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COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

Tenth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY-FIRST MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 24 April 1959, at 10.50 a.m.

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PRESENT:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. KELLY	(Australia)
<u>Members:</u>	Mr. ROBERTSON	Australia
	Mr. CASTRO ALVES	Brazil
	Mr. KANAKARATNE	Ceylon
	Mr. CORDERO MICHEL	Dominican Republic
	Mr. DOISE	France
	Mr. AMONOO	Ghana
	Mr. HERRARTE	Guatemala
	Mr. JHA)	India
	Mr. RASGOTRA)	
	Mr. KITTANI	Iraq
	Mr. de BRUYN)	Netherlands
	Mr. GOEDHART)	
	Mr. DAVIN	New Zealand
	Mr. HOUGHTON)	United Kingdom of Great Britain
	Mr. CASTON)	and Northern Ireland
	Mr. MORE)	United States of America
	Mr. HARRIS)	

Representatives of specialized agencies:

Mr. KHAN	International Labour Organisation
Mr. ACHARYA	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
Mr. WALTER)	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
Mr. SALSAMENDI)	
Dr. SACKS)	World Health Organization
Mrs. MEAGHER)	

<u>Secretariat:</u>	Mr. PROTITCH	Under-Secretary for Trusteeship and Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories
	Mr. KUNST	Secretary of the Committee

EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS IN NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES: GENERAL DEBATE
(A/AC.35/L.294, L.295, L.296, L.297, L.298, L.299, L.302, L.303) (continued)

Mr. KANAKARATNE (Ceylon) said that Ceylon, having been jointly responsible for the introduction of General Assembly resolutions 1154 (XII) and 1331 (XIII), had a special interest in the subject under discussion. He subscribed to the recommendation in the Committee's report for 1956 (A/3127, paragraph 26) that the eradication of illiteracy should be co-ordinated with other plans for economic and social development. Literacy and education were prerequisites for political independence, and for the economic and social advancement for which the people themselves would finally become responsible.

Referring to the illiteracy figures in the UNESCO report (A/AC.35/L.303, Annex, page 2), he said that although many of the figures were not recent, and much progress had been made since they were first published, there were grounds for concern. The figures were very high for Nyasaland and British Somaliland, and it was disquieting to find that in Nigeria, which was on the threshold of independence, the figure for illiteracy was 89 per cent, according to a 1952 census. The United Nations was pointing the way to independence for the dependent territories, and would eventually be asked to provide technical assistance to help those countries to build up their economies; it therefore had a direct responsibility to promote the educational advancement of their peoples so that they would be fully capable of discharging the responsibilities of self-government.

He believed that there were some parallels between the problems of newly independent countries in Asia and those facing the African Territories which would soon be independent. The smooth transition to independence in Ceylon had been facilitated by the strong administrative tradition established by the United Kingdom, but the drawback had been that too much emphasis had been placed in the past on office work. As a result, independent Ceylon had faced a serious shortage of the technical specialists so urgently needed by newly independent countries. Those responsible should heed the mistakes made by their own and other countries in the past. He hoped that the educational systems in those territories would be balanced by the introduction of an adequate number of technical training centres to ensure a supply of technical experts from among the local people and thus avoid the need to import costly foreign technicians. He also considered that the

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(Mr. Kanakaratne, Ceylon)

educational system in Ceylon under British administration had placed too much emphasis on English and European history and literature. If a similar policy were followed in the dependent territories, there was a danger that the reins of government might be taken over by a small group of people who had received an education alien from their own tradition which divorced them from the mass of their fellow countrymen.

It was regrettable that in some territories the type of schooling provided was related to the racial origins of the pupil. There could be no moral or logical justification for such a practice, and such a distinction could not be accepted by those who subscribed to article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He did not intend to imply that pupils were segregated according to their race, as was done in some sovereign countries of the African continent, but in practice it was true that children of metropolitan origin attended schools on which more money was spent and which in general compared favourably with the schools provided for the children of the Territory. Such practices must inevitably incline the children to modes of thought that were not in accordance with the principles of the Charter, and might eventually lead to unrest and violence, and he urged the responsible authorities not to overlook those dangers.

