

UNITED NATIONS

GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY



Distr.  
GENERAL

A/AC.35/SR.190  
17 July 1959

~~ORIGINAL: ENGLISH~~

COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

Tenth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND NINETIETH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Thursday, 23 April 1959, at 10.45 a.m.

CONTENTS

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)

- (a) Fundamental education and eradication of illiteracy  
(A/AC.35/L.303)

PRESENT:

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

Representatives of the Specialized Agencies:

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

<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. CHAPMAN (Ghana) said that the role of education in dependent countries was of crucial importance to the orderly and systematic progress of their inhabitants towards a new status of independence and rising economic, social and cultural expectations. In order to achieve the goals set out in Article 73 of the Charter, sufficient numbers of young people should be trained to take their places in commerce, industry, science, agriculture, engineering and the teaching profession as well as in the public service; the educational system should be planned so as to produce the kind of leadership that was needed both before and after self-government and independence.

General Assembly resolution 1049 (XI) had emphasized that, in order to attain the objectives of education in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, it was necessary to establish systems of primary, secondary and higher education which would meet the needs of all, and had recommended to the Administering Members the formulation of plans, with targets and dates, for the establishment or extension of universal, free and compulsory primary education and general literacy. The duty of the Committee and of the Administering Members was to ensure the kind of progress in education that would make possible a rapid advance towards self-government and independence and lay the foundations for stability and progress once independence had been achieved. Nationhood made very considerable demands on the limited resources of trained manpower, and the importance of a literate and well-informed electorate to the efficient working of modern government should be borne in mind. The raising of the standard of living was also dependent on educational advance.

It was often argued that, though self-government for dependent Territories was acceptable in principle, it must be postponed until a high standard of education had been attained. In certain Non-Self-Governing Territories in East and Central Africa, educational programmes were specifically designed to perpetuate political and social inequalities. Experience seemed to show that the rate of development in education could be accelerated only when responsibility for policy and planning was vested in the representative institutions of the people concerned.

(Mr. Chapman, Ghana)

Failure to recognize that principle accounted for the dangerous social situation in African Territories with multi-racial societies, where the Administering Powers, as a result of their own action, would have to contend with increasing agitation unless opportunities for education were made universally equal and educational planning was conceived of in terms of the whole community.

Although his delegation welcomed the incontestable evidence of increasing participation by the inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories in their education affairs, it questioned how far present arrangements for such participation fulfilled the aims of Article 73 of the Charter. Progress in that respect was characterized by a remarkable lack of uniformity in the various Territories, although the objectives laid down in Article 73 were the same for all. His delegation held that the logical development of the principle of participation should be the establishment of a ministerial system, with a Minister of Education democratically elected and responsible to the whole electorate, and not merely to part of it. Those anomalies referred to as "European" or "African" education would then no longer exist. The Committee should ensure that the objectives of education were not distorted by sectional considerations.

In paragraph 9 of document A/AC.35/L.294 it was stated that, in Territories under French administration, programmes of study and examination regulations continued to be determined by the appropriate authorities of the French Government, although the Territories might adapt those programmes to local conditions. The Prime Minister of Guinea had said that, when his country had been a Non-Self-Governing Territory, young Africans had been obliged to study French poets instead of their own cultural heritage. The point was not so much the subject taught as the fact that the local inhabitants were not given the opportunity to make their own wishes felt about the educational policy applied, and there seemed to be a strong case for adopting the suggestions made in General Assembly resolution 1049 (XI).

As regards primary education, it was gratifying to note that the ratio of children enrolled in primary schools related to the total child population between five and fourteen years of age was as high as 61 per cent in many of the Territories. There were however many Territories where the ratio was very low, and it was clear that still greater efforts should be made to provide more primary schools. It was the primary and secondary schools which would in large measure determine the quality of the higher educational institutions of the future, and in that connexion he would emphasize the importance of effective teacher-training programmes.

