

ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION

Third Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FORTY-SECOND MEETING

Lake Success, New York,
Tuesday, 20 April 1948, at 11.30 a.m.Chairman: Mr. Roland WILSON (Australia)Members:

*Mr. J. WOULBROUN	Belgium
*Mr. J. G. TORRES	Brazil
Mr. DEUTSCH	Canada
Mr. F. HO	China
*Mr. N. SILVERIO	Cuba
Mr. R. BYSTRICKY	Czechoslovakia
Mr. J. RUEFF	France
Mr. R. NEHRU	India
Mr. G. BOE	Norway
*Mr. G. LUTOSLOWSKI	Poland
Mr. A. P. MOROZOV	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
*Mr. M. FLEMING	United Kingdom
Mr. I. LUBIN	United States of America

Representatives of Specialized Agencies:

Mr. A. A. EVANS	International Labour Organization
Mr. D. GORDAN	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

Consultants from Non-Governmental Organizations:

Miss T. SENDER	American Federation of Labour
Mr. P. VASSEUR	International Chamber of Commerce

Secretariat:

Mr. A. GOLDET	For the Assistant Secretary-General
Mr. D. WEINTRAUB	Commission Secretary

* Alternates for the third session

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ITEM 3 - SELECTION OF MEMBERS OF SUB-COMMISSIONS TO REPLACE MEMBERS WHO HAVE RESIGNED

The CHAIRMAN announced that the only existing vacancy was on the Sub-Commission on Economic Development as a result of the resignation of Mr. Victor Urquidi of Mexico. The Commission might agree to submit nominations, accompanied by a brief biographical sketch of the candidate, to the Secretary by Thursday, 22 April 1948 at 5 p.m. Members were requested to ascertain whether nominees were available for service on the Sub-Commission. On Friday, the Commission could discuss the nominations and hold the election in closed session as provided in the rules of procedure.

Mr. NEHRU (India) supported the election procedure suggested by the Chairman.

The Commission agreed to adopt the election procedure as indicated.

ITEM 4 - REPORT OF MR. JOHN DEUTSCH, THE COMMISSION'S REPRESENTATIVE ON THE POPULATION COMMISSION

Mr. DEUTSCH (Canada) indicated that he had been unable to attend the meetings of the Population Commission because he had represented Canada on the Preparatory Commission of the International Trade Organization in Geneva. Mr. H. Lukin Robinson (Canada) had attended as alternate for Mr. Deutsch.

Mr. Deutsch presented his report on the second session of the Population Commission (document E/CN.1/57). Since he had not been present at the meetings, he could not answer specific questions but felt that the Economic and Employment Commission might wish to advise the Population Committee of its needs.

On behalf of the Economic and Employment Commission, the CHAIRMAN thanked both Mr. Deutsch and Mr. Robinson for their co-operation.

/Mr. FLEMING

Mr. FLEMING (United Kingdom) indicated that Mr. Deutsch's report confirmed his impression that the work of the Population Commission was being conducted in a thorough and scientific way. He drew attention to the fact that the Population Commission had not requested the views of the Economic and Employment Commission, that it was merely initiating its work and that it had an exceedingly limited staff at its disposal. He therefore hoped that the Economic and Employment Commission would not request elaborate studies from the Population Commission.

Mr. Fleming felt, however, that it would be desirable for the Sub-Commission on Economic Development to be kept fully informed of the work of the Population Commission since that Sub-Commission dealt with long-range problems and was particularly concerned with population trends in under-developed territories.

One of the important matters in formulating questions for censuses was classification of the industrial composition of the population. While it was true that the International Labour Organization and the Statistical Commission had done a substantial amount of work on the subject, Mr. Fleming pointed out that it would be useful to have the industrial classification of the population tied in with the classification of production in production indices.

Speaking as the representative of Australia, the CHAIRMAN concurred in the remarks of Mr. Fleming and stated that he too was favourably impressed by the work of the Population Commission.

Mr. MOROZOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) noted that during discussion in the Economic and Social Council, the Soviet delegation had already raised objections to a number of statements in the report of the Population Commission based on archaic and unacceptable theories. He had no intention of repeating that discussion but deemed it

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necessary to state that if the Population Commission adheres to those theories it will fail to carry out its task.

Since there were no further comments, the CHAIRMAN declared discussion of item 4 closed and indicated that in due course a draft for inclusion in the Commission's report to the Council would be submitted for approval.

ITEM 5 - REPORT OF MR. JOSE NUNEZ GUIMARAES, THE COMMISSION'S OBSERVER ON THE SOCIAL COMMISSION, ON THE QUESTION OF CONFERENCE OF EXPERTS ON HOUSING

Mr. TORRES (Brazil) explained that Mr. Guimaraes, who had been designated as the Commission's observer on the Social Commission, had been unable to attend the second session of the Social Commission and had requested Mr. Robert de Oliviera Campos (Brazil) to replace him. Accordingly, the report on the Social Commission (document E/CN.1/56) which Mr. Torres presented, had been prepared for the Economic and Employment Commission by Mr. Campos.

The CHAIRMAN expressed the appreciation of the Economic and Employment Commission for the contribution of Mr. Torres and Mr. Campos.

Mr. LUTOSLOWSKI (Poland) felt that, in view of the importance of housing, particularly in war devastated and under-developed areas, the Commission should have further information on the programme for regional conferences of experts, the possibilities of technical assistance and other aspects of the problem falling within the competence of the Economic and Employment Commission.

