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Statement by Senator A.J. Brooks, P.C., Q.C., Vice-Chairman of the Canadian Delegation in Plenary Session of the General Assembly, on November 27, 1961.

The Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries & Peoples

Mr. President:

I wish to indicate the attitude of the Canadian Delegation towards the draft resolution contained in Document A/L.366 which is co-sponsored by 38 delegations from Africa and Asia.

Last year the General Assembly concluded a most important debate by adopting the resolution proclaiming the "Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples". That resolution was a landmark in the political development of the United Nations. It was in accord with the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and was based on fundamental principles of the Charter.

Last year's Declaration on Colonialism gained added significance from the fact that it was initiated by states of Africa and Asia, that it was not opposed by any member state and that 89 members cast their votes in favour. Canada was pleased to be one of them.

It is natural and proper that having adopted the Colonial Declaration at its 15th Session, the Assembly should this year review the situation as concerns its implementation.

The Canadian attitude is based on several considerations. Foremost is our concern that fundamental human rights and

freedoms should be fully respected throughout the world, including the national right of self-determination and the freedom of the individual from discrimination on grounds of race, colour and creed.

We recognize too, the significance of the role which the new nations of Asia and Africa are playing in international affairs. Our desire to keep in being an effective United Nations prompts us to join with the new states in strengthening this Organization. Not only does Canada place special emphasis on the maintenance of Commonwealth ties which link us with some of the leading African-Asian states and with other nations in Africa fast approaching independence, but because of the bilingual nature of our own nation, Canadians are conscious of a cultural and linguistic affinity with French-speaking nations in Africa and South East Asia.

Thus Canada has a genuine interest in wishing to promote the evolution from colonialism to nationhood for all dependent peoples who desire that status and at a rate of development which is governed only by practical considerations of internal stability.

That is why, in other forums of this Assembly my Delegation has stressed the need for the rapid training of indigenous civil and technical personnel in trust and non-self-governing territories. If dependent territories are to reach the "take-off point" for viable nationhood, they must have a solid base of trained administrators. This need has been rightly emphasized, particularly by the delegations of Nigeria, India and Burma.

In this task we can all help. As an example, in my own country, Canada, over 1,000 students from non-self-governing and trust territories are taking higher education or pursuing studies under technical assistance programmes in the current

academic year.

It seems to me that the danger lies not so much in the possibility that the administering authorities will not compromise eventually with the force of nationalism; indeed, the vast majority have shown impressive proof to the contrary. Rather the danger is that in the case of territories administered under a different philosophy, independence when it comes may find the inhabitants almost totally unprepared to handle the responsibilities which they are certain to demand and get.

That is why we in Canada endorse wholeheartedly the British policy of creating an administrative base, by training a core of public officials who will owe their allegiance not to a tribe or party but to all the people of their country when independence comes. The wisdom of this policy has been amply demonstrated.

Likewise, if independence is to be of lasting value, if factionalism and civil strife are not to follow, it must be achieved in a harmonious and orderly manner. Britain and France have met this test on a scale and speed without precedent in world history.

The roll-call of emerging nations includes states from all parts of the world but it is to developments on the African continent that our attention at this time is irresistibly drawn. There the tempo of transition has exceeded all expectation; the tide of freedom flows strong. Twenty-two African states have attained independence since 1946.

In recent months we have welcomed Sierra Leone and Mauritania as members of the United Nations. In December we look forward to the admission of Tanganyika, a multi-racial society whose smooth transition to independence can well serve as a model for others to emulate. And this is not the end. Uganda is on the horizon. Kenya, Ruanda-Urundi and other African

territories will not, we hope, be far behind.

I would like to add one word about the union of the southern section of the former British Cameroons with the Cameroun Republic on October 1st of this year. Because of its bilingual French and English character Canada feels a special affinity for the Republic of Cameroun. I wish to pay a special tribute here for the manner in which this union was carried out, in a spirit of cooperation and goodwill which reflects the highest credit on all concerned.

Mr. President, it is clear that progress has been made in implementing the Declaration on Colonialism, both in Africa and in other regions of the world. My delegation recognizes that this Assembly may now wish to take the further step of setting up machinery, as proposed in the 28 power draft, to examine the application of the Colonial Declaration and to make suggestions and recommendations on the progress and extent of the implementation of the Declaration.

This seems to us to be logical and sensible and Canada will vote in favour of this resolution.

I wish now to explain the framework within which the Canadian Delegation interprets this resolution.

While appreciating that the text before us is itself a compromise, arrived at only after long and patient discussion, we think that some of the operative paragraphs could have been more happily worded. In our view the majority of administering powers, who honour their obligations under the Charter, have been making rapid progress in the manner called for by the Colonial Declaration.

It is the considered opinion of the Canadian Government that the Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples should be applied throughout the world.

The Assembly should look at colonialism in its broadest context and bend its efforts to implementing the Declaration in areas in which progress toward independence and freedom is being deliberately impeded or denied.

We should be especially wary in considering any single formula or general principles to be applied to all the remaining colonial territories. Each of them has its own problems and its own conditions to be met. In some territories steps have already been taken which will ensure the orderly attainment of independence in the near future. In others, delicate negotiations are in train to resolve complex situations. As for some of the very small territories, it may be seriously questioned whether outright independence would serve the best interests of their inhabitants. Varying circumstances require that different methods be applied to achieve practical solutions and in all cases the wishes and the interests of the inhabitants should be regarded as paramount. It seems to us that these realities are recognized in the Nigerian draft resolution on a programme of independence for Africa.

We trust that the Special Committee proposed in draft resolution L.366 will bear these general considerations in mind in adopting its procedures and in carrying out the tasks entrusted to it.

The administering powers cannot share or shift their responsibility. The function of the Special Committee is not to interfere with the Administering Authorities. It is rather, to scrutinize the progress made and to make suggestions and recommendations, essentially with a view to the practical steps which should be taken to further the implementation of the Colonial Declaration.

We interpret operative paragraph 6 as meaning that

should the Special Committee wish to meet outside New York it will only do so in consultation, and in agreement with, the appropriate authorities.

The Special Committee, working in close cooperation with the Trusteeship Council and the Committee on Information from non-self-governing territories, will undoubtedly facilitate the movement to full self-government or independence. But as the distinguished representative of Japan has reminded us, independence is not a wind-fall; it is a harvest and a good harvest calls for continued hard work on the part of all who wish for it; the inhabitants of the Territory, the Administering Authorities and the United Nations.

This three-way partnership is the sine qua non for successful de-colonization. It is of the utmost importance that it should never be lost sight of in the work of the proposed Special Committee. This cooperative atmosphere, so well exemplified by New Zealand's trusteeship in Western Samoa, must continue in the Special Committee.

The peaceful and orderly transition from colonial status to self-government or independence can only be achieved with the collaboration of the Administering Authorities. Their active and friendly cooperation must be secured. We are confident that this consideration will be borne in mind not only in nominating the membership of the Special Committee, which should reflect the need for equitable geographical representation, but also in the active work of the Committee itself.