(Mr. Chapman, Ghana)

There was great need for a concerted attack on the problem of mass illiteracy. Emphasis in the programmes should be placed on the social welfare and community development aspects and not merely on reading and writing. That had been the course followed in Ghana, where such programmes had been developed over a number of years and where there was a great and increasing demand for them on the part of the people, especially in the rural areas.

Turning to secondary education, he said that it appeared from the reports that successful attempts had been made in many Territories to diversify secondary education by the establishment of technical and vocational schools and to expand the facilities for secondary education. In his delegation's view, the most significant feature of the reports was the increasing extent to which curricula in some Territories were being adapted to local needs, by the inclusion of the vernacular languages on an equal footing with the metropolitan languages, by the study of local customs, history and traditions, and by the introduction of practical subjects such as home economics, handicrafts and agriculture. Another sign of progress was the extension of courses in secondary schools and the recognition in many territories of the need for qualified indigenous personnel to replace non-Africans in branches of the local administration. Nevertheless, his delegation felt that the rate of expansion in secondary education was still slow; in only five out of fifty territories was it comparable to that in his country since 1951, when an African parliamentary majority had become responsible for educational matters. In spite of a reported expansion, there were only seventeen secondary schools in Northern Rhodesia and five in Bechuanaland. The ratio of the enrolment in secondary schools to that in primary schools was still very low and showed no significant improvement. In multi-racial territories such as Kenya, the Central African Federation and the Belgian Congo, there was evidence of discrimination in education. In the whole of British East Africa, the only secondary school open to Africans was Makerere College, while in the Central African Federation there were only two available for Africans. The much-vaunted concept of partnership should begin in the field of education if it was not to remain a mere catchword. According to sources available to his delegation, conditions in Territories under Portuguese administration were most unsatisfactory, and his delegation held that the General Assembly should take immediate measures to ensure the implementation of Article 73 in respect of those territories.

/...

(Mr. Chapman, Ghana)

Comparatively speaking, much more progress appeared to have been made in higher education; new institutions had been established or were projected, the enrolment of students had increased and available facilities had been extended, while most of the universities were multi-racial. The majority of the students were in receipt of scholarships or Government grants, and that would doubtless continue to be the case, since the income of most indigenous parents was not high enough to enable them to pay for a higher education. That was an important factor which should be considered by the Committee and by the Administering Powers.

Difficulties continued to be experienced in persuading young people leaving school to enter occupations involving manual work. That might well be due to the emphasis which had been placed on "white collar" occupations; greater emphasis should now be placed on vocational training, so that the Territories could embark on urgent problems of economic and social development, and a new attitude towards manual work should be inculcated in the peoples concerned. The connexion between successful vocational training and adequate general education had been confirmed by the conferences held in 1957 at Lusaka and Luanda under the auspices of the Committee for Technical Co-operation in Africa South of the Sahara, which had brought together labour and educational specialists from a number of Non-Self-Governing Territories in that area. The recommendations of those conferences appeared to offer a satisfactory basis for the reorientation of policy in many of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

In his delegation's view, the conclusions of the survey undertaken by the Food and Agriculture Organization were extremely important and should be commended to those administering Non-Self-Governing Territories. Agricultural extension services were an effective method for improving the low agricultural output of the Territories; but, if they were to lead to results, adequate provision would have to be made for the local training of agricultural extension officers, able to communicate with predominantly illiterate farmers in a way which the latter could understand. A revolution in agriculture was required in many Territories, but that did not necessarily involve dramatic methods such as the indiscriminate introduction of mechanization. Much could be done to overcome the reluctance of young people to enter agricultural and other vocational occupations if the recommendations of the Luanda and Lusaka Conferences were adopted. A clear and

/...

(Mr. Chapman, Ghana)

comprehensive statement was required of the relations between over-all economic development and the training of labour and managerial personnel. The Committee should pay particular attention to measures which would provide expanding economic opportunities in industry and agriculture for young people leaving school, in order to ensure that existing training facilities were not under-utilized.

