

NON-SELF-GOVERNING-TERRITORIES

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TRANSMITTED

UNDER ARTICLE 73 e OF THE CHARTER

Summary Record of the Sixth Meeting, held at Geneva
on Monday, 6 September 1948 at 3 p.m.

Present:

Chairman: Mr. Cheng Paoan (China)

Rapporteur: Mr. H. Lannung (Denmark)

Members: Mr. D.W. Forsyth (Australia)
Mr. P. Ryckmans (Belgium)
Taha Bey el Sayed Nasr (Egypt)
Mr. R. Garreau (France)
Mr. B. Shiva Rao (India)
Mr. J.W. de Stoppelaar (Netherlands)
Mr. J.S. Reid (New Zealand)
Mr. S.J. Söderblom (Sweden)
Mr. A.G. Kulagenkov (Union of Soviet
Socialist Republics)
Mr. J. Fletcher-Cooke (United Kingdom)
Mr. B. Gerig (United States of
America)

Specialised Agencies: Mr. Blelloch (I.L.O.)
Mr. E. Grzeczowski (W.H.O.)
Mr. Cortesac (UNESCO)

Secretariat: Mr. Victor Hoo, Assistant
Secretary-General
Mr. Benson, Committee Secretary

Mr. BENSON (Secretary) said that the Secretariat noted with appreciation the following general constructive criticisms;

1. Criticisms of a broad editorial character, such as that voiced by the representatives of Belgium and Denmark which would prove useful with a view to the future publication of the material before the Committee.

2. Criticism, such as that voiced by the representative of India, which would prove useful with a view to next year's information. The Indian representative had termed some of the information as meagre. In the case of agricultural indebtedness, this was probably true: in the case of land cession the information had not been meagre but the Secretariat, under obligation to select the material, had omitted much of the information given on this subject.

3. Criticism regarding more detailed points, such as special analysis of a question like agricultural indebtedness, which might be studied over the coming year in co-operation with the specialized agencies.

The RAPPORTEUR, speaking on behalf of Denmark, pointed out, with reference to the Belgian representative's remarks, that he desired statistics to be presented in such a form that comparisons could be drawn from year to year and from territory to territory. Figures should be given in a ratio to population, for example number of doctors per hundred thousand population. While it might not prove useful to draw a comparison between Greenland and a non-Arctic territory, it would prove useful to draw comparisons between two territories similarly situated.

Regarding currency, he desired figures to be given in terms of an international currency, such as the dollar and

pound, as well as local currency which, always allowing for the price index, would yet furnish some basis of comparison.

Mr. KULAGENKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) had attempted to analyse the documents furnishing economic information in Non-Self-Governing-Territories with a view to learning whether the General Assembly Resolutions and Chapter XI of the Charter had been implemented to the extent that "Members had assumed the responsibility to develop self-government...." Economic advancement laid the foundation for future independence and emancipation from foreign exploitation. Yet, despite peculiar features of each territory they seemed to have a common trait, which was their economic dependence on the metropolitan powers. The economies were adapted, by artificial means if necessary, to the metropolitan economy. Many Non-Self-Governing-Territories, rich in natural resources, were backward in their development, agrarian in their economy, organized only to supply raw materials to the metropolitan power and the world market. Industrial crops, such as rubber and jute, were cultivated instead of consumer crops which would feed the population. Even the industries established, such as mining, helped the capitalist monopolies, which, in control of natural resources, imposed their own terms on the world market while at the same time pursuing a policy of repression and exploitation of the Native population.

Referring to Documents A/587 and A/588, the Tables, he pointed out, made the one-sided development clear with their emphasis on raw materials and agriculture. The state of agriculture in most of these territories was primitive and a certain attempt seemed to be made to paint the picture better than it was. Future development schemes were substituted for information on present conditions. These schemes were not

new but referred to methods such as soil preservation and the prevention of erosion, and did not seem to envisage much progress in the economy of the territories themselves, but rather an improvement of the national economy of the metropolitan powers, and an opportunity for further capital investments from which the Native farmers were not likely to profit.

If the improvement of the territorial economy were desired, it would seem logical to expect a policy of cheap credits for the purchase of farm machinery, provision for the re-organization of agricultural relationships, and the redistribution of land. The metropolitan powers, having administered these territories for many decades, had not realized these plans but only those helpful to themselves and to private capital.

It was stated that in British East African territories attention was paid to how Africa could help solve the world food crisis, while nothing was done to help improve the conditions of the Natives. Regarding French African territories, Document A/588 stated that agriculture had not gone beyond the stage where it barely supplied the Native population. The standard of agriculture and the standard of living had not been raised; the continent was rich in resources yet nutritional standards remained extremely low.

Regarding agricultural training schemes, European personnel was preferred in the development schemes, on the grounds that there was a lack of skilled workers among Africans. Nothing had been done to train Africans, however, at a time when such training could be achieved comparatively quickly. The argument ran that since there were no skilled African personnel, Europeans had to be imported; and, having imported them, there was no need to train Africans. This was

a vicious circle.

