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COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

Thirteenth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 8 May 1962, at 3.20 p.m.

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PRESENT:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. MALALASEKERA	(Ceylon)
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mr. ROS	Argentina
<u>Members:</u>	Mr. HOOD	Australia
	Mr. ABHAYARATNE	Ceylon
	Mr. VALENCIA	Ecuador
	Mr. de CAMARET	France
	Mr. EASTMAN	Liberia
	Mr. CALVILLO	Mexico
	Mr. GOEDHART	Netherlands
	Mr. NORRISH	New Zealand
	Mr. AKHUND	Pakistan
	Mr. JIMENEZ	Philippines
	Mr. de PINIES	Spain
	Mr. SANKEY	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Mr. POPPER	United States of America
	Mr. ILBOUDO	Upper Volta

Representatives of specialized agencies:

	Mr. LLOYD	International Labour Organisation
	Mr. SALSAMENDI	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
	Mrs. KALM	World Health Organization
<u>Secretariat:</u>	Mr. CHÜ	Secretary of the Committee

POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION ON NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES (A/5078/Add.3 and Add.7-18, A/5079 and Add.1 and Add.3-6, A/5080 and Add.2-4, Add.6, Add.8 and Add.10-17, A/5081 and Add.1 and Add.3-5, A/5120) (continued)

PREPARATION AND TRAINING OF INDIGENOUS CIVIL AND TECHNICAL CADRES IN NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES (A/5122) (continued)

Mr. ROS (Argentina) observed that for the first time the Committee had received political information on almost all the Territories administered by States which were co-operating in the Committee's work. His delegation had welcomed the United Kingdom's decision to provide political and constitutional information. Without, however, wishing to belittle the value of the information that State had submitted on the Territories under its administration, he felt that, apart from the general outline provided in document A/5120, it was somewhat static in nature. The papers on individual Territories described the political and administrative structure, gave the names of the authorities, the existing political parties and principal leaders and some decisions regarding the political future of the Territories, but did not reflect the growing aspirations of most of the Territories towards independence or self-government. He would have thought that some reference might have been made to the more dynamic process of the formation of federations into which a large number of Territories were entering, or in some cases the formation of new groupings where an experiment had failed. He hoped that in future the Committee might receive more information going beyond the bounds of each individual Territory, particularly where there were plans to regroup such Territories in federations or regional associations. The examples he had in mind were the failure of the Federation of the West Indies, the future federation of the small West Indian islands, the broad federation of the Malayan countries and so forth.

Although some of the Territories under United Kingdom administration lacked the essential conditions for the formation of future independent States based on democratic and egalitarian principles, most of them had a sound basis of political institutions. The principle of the equality of all the adult inhabitants, both men and women, of a Territory in the exercise of civil rights was fundamental. No restrictions based on economic position or race should be placed on the right to elect or to be elected to public office. The cases mentioned by the representative of Liberia merited the attention of the United Kingdom Government.

(Mr. Ros, Argentina)

He welcomed the fact that Uganda and Jamaica were soon to become independent. The forthcoming independence of Jamaica was of great moment for the Latin American community, which in resolutions passed at a number of inter-American meetings had laid great stress on the need to eliminate colonialism in the Americas. He hoped that the difficulties which had arisen in connexion with the achievement of independence by British Guiana would be overcome and that a new date for independence would soon be announced.

It was greatly to be regretted that the Government of Portugal had not been willing to participate in the Committee's work together with the other Administering Powers. He still hoped that at some time in the not too distant future it would decide to co-operate in accordance with its obligations under the Charter.

The United States was to be congratulated upon having given the people of Guam, American Samoa and the Virgin Islands every opportunity of expressing their wishes freely and upon its progressive introduction of autonomy in the local Governments. On a recent visit to the Virgin Islands he had noted the great interest the people took in the work of the United Nations.

Mr. AKHUND (Pakistan) reminded the Committee that the Pakistan Government recognized Indonesia's claim to sovereignty over West Irian. Any views expressed by his delegation on that Territory would be subject to a reservation to that effect.

The whole situation in regard to dependent Territories had reached a climactic stage. The concern shown by the United Nations in the fate of those Territories had been a very important factor in that development. The Committee on Information was now only one of the many United Nations bodies through which that concern was manifested but it still had an important role to play in considering the picture as a whole. The extension of the Committee's terms of reference to include consideration of political and constitutional information had made its jurisdiction similar to that of the Trusteeship Council, despite important differences in procedure, and recognition of the Committee's right to examine such information was an important development. The United Kingdom's decision to join other Administering Members in submitting political information

(Mr. Akhund, Pakistan)

was of the greatest significance and his delegation wished to reiterate its tribute to the political sagacity which had always characterized that country's policies. His delegation was somewhat disappointed, however, that despite the impressive bulk of the summaries submitted by the United Kingdom, the whys and wherefores of United Kingdom colonial policy remained unanswered.