The problem of improving health standards was one requiring immediate attention, but it could not be tackled unless large numbers of trained medical personnel were made available. For that reason, the account of the education and training of medical and health personnel given in the reports could not fail to cause concern. Methods of training were adequate and the quality of teaching was comparable to that in professional institutions elsewhere; but the number of scholarships awarded and the intake of students by local institutions was quite inadequate. Only 108 World Health Organization fellowships had been awarded in all the Non-Self-Governing Territories in 1956; there were only nine medical schools altogether, the total number of graduates from which had been only 190. The supply of students was no doubt seriously affected by the limited facilities for primary and secondary school training; enrolment in the medical school at Makerere was 55 per cent of capacity, while in that at Suva it had declined from 129 in 1952 to eighty-six in 1956. At the existing rate of output of doctors, and disregarding the natural increase in population, it would take at least half a century to supply the minimum number of doctors required by the 113 million inhabitants of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Local training of nurses, midwives and sanitary personnel was more widespread, but the reports indicated that, owing to educational shortcomings, standards were lower than in independent countries. An undesirable aspect was that medical assistants, intended merely as a temporary expedient to meet the needs for simple medical care, had become a permanent feature of medical practice in certain Territories. What his delegation wished to see was a rapid extension of primary and secondary education as a prerequisite for the training of medical personnel, and an extension of medical training facilities in the Territories themselves. The training of medical teachers should also be accelerated. In order to meet those needs, specific goals and priorities should be laid down and comprehensive plans devised.

/...

(Mr. Chapman, Ghana)

It was intolerable that those in power in some Non-Self-Governing Territories should maintain that self-government must be postponed until the people were judged by their rulers to have reached certain standards of education set by those rulers themselves. It was undeniable that, in several Territories in East and Central Africa, political progress was made conditional on education and voting rights were largely based on education, either directly or through the use of social status and income as qualifications. It so happened that the only important Territories where political rights were still based on educational qualifications were those which possessed a so-called multi-racial society. In such Territories, the small community of European agricultural settlers and merchants held a great advantage over the indigenous majority as regards educational qualifications. Their children had access to schools where there was a place for every child and where equipment and teaching were superior. It was thus easy for them to achieve the economic and social status which would entitle them to political rights. Such political discrimination, based on education, would be an increasing source of unrest in those Territories.

The reports gave cause for hope and his delegation would commend those administering members who had approached their task with imagination and realism. On the other hand, the number of serious gaps were so great that redoubled efforts should be made. The plans made for Non-Self-Governing Territories at the present time would determine whether their future development would be consistent with the requirements of Chapter XI of the Charter.

Mr. CASTRO ALVES (Brazil) gave some basic data on educational progress in Brazil and on the fundamental principles underlying Brazil's educational policy and legislation, in order to make clear the principles upon which his delegation's evaluation of data concerning education in Non-Self-Governing Territories would to some extent be based. At a later stage his delegation would deal specifically with some of the sub-items of item 4 in the light of those principles and of local peculiarities. It would consider the possibilities of achieving progress in the field of education in remote areas, where governmental control had only recently been established, and where multi-racialism and an almost total absence of civilization were serious factors.



(Mr. Castro Alves, Brazil)

He expressed his delegation's appreciation of the documentation submitted by the United Nations Secretariat and by UNESCO and WHO. He also thanked the representatives of five of the Administering Powers for having supplemented the information transmitted by their Governments.

His delegation would speak again in the debate when it deemed it necessary to do so.

Mr. KITTANI (Iraq) said that for the time being he would make only some general observations regarding his delegation's approach to the entire subject of educational conditions in Non-Self-Governing Territories. His delegation reserves its right to comment in detail, at a later stage, on the various sub-items of item 4 of the agenda.

His delegation continued, as in the past, to believe that educational progress was the foundation of the speedy advancement of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories towards the attainment of self-government, political, economic and social.