Miss SENDER (American Federation of Labor) indicated that at the third session the Social Commission had further discussed the question of housing. It had then been announced that a meeting of experts on tropical housing had been held and that housing in war devastated countries was being handled by the Economic Commission for

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Europe. A report from the Secretariat giving complete information on the subject would be helpful.

If the Economic and Employment Commission dealt with the supply aspect of housing, as had been indicated, the question of labour in the construction of housing needed clarification in order to determine whether the matter would fall within the competence of the Social Commission or the Economic and Employment Commission.

Mr. WEINTRAUB (Commission Secretary) confirmed Miss Sender's statement that a meeting of experts on tropical housing had been held in Venezuela in December 1947. The Economic Commission for Europe concerned itself with the question of housing in the war-devastated countries and had taken action on the question at various times. If the Commission wished the Secretariat could present a more detailed report.

Mr. EVANS (ILO) said that the Governing Body of ILO had set up an Industrial Committee of building, civil engineering, and public works. The Committee met for the first time in Brussels from 25 November to 3 December 1946. It adopted a number of resolutions which included collaboration in the construction industries, the stabilization of employment in the construction industries, general problems of construction and reconstruction, and conditions of work. Some of those resolutions were reproduced in document E/CN.1/46. Mr. Evans added that another session of that industrial committee would be held in the United States in the course of the present year.

The CHAIRMAN recalled that during the first session of the Economic and Employment Commission, the matter was placed on the agenda, and by consultation between the Chairman of the Social Commission, and the Chairman of the Economic and Employment Commission,

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the degree of participation of both Commissions had been decided upon.

The views of both Commissions seemed to be that the problem of housing should be dealt with primarily by the Social Commission, which would study the housing needs and various alternative methods for dealing with those needs. The Economic and Employment Commission was more interested in the wider aspects of the question, in particular the repercussions of the housing problems on the general economic life of a country. That view had been translated into the formula that the Social Commission would deal with the question of demand of the housing problem, and the Economic and Employment Commission with the question of supply; as a result there had been some confusion and misconceptions as to what had been agreed between the Chairmen of the respective Commissions.

Arrangements would be made to obtain from the Secretariat up-to-date information on subsequent developments, which could be used in future discussions of the Commission. The report would be circulated among the members as soon as possible, and on the basis of the information obtained, it might be necessary to come back to that point of the agenda at a later stage.

Mr. RUEFF (France) said that the housing question was one of the most important economic problems. The question of the inequality of demand and supply in the countries where the housing problem was acute, was one of the characteristics of the present situation. From the explanations given, the Social Commission appeared to have devoted its studies to the material aspect of the problems of housing, construction and supply, but had not dealt with the real economic aspect of the problem, which was the reason for the existing inequality; methods would have to be considered to make those conditions disappear. The Economic
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and Employment Commission should include in its studies investigations on the question of housing and of construction. Apart from the question of economic balance, there were substantial reasons why the housing problem should be considered within the competence of the Commission. The question was of extreme importance and research was needed not only on the technical aspect of the problem as it related to various countries but on its relation to the problem of economic stability.

Mr. EVANS (ILO) said that his organization would shortly be publishing a report on housing and employment, which might not cover all the points raised by Mr. Rueff, but would be a contribution in that direction.

Mr. LUTOSIOWSKI (Poland) wished to clarify his previous statement. The housing problem had many aspects, but the one aspect that could help in the solution of the problem was the technical question of thrifty and efficient methods of house construction. The construction of houses could not be regarded from the economic point of view without taking into consideration the technical aspects of the problem, as both were closely connected. It might be of interest for the Commission to obtain figures as to the amount of housing that could be provided for a given investment. That question should be raised in the course of the discussion of the reports of the Sub-Commission on Employment and Economic Stability, and of the Economic and Employment Commission, both of which dealt with the question. He stressed the importance of providing practical remedies to the problem, to which the United Nations organs could furnish assistance in the countries which had difficulties in solving them.

/The CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN said that the question could be appropriately dealt with later, when the document prepared by the Secretariat had been circulated. Although he agreed to a large extent with the views expressed by Mr. Lutoslowski, he doubted whether such problems could be dealt with on a world-wide basis. There were differences in the technical methods of the various countries. He thought the view of the members of the Social Commission was that the matter should be dealt with through regional commissions.

In reply to a question raised by Mr. Lutoslowski, Mr. WEINTRAUB (Commission Secretary) said that the problems of construction technique were not within the competence of the Economic and Employment Commission, but that they would be studied by a technical group set up by the Secretariat in accordance with the recommendations of the Social Commission.

Mr. RUEFF (France) agreed that the question of examining the problem of construction technique was not within the terms of reference of the Commission, but pointed out that the housing problem was a fundamental question which required immediate attention. In a great many European countries private construction had practically disappeared. The results of public investments and other economic questions should be examined. An organ of the United Nations should be entrusted with the work of studying the problem, which affected large numbers of people in the world today.

Mr. BOE (Norway) and Mr. NEHRU (India) both expressed a desire to examine the Secretariat's report before ending the discussion.

The CHAIRMAN ruled that the Commission would return to that item on the agenda when the Secretariat's report had been circulated among the members.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.