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## Prime Minister Diefenbaker's proposals for a U.N. Food Bank

The following is a partial text of the statement made on October 24 by the Canadian Representative in the Second Committee (Economic and Financial) of the United Nations General Assembly, in support of a resolution co-sponsored by Canada, the United States, and four other countries, regarding the Provision of Food Surpluses to Needy Peoples through the United Nations system:

"It is a privilege to table formally in this Committee draft resolution A/C.2/L.459 co-sponsored by Canada, Haiti, Liberia, Pakistan, United States of America and Venezuela on the question of the provision of food surpluses to needy peoples through the United Nations system. This is a subject which my Delegation considers to be one of the most important, if not the most important, of those to be considered at this year's session of the Second Committee.

Canada has repeatedly urged that international action be taken to provide food, which is in surplus in some parts of the world, to needy and hungry peoples in other lands. It is one of the great anomalies of our time that there are widespread areas in desperate need of food while at the same time there are other areas where foodstuffs are in abundant surplus. Surely the international community has developed a sufficient sense of responsibility and adequate experience with the techniques of international co-operation to find some way by now out of this dilemma. The co-sponsors have joined together to submit draft resolution A/C.2/L.459 in an effort to have the Assembly consider this tragic human problem as a matter of great urgency. In his speech to the General Assembly on September 26, Prime Minister Diefenbaker re-emphasized Canada's determination to seek international action on this question, stating: "I believe that much must be done on behalf of food deficit countries, first to help them in their hour of need and then to help them raise their own levels of production. This to me is the responsibility of the United Nations as a whole to meet this challenge." He went on to say "We envisage a food bank to provide food to member states through the United Nations. Such a scheme would require the establishment of concerted machinery which would take into account established patterns of trade and marketing and co-ordinate the individual surplus disposal to improve the effective utilization of wheat."

It must be admitted that progress in this matter has thus far been slow and to us in Canada, and no doubt even more so to the food deficit countries, disappointing. On a number of occasions in recent years, the Prime Minister of Canada has urged that specific programmes be established to make available surplus foodstuffs for consumption in those parts of the world where food shortages occur. As far back as December 1957, Prime Minister Diefenbaker, speaking in Paris, referring to the needs of hungry peoples, stated that "The conscience of the free world will not accept a situation where half mankind is well fed and the other half is starved". He advocated the establishment by some of the more fortunate countries of something in the nature of a food bank whereby food would be made available for distribution among those countries that were struggling for economic advance but which were held back by low or inadequate nutritional levels among their populations.

At the opening session of the Food-for-Peace Conference held in Washington in May 1959, the Canadian Minister of Trade and Commerce expressed Canada's hearty support for the humanitarian objectives of the President of the United States in his proposals to Congress for the more effective utilization of surplus food supplies in the interests of peace and he recalled Prime Minister Diefenbaker's many previous suggestions for international action to alleviate distress and to promote economic development in the less fortunate countries of the world. At the last session of the FAO Assembly in October 1959, the Canadian views on this subject were once more put forward. The Canadian Minister of Agriculture, referring to the challenge of surpluses and hunger continuing side by side, urged member countries to encourage and assist multilateral action whenever possible.

My Delegation recognizes that the draft before you is open to improvement and I would emphasize that we are deeply interested in the views of other delegations on the issues raised in that resolution. For our part, we would earnestly hope that the FAO, in its study of the feasibility and acceptability of new arrangements for mobilizing and distributing available surplus foodstuffs in areas of greatest need, will find it possible to recommend for this purpose the establishment of a U.N. food bank which would be supported by all member countries on an equitable financial basis. As Prime Minister Diefenbaker said on September 26, "A few countries cannot underwrite the costs of transferring their surpluses to countries in need. What we need is to join together in contributing to a solution of truly world-wide scope to this problem." Canada would of course expect that any food bank that may be established as a result of the FAO's study would be both realistic and workable. We fully agreed with the distinguished representative of Argentina when on October 18 he said that any international arrangements established for the disposal of surplus agricultural commodities must avoid damage to legitimate and normal commercial trade. Our own trade has in the past been disrupted by erratic surplus disposal arrangements and we would certainly have no intention of ourselves supporting action which would have this effect. The Delegate of Argentina is correct in saying that the concept of a world food reserve has been studied in FAO and considered at various times in the past. But times are changing, and my Delegation is convinced that a fresh look at this problem, in an atmosphere of goodwill and sympathy for the world's suffering people, could this time produce concrete results.

