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COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

Ninth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY SECOND MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 1 May 1958, at 10.45 a.m.

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PRESENT:

Chairman:

Mr. LALL (India)

Members:

Mr. KELLY Australia

Mr. CASTRO ALVES Brazil

Mr. DURAISWAMY Ceylon

Mr. YIN China

Mr. de CAMARET France

Mr. URRUTIA APARICIO Guatemala

Mr. JAIPAL India

Mr. KITTANI Iraq

Mr. VAS NUNES)
Mr. GRADER) Netherlands

Mr. THORP New Zealand

Mr. CASTON United Kingdom of
Great Britain and
Northern Ireland

Mr. MORE United States of
America

Mr. ALFONZO-RAVARD Venezuela

Representatives of specialized agencies:

Mr. PAYRO International Labour
Organisation

Mr. SALSAMENDI United Nations
Educational, Scientific
and Cultural
Organization

Dr. SACKS)
Mrs. MEAGHER) World Health Organization

Secretariat:

Mr. COHEN Under-Secretary for
Trusteeship and
Information from
Non-Self-Governing
Territories

Mr. PEREZ GUERRERO Director of the Division
of Non-Self-Governing
Territories

Mr. KUNST Secretary of the
Committee

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES (continued)

Mr. KITTANI (Iraq) recalled that during the previous session his delegation had emphasized the Committee's competence in the light of Chapter XI of the Charter to discuss the association of certain Non-Self-Governing Territories with the European Economic Community and had expressed its apprehension concerning the far-reaching consequences of that association. He regretted that it had not been possible for the Secretariat to issue its report on the subject, to be drawn up in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1153 (XII), in time for the Committee to examine it before it was submitted to the General Assembly as a whole and that the Committee had not had a progress report of any kind on that vital matter. His delegation's apprehensions arose for the most part from two circumstances: firstly, that when it had been decided to associate certain of the Non-Self-Governing Territories with the Community the views of the inhabitants of those Territories had not been ascertained; secondly, that there was no provision for the termination of the association upon the attainment of self-government, if the Territories concerned so desired. He hoped that that point would subsequently be examined more thoroughly than it had been at the previous session.

Mr. KUNST (Secretary of the Committee) recalled that at the 178th meeting the Under-Secretary had informed the Committee of the progress being made and the reasons why a report had not been submitted to the Committee.

Mr. KITTANI (Iraq) said that he had heard the Under-Secretary's statement but would hardly describe it as a progress report. He had not intended to impute any blame to the Secretariat but regretted that it would not be possible for the Committee to discuss the vital question of the effect of the European Common Market on the Non-Self-Governing Territories before it was taken up by the General Assembly.

EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS IN NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES (continued)

Mr. CASTON (United Kingdom) wished to clarify certain points in the Secretariat study of mass communications (A/AC.35/L.273) to which the representatives of Guatemala and India had referred. The reference in paragraph 17 to the absence in Kenya of an established African local Press in

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the provinces might easily be misunderstood; African opinion in Kenya found expression in the independent national Press, which was read throughout the Territory and included newspapers published in six vernacular languages. There were, however, no newspapers dealing with news of purely local interest published on a commercial basis, presumably because it was felt that such enterprises would not be profitable; the gap was therefore being filled for the present by fourteen Government-run newspapers, financed monthly by grants to local African District Councils, which then accepted full responsibility for the production of the newspapers, sometimes providing additional funds from their own resources.

The figure given in paragraph 18 for the circulation of newspapers in Uganda was the number of copies of each edition of each newspaper sold.

The statement in paragraph 24 that Gambia and Sierra Leone had no daily commercial newspapers was incorrect: Sierra Leone had four daily newspapers, none of them sponsored by the Government, and although there were no daily newspapers in Gambia there were two commercially-run weekly newspapers.

