

GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY

SIXTH SESSION

Official Records



MEETING

Monday, 19 November 1951, at 3 p.m.

Palais de Chaillot, Paris

## CONTENTS

Page

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Budget estimates for the financial year 1952: (a) Budget estimates prepared by the Secretary-General (A/1812 and Add. 1, A/C.5/448, A/C.5/449, A/C.5/451); (b) Reports of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/1853, A/C.5/455) |    |
| First reading ( <i>continued</i> ).....  | 33 |

Chairman : Mr. T. A. STONE (Canada).

**Budget estimates for the financial year 1952: (a) Budget estimates prepared by the Secretary-General (A/1812 and Add. 1, A/C.5/448, A/C.5/449, A/C.5/451); (b) Reports of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/1853, A/C.5/455)**

[Item 41]\*

*First reading (continued)*SECTION 10. DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS  
(*continued*)

1. Mr. ABBASI (Pakistan) noted that the only divergence of views between the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Secretary-General concerned the expenditure involved by the decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council at its thirteenth session. As the Secretary-General would always be able to ask for supplementary funds, if the need arose, he was in favour of the figure proposed by the Advisory Committee.

2. Mr. KOBUSHKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked the Secretary-General to indicate whether during 1950 and that part of 1951 which had elapsed, the funds allocated to the Department of Economic Affairs had been exceeded, or whether there had in fact been a surplus which had not been used. He recalled in that connexion that the Secretary-General was always entitled to transfer credits from one section of the budget to another, with the Advisory Committee's consent.

3. He also noted that the relation between the number of permanent posts and the sum requested for the recruitment of temporary staff varied considerably from one department to another; he wished to know whether the Secretariat used any method to determine that relation.

4. He asked the Chairman of the Advisory Committee whether he thought that the Committee's comments in paragraphs 86 and 87 of its second report of 1949 to the General Assembly (A/934)<sup>1</sup> were still valid.

5. In conclusion, he requested that all applications for additional funds should be examined by the Advisory Committee, particularly in view of the fact that at its thirteenth session the Economic and Social Council had decided that six organs should not meet during 1952.

6. Mr. OWEN (Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Economic Affairs) said that a reply to the USSR representative's first question was to be found in the budget estimates (A/1812), in so far as the year 1950 was concerned, and, for 1951 up to 30 September, in document A/C.5/449. In 1951, as he had earlier mentioned \$150,000 of the appropriations for the Department, for the full employment resolutions, had not been used and had been returned to the general account.

7. Generally speaking, the Secretary-General's aim had been to stabilize the budget of the Department at a level slightly below that of the previous year. The Department was responsible for administering the services at New York and organizing the regional commissions based at Bangkok, Santiago and Geneva. Experience had shown that if too many restrictions were placed on travel by the New York staff, the result was bad co-ordination and useless expense. He therefore requested that the appropriations for the travelling expenses of departmental personnel on mission should be reduced by only \$10,000 instead of \$20,000.

8. He asked the Committee either to accept the proposals of the Advisory Committee amended in that way, giving the Secretary-General the right to make possible modest requests for additional funds to cover expenses resulting from new decisions by the Economic

\* Indicates the item number on the General Assembly agenda.

<sup>1</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fourth Session, Supplement No. 7.*

and Social Council, or to accept the appropriations proposed by the Secretary-General, with a reduction of \$10,000 in the item for travelling expenses.

9. Mr. VALENZUELA (Chile) thought it would be difficult for the Committee to approve in advance a proposal concerning a request for additional funds in the future.

10. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee had said at the previous meeting that he would like to see the Secretariat in a position to supply for itself all the experts needed to carry out the work planned for it by the General Assembly. However, the work of consultants and experts often touched upon matters of extreme delicacy and it was important, particularly in connexion with the under-developed countries, that the experts should be entirely free to express their opinions, without needing to ask themselves how such opinions would be received by delegations. The members of the Secretariat showed great objectivity, but they were forced to restrict themselves to fields of activity that did not, come within the purview of governments.

11. Mr. AGHNIDES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee) said in reply to the USSR representative that the Advisory Committee was reasonably satisfied with the results obtained by the Department of Economic Affairs in connexion with the stabilization of expenditure. Progress had been made with regard to the system of special assistants, but the Advisory Committee, while recognizing that a re-organisation had taken place, was concerned that savings had not resulted. He referred the USSR representative to paragraph 130 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/1853).

12. In reply to the Chilean representative, he said that he felt on the contrary that consultants should not express any opinion on questions of principle. Such questions could only be settled by the organs of the General Assembly, and, within wide limits, by the Secretary-General himself and his representatives, who should be guided by the Charter of the United Nations.