Nevertheless, the forthcoming independence of Uganda and Jamaica was a matter for joy and bore witness to the basic soundness of United Kingdom policy. Viewed in the historical perspective, British imperialism had shown a quite remarkable capacity for enlightenment; it had been said that the idea that Non-Self-Governing Territories should become independent was largely the result of United Kingdom political ideas and practice. There could be no doubt that the representative institutions which now prevailed over so large a part of the world owed much to those ideas. Even countries which had never been colonies of the United Kingdom had voluntarily adopted them as the basis of their political system. Indeed, it might be said that in the Non-Self-Governing Territories themselves the purpose of the struggles now taking place was to persuade the United Kingdom Government to put those ideas into practice.

The explanatory memorandum (A/5120) which outlined the pattern of development in United Kingdom Territories gave an idealized picture of slow and steady progress by colonial peoples under the benign guidance of Powers endowed with special abilities to carry out that purpose. Facts unfortunately did not bear out that idyll; in Territory after Territory national leaders had been called out of gaol to assume public office, a proceeding which bore witness to the political struggles which had preceded each slow advance outlined in the United Kingdom statement. His delegation could not acquiesce in the view that Administering Powers were in the Territories for the fulfilment of some divine purpose; it accepted the existence of the system under which some countries were ruled by others only because that system did in fact exist, and if it urged the Administering Powers to do certain things in the educational, economic and social fields, it was not out of a belief that those things could not be more appropriately done by the peoples of the Territories themselves but because in the present circumstances it could only appeal to those who retained the power in their hands.

(Mr. Akhund, Pakistan)

It was not, however, the Committee's purpose to say how the Non-Self-Governing Territories should be governed, for Article 73 of the Charter laid down self-government as the goal. The task of the Committee was to examine the information submitted and to determine to what extent and how quickly political power was being transferred to the peoples of the Territories, leaving it to them to decide how they would rule themselves when the time came.

In United Kingdom Territories, political evolution had in all cases led to the establishment of the parliamentary type of institutions. In Pakistan, however, the parliamentary system inherited from the United Kingdom had not been able to withstand the stress of that country's particular circumstances and had been replaced by another which it was hoped would better meet the need for political stability and the desire for democratic freedoms. Under ideal conditions, the parliamentary system might well be the most suitable form of government, but the Committee's sole concern should be that the people should be given the power to fashion institutions which they considered most appropriate to their own particular circumstances. Nor should the Administering Powers set out to mould the people of Territories in their charge for the specific purpose of running any particular political system; such a task, even if undertaken in the most selfless spirit, was impossible of achievement and the objective, however worthy in itself, could not be justified on pragmatic grounds. If the thesis that colonies might be retained by the Administering Powers for the purpose of educating their people in the ways of parliamentary democracy were accepted, the goal of independence or even of self-government would recede far into the future.

While the summaries of information transmitted by the United Kingdom gave an adequate account of the political, administrative and judicial organization in the Territories under its administration, they were silent on the extent to which those institutions were in the hands of the indigenous people; it might perhaps be assumed that so far that was the case to a very limited extent only. Moreover, in relatively few Territories had institutions of local government evolved to the stage where they might act as a training ground for parliamentary procedure.

(Mr. Akhund, Pakistan)

Of course, the many Territories under United Kingdom administration were at very different stages of political development, but even without questioning the validity of the process outlined in document A/5120 there was reason to ask why those disparities existed. In Northern Rhodesia, for example, there was an electoral system of great complexity, ingenuity and obscurity, whereas according to Mr. Kaunda the African inhabitants would prefer a system based on universal adult suffrage. The Administering Power for its part accepted adult suffrage as the eventual goal but considered that it should be reached by the gradual road of qualified franchise. If education was taken as the criterion, neither in literacy nor in general educational development was Northern Rhodesia so far behind Uganda as to justify the fact that, while Uganda had universal franchise and was on the threshold of independence, Northern Rhodesia had to make do with that very complicated electoral system. It was said that the special problems of Rhodesia arose from its racial heterogeneity, but in Mauritius, for instance, three different races coexisted happily and enjoyed universal suffrage. There were after all only some 76,000 settlers in Northern Rhodesia out of a total population of nearly 3 million and it needed no great mathematical ingenuity to ensure them their due share in the political life of the country. Many of them had made Rhodesia their home and Rhodesia in turn needed their talents and skills; in that fact surely lay the guarantee of their future, rather than in attempts to retain privileges which had never been justifiable and were now anachronistic and inadmissible. Without wishing to belittle the difficulties the United Kingdom was facing in Rhodesia, his delegation felt that a gradual approach, which might have worked in other Territories, was not likely to be successful in solving Rhodesia's problems and might well make them worse. He sincerely hoped that Mr. Butler would embark on his forthcoming visit to Rhodesia with a determination to find a solution based on the interests of the inhabitants of the Territory and one that would not carry within it the seeds of future difficulties.

