

United Nations

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SOCIAL COUNCIL**

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ET SOCIAL**

LONDON
E/REF/10
9 April 1946
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

SUMMARY RECORD OF SECOND MEETING

Held at Church House, Dean's Yard, London,
on 9 April 1946, at 10.30 a.m.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. McNEIL (United Kingdom)

Schedule of Meetings

The Committee gave its approval to the suggestion of the Chairman that the meetings of the Committee should normally take place every day with the exception of Saturday afternoons and Sundays. They should be held from 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m., from 3.15 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. and from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. The Easter recess should begin at noon, Thursday, 18 April extending until Tuesday morning, 23 April. In order to meet the requirements of those Delegations whose languages were not the working languages, and who, therefore, required additional time to study their documents thoroughly, it was agreed that if a request was received before 4 p.m. the following morning meeting might be omitted.

Publicity of Meetings

The Chairman drew attention to the Provisional Rules of Procedure which specified that the meetings of the Committee and its Sub-Committees should be held in public unless a private session was thought particularly desirable.

Decision: The Committee endorsed this policy.

Status of the I.G.C. and UNRRA

In view of paragraph 5 of the Economic and Social Council Resolution (E/15/Rev.1) which provided that the representatives of the I.G.C. and UNRRA should be invited to sit with the Committee in a consultative capacity, the Chairman thought it desirable that its precise meaning and intention should be fully understood from the outset.

It was clear, he felt, that the representatives of the I.G.C. and UNRRA would be expected to sit with the Committee and also that they would be entitled, when called upon by the Chairman, to express an opinion on any matter under discussion which concerned their Organizations or in which their Organizations were particularly interested. It was obvious that they would be frequently requested to place their wide knowledge and experience of the problem at the disposal of the Committee. On the other hand, it was important to note that the term "consultative capacity" did not necessarily entitle representatives of these bodies to take part in the deliberations of the Committee unless specifically requested. This limitation need not, of course, preclude them raising any point of particular interest to them by informing the Secretary and suggesting to him that he should request the Chairman, with the permission of the Committee, to ask for their views.

Decision: This interpretation of the status of the I.G.C. and UNRRA was endorsed by the Committee without comment.

Discussion of Agenda (E/REF/2)

The Chairman pointed out that no additional items for inclusion on the Agenda had been submitted by Delegations since the distribution of Document E/REF/2. Although the Rules of Procedure contained no provision regarding submission of items for the Agenda, he suggested that a time limit of 48 hours should be applied.

Decision: This was agreed, and the provisional Agenda was accordingly adopted.

Discussion of Rules of Procedure (E/REF/3)

In view of the fact that the provisional Rules of Procedure had been closely modelled on those of the Economic and Social Council, which had exhaustively discussed them at its sessions, and also in view of the shortage of time at the disposal of the Committee, the Chairman suggested that the Rules need not be considered paragraph by paragraph, but might rather be adopted as a whole.

The Secretary explained that the application of Rule 11 concerning verbatim records would differ slightly from the comparable Rule of the Economic and Social Council. In view of the shortage of staff it would be possible only to produce a verbatim text of original speeches in the two working languages. When speeches were made in other than the working languages, a text based on the first interpretation would be reproduced.

Decision: The provisional Rules of Procedure were adopted without further discussion.

Election of Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur

On the nomination of the Delegate for the United Kingdom, seconded by the Delegates for France, the Netherlands and Yugoslavia, Mr. Winiewicz, Delegate for Poland, and Mr. Lisicky, Delegate for Czechoslovakia, were elected First Vice-Chairman and Second Vice-Chairman respectively by acclamation.

On the nomination of the Delegate for the United Kingdom, seconded by the Delegates for Yugoslavia and Belgium, M. Bousquet, Delegate for France, was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

Interpretation of terms of reference: (Document E/REF/5)

Replying to a query from the Delegate for the United Kingdom regarding the interpretation of the term "refugees and displaced persons", the Chairman ruled that though it was desirable that a definition of these terms should be determined as soon as possible, it could more appropriately be considered under Item 7 of the Agenda, the Chairman's plan of work.

A general discussion developed concerning the date on which the Committee's report should be submitted to the Economic and Social Council, and in this connection particular reference was drawn to paragraphs 2, 8 and 9 of the Economic and Social Council Resolution (E/15 Rev.1). On the basis of the observations of the Secretariat (E/REF/5), the Chairman suggested that the Report should be placed before the Committee by May 9 and approved by May 12.

Certain Delegates expressed the view that the nature of the Refugee problem and the thorough examination which was required, would make the preparation of a report for this date virtually impossible, particularly if the detailed investigation or field trips envisaged in paragraph 7 of the Resolution were undertaken. They felt that the outside date could justifiably be set at July 25 which would be forty-five days prior to the convening of the Second Part of the First Session of the General Assembly as prescribed in paragraph 9. It was pointed out that the Resolution was itself contradictory since it required the prompt and detailed consideration of a question which could obviously not be examined both exhaustively and expeditiously. Some compromise would have to be made, and it was preferable that thoroughness should prevail.

The necessity of a thorough study of the problem was generally expected. At the same time, several delegates felt that a prompt examination was equally essential, particularly in view of the forthcoming close of UNRRA's work. It was noteworthy that in a recent resolution at Atlantic City, the UNRRA Council, which incidentally had a similar membership to that of this Committee, it had been decided to make every effort to establish an international organization for the care of refugees and displaced persons in accordance with the Resolution of the General Assembly. They believed that paragraph 2 of the Economic and Social Council Resolution should be regarded as the operative part for the Committee, and that paragraphs 8 and 9 referred to future action by the Council. Paragraph 2 obliged the Committee to submit its findings to the Second Session of the Council. After the presentation of its report, the Committee would have no authority to continue its work unless specifically requested to do so by the Council; it was merely required to hold itself at the disposal of the Council. The investigation or field work envisaged in paragraph 7 was permissive rather than obligatory,

and must not affect the target date prescribed in the Resolution.

It was felt that the suggestion put forward by the Delegate for France that no precise date need be set and that it would suffice for the Committee's report to be submitted some time following 25 May did not really meet the requirements of the Resolution. Furthermore ample time must be allowed the Council to examine the Committee's findings fully. It was possible that the Committee's report would be referred back for revision before its distribution to the Members of the United Nations by 25 July.

Concern was expressed with such stringent limits being placed upon the Committee's work. A suggestion was put forward by the Delegate for Poland, supported by the Delegate for the U.S.S.R. that the Committee was fully empowered to ask the Second Session of the Economic and Social Council for further time to complete the work if, as was probable, its report was inadequate. To this it was replied that such a proviso would, at this stage, inevitably prejudice the accomplishment of the Committee's task, a task which it was clearly intended should be completed by 25 May. It should be sufficient to draw the attention of the Council to any deficiencies by indicating them in the body of the report itself.

The following proposal was made by the Delegate for the United States, seconded by the Delegate for the United Kingdom:

"Taking into account the pertinent provisions of the Resolution of the Economic and Social Council, the Committee sets itself the objective of presenting a report to the Council by 25 May 1946."

Stressing the desirability of the Committee being able to ask the Council for additional time to complete its work, the Delegate for Poland proposed the following amendment to this motion which was seconded by the Delegate for Yugoslavia:

"Finding however that it might not have time enough to study the problem thoroughly as recommended by the Resolution of the Economic and Social Council, it reserves itself the right to suggest to the Second Session of the Council the possibility of a supplementary enquiry."

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Decision: The amendment proposed by the Delegate for Poland was rejected. The motion of the Delegate for the United States was then put to the vote and adopted with one abstention.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.