With regard to free and compulsory education, one of the first acts passed by the State of Ceylon when it had become independent had provided that education should be free from the kindergarten up to and including the university. The financial burden and administrative difficulty of introducing such legislation in a multi-racial and multi-lingual society had been considerable, but that measure had symbolized Ceylon's conviction that education was the foundation of a healthy and prosperous democratic society. Even if a high level of education led to certain problems of frustration, that was preferable to having an ill-educated and undisciplined population unresponsive to the dictates of reason. He realized that the financial burden of education in the Non-Self-Governing Territories might be heavy, but he urged the authorities responsible to make every effort to find the necessary funds.

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(Mr. Kanakarathne, Ceylon)

He paid tribute to the Secretariat and the specialized agencies for the useful reports they had prepared. He also wished to pay tribute to the countries responsible for the administration of the dependent territories, for the efforts that they were making to realize the aims enshrined in the Charter. The first half of the twentieth century would undoubtedly go down in history as a period notable above all else for the resurgence of dependent territories in Africa and Asia, and throughout the world. Developments since 1945 had shown that that movement was an irresistible flood which could not be dammed, but must be channelled with the guidance and help of those responsible for the welfare of the dependent territories. Such guidance and help could be more fruitful in education than in any other field.

(a) FUNDAMENTAL EDUCATION AND ERADICATION OF ILLITERACY (A/AC.35/L.303) (continued)

Mr. ROBERTSON (Australia) said that the Australian administration in Papua had the task of bringing literacy to peoples who had never had an indigenous literary tradition or even a written language, and many of whom failed to understand the need for them to become literate in any language. That was one reason for the relatively high degree of illiteracy in the territory. However, it was a hopeful sign that already some 50 per cent of the children in Papua were literate. That fact illustrated the soundness of the first sentence of paragraph 26 of the UNESCO report (A/AC.35/L.303), and justified his delegation's view that of the items listed in paragraph 59 of the report, item (e), stressing the importance of primary education as a means of eradicating illiteracy, should be given the first place.

Referring to paragraph 20 of the report, on the use of mass media, he said that television in Australia had not yet been developed to the point at which it could be used as a method of bringing education to the adult illiterates of Papua. However, radio broadcasting was so used, and programmes directed specifically to the indigenous people were very popular. Many radio receivers had been distributed in the territory, listening centres were being organized at all Government stations, and in addition local Government councils provided receivers for communal listening. The programme consisted of ninety-minute broadcasts of news and information on each week day; they were at the adult level, designed to interpret local affairs and administration activities, and different subjects were dealt with on different

(Mr. Robertson, Australia)

days of the week. The territory urgently needed a lingua franca, and as it was the Administration's policy to increase the use of English for that purpose, the time allocated to English on the programmes had been increased to thirty minutes daily during 1957-1958, the time for vernacular broadcasts being correspondingly reduced. At present programmes were given in simple English and in six vernacular languages.

A 16-millimetre film service operated at all main centres and at out-stations where electric power was available. The material available included documentary and educational films, and it had been found that Papuan audiences were particularly interested in films showing development in overseas countries where the conditions were comparable with those in Papua.

Mr. WAITER (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), replying to points raised by the Indian and United Kingdom representatives regarding the definition of illiteracy given in paragraph 8 of the UNESCO report (A/AC.35/L.303), pointed out that the definition was part of a recommendation by the General Conference of UNESCO and was of a transitional character.

The suggestion made by the Indian representative that UNESCO should undertake sample surveys in the Non-Self-Governing Territories was a useful one. He was not sure that there would be sufficient funds to do so on a large scale before the beginning of UNESCO's next budget period in 1961, but something could no doubt be attempted. He would agree that the statistics of illiteracy given in the report should be treated with some reserve.

With regard to the suggestion made by the United Kingdom representative that a distinction should be drawn between child illiterates and adult illiterates, he would point out that provision was made in paragraph 11 of the UNESCO report (A/AC.35/L.303) for the division of illiterates into five-year age groups.

During its next programme period UNESCO proposed to survey the possibilities of the simpler forms of mass media, especially in tropical Africa. It was perhaps too early to consider the use of television, but the next decade might bring many developments; a representative of UNESCO was studying the use of television in education in the United States.