The principles laid down in article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were no longer controversial. As stated in its preamble, however, the Declaration was "a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations". As was shown in the latest UNESCO publications, there was a tremendous gap between the educational conditions in the less-developed countries and territories and such a common standard of achievement. One of the major tasks facing the less-developed areas of the world, a task that was by no means confined to the Non-Self-Governing Territories, was to bridge that gap as quickly as possible. The delegation of Iraq was able fully to appreciate both the nature of the educational problems and difficulties of the Territories and their determination to overcome those obstacles. It could benefit from their experience and hoped to be able to contribute from its own experience to the discussion in the Committee of educational conditions in the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

The first point to which he would refer was that of educational statistics. His delegation greatly appreciated the work done by UNESCO in that field and particularly the Recommendation concerning the international standardization of educational statistics adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its tenth

(Mr. Kittani, Iraq)

session. No doubt the Administering Powers when submitting educational statistics about Non-Self-Governing Territories in the future would follow those recommendations as closely as possible.

In his delegation's view the practice of comparing educational data from year to year was not entirely satisfactory. All such progress should be viewed against the more general background of total population and of the number of children of school age, bearing in mind the universal common standard of achievement to which he had referred. A mere chronological comparison of statistics often reflected previous shortcomings and sometimes neglect or inadequate attention in earlier periods.

Secondly, with regard to the general question of the goal of education, experience in his country had shown how easy it was to fall into the trap of regarding education as a means towards government employment, at least in the early stages of development. Since education's advancement was the foundation of total progress, universal education should be considered from the very beginning as a goal in itself. His delegation therefore attached great importance to vocational training, industrial schools, agricultural schools and adult and youth education. He would refer to those subjects at greater length during the discussion of the various sub-items.

With regard to the central problem of teacher training, his country knew from experience the danger connected with over-centralization of teacher-training institutions. An attempt had been made in Iraq to deal with that danger through decentralization of primary school teacher-training institutes. It had been found that after spending a considerable number of years in metropolitan areas, teachers were reluctant to live in the rural areas, where the need for their services was greatest. The establishment of primary school teachers' institutions as close to the village level as possible had the advantage of acquainting future rural teachers with the particular problems of the area concerned.

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

Mr. de BRUYN (Netherlands) said that his Government attached great importance to fundamental and mass education for the eradication of illiteracy, as a prerequisite for the social, economic and political advancement of the people of Netherlands New Guinea, which was the aim of the Netherlands Government's educational policy in that territory. One major difficulty was the excessive fragmentation of indigenous society; only some 7 per cent of the villages had over 300 inhabitants, and about 160 different local languages had thus far been identified. The difficulties were illustrated by the educational experiment in the Baliem valley, where in 1957 fifteen Papuan continuation-school graduates had begun a training course for village teachers, given by a Netherlands instructor. At the end of a four-year course, during which they would learn the local language, they would be able to begin teaching the villagers in that language.

As the extension of primary schooling would eventually lead to the elimination of illiteracy, the ratio of school enrolment to the total number of children of school age was an important factor. In 1957 the total registered population of the territory was 340,450; the number of children attending elementary village schools was 40,849, and in addition there were children of the same age group, namely, seven to fifteen years of age, attending other schools. Given that children of that age made up between 15 and 20 per cent of the total population, it could be estimated that the school attendance figures represented an average of approximately 70 per cent of the total number of children of school age, although the figure would vary considerably from one area to another.

The adult literacy rate also varied according to area, being low where administration and mission work had been established only recently, and between 60 and 85 per cent in the northern and coastal areas where there had been mission schools since long before the Second World War.

The Information Service of the Department of Cultural Affairs was responsible for providing suitable reading material for new literates, and a special committee

/...