13. Mr. VALENZUELA (Chile) explained that it was not a question of asking consultants to settle matters of principle, but that the work done by the experts was often of a kind which members of the Secretariat could not do without offending certain Member States.

14. Mr. FRIIS (Denmark) did not agree with the Chilean representative. He felt, on the contrary, that the Secretariat often showed excessive pessimism about its own potentialities. The work done by experts rarely had political implications, and it was open to question whether experts were necessarily more independent of governments than the members of an international secretariat.

15. Miss WITTEVEEN (Netherlands) proposed that the Secretary-General should be requested to prepare supplementary estimates arising from the decisions of the Economic and Social Council at its thirteenth session, for submission to the Advisory Committee, which would examine them and report to the Committee, and that the Committee should in the meantime take a decision on the estimates for the Department of Economic Affairs contained in section 10 of the budget estimates.

16. She hoped that the Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Economic Affairs would

accept the Advisory Committee's proposals on the understanding that a small item for travel on official business could be included in the supplementary estimates.

17. Mr. OWEN (Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Economic Affairs) could not accept the suggestion without an assurance that he would be able to obtain the additional funds he was certain to need to cover the cost of essential travel by Headquarters staff without procedural difficulties.

18. Mr. BOURGET (Canada) asked what the Chairman of the Advisory Committee's opinion was regarding Mr. Owen's request that the reduction in the appropriation requested for travel expenses should be limited to \$10,000 instead of \$20,000.

19. Mr. AGHNIDES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) expressed his appreciation of Mr. Owen's co-operative attitude. He suggested that the Committee should accept Mr. Owen's last proposal and adopt the figure recommended by the Advisory Committee. If the Committee decided to refer the supplementary estimates to the Advisory Committee, the latter would review them as carefully as possible.

20. Mr. MAROGER (France) was prepared to accept the Secretary-General's estimates, subject to the reduction of \$10,000 in the funds requested for official travel; he was sure that Mr. Owen would exercise discretion in the use of the funds authorized.

21. Mr. AMMOUN (Lebanon) felt that the Committee could not vote upon the estimates for the Department of Economic Affairs piecemeal. The Secretariat should prepare a complete statement for the section, showing the estimates prior to the decisions of the Economic and Social Council and the estimates arising out of the Council's decisions, for review by the Advisory Committee and subsequent submission to the Committee.

22. He reserved the right to raise at an appropriate time the question of co-ordination between the Fifth Committee and the Economic and Social Council in budgetary matters.

23. Mr. AGHNIDES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) suggested that the Committee should complete its consideration of the estimates in their present form, as accepted by Mr. Owen, before adopting the procedure proposed by the Netherlands representative.

24. Mr. MACHADO (Brazil) shared the concern felt by the representative of Lebanon; he was afraid that, if the Committee adopted the procedure suggested by the Netherlands representative, it might give the impression that no new work could be undertaken with existing staff without recourse to additional funds.

25. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the budget of the Department of Economic Affairs would in any case undergo a second reading. If the whole of that budget was referred to the Advisory Committee, the Committee's work might be substantially delayed.

26. In reply to Mr. FOURIE (Union of South Africa) the CHAIRMAN explained that it would be quite normal for the Committee to consider the budget in its present form immediately and the supplementary estimates in three weeks time.

27. Mr. ADARKAR (India) moved the closure of the debate on the procedural point.

*The motion was adopted.*

28. Mr. AMMOUN (Lebanon) submitted an amendment to the Netherlands proposal to the effect that the Committee should refer the estimates for the Department of Economic Affairs, and the supplementary estimates to be submitted by the Secretary-General in that connexion, to the Advisory Committee which would report to the Committee so the latter could take a decision upon the total estimates for the Department of Economic Affairs.

29. The CHAIRMAN put the amendment to the vote.

*The Lebanese amendment was rejected by 22 votes to 2 with 17 abstentions.*

30. The CHAIRMAN put the Netherlands proposal to the vote.

*The Netherlands draft resolution was adopted by 40 votes to none with 2 abstentions.*

31. Mr. KOBUSHKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) noted that mention had been made of supplementary estimates for the Department of Economic Affairs but that, in view of the nature of the decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council at its thirteenth session, those estimates would refer both to increases and reductions in expenditure. It was not out of the question therefore that the result would be a net saving.

32. Mr. AGHNIDES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) stated that it was not possible at the present juncture to determine the exact amount of the expenditure or savings which would result from the application of the Council's decisions.

33. The CHAIRMAN requested the opinion of the Committee, first, on the French proposal to the effect that the appropriation recommended by the Advisory Committee should be increased by \$10,000 and, secondly, on the proposal of Burma that it should be reduced by \$10,000.