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(b) PARTICIPATION OF THE INHABITANTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION
(A/AC.35/L.294)

Mr. JHA (India) said that participation of the inhabitants in the development of education was important in itself and also as a useful preliminary stage in the preparation for self-government. The report of the eleventh session of the Committee had emphasized the fact that educational policy and programmes, if they were to be carried out successfully, must have the interest and support of organs of public opinion in the Territories, both those operating on a territorial scale and those representing local interests. If individuals were to play their parts as useful and responsible citizens, they must be associated with the processes whereby educational policies were formulated. Participation by the people was indeed essential under the terms of Article 73 of the Charter, and he would stress the importance of the reference in that Article to the need for due respect for the culture of the peoples concerned; it was from that culture that the inspiration for educational policies should be drawn. Moreover, if a society was to develop into a self-governing democratic society as contemplated by Article 73, the whole concept of education and all of its processes must be democratic. Close participation by the people was essential as it was one of the best means of arousing interest in education and ensuring its spread, and the local administration should aim at obtaining full co-operation from the inhabitants. Those were sound principles, and the Committee, by constructive criticism, should help to ensure their adoption by the Administering Powers.

He could not agree with the observation made by Mr. Houghton of the United Kingdom delegation that participation helped to complicate the task of the educator. Experience in India showed that partnership between a Government and its people in the formulation and implementation of educational policies made educational problems easier to solve. Nor was the theory any longer tenable that partnership between administrative organs and non-official organizations slowed down the process of education. It was true that in certain special areas the illiterate masses might initially resist education. But experience in his country had shown that such people could be persuaded. It had been found that once the appetite had been whetted, the popular desire for education was far greater than

(Mr. Jha, India)

it was within his country's resources to satisfy. That was because the people had been associated with decisions concerning education. There was in fact an intense desire for education. In paragraph 69 of its 1956 report, the Committee had referred to the technical problems involved; but those were transitory difficulties and, once they had been surmounted, the task was infinitely easier.

His delegation was in general agreement with the views quoted in paragraph 2 of the Secretariat's report (A/AC.35/L.294), except for the statement that the form of participation was less important than its spirit and effectiveness. It was his delegation's view that the form of participation was of the greatest importance. There were various forms of association; in some Territories there were none, or hardly any, while in others there were now popularly elected Ministers of Education. Between those two extremes there were various other types of association. All of those no doubt produced good results, but his delegation suggested that educational questions should as soon as possible be transferred to the people and their elected representatives given full authority to deal with them. He was impressed by the large sums of money spent on education, amounting in the case of Nigeria - where authority had been transferred to a popularly elected Minister - to 38 per cent of the budget.

Results left much to be desired in territories in which participation by the inhabitants was non-existent and in which there was too much guidance from above. That was the case in Papua, although he would admit that the conditions peculiar to that Territory made the task of the Administering Power somewhat more difficult. The policy adopted by the New Zealand Government was one of initial instruction in the vernacular; that was an important point, and excellent results had been obtained. Furthermore, in Niue Island, the New Zealand authorities had based the curriculum on agriculture, weaving and manual training. Those were in fact the elements of what was known as basic education, which had been adopted in India with very satisfactory results. Where educational policies and programmes were closely interwoven with the general social and economic development of a community, popular participation developed more quickly.

(Mr. Jha, India)

His delegation welcomed the fact that, in some of the East African territories under the United Kingdom administration, educational policies were being developed on those lines. It was however regrettable that such programmes were being carried out too slowly; the spread of education in those territories was hampered by the absence of a broad basis of popular participation and support. Another handicap was the emphasis laid on education on a racial basis, which made it impossible to consider educational policy as a whole. He hoped that it was only a transitory feature; it was contrary to the whole current of modern African thinking. The African would not accept any system under which he was treated as an inferior person, and the same was true of other races. Recent press reports had suggested that troubles in the Belgian Congo had been due to the discriminatory attitude fostered by such policies.

He was glad to see that, in the Non-Self-Governing Territories under French administration, the responsibility for educational policy had been delegated to the local legislative bodies. In the case of higher education, however, it still rested with the metropolitan Government, which also continued to be responsible for programmes of study and examination regulations. He agreed with the representative of Ghana that responsibility in such matters should be transferred to the people of the territories concerned.

He welcomed the statement of the representative of UNESCO on the subject of sample surveys. As regards financial limitations, he had not intended that such surveys should be carried out at the expense of UNESCO; they should be made by the Governments of the territories concerned, with the help of UNESCO. Expenditure would not be considerable and he hoped that UNESCO would not be deterred on that account.

