



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 52/16

REVIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION (Part II)

Statement by the Parliamentary Assistant to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Jean Lesage, made in the House of Commons on March 25, 1952.

...When the Secretary of State for External Affairs opened this debate last Friday he said that there were some aspects of our external policy that he would not have time to discuss then, but he expected me to deal with some of them at this time. I should like this afternoon first to review briefly the results of the Sixth Session of the General Assembly, which is the last Session of the Assembly of the United Nations, and then to elaborate on the subject of assistance to under-developed countries, with which I myself was particularly concerned.

I would not deny to the House that the recent sessions of the General Assembly left many of the participants with a sense of depression. We all know that the General Assembly exists primarily to further the cause of peace and security and to promote the general welfare of all peoples. It is a meeting place where we hope to relieve the tensions between the free world and the Soviet world, and to reach satisfactory political settlements by conciliation and peaceful negotiations. It cannot be said that the Sixth Session achieved a great deal in terms of these basic purposes.

Nevertheless I would not wish to leave the impression that this meeting, or any other similar meeting during the past year has, in any sense, altered my own basic conviction that we must give full support to the United Nations.

The organization still affords opportunities for negotiation between the free world and the Soviet world, provided that the will to carry on such negotiations is present. This was shown, for instance, in the Berlin blockade, where a casual conversation between a Soviet and a United States representative led to negotiations which eventually ended this explosive episode.

Again, in several complicated disputes, on which the non-Communist world has been divided, such as those which have prevailed in Kashmir, Indonesia and Palestine, the United Nations has provided machinery which has yielded important results in ending hostilities.

Moreover, the organization brings together in loose association all the countries of the world which are opposed to Soviet aggression. Indeed, it provides the greatest agency existing today for reconciling the views of the highly developed countries of the West and the less developed countries of Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. At the present time it brings together those states which are taking active

steps to resist aggression in Korea and those countries which are giving moral, and in some cases diplomatic and economic, support.

The machinery of the United Nations can be used, and it must be used, to make aggression more difficult, if not impossible, and to organize opposition to it. To ignore or belittle the United Nations would be an act of irresponsibility which would gravely weaken the moral basis of our democratic way of life. We cannot pretend that the machinery, as it now stands, is perfect, but there is no substitute for it anywhere. We live in an imperfect world, and any world organization will inevitably reflect those imperfections.

It is fair to say, I think, that on the whole the recent Session of the General Assembly neither increased nor decreased the existing tension between the Soviet and the free world. On the other hand, a number of resolutions were approved which, if they can be put into effect, may serve to lessen that tension. In the main, their success will depend upon the desire of the Soviet Union to make them work.

The resolution on disarmament, which set up a new Disarmament Commission, of which Canada is a member, to consider "the regulation, limitation and balanced reduction of all armaments and armed forces", may turn out to be the major accomplishment. But the debates on disarmament in the Assembly itself and the recent meetings of the Disarmament Commission under the chairmanship of the Canadian Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York show little promise that the U.S.S.R. will be inclined to use the new Commission as a place where serious plans for disarmament and the control of atomic weapons should be studied. However, it is really still too early to estimate the value of this resolution of the Assembly, and we all must hope that steps will be taken, as a result of the discussions in the Commission during the next few months, which will bring some agreement on the very difficult questions of disclosure and international control of armed forces and armaments, including atomic weapons, so that a measure of disarmament, with its consequent easing of tension, will be possible.

Another important decision taken by the General Assembly was a resolution on collective measures, which continued the Collective Measures Committee for another year. It was encouraging to see the wide support which the principle of collective security, based on mutual contribution, received from all of the United Nations, with, of course, the exception of the Soviet bloc, and a very few other countries.

In other political fields a commission was established to look into the possibility of holding free elections throughout Germany, and this commission has been unsuccessfully seeking entrance into east Germany for that purpose. The German Federal Republic has, on the other hand, welcomed the establishment of the commission and has assisted it in its work.

A resolution on the Palestine dispute was adopted which called on the parties to resolve their differences in conformity with previous assembly resolutions. This resolution was made acceptable to all parties concerned by amendments introduced by the Canadian delegation.

