

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE & EMPLOYMENT
Department of Public Information
Havana, Cuba Press Release ITO/220
23 March 1948
STATEMENT BY RT. HON. WALTER NASH, DELEGATE FOR NEW ZEALAND

May I in opening - before entering on the points that I desire to mention - extend the thanks of New Zealand to the President and Government of Cuba - to the Chief of the Protocol and to CACNUCE - for the hospitality and other facilities that have been provided for us during our stay in Havana. Opportunities to see the countryside of this amazing country have been very limited owing to the many sessions of the Conference. Pinar del Rio, Mariel and places adjacent to Havana, however, suggest to me that Cuba has a future as great as any other small country. Its productivity like its hospitality, is outstanding and the benefits coming to it from this Charter will be as great as that which will come to any other country. Linked with an equitable distribution of the wealth, the productivity of its soil, and its climate, should give it one of the best even living standards of any known area of the world. If that living standard is in accord with the magnificent hospitality of its people then progress is assured.

Again, my thanks to the President and Government of Cuba - to the Mayor and Councillors of the City of Havana and to everyone who has been so kind to the delegates.

Since first we came to Havana on 21st November 1947, 123 days have passed - 123 days of discussion - negotiation - disagreement and agreement. Out of these discussions have come the text of a Charter to authenticate which it is planned that we should sign the Final Act tomorrow.

The objective, I believe, of most of us in coming to this Conference was to try and so organize world trade as to achieve the purpose and objectives set out in Article 1 of the Charter; a purpose to which we all subscribe. It would be good if there was as much agreement as to the means of achieving the purpose as there
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is on the purpose itself.

There were - there are - and there will be real differences of opinion as to the way nations must go to achieve the purpose and objectives. If, however, we get our objectives right, it will be easier to reach them.

The world at present is dissatisfied and in the future will be less satisfied with the cruel disparities that are existing in living standards and opportunities to enjoy personal freedom. These disparities must be removed if we are to have the personal freedom which is the rightful heritage of all human beings.

More steps have been taken towards achieving this purpose during the past 10 years than in any like period of history. It is fully recognized that lifting of living standards - a better chance for the people of all countries - a fuller life - an ordered material world in which persons enjoy spiritual and mental freedom must be achieved.

The Havana Charter lays down principles and possibilities that will lead towards the goal that I have just referred to and New Zealand, as a small country, will endeavor to live up to and take its share of the responsibility necessary to reach that goal - a better world for all - not for ourselves alone - but for all.

When looking at the conditions of the world there is room for optimism even though so much pessimism prevails. We have mentioned before - but it is worth reiterating - there never has been in history a period in which the peoples of one nation in particular, and other nations, have supported others by gifts of the amazing range which they have provided - Lend-Lease - the Marshall Plan - Emergency Children's Fund - UNRRA - are great and inspiring examples of such aid.

This willingness to provide the good things of life to enable others to live, is unparalleled in history. (MORE)

Now may I say a word about the origin of the Charter: it seems to me that it originated in the personality of Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State of the United States Government, and the passing of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act. From this the great principle went through -- the Lend-Lease system -- the greatest conception any human mind has yet had with regard to promoting good relations between nations. Then to the Atlantic Charter, through the United States' and United Kingdom proposals for world trade--all of these roots being stemmed out into the Conference at London, the cleaning-up at New York - the adjustment at Geneva (when it appears that things were made a little too tight) and now here at Havana where there has been some relaxation.

May I give credit to the Delegation and the Government of the United States of America. I believe it is their persistence that has brought us as far as we have reached. Whilst, at this conference, they have maintained a strong tenacity for principles, they have nevertheless shown an appreciation of other countries' difficulties and a willingness to compromise. There is much credit due to the Deputy-Chairman and other members of the United States Delegation.

This does not in any way to me, qualify the great attachment of New Zealand to the British Commonwealth and the United Kingdom--but only extends the area and takes in the countries of North America and gives them credit and responsibility for what is to come out of the future.

Regarding the contribution of individual delegates at this Conference--I would that I could name them, but this would be invidious because one might forget one or other who is behind the scenes and who has done the job. There is, however, a small band of men - one or two from each of the major countries - one or two from the smaller countries who have done remarkable work here in Havana and previously at Geneva. I do give credit, also - and we all must - for the amazing achievement of the Secretariat - especially the documentation section. (MORE)

Now to come to the CHARTER:

It would be idle to say that there are no adjustments required in the Charter and it is probable that when the period of five years has passed, the provision for review will lead to many amendments and adjustments. But despite the adjustments that may be required there have been great achievements.

If we will look at the Charter and the technical clauses covering international trade - freedom of transit - dumping - valuation - marks of origin - trade regulations - statistics and trade information - provision for Customs Unions - the steps to amend or abolish restrictive business practices/the provision for intergovernmental commodity arrangements - and state trading - all are a considerable advance on anything previously achieved. There has been agreement on two other very important principles -- the general principle of reducing trade barriers -- and the principle of general most-favoured-nation treatment for all.

There are differences of opinion with regard to the use of quantitative restrictions and subsidies and other practices provided for in the Charter. It is possible, however, that as the days pass we will see these in a different light and it may be that measures which are today thought to be dangerous may have great potentialities for good.

The present text tends to remove grave dissatisfaction and feelings of injustice and frustration. It was felt by some when the Conference commenced that industrialized countries were determined to maintain their advantages - that was incorrect. The proposals when adopted will in my opinion give the necessary opportunities to the underdeveloped countries to utilise their resources and raise their living standards to the ultimate advantage of all.

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Many of the raw materials of the under-developed countries will, within the next decade or so, be processed in their own country if the people have the will to do so.

The text is not perfect -there is no such state as perfection-. What we must strive for is infinite perfecting- uphill all the way. The result will be dependent on persons and governments to live up to the letter and spirit of the Charter.

Domination cannot be permanent. Dictatorship is not fertile -it cannot last. It is freedom that is desired but it cannot come unless there is food to eat -clothes to wear and somewhere to live in healthy conditions. That is the rightful heritage for all and I believe the Charter will help to this end.

What we require is an ordered material world -great steps forward have been made towards this goal in Havana -an ordered material world so that we can have personal and spiritual freedom, so long as that freedom does not interfere with the freedom of others.

In conclusion, as I see it, the charter recognizes the position of under-developed countries and provides ways and means for them to become developed countries, enables them to take their place as complete equals with the alleged developed countries of the world. If the right steps are taken, productivity will be increased and living standards will be lifted. It is worth while recognizing that if parts of the world have not sufficient resources inside their sovereign areas, then we have either to adjust the boundaries of these sovereign areas or make our surplus resources available to them so that they might achieve a higher place in the world economy which, I think, in the long run is the goal that we are all after.

New Zealand has had -and may at the present time - have some misgivings and reservations. We express none. Our Government and Parliament will consider the Charter in its present text not only from the point of view of our own people - or of the people of the British Commonwealth to which we are proud to belong- but in accord with the purposes of the Charter.

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