Mr. de BRUYN (Netherlands) said that the level of education reached in Netherlands New Guinea did not yet make it possible for the indigenous authorities to control educational policy and administration. The Netherlands Government was doing its best to encourage the association of representatives of the inhabitants of the Territory in educational matters and from 1950 onwards that policy had been put into practice by the establishment of the Council of Indigenous Education.

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(Mr. de Bruyn, Netherlands)

That Council did not deal exclusively with educational problems; it was an advisory body which advised the Governor or Heads of Government Departments on subjects concerning the social, economic and cultural development of the indigenous inhabitants of the Territory. It could meet whenever it considered that its advice was warranted. The Council was not solely a governmental body. Of its sixteen members, four were civil servants, the Protestant and Roman Catholic Missions were represented by four members each and the remaining four members were private individuals. Three of the members were indigenous inhabitants.

In its sessions of December 1958 and March 1959 the Council had been concerned with educational planning for the Territory's future needs. The discussions had been based on the assumption that the attainment of self-government required the provision of trained specialists and officials. In that and other ways the Council contributed to the formulation of educational policy. Educational matters could also be discussed in the Advisory Council set up to advise on the establishment of autonomous regional councils to which executive functions would be entrusted. The first Advisory Council had been established in 1947 for the region of the Schouten Islands and Numfor Island. It consisted of fifteen elected indigenous members and five appointed indigenous members; many of the members were teachers from the area.

An important aspect of the work of the district heads was to inspect the schools in their districts. Thirty-five out of the sixty-five districts into which the Territory was divided were administered by indigenous district officers.

Another channel through which the indigenous population could exert influence on educational policy was the Board of the Protestant Papuan Church, the chairman and some of the members of which were indigenous. In that connection it should be remembered that the great majority of educational institutions in the Territory were run by the Missions.

The indigenous inhabitants could also express their views on educational policy and educational problems through their participation in the three-yearly South Pacific Conferences. By that means the resolutions and recommendations of the Conference were brought to the notice of the territorial authorities. At the three most recent Conferences the indigenous delegation of Netherlands New Guinea had drawn up and presented working papers on village education, health education and economic education.

(Mr. de Bruyn, Netherlands)

Indigenous participation in the administration of education was relatively limited, since indigenous personnel with the necessary qualifications was not as yet available in sufficient numbers. At the present time the Department of Cultural Affairs employed one indigenous official among its seven school supervisors. Indigenous pupils were, however, graduating in increasing numbers from secondary schools, so that in a short time the role of the indigenous inhabitants in the Administration would be greatly increased.

Turning to the subject of the training of indigenous teaching personnel, he said that at present there were four training schools for village school teachers in the Territory, all of which had boarding establishments. Those schools, though administered by the Missions, were fully subsidized by the Government. No tuition fees were charged. No one considered suitable for the teaching profession was prevented from obtaining the necessary training because he lacked the means. Not only had there been an increase in the number of teacher-training institutions but the quality of instruction had been improved in recent years. The original two-year course had been expanded into a three-year course and hygiene, handicrafts and gardening had been added to the curriculum to meet the needs of rural communities. The expansion of the three-year course into a four-year course was now being considered. The extra year would be used especially for instruction in agriculture, public health and leadership in social activities. In the more or less isolated rural communities in particular heavy demands would inevitably be made on the knowledge and qualities of leadership of the village teacher. The percentage of indigenous teachers had risen from forty in 1952 to fifty-eight in 1958 and there was no doubt that before long the qualified Papuan teachers would greatly outnumber their non-indigenous colleagues.

Education and educational facilities had shown especially marked progress in recent years. In 1957 sixty-eight pupils had graduated from training schools for village teachers and in 1958, 115. The number of subsidized village schools had increased by twenty-one and the number of pupils by 662. The total number of teachers at those schools had increased from 827 to 916. The total number of indigenous teaching personnel at various types of schools, which had amounted

(Mr. de Bruyn, Netherlands)

to 493 in 1957, had risen above 500 in 1958. In addition to the subsidized schools, 465 Papuan teachers were employed at the non-subsidized village schools.