Libya's attainment of independence was also approved within the time limit set by the Assembly in 1949, a development warmly supported by Canada.

Yugoslavia's complaint of hostile activities by the Cominform states was dealt with by a resolution calling on all the parties to conduct their relations in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

The question of Korea was postponed to a special session of the Assembly to be convened if an armistice is signed, or if "other developments" make such a session desirable.

There was a sharp division of opinion in the assembly on trusteeship and colonial questions which the debate on Southwest Africa made even sharper.

The Canadian delegation, while not taking an active part in these frequently acrimonious and important debates, was not perhaps without influence in bringing about compromises between the views of the administering countries and the non-administering majority.

A sum of a little over \$48 million was approved for the United Nations budget for 1952, and the scale of assessments of member governments was adjusted to bring it more into line with the principle that in an organization of sovereign equals no one government should contribute too large a proportion of the budget. The Canadian delegation took an active part in administrative and budgetary questions and pressed once more for all possible economies consistent with efficient functioning of the United Nations.

Mr. T.A. Stone, our Canadian Minister to Sweden and Finland, was elected to the important office of Chairman of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee, and in this capacity sat as a member of the General (steering) Committee of the General Assembly.

The Third (Social) Committee of the Assembly spent the greater part of its time on the question of the international covenant on human rights. The main issue was whether economic, social and cultural rights should be contained in a covenant dealing with political and civil rights. The Assembly decided that the two covenants should be drafted, one containing political and civil rights and the other economic, social and cultural rights. This question has been debated in the United Nations in the last four or five years, for weeks and weeks without interruption, and the debate in this House yesterday reminded me of all those weeks spent on civil rights and fundamental human rights.

In the legal field, the Assembly set up a special committee of fifteen states, including Canada, to study steps to be taken to improve the handling of legal and drafting questions by future sessions of the Assembly. A long debate, as we have them in the United Nations, took place over the definition of aggression, which will be considered again at the next session when a draft code of offenses against the peace and security of mankind will be discussed.

In economic questions the Assembly made several important decisions, many of which were taken during the post-Christmas period. Resolutions were approved on land reform in under-developed areas, on the problems of hunger and famine,

on the prevention of decline of living standards, and on war damages in Libya.

An important resolution calling for contributions to the Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees was also approved by the Assembly. A long and useful debate was held on the general problem of economic development of the under-developed countries. I will deal with that question very fully, since I intend at this point to speak in some detail on technical assistance and capital development in under-developed countries.

Last year Parliament approved Canadian participation in the Colombo Plan and authorized an appropriation of \$25 million for the fiscal year 1951-52 for economic assistance to governments in countries in South and Southeast Asia. It was later decided that, for the first year of the Colombo Plan, the Canadian contribution should be used to assist in the economic development of India and Pakistan. In order to establish a basic working relationship with the Indian and Pakistan Governments, and to make sure that our activities under the Colombo Plan would be founded on knowledge and mutual understanding, arrangements were made for consultations to take place here in Ottawa with officials from India and Pakistan.

These discussions were held last summer, and agreement was reached on the general principles which should guide and govern the provision of economic aid by Canada to India and Pakistan under the Colombo Plan. Subsequently, on September 10, 1951, an agreement, in the form of a statement of principles, was signed in New Delhi by representatives of the Canadian and Indian Governments, and in Karachi by representatives of the Canadian and Pakistan Governments.

Since then continuing discussions have been carried on with a view to selecting specific projects suitable for economic assistance out of the 1951-52 Canadian appropriation for the Colombo Plan.

...At the request of the Government of India the Canadian Government agreed to allot \$10 million for the provision of wheat to India under the Colombo Plan. This wheat was urgently needed to help prevent starvation in certain districts in India. Except for a negligible amount, all the wheat has now been shipped from Canadian West Coast ports.

In order that the grant of wheat might be directly related to the economic development objectives of the Colombo Plan, the Indian Government agreed to establish a special counterpart fund equal in rupees to the \$10 million paid for the wheat by the Canadian Government.

