

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 1ST MEETING

Temporary Chairman: Mr. SALIM (President of the General Assembly)

CONTENTS

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN

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The meeting was called to order at 5.25 p.m.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Rule 103 of the rules of procedure provides that each Main Committee shall elect a Chairman, two Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur. These officers shall be elected on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, experience and personal competence.

The elections shall be held by secret ballot, unless the Committee decides otherwise in an election where only one candidate is standing. The nomination of each candidate shall be limited to one speaker, after which the Committee shall immediately proceed to the election.

Furthermore, rule 110 of the rules of procedure provides that congratulations to the officers of a Main Committee shall not be expressed except by the Chairman of the previous session or, in his absence, by a member of his delegation, after all the officers of the Committee have been elected.

This meeting has been convened for the election of the Chairman of the First Committee. Are there any nominations?

Mr. PASTINEN (Finland): Although this is formally a meeting of the First Committee, I should like to take the liberty of extending to you my personal congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly. The official congratulations on behalf of the Finnish Government will be conveyed in due course.

It is a tradition of the General Assembly that the outgoing Chairman of a Main Committee should have the prerogative of nominating for the consideration of and election by the Assembly a person to serve in that capacity at the current session. You, Mr. President, have properly emphasized the qualifications that the rules of procedure require of a prospective Chairman, namely, experience and personal competence. Mere tokens of good intentions should not be accepted, nor is this a pure formality. If anything, the members of the Assembly should give such qualifications their most careful

(Mr. Pastinen, Finland)

scrutiny. These considerations will, indeed, have added topicality at a time when the Assembly will be engaged in an effort to improve and rationalize its working methods. The Chairmen of the Main Committees will have a crucial role to play in this effort. It will put their experience and competence to a particularly demanding test.

I put forth these considerations in order to underline the fact that I am here for more substantive reasons than merely to exercise a formal prerogative in nominating Ambassador Davidson L. Hepburn, Permanent Representative of Bahamas, for election to the office of the Chairman of the First Committee at the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. On the basis of both personal and official knowledge, I consider it a privilege to nominate Ambassador Hepburn, a person who eminently fulfils the qualifications to which I have referred.

A quick perusal of the formal record of Ambassador Hepburn testifies to those qualifications. When Bahamas became independent in 1973, Davidson Hepburn, appointed Deputy Head of Mission, was instrumental in establishing the Bahamas Permanent Mission to the United Nations. From the twenty-eighth to the thirty-third session of the General Assembly, Ambassador Hepburn was the chief representative to the First Committee. He was also Vice-Chairman of his country's delegation from the seventh to the tenth special session of the General Assembly and served as Vice-Chairman of the Preparatory Committee as well as of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, on disarmament.

Prior to his appointment as Ambassador, Davidson Hepburn served in several ministries in the Bahamas. His most recent post was that of Under Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs. Ambassador Hepburn, who earned his Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Madrid, Spain, in 1966, was a professor of comparative languages and literature before joining the Bahamas Foreign Ministry in 1969. He also holds a Certificate in International Diplomacy from the International Institute in Geneva, Switzerland, where he studied as a Carnegie Fellow.

(Mr. Pastinen, Finland)

But to many of us who have the privilege of knowing Ambassador Hepburn on a more personal level, the formal record leaves unmentioned qualities at least as important as those it mentions. What I have in mind are good and balanced judgment, impartiality, objectivity, tolerance combined with firmness, and a thorough knowledge of the subjects within the ambit of the First Committee. For all these reasons, it is a privilege and a personal pleasure for me to nominate Ambassador Hepburn, Permanent Representative of the Bahamas, for election to the office of the Chairman of the First Committee which, in dealing with the questions of disarmament and related security questions, has such a crucially important role in the work of this Assembly.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: His Excellency Mr. Davidson L. Hepburn of Bahamas has been nominated by the representative of Finland. Since only one candidate has been presented, I propose that under rule 103 the Committee decide not to have a secret ballot.

It was so decided.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I therefore declare His Excellency Mr. Davidson L. Hepburn of Bahamas elected Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.