34. Mr. KOBUSHKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) recalled that Mr. Owen had accepted the Advisory Committee's recommendations. In his opinion, it was not logical to ask the Committee to express its views on the allocation of an amount in excess of that which the Secretary-General's representative had accepted.

35. Mr. OWEN (Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Economic Affairs) considered that it would not actually be possible for officials in his Department to discharge their duties to the full, if funds to cover expenses for travel on official business were reduced by \$20,000, as the Advisory Committee had recommended. He was, however, prepared to accept that reduction in principle because he had received an assurance that, if the need arose, the Advisory Committee would give favourable consideration to a request for the transfer of \$10,000 to chapter II of section 10 in respect of travel on official business.

36. Mr. MAROGER (France) paid a tribute to the spirit of co-operation shown by Mr. Owen and withdrew the proposal his delegation had submitted.

37. The CHAIRMAN called for a vote on the proposal of Burma to reduce the estimates regarding expenses

for travel on official business by \$10,000 in addition to the reduction already recommended by the Advisory Committee.

*The proposal was rejected by 23 votes to 5, with 10 abstentions.*

*The estimate of \$2,117,200 recommended by the Advisory Committee in respect of section 10 was approved by 41 votes to one.*

#### SECTION 16. ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

38. Mr. FOURIE (Union of South Africa) recalled that the transfer of the Buildings Management Service from the Department of Conference and General Services to the Department of Administrative and Financial Services had been referred to at the time as a temporary measure. He hoped that the Secretary-General had not changed his views on the subject as it would be more fitting that the department responsible for supervising the operation of the rest of the Organization should not itself be responsible for a fundamental service. For that reason, he hoped that the Buildings Management Service would shortly be detached from the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, and he wished to inquire to which Department the Secretary-General intended to transfer the Service.

39. Mr. PRICE (Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services) stated that the Buildings Management Service had been attached to the Department of Administrative and Financial Services in order that those Secretariat activities which were identical in purpose should all be under the supervision of the same Department. The present building programme would be completed in 1952, and the transfer of the Buildings Management Service would then be reviewed.

40. Under section 5a, the Secretary-General had submitted estimates in connexion with sixty-five proposed new posts in the Field Service. The essential purpose of the proposal had been to form a reserve of Field Service officials at the Headquarters of the United Nations. The Advisory Committee had not approved that proposal. The Secretary-General had expressed his views on the subject in paragraph 9 of his statement (A/C.5/448), and the Chairman of the Advisory Committee had stated (A/C.5/455) that the Committee was pleased to take note of the Secretary-General's latter proposal which represented an approximation to its own views.

41. The General Assembly had decided to create the Field Service so that the Secretary-General might have at his disposal at all times a reserve enabling him to meet without delay the requirements of missions. The Secretary-General, wishing to avoid a situation whereby the members of the Field Service comprising that reserve remained idle, had assigned them to the Buildings Management Service for guard duties at Headquarters, and it was for that reason that the estimates referring to the new posts in question had appeared under section 5a. The new Headquarters buildings were more extensive than the old premises, there was a larger number of entrances and exits and there were many more visitors. The increase in the guard force was therefore justified.

42. In conclusion, Mr. Price stated that in his opinion there was no substantial difference of opinion on the subject between the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee.

43. Mr. AGHNIDES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) stated that the Committee had considered the new proposals of the Secretary-General to be more satisfactory as they enabled a saving to be made.

44. Mr. MACHADO (Brazil) inquired whether it was really desirable to increase the Field Service force, when it was expected that the number of political and special missions in 1952 would be fewer than in 1951. It would be sufficient to increase only the guard force assigned to the Buildings Management Service.

45. Mr. KOBUSHKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) pointed out that from the table on page 14 of the Advisory Committee's report it appeared that the number of principal directors, directors and principal officers in the Department of Administrative and Financial Services would be 11 in 1952, as against 7 in 1951. The Advisory Committee had frequently complained, however, that the number of higher officials in the Secretariat was already excessive.

46. Mr. PRICE (Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services) recalled that, at the beginning of 1951, the Salary Review Committee had undertaken a detailed study of the permanent posts in the Secretariat and of the duties and responsibilities of the holders of those posts. On that occasion, it had been ascertained that the standards determining the categories and classes of permanent posts in the Bureau of Personnel and the Bureau of Finance were even stricter than the standards applying to the remainder of the Secretariat, and that certain officials had been classified at a level which was not in accordance with the responsibilities they were called upon to assume. That was the reason why the Secretary-General had decided to present the proposals regarding which the representative of the Soviet Union had requested an explanation. They represented in fact a tidying-up of the new classification arrangements, and similar cases would not appear in future budget estimates.

47. Mr. FRIIS (Denmark) recalled that the Secretary-General had proposed to create in 1952 a post of Medical Director. He asked whether the views expressed on that subject by the Advisory Committee in subparagraph (iii) of paragraph 221 of its report had been taken into consideration.