In Bechuanaland, Basutoland and Swaziland little, if any, progress appeared to have been made and political institutions were at a very early stage of development. Members had seen the petition submitted by a political group from

(Mr. Akhund, Pakistan)

Basutoland, which seemed to indicate that the lack of political development in that Territory, at least, was not due to the absence of political awareness. Those Territories had only a small population but their geographical situation gave them an importance well beyond their size and his delegation earnestly hoped that their political development would be greatly accelerated.

He congratulated the United Kingdom delegation and the political leaders of Kenya on the happy outcome of the recent constitutional talks. The admission of national leaders to the Executive Council augured well for the future and he hoped that the road to full independence would be short and free of obstacles. There was also encouraging news from Singapore and the Malaysian Territories; the agreement reached in London in November 1961 on the principle of establishing a Greater Malaysia Federation embracing the present Federation of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo was a most welcome development. His delegation would watch further developments in that matter with the greatest attention, not only because of its interest in the region and its friendship with the peoples of the region, but also because the successful outcome of the undertaking might well indicate a possible way of solving the special problems that arose in the case of small and scattered Non-Self-Governing Territories.

In conclusion, he thanked all the Administering Members which had submitted political and constitutional information. It was regrettable that Portugal had not yet thought fit to do so and continued to absent itself from the meetings of the Committee.

Mr. CALVILLO (Mexico) congratulated the Administering Members which had submitted political and constitutional information and expressed the hope that those who had not yet done so would soon break their silence, since that silence could not in any case prevent the voice of the peoples of those Territories from being heard in the United Nations. In view of the wording of Article 73 e of the Charter, it might seem that information from the Administering Powers on political and constitutional matters was a benevolent gift made to the United Nations. The fact was, however, that such information was complementary to the other information required and without it the United Nations could have no clear

(Mr. Calvillo, Mexico)

understanding of how quickly the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories were being prepared for political and economic independence. To a large extent the political development of a people depended on the constitutional system under which it lived. Thus it was important that that system should be in line with the particular human and material conditions of the Territory. That view, which had been expressed in similar terms by the United Kingdom representative, was in harmony not only with the Charter of the United Nations but also with the ideas of free men in all countries.

Similarly, social, educational and economic advancement largely emanated from the constitutional system, which could either stimulate it or hold it back. It was therefore essential that the Administering Powers should follow an enlightened policy in constitutional matters. The goal of the constitutional system in a Territory was to ensure the well-being of the people; that meant the well-being of all the inhabitants and could never be interpreted as permitting special privileges for minority groups, whether racial, religious or cultural.

Implicit in the concept of political advancement was the opportunity for the people to express their needs, ideas and ideals in their civic activities. They should be able to form political parties, which could lay down goals to be achieved in all fields and establish programmes of action. Advancement also meant that the people became aware that they constituted a social entity. Men and communities could only fulfil their destiny when their existence was free from outside pressure and based on freedom and democracy.

His delegation hoped that the following year the Administering Powers would supply more specific information concerning the following problems: whether the constitutional régime in the Territories recognized the importance of human rights; if so, whether provision was made for judicial machinery to guarantee them and to protect citizens from any arbitrary action or abuse of power on the part of the public authorities; whether the constitution included such "social guarantees" as the right of the workers to form unions and if necessary to strike; whether the constitution included provisions concerning the ownership of the basic resources of the Territories and, if so, what the nature of such provisions

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was, particularly with regard to ownership of such resources by foreign business concerns or individuals; whether provision was made for an equitable and economic distribution of land ownership; whether the citizens were guaranteed, in law and in fact, the free expression of political views through political parties; what were the qualifications for citizenship and what were the qualifications for voting and being elected to public office; what political parties there were, their principles and trends, number of members, etc.; and, lastly, whether the political parties were able to function without a State subsidy. Such information would enable the Committee to make a better assessment of the progress made by the peoples towards independence.

Owing to their geographic situation, small area, sparse population, or other reasons, many of the Territories would have to form some kind of federation or union, since they would not be able to improve their living conditions alone or carry on an independent existence. The Administering Powers should pay careful attention to that problem and inform the Committee of its views.