(Mr. de Bruyn, Netherlands)

had been established for that purpose. Sales of literature had risen from 900 guilders in 1955 to 30,000 guilders in 1958, when a total of 12,000 books and booklets, comprising some 70 titles, were sold. That material was printed predominantly in the Malay language; approximately half was educational and half recreational. In addition, there was an illustrated monthly with a circulation of 1,000 copies and a weekly, distributed free of charge, with a circulation of 6,500; those periodicals included material in both Malay and Dutch. The monthly publication included short stories by Papuan authors, and was used for its educational value at all continuation schools. A continuous rise in the demand for literature was to be expected, and steps were being taken to improve the distribution system and establish more local libraries for indigenous literature, sixteen additional libraries having been established in 1958, as well as five additional sales agencies. Additional reading material of a religious nature was distributed by the missions.

The Information Service also organized film shows, of which there had been fifty-one in 1957, and 240 in 1958 at which 200 films had been shown. Daily radio broadcasts for the indigenous population had been increased from 4 1/2 to 9 hours a week.

As the majority of the people were employed in agriculture, agricultural development projects were of great importance in fundamental education. At the Mappi area project, the men received instruction in village community affairs and leadership, in addition to purely agricultural training, and the wives of the trainees also received instruction in agriculture and stock-breeding, hygiene, nutrition and home economics.

Literacy courses had been instituted in several urban centres where there was a more urgently felt need for formal education. In addition there were courses in Dutch and in general education, and training courses for lower administrative functions. The courses were given by both Papuan and Netherlands instructors. Between the end of 1957 and the end of 1958 the number of courses in Dutch increased from fourteen to nineteen, and the number of literacy courses from eight to nine. The Government granted subsidies for the courses and made teaching aids available. Various government departments also offered vocational training courses for indigenous officials about which further details would be provided during the Committee's discussion of vocational training.

/...

Mr. JHA (India) said that his delegation had read with great interest the UNESCO report on illiteracy and fundamental education (A/AC.35/L.303), which showed how the problems of illiteracy had been tackled in Non-Self-Governing Territories. The report was most useful, though the lack of comparable statistics somewhat detracted from its value in measuring the progress achieved in the Territories; in particular the figures given in the annex related either to actual census figures or to estimates, in most cases, for the years 1946 or 1947, and in only two cases were figures given for a later year than 1953. No figures were given for earlier or later years which would enable the Committee to measure the progress made. His delegation had noted with regret the very high rate of illiteracy in a number of the Territories, but there had no doubt been an improvement in recent years.

In the light of those figures his delegation would like to have information on the results of efforts made in recent years, details of which were given in the UNESCO report. More up-to-date figures should be made available and he suggested that where a census could not be or was not likely to be carried out in the near future sample surveys should be made with the help of UNESCO and other organizations and the results communicated to the Committee and the General Assembly.

His delegation entirely agreed with the statement of general principles set forth in paragraph 19 of the UNESCO report. It also agreed with paragraph 29 of the Committee's previous report on education in Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/3127), which laid down principles that should be borne in mind by the Committee and by the Administering Powers in dealing with the problem of adult and mass illiteracy.

When the subject had last been debated his delegation had pointed out that the Committee was handicapped by the lack of a valid definition of illiteracy. At the tenth General Conference of UNESCO definitions of a literate and an illiterate person had been drawn up which on the whole his delegation considered could be accepted as a working basis. In dealing with the question of mass literacy, however, certain higher ideals and aims should be kept in view. Education, whether of children or adults, should be directed to the same ends, though the greater responsibilities of adults must be borne in mind as a limiting factor.

/...