The Government of India proposed that the funds be used to finance a large-scale irrigation and hydro-electric project at Mayurakshi in West Bengal. From all reports this project appears to be economically sound, and we have accepted the Indian proposal that the counterpart funds be devoted to its construction. It is estimated that the Mayurakshi project will, through irrigation, increase the annual food production of the district by about 350 thousand tons of rice and other crops. It will produce some 4,000 kilowatts of electric energy.

In addition to assisting in the construction of the Mayurakshi irrigation and hydro-electric project through the use of counterpart funds, we have also been asked to supply a small amount of equipment not locally obtainable. Inquiries will be made to determine whether the required items are available in Canada and, if so, they will be provided.

Preliminary consideration is being given to the practicability of supplying a quantity of chassis to India for use of the Bombay State Transport Commission, but this project is still in the discussion stage.

The main project in the Canadian programme of economic assistance for Pakistan under the Colombo Plan is a cement plant to be erected in the Thal area of the Punjab where the Pakistan Government is carrying on a large-scale colonization scheme for settlement and rehabilitation of millions of people who have moved from their homes as a result of partition.

The Governments of Australia, Canada and New Zealand have jointly agreed to establish and equip an experimental livestock farm also in the Thal area. The Canadian contribution to this joint project will take the form of agricultural machinery and related equipment. In addition it is expected that a Canadian expert will be provided to instruct local Pakistani personnel in the care and maintenance of all the farm machinery.

Another item in the Canadian programme for Pakistan which has been mutually agreed upon is the provision of a substantial quantity of wooden railway ties which are urgently needed for the rehabilitation and development of the Pakistan railway system.

A tentative agreement has been reached on a photographic and geological survey of Pakistan to be undertaken by Canada. Very little is known of the geological and geophysical make-up of Pakistan, and a survey of the kind contemplated would provide basic data of immediate and long-term value to Pakistan in carrying out its economic development.

The Colombo Plan is a novel experiment in international economic co-operation. It is inevitable that in translating the plan into action all kinds of organizational, administrative and consultative problems will arise which will require time to solve. There is also a good deal of preliminary study and fact finding to be undertaken if our economic aid programmes are to rest upon a sound foundation.

As a result, delays in the first stages are unavoidable. Nevertheless it was possible in the past few months to make real progress. Moreover governmental machinery which has been set up to co-ordinate our international economic and technical co-operation, and the experience which has been gained in the first year of the Colombo Plan, will greatly help our activities in the future.

As the Secretary of State for External Affairs said last night at a press conference:

"We have been criticized for giving only \$25 million to the Colombo Plan this year. During the past year we have had a very difficult time working out with India and Pakistan a practical programme by which the money could be spent."

As a matter of fact, although the whole \$25 million voted by Parliament for this current year has been earmarked, only \$10 million of goods has been shipped out. This means, in effect, that in the coming year the balance of this year's programme will have to be carried on, along with the programmes to be initiated under the 1952-53 contribution.

I should perhaps at this point make reference to the meeting, which opened yesterday in Karachi, of the Consultative Committee for Co-operative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia. This Committee, which is composed of all the Governments participating in the Colombo Plan, and includes the United States, meets from time to time to review the progress being made in reaching the objectives of the plan and to discuss matters of policy. At this session Canada is being represented by my colleague the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Trade and Commerce, (Mr. McIlraith).

Now, a few words about technical co-operation under the Colombo Plan. Soon after the establishment of the Council for Technical Co-operation in Colombo, a permanent Canadian representative was appointed to it. The Government was anxious to see the programme get into action with the least possible delay, and therefore took the initiative in making special offers of training facilities to countries participating in the Plan.

Two principles have been kept in mind in making offers of scholarships and fellowships and in inviting technical missions to visit Canada. The first is that the training we offer to make available should be directly related to the economic development needs of the countries in the area, and the second is that the offers be ones which Canada is in a position to implement effectively.

Sixty scholarships and fellowships have been offered under the Colombo Technical Co-operation Programme: twenty-five to India, fifteen to Pakistan, ten to Ceylon and ten to non-Commonwealth countries in the area. Almost all the trainees from India, Pakistan and Ceylon have arrived in Canada. They are taking courses of training in road and bridge construction, hydro-electric development, public administration, public health and welfare, and agriculture. Up to date, the ten awards which were offered to non-Commonwealth countries have not been taken up. They are, however, being held open.

