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Chairman: Mr. Jiří NOSEK (Czechoslovakia).

## AGENDA ITEM 44

Budget estimates for the financial year 1960 (A/4100, A/4170, A/4223, A/C.5/777, A/C.5/782, A/C.5/783, A/C.5/L.567) (continued)\*

First reading (continued)

## SECTION 6. SALARIES AND WAGES (A/4110, A/4170, A/4223, A/C.5/777)

1. Mr. TURNER (Controller) pointed out that the Secretary-General had submitted an initial budget estimate of \$31,537,500 for section 6, to which a supplementary estimate of \$160,200 for temporary assistance, consultancies, and expert groups had been added as a result of decisions by the Economic and Social Council (A/C.5/777). It should be stressed that the Secretary-General had not proposed the establishment of any new permanent posts. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had recommended (A/4223) a reduction of \$30,200 in the Secretary-General's supplementary estimate. The Secretary-General did not wish to contest either that recommendation or the recommendation to reduce his initial estimate by \$235,000 (A/4170, para. 155). Most (\$135,000) of the latter reduction applied to the proposed new General Service posts at Headquarters and Geneva; the Advisory Committee considered that there should be twenty-five new posts instead of fifty, as proposed by the Secretary-General (*ibid.*, para 140). The Secretary-General, in his statement at the Committee's 711th meeting (A/C.5/782), had expressed doubts concerning the wisdom of the recommendation, since he did not believe that the immediate monetary savings represented a true economy. However, he did not wish to contest it. The Advisory Committee also requested a further reduction of \$100,000 in connexion with staff turnover (A/4170, para. 143); the Secretary-General proposed a turnover factor of 3 per cent, or \$900,000, while the Advisory Committee asked that the amount should be raised to \$1 million—the difference was not substantial, as it was, in fact, very difficult to make exact estimates in that respect. It should be noted, however, that the Secretary-General had expressed reservations concerning the Advisory Committee's assumption as to likely turnover savings (A/C.5/782, para. 13), since there was no reason to believe that they could be achieved in practice.

\*Resumed from the 722nd meeting.

2. With regard to the adjustment for staff turnover, he pointed out that owing to the method of computation of the 1960 estimates as compared with 1959 the 1960 estimates included indirectly an additional allowance of \$160,000 for the turnover factor. The adjustment for staff turnover should therefore be estimated at \$1,060,000. Further, as vacancies in the General Service category offered very small possibilities of savings, the 3 per cent turnover factor envisaged by the Secretary-General applied essentially to the professional establishment and was therefore equivalent to an actual percentage of approximately 5 per cent.

3. Commenting on the increase in staff costs since 1955, he said that the increase, which amounted to \$6 million, or 25 per cent of the 1955 estimates, could be broken down as follows: (a) \$1 million for established posts of the Bureau of Technical Assistance Operations and the Office for Public Administration—items not previously included in the regular budget and, moreover, almost entirely offset by receipts; (b) A little over \$1 million representing the cost of new posts established between 1955 and 1960; (c) A \$575,000 decrease in the provision for turnover of staff owing to the more extensive use of posts; (d) The balance (\$3,250,000) was attributable to various factors, in particular to an increase of about 15 per cent in salaries of Professional staff owing to the rise in the cost of living in New York and the effect of increments, by an increase of a similar proportion in Headquarters General Service posts costs, and by lesser increases at Geneva and other overseas offices.

4. With regard to the increase of approximately \$5,000,000, excluding the Bureau of Technical Assistance Operations and the Office for Public Administration, it might be computed that there was an offset by means of credit to the Tax Equalization Fund of perhaps \$1,000,000.

5. Many representatives had called the Secretary-General's attention to the need for a decentralization of staff and services. In that connexion, he pointed out that forty-four new Professional posts had been established between 1955 and 1960 in the Secretariat as a whole, not including Technical Assistance services. The number of those posts at Headquarters had been reduced by sixty-seven; therefore, the increase in the number of Professional staff members occupying posts in overseas offices had been 111. Many staff members, including the entire Division of Narcotic Drugs and a large number of translators and interpreters, had been transferred to Geneva. There had been a similar trend in General Service posts.

6. In conclusion, he said that the Secretary-General, notwithstanding the reservations he had already expressed, would not contest the Advisory Committee's reasonable recommendation.

7. Mr. H. P. MARTIN (Union of South Africa) asked for an explanation in respect of section 6, chapter III (Temporary assistance). For the financial year 1959

the Secretary-General had requested \$200,000 for temporary assistance for the General Assembly, but that sum had proved very inadequate and he had had to request an additional appropriation of \$92,000 (A/4198, para. 36); that represented a 46 per cent error in calculation. He wished to know why expenditure in 1959 had so greatly exceeded estimates. It would be helpful to know that in considering the 1960 estimates.

8. Mr. TURNER (Controller) replied that in the past that item of the budget had nearly always been underestimated. As a result of the Advisory Committee's very pertinent proposals, measures had been taken to the end that unused appropriations deriving from vacant posts should no longer be used to finance temporary posts for the General Assembly. That procedure had made it possible to achieve calculations which corresponded much more closely to reality. Even so, there had been a reduction in the total appropriation requested for temporary staff.

9. Mr. H. P. MARTIN (Union of South Africa) thanked the Controller for his explanation.

10. Mr. FOBES (United States of America) pointed out that the Plenipotentiary Conference for the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs was to be held in 1961, and that at least one article of that instrument would concern administrative services. It would therefore be well if the Advisory Committee examined the administrative aspects of the draft convention. He hoped that the Committee could examine the position as early as 1960 and prepare a report which would be of interest not only to the Fifth Committee but to all the Member States.

11. Mr. BANNIER (Netherlands) thought that the United States representative had raised an important point. Probably it was possible to reduce the administrative costs of the various bodies dealing with narcotics. The possibility of amalgamating the secretariats of those bodies with the Division of Narcotic Drugs in Geneva should be considered, and it would be valuable if the Advisory Committee could make a study of the existing situation before the conference to draw up the draft convention met.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.