(Mr. Jha, India)

The question of extending adult education was fundamental to the entire performance of the functions accepted by an Administering Power under Chapter XI of the Charter. It was the foundation of any stable democratic system, which must be the eventual goal of the administration of Non-Self-Governing Territories. Many countries in Asia and Africa had found that the lack of a broad basis of adult education was a hindrance to the development of a democratic way of life and the building of sound economic foundations. The problem of adult education should therefore be considered in the widest possible context. He emphasized the important role played by community development in connexion with education, and particularly with adult education. The summaries of information transmitted to the Secretary-General showed that adult literacy programmes forming part of community development programmes had been under way in several Territories under United Kingdom administration. He hoped that more detailed information on the subject would be provided by the Administering Powers after an analysis had been made by UNESCO. If campaigns to eradicate illiteracy were being conducted on scientific lines the compilation of statistical information should not be difficult.

Referring to paragraph 23 of the UNESCO report, he wondered whether the education programmes referred to were those being carried out in Nigeria, Hong Kong, Sierra Leone and the West Indies. In order that useful conclusions might be drawn from the assertions made in that paragraph, the Committee should be informed of the magnitude and detailed organization of the programmes, the funds provided by the Governments concerned, the number of teachers employed, the curricula and so on.

In view of the approaching independence of many Non-Self-Governing Territories more vigorous action was called for to eradicate illiteracy, especially in view of developments on the continent of Africa in particular. The whole pace of political development had quickened and must be matched by the development of education and of social services. If the pace of adult education were not also accelerated the people might be left behind in the race.

The United Kingdom representative had informed the Committee that the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories were completely independent of the metropolitan country with regard to the formulation and implementation of

(Mr. Jha, India)

educational policy. That fact, however, could not provide any excuse for slowness or neglect in any Territory the responsibility for which rested with an Administering Power under the terms of Chapter XI of the Charter. He therefore hoped that the United Kingdom Government would urge the Governments of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to achieve the maximum speed in that direction. The spread and development of education cost money and as long as the indigenous people did not control expenditure their share in educational policy must be limited. Backward peoples all over the world were filled with an intense desire for education. Where for any reason their interest was less acute it only needed stimulating and that was a task that should be undertaken without delay.

Experience had shown that as countries approached independence educational programmes assumed greater impetus and speed. As the members of the Committee were aware, there had been a tremendous urge for education in Ghana and Nigeria and the Governments of those countries were taking steps to promote the spread of adult education. The increase in the percentage of literacy in India from 15 per cent in 1947 to nearly 30 per cent today had been made possible and indeed necessary by the great desire of the people which could not have been resisted by any Government.

As pointed out in paragraph 33 of the UNESCO report, literacy work with adults depended to a great extent on the quality of the teacher. Nevertheless experience in India and other countries had shown that untrained graduates or even students could be usefully employed for the purpose. Unfortunately, there were not many college students available in those Territories.

For all those reasons, the spread of adult education was a difficult task. The attack on illiteracy was best carried out as part of a general plan for the spread of all kinds of education.

He noted that a pilot scheme in Brunei had shown a definite demand for adult literacy in rural areas, but that in urban areas classes would have to be built up slowly. That was surprising in view of the fact that the demand for education was usually stronger in urban areas and he would like if possible to have an explanation from the United Kingdom delegation. He would also like to know whether the pilot scheme had been successful and what was being done to build up classes in the urban areas.

/...

(Mr. Jha, India)

In Sarawak a scheme had been started but had had to be abandoned in 1957 owing to staffing difficulties. He wondered whether indigenous staff could not be employed and whether attempts had been made to borrow staff from abroad so as to be able to continue the rural improvement school at Kanowit.

The question of methodology needed constant attention and experimentation and the introduction of newer methods on the basis of experience. India had found that adult education must be combined with and utilized for educating the people in various other subjects such as health and hygiene, farming methods and qualities of citizenship and with the provision of recreational facilities, reading matter and so on. Sometimes instruction on those matters prepared the ground for adult education by creating a desire for knowledge. He did not mean to imply that the methods used in many of the Non-Self-Governing Territories were unsuitable but that the methods used should be adapted to each area and should continually be improved upon.