The Indian representative had commented on the fact that Table 5 of the Secretariat report showed only 115 licensed radio receivers in Uganda. The explanation of that low figure was that registration of receivers was not compulsory in Uganda, and most listeners did not apply for licences. A footnote to that effect had been included in the information transmitted by the United Kingdom Government but had unfortunately not been reproduced in the Secretariat paper. It was known that 16,833 receiving sets had been imported into Uganda during 1955 and 1956; it could therefore be assumed that there were at least 100,000 listeners in the Territory.

The purpose of the film censorship carried out in Hong Kong and Singapore was to avoid the showing of material which would offend local susceptibilities. In Singapore the board of film censors, which was an unofficial body, reviewed films and, if necessary, suggested cuts which would eliminate scenes involving violence, lawlessness, horror or racial antagonism. If the owners of the films agreed, the films were shown without those scenes; if, after several viewings, the board decided to ban an entire film, the owners had a right to appeal against the decision.

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In connexion with the Indian representative's remarks on the development of television services in some Territories under United Kingdom administration, he would point out that it was no part of the United Kingdom's policy to sacrifice social or educational development in other fields to the development of such services. He agreed that television was at present unlikely to be of great social benefit to under-developed populations; all the Territories in which television services had been introduced - Bermuda, Cyprus, Gibraltar and Hong Kong - had large and sophisticated urban populations.

Mr. JAIPAL (India) thanked the United Kingdom representative for his clarification of a number of points not fully elucidated in the Secretariat study.

Mr. KUNST (Secretary of the Committee) thanked the United Kingdom representative for the additional information he had given on the subject of mass communications, dealt with in document A/AC.35/L.273. The documents submitted to the Committee were based on the information available at the time of their preparation. Any additional information supplied would be added to the final version of the document.

Mr. ALFONZO-RAVARD (Venezuela) stressed the fundamental importance of education as an instrument for social, economic and political development, the diffusion of culture and the integration of national communities. The paramount educational problem in the Non-Self-Governing Territories was the eradication of illiteracy. Some of those Territories had the highest rates of illiteracy in the world: 95 to 99 per cent of the population in French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa and in British and French Somaliland were illiterate, while the rate was 90 to 95 per cent in Gambia, Nyasaland, Sierra Leone and other Territories, and 85 to 90 per cent in Nigeria. The urgent nature of the problem was obvious from those figures, especially since, as the Committee had noted in its 1956 report, fundamental changes were taking place rapidly in the Non-Self-Governing Territories leading ever closer to the attainment of the objectives of Chapter XI of the Charter.

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(Mr. Alfonso Ravard, Venezuela)

His delegation had taken note of UNESCO's work in combating illiteracy and considered its monograph on World Illiteracy at Mid-century extremely valuable. Mention should also be made of the direct and indirect help UNESCO was giving to the Territories; his delegation considered, however, that everything possible should be done to increase the number of fellowships available to students from the Non-Self-Governing Territories; UNESCO's report (A/AC.35/L.280) mentioned only three which had been granted during 1957.

His delegation considered that in the development of education the greatest attention should be paid to Recommendations Nos. 44 and 45 of the Twentieth International Conference on Public Education, held at Geneva in 1957, which dealt with the problems of school construction and teacher-training. The latter problem was particularly important because, as the Conference had pointed out, the functions of the primary schools now included the social and civic training of their pupils.

His delegation had been pleased to learn of the progress being made in the extension of mass communications in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The spread of radio broadcasting was especially significant because that medium constituted a very effective vehicle of education and information for isolated and illiterate communities. His delegation had noted with interest that between 1954 and 1956 the number of receivers had almost doubled in North Borneo and had quintupled in Sarawak. It was encouraging to learn that Radio Sarawak was co-operating with the schools by broadcasting material supplementing the school curriculum. His delegation would be interested to hear more about the results of the experimental literacy campaign undertaken by radio in Singapore.

His delegation had taken note of the efforts being made to encourage vernacular literature in the Territories and it agreed with the delegations which had emphasized the need for publications in the vernacular languages. It considered that greater efforts should be made to overcome the difficulties in those Territories where little or no material was published in the local languages, for such languages were not only vehicles of communication but vehicles for deeper social integration and for the preservation of the cultural heritage of the indigenous populations.