The problem is admittedly complex, but in our view its solution is of the greatest urgency for every day the numbers of hungry people increase. Let our goal be the abolition of hunger in a world where hunger should no longer exist and let us now join together in taking a great and decisive step forward."

There follows the text of the joint resolution which was unanimously approved by the General Assembly on October 27 and which has now been transmitted to the FAO for action:

"The United Nations General Assembly:

Considering that the peoples in many of the less developed countries suffer from serious shortage of food,

Noting with approval that the FAO of the U.N., in co-operation with the U.N., appropriate specialized agencies, member governments, and non-governmental organizations, has launched a "Freedom from Hunger Campaign" designed as a concerted attack on the problem of providing adequate food for food-deficient peoples,

Recalling the General Assembly's Resolutions 827(IX) and 1025(XI) and Economic and Social Council Resolutions 621(XXII) and 685(XXVI) concerning international co-operation in the establishment of national food reserves,

Bearing in mind the existing opportunities for consultation and exchange of information provided by FAO through its consultative Sub-Committee on Surplus Disposals,

Recognizing that FAO principles of surplus disposal and guiding lines are a valuable instrument for guidance to governments in transactions, programmes, policies, and consultations relating to disposal and utilization of agricultural surpluses,

Recognizing further that the ultimate solution to the problem of hunger lies in an effective acceleration of economic development allowing the under-developed countries to increase their food production and enabling them to purchase more food through normal channels of international trade,

Convinced of the impelling need to solve the problem of hunger and malnutrition among many peoples and of the vital role which the U.N. system can play in actions designed to help solve this critical problem,

Further convinced that better-fed peoples will help raise productivity and thus contribute to the increase of their standard of living,

1. Endorses the "Freedom from Hunger Campaign" launched by FAO and urges all members of the U.N. and of the specialized agencies to support this campaign in every appropriate way;

2. Appeals to members of the U.N. and the specialized agencies to take suitable measures to relieve the suffering of food-deficient people in other nations and assist them in their economic development and in their efforts toward a better life;

3. Expresses the belief that international assistance in the establishment of national food reserves in food-deficient countries is one effective transitional means to assist accelerated economic development in the less developed countries;
4. Invites the FAO, after consulting member governments, the Secretary-General and appropriate specialized agencies of the U.N., to establish without delay procedures - in particular for consultation and the dissemination of information by which, with the assistance of the U.N. system, the largest practicable quantities of surplus food may be made available on mutually agreeable terms as a transitional measure against hunger; such procedures to be compatible with desirable agricultural development as a contribution to economic development in the less developed countries and without prejudice to bilateral arrangements for this purpose and compatible with FAO principles;
5. Further invites FAO, in consultation with member governments, the Secretary-General of the U.N., appropriate specialized agencies and other international bodies (such as the International Wheat Council, the Wheat Utilization Committee, etc.) to undertake a study of the feasibility and acceptability of additional arrangements, including multilateral arrangements under the auspices of FAO having as their objective the mobilization of available surplus foodstuffs and their distribution in areas of greatest need, particularly in the economically less developed countries;
6. Requests the Director-General of FAO to report on action taken to the Economic and Social Council at its thirty-second session;
7. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Director-General of FAO and after such other consultations as he may deem necessary, to report to the Economic and Social Council at its thirty-second session on the role which the U.N. and the appropriate specialized agencies could play to facilitate the best possible use of food surpluses for the economic development of less developed countries;
8. Recommends that the Secretary-General in preparing, in consultation with the Director-General of FAO, the provisional programme for the joint meeting of the Commission for International Commodity Trade and the Committee on Commodity Problems of FAO which will examine a report on the prospects of production of and demand for primary commodities, include the question of the production of and demand for food in relation with the problem of hunger;
9. Stresses that any action taken or contemplated under this resolution proceed in accordance with FAO principles and guiding lines for the disposal of surplus commodities, and specifically with adequate safeguards and appropriate measures against dumping of agricultural surpluses on the international market and against adverse effects upon the economic and financial position of those countries which depend for their foreign exchange earnings primarily on the export of food commodities, and recognizing that avoidance of damage to normal trade in foodstuffs will best be assured by multilateral trading practices."