One of the most important problems was the production of suitable reading material for adults. Reading matter should be made available of a quality which would interest an adult mind and whet curiosity. Experiments made by the Government of Nigeria in that connexion had been particularly successful and should be introduced in other Territories. The methods used in the former Gold Coast and those described by the representative of Ghana could also be adopted in other Non-Self-Governing Territories.

He felt sure the Committee would like to have more information on the progress of the experiment carried out in New Zealand concerning the development of adult education through co-operatives.

He emphasized that any criticisms he might have made had been offered in good faith and in a friendly spirit. His delegation appreciated the efforts that were being made in many of the Territories and only wanted the problem to be tackled more vigorously.

He would speak again towards the end of the discussion of the item, when he would be better informed of the various trends of thought on the different sub-items.



Mr. HOUGHTON (United Kingdom) paid tribute to the UNESCO report (A/AC.25/L.303). With regard to the standardization of illiteracy statistics, he believed that even if the recommendations in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the report were adopted, the compilation of such statistics would still be difficult. Firstly, there might be considerable difference of opinion as to what was meant by the "short simple statement" referred to in paragraph 8. Secondly, the limitations of the statistical services in the dependent territories would make it difficult for the Governments of those territories to adopt the measures recommended in paragraph 9. He agreed that an attempt should be made to compile illiteracy statistics which would be internationally comparable, but the first results were likely to be disappointing. More useful data might be obtained from returns relating to paragraphs 13 to 17 of the report, dealing with statistics on the educational attainment of the population, since useful information about illiteracy could be deduced from the more general educational statistics. It was important to distinguish, both in statistical definitions and in literacy training, between child and adult illiterates; in some territories there were still many children who received no schooling, and if those figures were merged with the much larger figures for adult illiterates, the difference between the techniques required for the two groups might be obscured.

With regard to Section II of the report, he agreed with the views expressed by the Indian representative that literacy must be one element of a general programme of community development, and in particular he endorsed paragraphs 19, 20 and 23 of the report. Experience in the United Kingdom territories had shown that literacy training as an end in itself, divorced from social and economic aims, ran the risk of failure. An early literacy campaign in Jamaica, for example, had failed partly because certain essential conditions, such as the provision of follow-up literature, had not been fulfilled, but mainly because the people had no sustaining motive to compel them to continue their efforts. At a later stage the people themselves had begun to feel the need for literacy in connexion with a campaign concerned with nutrition and improved methods of growing and cooking food; having learnt something about the subject from lectures and film-shows, they became anxious to learn more from the pamphlets that were available to those that could read. It was worthy of note that the second literacy campaign was to some extent hampered by the feelings of doubt that had been engendered by the earlier

(Mr. Houghton, United Kingdom)

unsuccessful campaign. He emphasized the importance of the educational element in all community development programmes, and the need for the various experts concerned to know how to impart their special knowledge to the people. It was a fundamental principle of community development that the programme should be provided in response to needs voiced by the people themselves, and be founded on local initiative and leadership. He wondered how far the experience of such countries as India and Ghana in the field of community development would justify the Governments of dependent territories in imposing community development programmes on the people, despite local apathy, in the knowledge that the programmes were likely to develop into true community activities after the initial stage. He considered that such a course might be dangerous in the case of literacy campaigns, since it might prejudice the long-term results. He agreed with the conclusions in paragraphs 26 and 27 of the report that the extension of primary schooling was the most effective weapon in combatting adult illiteracy.

With reference to adult education in the wider sense, he referred to the expansion of the extramural departments of university colleges, especially Makerere College in Uganda, and to the proposal to establish an institute of adult education as part of the recently-founded college of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

He emphasized the importance of the part played by women in the general national education. Even in countries where the long-established social pattern resulted in opposition to formal schooling for girls, there was not the same prejudice against such activities as instruction in home economics, which often smoothed the way to more formal education.

His delegation accepted the list of required conditions in paragraph 59 of the report. He did not consider that the list indicated any order of priority, but if any such order was to be established, he would put the last item, relating to the extension of primary education, before all the others.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.