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Lastly, his delegation agreed that the media of communications themselves were less important than the use to which they were put. As instruments of mass education those media should further the objectives set forth in General Assembly resolution 743 (VIII), in particular that of developing moral and civic consciousness and responsibility among the peoples and enabling them to take an increasing share of responsibility in the conduct of their own affairs.

Mr. YIN (China) said that considerable advances appeared to have been made in education in the Non-Self-Governing Territories during recent years, as reflected in the increased expenditure by Government for that item and the greater number of schools, pupils and teachers. The increase in the number of primary schools and of children attending them in the Eastern Region of Nigeria from 1955 to 1956 was indeed remarkable. In other Territories, however, such as St. Helena and the Falkland Islands, there had been little or no progress. While appreciating the financial difficulties with which the Administering Powers were faced, his delegation hoped that they would do their utmost to expand educational facilities as a prerequisite for the economic, social, cultural and political progress of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. As his delegation had observed at the previous session in connexion with the former Territory of the Gold Coast, it was in the Territories which were on the threshold of independence and in which education was therefore in the hands of the local authorities that educational progress was most rapid. Nigeria was another case in point; considering that total expenditure on education in that Territory had actually been lower in 1956 than in 1955, the great progress achieved could only be attributed to wider recognition by the people themselves of the essential importance of education and to the fact that more and more divisional and district councils were being appointed as education authorities for their areas. The Committee had noted in 1956 that in the Territories administered by the United Kingdom the participation of the indigenous inhabitants in the formulation and execution of educational policy was a fundamental principle (A/3127, Part Two, paragraph 14). His delegation would like to see that principle applied in as many other Territories as possible.

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(Mr. Yin, China)

The inadequacy of financial resources made it all the more important that the funds available for education should be distributed equally among all races. Unfortunately that was not always the case: in Kenya, for example, where the ratio of the African to the European population was 100 to one, the ratio of school expenditure for the two groups was three to one, while in Bechuanaland, where the population ratio was 123 to one, the school expenditure ratio was four to one. Even taking into account the differing requirements of the various races, there was surely no justification for such a discrepancy.

With regard to the all-important problem of eradicating illiteracy, he hoped that the Administering Powers would avail themselves of the assistance which UNESCO was prepared to offer. The figures on efforts to combat illiteracy among the adult populations in Nigeria and Uganda, as shown in the summaries of information transmitted to the Secretary-General, were impressive. It was regrettable that such statistics were not available for all Territories where illiteracy was a problem; he hoped that in future they would be provided by the Administering Powers which had hitherto failed to do so.

Turning to the subject of mass communications, he welcomed the United Kingdom representative's statement that it was his Government's policy to encourage the development of a free and responsible Press. He had been interested to learn of the short courses in journalism offered at Makerere College in 1956. Such steps should help to meet the need for trained newspaper personnel, particularly journalists who could write in the vernacular languages. In sparsely populated Territories with a high rate of illiteracy broadcasting was particularly important and he was glad to note that in those areas emphasis was laid on educational programmes, such as the courses in reading and writing offered by radio in Singapore, teacher-training courses conducted partly by radio in Barbados and so forth. It was to be hoped that other Administering Powers would follow those examples and that free receivers would be made available to such communities, as had been done in Papua. Mobile film units showing films with commentaries in the vernacular languages should also be provided. The number of libraries in the Non-Self-Governing Territories was still very small and should

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be increased; their collections need not be extensive but should take into account the particular needs of the communities they served and should include a greater number of books in the local languages. In that connexion, he endorsed the United States representative's statement that the encouragement of indigenous literature was important as a means of preserving the traditional cultures of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Mr. KITTANI (Iraq) noted that important progress had been made in the field of mass communications; he wished to emphasize, however, that mass communications media, as their very name implied, were not a goal in themselves but a means to an end and that an increase in the quantity and technical quality of such facilities was not necessarily advantageous unless they were properly used. In a field such as that of race relations, to take but one example, if mass communications media were used to foster harmony among different peoples their expansion would be a most welcome development but it should not be forgotten that they could also be used to the opposite effect.