Last year three technical missions, each composed of senior government officials from India and Pakistan, were taken on tours across Canada, arranged by Canadian government departments in co-operation with the corresponding provincial departments. One of these missions was interested in studying highway and bridge construction in Canada, another mission came to look into Canadian agricultural methods, and the third was interested in hydro-electric power installation and development.

It has proved more difficult to find qualified Canadian experts to serve in advisory capacities in the countries of South and Southeast Asia than it has to provide training facilities in Canada for scholars and fellows from that area. Nevertheless we have been able to provide a fisheries consultant from British Columbia to assist the Government of Ceylon in the development of the fishing industry, and a refrigeration engineer has also gone to Ceylon to help in the same field.

Now that the programme is under way we shall be able to operate more and more on the basis of specific requests from governments for both experts and training facilities. The Government believes, as do most members of the Colombo Plan, that technical co-operation will probably do most good at this stage if it concentrates on the training of middle and lower grade workers in their own countries. In planning future activities every effort will be made to shift the emphasis in this direction.

For each of the past two fiscal years, this Parliament has authorized an appropriation of \$400,000 for Canadian participation in the Technical Co-operation Programme of the Colombo Plan. Because of the delays in getting a programme of this kind off the ground and running smoothly the total value of the services and facilities extended by Canada has lagged behind the amount of funds available. However, the programme has been steadily increasing its pace. ...

The Secretary of State for External Affairs in a public address three weeks ago, said:

"The Canadian government regards the Colombo Programme for Technical Co-operation as a temporary supplement to the technical assistance activities of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies in South and Southeast Asia.

"We hope that the United Nations, if it is given appropriate support in these activities, will be able to assume by the end of a three- or four-year period the major responsibility for technical assistance in South and Southeast Asia and we are urging the greatest possible use of all United Nations agencies offering technical assistance to South and Southeast Asia. That is not to say that as a participant in the six-year Colombo Plan for the economic development of the area and particularly as a member of the Commonwealth we will not have a direct and continuing interest in special technical assistance to those countries. But we do not wish the two approaches to this problem to overlap or conflict."

The expanded Technical Assistance Programme of the United Nations is a vast and concrete plan. This plan is in effect a very comprehensive one, and at the same time a most practical one; it is of no mean significance in the world of today, having as its objective a pooling of technical knowledge for the benefit of all peoples. This plan is intended to be one of the essential factors in the economic and social co-operation described as a fundamental task of the United Nations by the Charter itself, and particularly by Article 55:

The technical assistance missions and experts constitute the "other forces of the United Nations." While the soldiers of the United Nations are fighting in Korea to repel aggression, it is the privilege of these other "forces" to contribute directly to the well-being of the countries in which their operations are conducted and in so doing to help easing the present world tension.

Here for the first time almost all countries of the free world have co-operated in pooling their resources to give technical assistance to governments which are in need and which request it, but of course the Soviet bloc refused to participate, despite their constant professions of solicitude for the welfare of the peoples of the under-developed countries.

Canada contributed \$850,000 to the first eighteen months' operation of this programme on a total budget of \$20 million. This year, at the Technical Assistance Conference which was held in Paris on the 6th and 7th of February, we offered to contribute on a matching basis a maximum of \$850,000 towards the objective of \$20 million for the present twelve months period, and at least \$750,000. The United States for its part has offered to contribute a maximum of \$12 million if the contributions reach \$20 million, but not more than sixty per cent of the total. The contributions of the United States and Canada are offered in this way in order to encourage other contributing countries, and especially the receiving countries, to participate themselves in the plan and show their interest in it. The United States and Canada have pledged a little over \$2 for each dollar which will be contributed by all the other countries in the world. I do not believe that Canada could be accused of lack of generosity. ...

On March 1, 1952, the total contributions pledged were equivalent to \$18,839,618, the American contributions being calculated at sixty per cent of the total and the Canadian contribution at \$750,000. The Canadian representative said at the Technical Assistance Conference, and I quote:

"We regret very much that pledges to date do not permit the utilization of the maximum Canadian pledge. However, we are very anxious to go as far as possible toward ensuring the success of this important programme during 1952. My government, will, therefore, make a firm pledge today of \$750,000. The further \$100,000 will remain available until the Final Act is closed for signature, which is April 15."

