

The Security Council

In 1958 the Council, during its twenty-third year, held 76 meetings, compared to 46 in 1967. More than half these meetings (42) were devoted to the situation in the Middle East, nine were devoted to the trial and sentencing of a number of South West Africans (Namibians) in South Africa, and six dealt with the situation in Rhodesia. Five were taken up in response to developments in Czechoslovakia, and three concerned Cyprus, the balance being devoted to the question of security assurances in connection with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the admission of new members, the Pueblo incident, a complaint of Haiti and a tribute to the late Senator Kennedy.

Canada played an active part in Security Council consideration of the Rhodesia issue and in efforts of the Council to deal with issues arising from the Middle East dispute and to promote an agreed solution. A significant decision of the Council was the unanimous adoption on May 29, 1968, of comprehensive mandatory sanctions, under Chapter VII of the Charter, against the illegal régime in Rhodesia. Compliance with the mandatory provisions of this decision is an international legal obligation on all United Nations members, and the Department of External Affairs announced on December 31 that Canada had implemented the Security Council resolution.

In the course of 1968 there was further development of the attempt in the Council to seek agreement by consensus. In part, this development can be traced to the enlargement of the Council in 1966 from ten to 15 members. In part, also, it can be related to the effect on members of the situation created in the organization in 1964 over the Article 19 crisis and the wish of members to avoid stark confrontations. The enlarged Council requires nine concurring votes for decisions and the difficulty of securing these, coupled with the acceptance that unanimity is desirable, has greatly strengthened the influence of the non-permanent members and efforts to find compromise solutions. With few exceptions, decisions of the Council were by unanimity or near unanimity and there were few negative votes cast. There was only one occasion when a permanent member used the veto - the U.S.S.R., on a resolution on Czechoslovakia. While it is clear, therefore, that members will vote negatively when their direct interests are at stake, on other issues the Council seeks to work through a search for consensus.

Peace-keeping

The twenty-second session of the General Assembly requested the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations to continue its examination of all aspects of United Nations peacekeeping operations. The Committee was also given the task of preparing "a study on matters related to facilities, services and personnel which member states might provide in accordance with the Charter...for United Nations peacekeeping operations".

With its new mandate, the Committee of 33 opened its 1968 session in March. For a time, it appeared that the constitutional issues of authorization, financing and control would again prevent any forward movement, but eventually it was agreed to set up a small working group