He agreed with the view expressed by other representatives that there was a need for more periodicals and newspapers in the vernacular languages but he thought that certain other media, such as radio, television, films and audio-visual aids in general, were more important as a means of reaching greater numbers of people, particularly in Territories where there was a high percentage of illiteracy. They might also be more effective than publications as a means of preserving the indigenous folklore.

As the Non-Self-Governing Territories were in effect under-developed countries he hoped that the resolution recently adopted by the Commission on Human Rights requesting the Economic and Social Council and the specialized agencies to assist such countries in improving mass communications media would be interpreted as applying to those Territories as well.

QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE SUMMARIES AND ANALYSES ADDITIONAL TO THOSE TREATED UNDER PREVIOUS ITEMS (A/AC.35/L.284; A/3806 to A/3808, A/3809 and Corr.1, A/3810 to 3816)

Mr. JAIPAL (India), referring to document A/AC.35/L.284, said that no clear pattern was discernible in regard to the dates of transmission of information

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concerning Non-Self-Governing Territories, although according to General Assembly resolution 218 (III) it should be transmitted at the latest within a maximum period of six months following the expiration of the administrative year in the Territories concerned. Furthermore, no information had as yet been received concerning a number of Territories. His delegation would urge the Administering Powers to do their utmost in future to comply more adequately with the requirements of the General Assembly resolution.

The revised Standard Form annexed to General Assembly resolution 551 (VI), which had been adopted without opposition from the Administering Powers, included two important categories of matters on which information was sought. The first was the optional category, consisting of political information. As far as his delegation was aware, only the United States of America, New Zealand and Australia had so far furnished information which could properly be described as political. He would draw the attention of the other Administering Powers to General Assembly resolution 551 (VI) and suggest that for a proper understanding of developments in the economic and other fields the Committee must have authoritative official information on political advancement. The transmission of political information was not specifically excluded by Chapter XI of the Charter; on the contrary, the primary objective of that Chapter was the development of self-government in dependent territories and it would be unrealistic to examine economic and social conditions in a political vacuum. For those reasons the General Assembly had on at least four occasions invited the Administering Powers to transmit political information, in resolutions 144 (II), 327 (IV), 551 (VI) and 848 (IX).

He drew attention to operative paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 327 (IV), which recommended that information on human rights should cease to be classified under the optional category. In the revised Standard Form adopted at the sixth session of the General Assembly, the Administering Powers were specifically invited to transmit information on the manner in which human rights were protected by law and the extent to which they accorded with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. His delegation had found very little information on that subject in the summaries. Although the members of the Committee were

aware of the scope of the problem in the various Territories, they had little information about the many efforts being made to find a solution. The importance of the question could not be over-emphasized. He would refer to General Assembly resolutions 218 (III) and 446 (V). The absence of information on the subject was an important gap in the material submitted to the Committee.

One General Assembly resolution that was bearing fruit was resolution 145 (II), which invited the specialized agencies to bring to the notice of the General Assembly through the appropriate channels conclusions based on the information transmitted in accordance with Article 73 e of the Charter and supplemental information as to the conditions, within their respective fields of interest, of Non-Self-Governing Territories generally and particularly as to the services which the specialized agencies might make available in improving those conditions. That was an important resolution, which should be constantly borne in mind. Even now not all its requirements were being strictly met but there was steadily growing collaboration by the specialized agencies. The Indian delegation hoped that that collaboration would continue to increase.