Since the beginning of the programme in July, 1950, Canada has received forty-six United Nations fellows from under-developed countries for special training in Canada, in addition to many directed to us by the specialized agencies. We have just completed training arrangements for an additional twenty-seven United Nations fellows in Canada. Moreover, many Canadians are serving abroad in the field under United Nations programme, a great number of them in Asian countries.

In the field of assistance to under-developed countries there are certain essential points which to my mind must not be forgotten if our action in economic aid and technical assistance is to be effective. In the first place, we must keep in mind the co-operative nature of these programmes. We can help, but much more important than any help we can give must be the determination of the countries concerned to come to grips with their own grave economic and social problems. Further, our action must be patient and sustained; for we cannot expect positive results overnight; after all, it is a question of raising living standards for hundreds and hundreds of millions of human beings who at present sometimes find it hard merely to survive.

Successful co-operation between economically under-developed countries and those who wish to assist them can be established only on a basis of mutual confidence. Essentially, it is a question of self-help and mutual aid, a matter of putting into practice the old familiar proverb: "God helps those who help themselves". The economic and social betterment of all regions and of all nations can, in the long run,

be achieved only by effort from within the countries. Outside sources can provide equipment and technical knowledge or capital, but the national will must assert itself and work for the nation.

The Marshall Plan is an excellent illustration of this truth: if European nations had accepted North American aid with their arms folded, Europe could never have recovered economically from the devastation of the last war. In working together for the recovery of their respective economies, European powers have done as much one for another as the Marshall Plan has done for each.

As I have said, successful economic and social rehabilitation will not be achieved over-night. The problems are too complex and diverse for that. We know that even in a country like Canada the improvement of social conditions is a slow process, bound up with the whole of the human and natural resources of the country, and dependent upon education as much as upon economic development. It is too frequently forgotten that the populations most advanced socially have reached their high standard only progressively. As the Secretary of State for External Affairs said in this House last year, trying to move too quickly in too many directions at once, directions that are often opposite ones, can only lead to chaos. It is well known that economic progress in any field, whether it be by way of accelerated industrialization or by modernization of agricultural methods, upsets the old social structure and creates and intensifies social problems. If economic development is to be achieved without unnecessary disruption and hardship, it is important not to neglect the social problems, problems of health, education, labour conditions and social welfare.

On the other hand, it is not by completely exhausting a national economy for social needs that the social problem can be solved. On the contrary, the opportunity of solving it will be lost. There is a balance to be kept, a balance which differs according to countries, but which can be maintained only if social progress is founded on economic reality.

That being said, we must acknowledge that there exist today hundreds of millions of human beings, especially in Asia and Africa, whose living conditions are not only deplorable; they are intolerable. It is imperative that we help to remedy this state of affairs. Otherwise, the democratic world will remain at the mercy of a real enmity kindled for political ends in these peoples who are starving for bread and enlightenment.

If we expect the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America to share our belief in democracy and to stand with other nations of the free world in defence of the democratic way of life, we must help them to know the benefits of democracy. We must convince them, by genuine and practical co-operation, that our system does not tend to perpetuate economic and social injustice and class privilege. It is urgent, therefore, that we should continue, through the United Nations and outside it, as in the Colombo Plan, to assist under-developed countries to build up, little by little, conditions of economic stability and social well-being.

To conclude may I quote these words from a message of the President of the United States to Congress on March 6 last:

"The peoples of many of these areas confront the legacy of centuries of neglect; they are in many cases desperately poor, defenceless before famine and disease, disabled by illiteracy. At the same time they have a new and burning determination to improve their living standards, to fulfil their desire for self-government, to control their own futures. As old social structures have failed to meet the basic needs of their peoples, the popular energy, so long pent up, is bursting forth in fierce nationalism and in fierce demands for real economic change.

These conditions would exist even if there were no Soviet threat to world peace. But the pressure of Soviet Communism, working overtime to exploit the turbulence of the under-developed areas, greatly increases the necessity for speed in meeting these conditions - speed in the interest, not alone of orderly and democratic development, but of the security of the whole free world."

S/C