The Mexican delegation sincerely welcomed the forthcoming independence of Jamaica.

Mr. ILBOUDO (Upper Volta) expressed his delegation's satisfaction at the submission of political and constitutional information relating to Non-Self-Governing Territories. It had also been glad to hear from the United Kingdom representative that Jamaica and Uganda would achieve independence at an early date.

He had listened with interest to the statement made by Mr. Jouwe, a member of the Netherlands delegation who represented the people of Netherlands New Guinea; his statement had enabled the members of the Committee to form a more accurate idea of the situation in that Territory and in particular of the constitutional reforms which had been carried out.

He had been surprised to hear Mr. Jouwe extol the New Guinea Council. While it was true that sixteen members of the Council had been democratically elected, the Council represented only 250,000 out of a total population of nearly 800,000. If that statement were compared with the speech made by the

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representative of Australia, who had described the people of New Guinea and Papua as absolutely primitive and without political awareness, it was clear that three quarters of the population, living scattered in the dense forest and in the mountains, were completely cut off from political life and unaware that their future was a subject of discussion. According to the representative of Australia, all the Administering Power could do was to intensify its penetration of the country and gradually to bring the people under Administration control. Since he believed that that part of the population which was already under Administration control was an essentially urban population, he hoped that henceforth when information was submitted with regard to Territories in an early stage of development a chapter would be devoted to the development of towns and the extension of urbanism. The Committee would then be able to judge what part, if any, was played by rural areas in political advancement.

With the view to the inculcation of political awareness, the indigenous cadres should above all act as propaganda agents. He suggested that the Committee should urge the Administering Powers to take steps to enable the indigenous cadres to carry out that task. He had been glad to hear from Mr. Jouwe that many indigenous political parties had come into existence in the Territory. He understood that those parties had the support of the Government.

Mr. NORRISH (New Zealand) said that he had not spoken on the item under discussion, for reasons which he thought the Committee understood, but he would say a few words of explanation in order to dispel any possible misunderstanding. Shortly after the opening of the session he had made a very general statement about the island Territories for which New Zealand was responsible. That statement had been in connexion with the item concerning educational advancement in Non-Self-Governing Territories, but he had covered a number of other points in order to save the Committee's time. His statement had concentrated to some extent on education but he had also included information on political, economic and social advancement. He need therefore do no more than recapitulate a few points.

Firstly, New Zealand had always transmitted political and constitutional information to the Committee. Secondly, information transmitted for the present session had been summarized by the Secretariat and was to be found in

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(Mr. Norrish, New Zealand)

document A/5081. Thirdly, in his statement he had brought the political and constitutional information up to date, in particular by reporting a development in connexion with the transfer of full financial responsibility to the elected assemblies of the islands as from 1 April 1962. Lastly, his Government's report on the preparation and training of indigenous civil and technical cadres had been submitted to the Secretariat and circulated to members as document A/5122.

Mr. GOEDHART (Netherlands) said that his delegation did not intend to make any statement on the preparation and training of indigenous cadres, since at the 1961 session it had submitted an extensive report on the matter which had subsequently been distributed as document A/4767. His delegation had submitted some new information on the subject in its statements on educational development and vocational training.

Replying to the representative of Upper Volta, he said it was true that not all the inhabitants of Netherlands New Guinea had been registered; at the present time there were under administrative control some 450,000 out of a total population of approximately 700,000. The Administration had made contact with most of the population but the country was rugged and mountainous and the task of bringing it under control was a slow one.

With regard to the New Guinea Council, the sixteen elected members represented 250,000 inhabitants. Another six, appointed by the Governor, represented 95,000. Another four members appointed by the Governor on the recommendation of the inhabitants represented a further 75,000. Hence three quarters of the 450,000 registered inhabitants were represented on the Council. Admittedly the system was not perfect but it was evolving and further progress could be anticipated in due course.

Mr. de PINIES (Spain) said that when he had spoken on the subject of education he had referred mainly to higher education in Fernando Poo and Rio Muni. He could provide further information if desired. At the present time the number of officials in Fernando Poo and Rio Muni coming from the Peninsula amounted to 615, whereas the number of indigenous officials was 2,800, i.e. a proportion of about four to one in favour of the indigenous inhabitants.

Mr. AKHUND (Pakistan) pointed out that the Committee had devoted very little time to the item on the preparation and training of indigenous civil and technical cadres. He therefore suggested that the item should be left open so that it could be taken up again after the Committee had completed its discussion of economic advancement and social advancement in the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.