There was no doubt that in future years not only an increase in the number of teachers but also teachers with better qualifications would be required. As the area under administration steadily expanded the demand for new schools and new teachers would also grow. Furthermore, unsubsidized schools would gradually have to be converted into subsidized schools which would require fully qualified teachers. The Netherlands Government intended that in the near future all children should attend six-year school courses which would increase the demand for more teachers with better qualifications. Recently the Administration had begun to provide teacher-training facilities for a higher level of instruction. Graduates of the village teacher-training schools and junior high schools could now attend secondary teacher-training schools with two-year courses.

He hoped that his remarks had made clear the great importance the Netherlands Government attached to the participation of indigenous inhabitants in the development of education.

Mr. HOUGHTON (United Kingdom) said that he agreed with almost everything the Indian representative had said. In particular he endorsed that representative's observations concerning the intense desire of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories for education. At the 188th meeting he had referred to certain difficulties of educational administration in a transitional period, but he had not intended to suggest that the existence of such difficulties should ever be made an excuse for delaying the transfer of control to an indigenous people. Nevertheless the Indian representative would no doubt admit that the temporary difficulties were sometimes considerable.

One of the difficulties of the transitional period had to some extent been created by the Administering Powers themselves. People were often reluctant to accept education offered to them by Europeans whose educational background was so different both from their own and from the education they were being offered. He entirely shared the conviction that had been expressed that educational policies would prove more acceptable to the people when advocated by persons of their own race.

(Mr. Houghton, United Kingdom)

He drew attention to paragraph 2 (c) of the Secretariat report on the participation of the inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories in educational policies and administration (A/AC.35/L.294), to which the Indian representative had already referred. That paragraph quoted the view expressed by the Committee in its 1950 report that the form of participation was less important than its spirit and effectiveness. In that connexion he stressed the implications of the word "advice". There were a number of Territories in which such bodies as Boards of Education or Local Councils had the responsibility of giving advice on educational policy. The title "Advisory Board" might perhaps be misleading; in actual practice the advice tendered by many of the Boards became the policy of the Government in question because the Director of Education was bound to act on the Board's advice or at any rate not to disregard it without reference to the supreme authority. Hence advisory boards were important at the intermediate stage of development reached by many Territories before the final transfer of responsibility had been made. The experience gained through participation in the work of the boards was very valuable when the time for the transfer of responsibility came.

There was another group that was of great importance in connexion with the question of local participation, and that consisted of the teachers themselves. In British-administered Territories in recent years there had been a rapid development of teachers' professional organizations, which had begun as trade unions chiefly concerned with pay and conditions of work but had developed into strong professional bodies vitally interested in the development of sound education for each Territory as a whole. The Colonial Education Service owed much to the wisdom of the professionals on the spot who knew the needs and wishes of the people among whom they worked.

Other organizations which could do valuable work were the parent-teacher associations. Such organizations were valuable where they were spontaneous and arose from a genuine conviction among parents and teachers that they could really render service to the school concerned. Where a PTA was imposed by official pronouncement he did not consider that it would serve any useful purpose.

Another aspect of educational policy was the whole question of devolution and decentralization. In the United Kingdom itself local interest and local control

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(Mr. Houghton, United Kingdom)

of schools had never yielded to national control and centralization, and the same principle was applied in British-administered overseas Territories. In the opinion of United Kingdom educational authorities the school itself was the body which should decide on such questions as curricula, textbooks and so on. The difficulty of following such a policy was that at any given time a Territory might not have enough trained teachers available to justify the granting of such a degree of liberty to the individual school. Nevertheless freedom should never be jeopardized since the vitality of any school depended so much upon it. That was why the United Kingdom authorities were loath to limit the freedom of bodies such as missions, which had perhaps in some ways failed to keep pace with the progress that had been made in recent years.

In his opinion there was no real difference of philosophy among the members of the Committee concerning the vital importance of the full participation of local populations in the control of educational policies and the need for the ultimate complete transfer to them of responsibility for those policies, although opinions might differ as to the pace at which such developments should take place.

Mr. RASGOTRA (India) said he would like to know the extent to which parent-teacher associations influenced the running, firstly, of Government schools and secondly, of mission schools.

Mr. HOUGHTON (United Kingdom) said that he would reply to that question at a subsequent meeting.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.