48. Mr. PRICE (Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services) replied in the affirmative. The Secretary-General had considered that there was good reason to establish the post in question, which was at present of a temporary character, on a permanent basis.

49. Mr. ASHA (Syria) asked whether the Secretary-General accepted the recommendation in paragraph 220 of the Advisory Committee's report.

50. Mr. PRICE (Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services) said that the chairmen of the bodies concerned had agreed to the merging of their secretariats. That arrangement would make it possible without further increase of staff to establish the post of Deputy Secretary of the Joint Staff Pension Board.

51. Mr. FOURIE (Union of South Africa) thanked Mr. Price for the explanations he had given on the Buildings Management Service.

52. The CHAIRMAN proposed to put to the vote the Secretary-General's proposal (A/C.5/448, para. 9) for an increase of \$ 100,000 (for the Buildings Management Service) in the amount of the appropriations recommended by the Advisory Committee under section 16. That increase would be counterbalanced by a reduction of \$ 151,000 in the appropriations under section 5a. The final result would therefore be to reduce by \$ 51,000 the estimates submitted by the Secretary-General.

53. Miss WITTEVEEN (Netherlands) asked for the observations of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on the connexion between sections 5a and 16.

54. Mr. AGHNIDES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) expressed the view that since sections 5 and 5a were related, it would perhaps be better to defer consideration of section 5a until such time as the Committee was in a position to deal with missions.

55. Mr. PRICE (Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services) expressed the same opinion.

56. Mr. VORYS (United States of America) asked whether it would not be better to deal with the two items together.

57. The CHAIRMAN accepted the suggestion and proposed that the Committee should increase by \$ 100,000 the appropriation recommended by the Advisory Committee under section 16 and reduce by \$ 150,000 the appropriation requested by the Secretary-General under sections 5 and 5a.

58. Mr. KOBUSHKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said he would prefer the Committee to approve the figure recommended by the Advisory Committee for section 16, and would like the Secretary-General to submit the other proposal — for an increase of \$ 100,000 and a reduction of \$ 151,000 — in the form of an additional document to be presented to the Advisory Committee for its opinion. That method would be more in accordance with normal procedure. Moreover, it was possible that the Advisory Committee, which had not actually considered the matter, would find that a smaller appropriation, for example \$ 80,000, would be enough.

59. Mr. AGHNIDES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) and Mr. ADARKAR (India) supported the USSR representative's proposal.

60. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 73 of the Advisory Committee's report, which recommended that the number of posts in the Field Service should be held at 125, the Committee declaring that it would be prepared as and when the need arose to consider the effect of that recommendation on the staffing of the guard force in the Buildings Management Service.

61. Mr. AGHNIDES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) pointed out that it was not yet possible to foresee what the requirements of the missions would be.

62. The CHAIRMAN admitted that, in the circumstances, the course advocated by the USSR representative was the best.

63. Mr. MACHADO (Brazil) remarked that the Committee must first decide on the question of principle. The Secretary-General said he needed a bigger guard force and wished to increase the size of the Field Service. It should first be established that additional posts in the guard force were necessary. He did not think the matter was within the Committee's competence.

64. Mr. ASHA (Syrie) agreed with the USSR representative's observations and asked the Secretary-General to submit to the Committee a document demonstrating the need for a larger guard force.

65. Mr. AGHNIDES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) repeated that, until the matter of the political missions had been settled, it would not be possible to make a decision about guards. If, as Mr. Hambro considered, it was found necessary to bring a number of missions to an end, Field Service personnel would become available for guard duties. It was necessary, therefore, to wait until decisions had been made about the missions.

66. Mr. FOURIE (Union of South Africa) pointed out that the Field Service guards were recruited internationally, a procedure which involved travelling and moving expenses. He therefore supported Mr. Aghnides' remarks.

67. Mr. HAMBRO (Norway) proposed that the Committee should approve the USSR representative's obser-

vations and defer consideration of the matter so as to allow the Advisory Committee time to study it. The Committee should also be informed of the differences between the qualifications required for members of the Field Service, recruitment to which was international, and those required for Headquarters guards, who were recruited in the United States, as well as of any differences between the respective salary rates.

68. Mr. PRICE (Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services) considered that the Committee should approve the appropriations recommended by the Advisory Committee for section 16 and deal with the rest of the matter later. He was not sure that it would be wise to ask the Advisory Committee to prepare a report. Moreover, it was of little importance whether the appropriations for the guards were included under section 5a or under section 16.

69. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the estimate submitted by the Secretary-General for section 16 should be reduced by \$ 64,400.

*The Advisory Committee's recommendation for an appropriation of \$ 2,800,000 for section 16 was approved unanimously.*

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.