Lastly, he would refer to an important defect in the operation of Chapter XI of the Charter. There were a number of territories which clearly came under Chapter XI in accordance with any reasonable test of self-government, such as the list of factors outlined in General Assembly resolution 742 (VIII), but concerning which no information was transmitted and the United Nations was informed that they were not Non-Self-Governing Territories because the local law had given them a different name. Certain Member States claimed that it was the exclusive prerogative of an Administering Power to determine whether a Territory under its administration was non-self-governing or not. The Indian delegation could not accept that view. Chapter XI was an integral part of an international multilateral instrument or treaty, the interpretation and application of which could not be unilateral. The General Assembly had already discussed the question twice and he hoped it would do so again at its next session. He would make no proposal for the time being but would ask that his delegation's views should be included in the Rapporteur's report.

Mr. KITTANI (Iraq) associated himself with the Indian representative in regretting that information transmitted by the Administering Powers did not include information on political development, with the result that members of the Committee who wished to know what was happening in that respect were obliged to rely on outside publications.

Mr. DURAISWAMY (Ceylon) agreed with the views expressed by the delegations of India and Iraq. He drew attention once again to the delay in the transmission of information, which hindered the Committee in its work.

The delegation of Ceylon, like the delegation of India, could not agree with some of the doctrines propounded by certain Powers with regard to certain Territories under their administration. Information on those Territories should be submitted to the Committee and his delegation would revert to the subject at a suitable time and place.

Mr. KELLY (Australia) was glad that the Indian representative had not asked the Committee to press the claim of a number of countries, in contradiction with Article 2, paragraph 7, and Article 73 of the Charter, to determine what Territories forming part of the metropolitan areas of Member States as defined in their constitutions should be characterized as Non-Self-Governing Territories. Australia, like other Member States was firmly attached to the adequate recognition of its rights as a sovereign State under the Charter and would be reluctant to think that any country might, even by inference, suggest that Chapter XI diminished those rights.

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION IN RESPECT OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS (A/AC.35/L.272, L.276, L.283, L.287, L.288)

Mr. THORP (New Zealand) said that his delegation had at previous sessions given supplementary information to the Committee about those areas of international collaboration where New Zealand's activities affected Territories other than those for which it was responsible.

New Zealand's contribution to the work of the South Pacific Commission and its participation in the Colombo Plan continued on an undiminished scale. In particular he would mention the training facilities provided in New Zealand under

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the Colombo Plan for people from dependent and under-developed areas. The courses covered a wide field, including engineering, science, arts, law and commerce, dental and medical courses, education and health, surveying and public administration.

New Zealand contributed also to the South Pacific Health Service, a co-ordinating and advisory body, which assisted in the recruiting of medical and nursing staff for Fiji and the Territories of the Western Pacific High Commission as well as New Zealand's own island Territories. It advised on the running of the Central Medical School in Fiji and, by agreement with the South Pacific Commission, furnished an epidemiological service for the South Pacific area and Hawaii. The activities of the South Pacific Commission covered research into nutrition, food analysis, filariasis and malaria, demographic trends, subsistence economies, plant pests and diseases, the promotion of fisheries, literature, audio-visual aids, co-operatives and community development. The work of the Commission's Literature Bureau in disseminating suitable reading material and promoting indigenous literature was regarded as especially valuable.

New Zealand also directly assisted a number of Territories in the South Pacific by seconding teachers and scientific and technical officers. The liaison between the educational authorities in the Territories and New Zealand was particularly close and advice and assistance in problems concerning curricula, examinations and textbooks were readily and freely given. The New Zealand Territories in their turn received assistance from the Government of other countries and from the specialized agencies.

He had not felt the need to give additional information on economic, social and educational conditions in the island Territories because the information in question was very fully reproduced in the summaries and working papers prepared for the Committee.

Mr. JAIPAL (India), replying to the representative of Australia, said he did not wish to enter into a discussion on the interpretation of Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter or of its relevance to Chapter XI. He would merely

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draw attention to General Assembly resolution 334 (IV), which expressed the view that it was within the responsibility of the General Assembly to express its opinion on the principles which had guided or which might in future guide the Members concerned in enumerating the Territories for which the obligation existed to transmit information under Article 73 e of the Charter.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.