The ultimate objective of colonial policy seemed to be to increase the export of foodstuffs and perpetuate the backward, one-sided economy of Non-Self-Governing-Territories.

Regarding the mechanization of agriculture, this referred mainly to plantations owned by Europeans rather than to farms operated by Natives.

Referring to the Belgian Congo, the only contemplated change appeared to be a further sub-division of land, a continuation of employing old-fashioned methods, and providing Natives with some forest land where the exploitation of timber would be of interest to the metropolitan power. It was further mentioned that contemporary agricultural knowledge regarding tropical areas was not yet exact enough to permit the employment of modern methods, such as chemical fertilizers, and that there was a difficulty in obtaining agricultural equipment due to high prices.

The best land was owned and administered by Europeans, either large companies or individuals, while the indigenous population was forced into poorer land, jungle, desert, or even Native reservations which he called ghettos. In Kenya, for example, the better half of the land was owned by 17,000 Europeans while the other half was owned by 3,000,000 Africans. In other British territories two-thirds of the land were owned by Europeans, and more than one-half was under such ownership in other Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Feudal relationships still existed. The indigenous population, pushed into reservations, found it hard to subsist, and consequently sought work with Europeans. As a result they became serfs, subject to a special criminal code governing the relationships between master and servant. At other times, the Native, having rented land, was obliged to hand

over part of the yield to the owner. He was allowed to work for himself all but 189 days out of the year, the latter to be picked by the owner. Often, he could only cultivate one-fifth of his land, being obliged to raise industrial crops on the other four-fifths. Moreover, Natives, as for example in Kenya, cultivating their own land, were subject to special taxes on such land, on their houses and even on their wives. Most Natives, unable to pay these taxes, were forced to leave their homeland under the threat of criminal persecution.

Even under these circumstances, the supply of manpower was not sufficient, and in Sierra Leone and Northern Rhodesia, for example, compulsory recruitment of workers had taken place despite an international convention prohibiting forced labour, and a British code which, however, was not applicable to Non-Self-Governing Territories.

In West Africa the Natives had been "generously" permitted to own land but were forced to cultivate certain crops such as cocoa, cotton, etc., which were of importance to the United Kingdom. These crops were purchased at fixed prices by agents of monopolies.

Quoting "Crisis in Kenya" by Aaronovich, London 1947, the Soviet representative referred to racial discrimination, which, he said, was prevalent in all other parts of the British Empire, and to the fact that Natives were paid 50% less than Europeans for the same kind of work. Agricultural methods were so primitive that not even ploughs were available.

No desire was noted on the part of the colonial powers to develop Native industries, and in the Gold Coast and in Nigeria, for example, weavers still used century-old methods. Productivity of labour was naturally low, with this difference that while previously the Native peasant had been able to use

what he produced, he was now required to produce crops regulated by monopoly. The peasant was in a constant state of malnutrition. Agriculture was and remained on a low level and was retrogressive from the point of view of the Native standard of living.

Some theoreticians favoured the continued backwardness of Non-Self-Governing Territories, and their wish to justify it was based on the colonial powers' desire to perpetuate their system.

As recently pointed out by the Soviet delegate in the Economic and Social Council, the development of heavy industry was necessary for economic advancement.

In that body the United Kingdom representative had attempted to prove the inadvisability of developing heavy industry, and had opposed the Soviet proposal that such development should be under the auspices of the United Nations. On the contrary the United Kingdom had asked Asia to follow what it called a natural development, to produce only the essentials for herself and whatever was needed by more developed countries. This was an attempt to preserve cheap labour and access to raw materials for monopolies.

In fact, the problem of industrialization of Non-Self-Governing Territories, not mentioned in the information transmitted, had to be solved. These territories needed the assistance of more developed countries, and should receive it through the United Nations regardless of military and political considerations. Foreign capital should not be so dominant as to threaten the development of independence. The colonial peoples were fighting for their independence, and political, economic and social developments had to serve their welfare. The information before the Committee was

inadequate and needed supplementing before a true picture could be obtained of conditions of agriculture and industry alike.

Mr. FLETCHER-COOKE (United Kingdom) regarded the Soviet representative's statement as contradictory inasfar as it accused the colonial powers on the one hand of setting up certain development schemes, and on the other of keeping the territories in a state of backwardness; in perpetuating feudalism on the one hand and removing the Native into reservations on the other. He denied that thousands of labourers in West Africa had been driven into slavery, and termed incorrect the statement that no industries had been set up in Africa.

The general shortage of manufactured goods had developed an interest in the industrialization of colonial territories. But a shortage of capital, capital goods and skilled labour had prevented a speedy advance.

1947/48, however, had seen the establishment of a number of new industries in Non-Self-Governing Territories. The lack of cheap and abundant power supply had also hindered industrialization in the past. However, Uganda now had a plan for a large hydro-electric station. Textiles, cement, soap, fats and cocoa butter processing plants had been set up in various British territories in Africa; in the Caribbean timber was being processed and oil and sugar refineries established. Sierra Leone built her own railroad coaches with her own timber, while in the Gold Coast a fund had been established to help the development of secondary industries.

Regarding food conditions, he emphasized that the two objectives of colonial food policy were firstly, to increase production for home consumption and secondly, to increase the

production of export crops which would augment the territory's revenue and alleviate European and world shortages. The increase for local consumption had been put first.

The United Kingdom Government realized the importance of proper nutrition standards, and dietary surveys were at present carried out in several Non-Self-Governing Territories. Studies regarding diseases resulting from malnutrition were also being undertaken. Most territories had school lunch and milk schemes.

Regarding the Soviet representative's suggestion that economic development schemes, such as the East African Ground Nut Scheme, led to a deterioration of the Natives' condition, he pointed out that any new scheme affected the social and economic status of the territory, but that both the Colonial Development Corporation and the Overseas Food Corporation, the two companies concerned, were by law required to safeguard the interests of the indigenous population.

Mr. RYCKMANS (Belgium) felt the Soviet representative was ignorant of conditions in Non-Self-Governing Territories. In the Belgian Congo, for example, 206,000 persons were industrial workers. A central power plant had been installed. These facts alone proved that there was industrial development. In any event the Committee was not competent to pass judgment on the administering powers.

Mr. GARREAU (France) said that the advance in agriculture and nutrition in French Non-Self-Governing Territories had been remarkable. The greater number of territories used to be in a state of complete aridity due to drought. The population used to diminish. At the present time, however, the population increase was such that malnutrition, where it existed, was due to the fact that

agricultural production could not keep pace with population increase. In 1946, for example, France, herself short of food, had had to send food to North Africa. And yet agricultural production in both North and West Africa had made gigantic strides. A population, in misery when France first acquired these territories, was to-day relatively prosperous. The development of Native cultures was the main object of the administration.

Regarding industrialization, rapid progress had been made where rich mineral resources existed, as for instance in Morocco. In other territories in tropical Africa, minerals were not easily exploitable but depended on the development of railways and roads. A labour force for such development was difficult to find. Forced labour did not exist in the French Union. The population in tropical climates could not work with the same efficiency as in Europe, and the health of the workers had to be safeguarded.

French capital had produced considerable results in formerly under-developed areas. The greatest assurances were given to labour to prevent domination by monopolies. But heavy industry required enormous capital, and the Natives would have to approach the metropolitan powers or large financial organizations for help in industrializing. The great mining corporations, although he admitted abuses in the past, had fulfilled a dire need. The flow of foreign capital to these territories was necessary for their development.

Mr. KULAGENKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) maintained once more that the lack of industrial development in Non-Self-Governing Territories, especially in the Belgian Congo, was economically anomalous. Such industry as existed aided the metropolitan powers, not the indigenous population.

This was characteristic of all Non-Self-Governing Territories, and his argument that these territories had remained primarily agricultural had not been refuted.

The specialization of crops in the Gold Coast, for example, served the interests of the metropolitan government. Economically speaking, the administering powers had done little or nothing to aid Non-Self-Governing peoples to become self-governing in the nearest possible future. On the basis of the documents before the Committee, he had reached the conclusion that it would be difficult for any Non-Self-Governing Territory to obtain political or economic independence. As an example of the lack of aid on the part of the metropolitan powers, he pointed to a British territory where the import of wines and spirits surpassed that of all machinery imported.

Mr. RYCKMANS (Belgium) pointed out that industries in the Belgian Congo, such as the textile and cement industries, had been established with the help of the Belgian Government in the face of the opposition of Belgian industrialists. Regarding agricultural production, most of the products grown in the Congo were products that could not be grown in Belgium. The Congo had to export in order to pay for imports - a law of classic economics. He added that a request had been made to establish an alcohol industry in the Belgian Congo, but that in the interests of the population the Government had not permitted it.

He emphasized once more that the Committee had no right to exercise supervision over the administration of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Mr. FLETCHER-COOKE (United Kingdom), referring to the alcohol imports to Sierra Leone in 1946, admitted that

£170,000 worth of wines and spirits had been imported, while only £94,000 worth of machinery had been imported. However, if vehicles and other goods needed for production were added to the latter figure, it surpassed that of wines and spirits. Moreover machinery had been difficult to obtain in 1946, while in 1947 machinery plus other goods needed for production reached an import figure of £396,000, wines and spirits one of £130,000.

Mr. BENSON (Secretary), referring to the analysis on agriculture, where the Belgian and Indian representatives had deplored the lack of statistics, stated that the F.A.O. was conducting a World Food Census during the coming year. The F.A.O. had declared that the Article 73 e information on agriculture would provide the necessary data for the time being. The Secretary-General in communicating the Standard Form would therefore indicate to the administering powers the use which would be made of it by the F.A.O. This would have the advantage of avoiding duplication.

The meeting adjourned at 5.20 p.m.