

American countries, the prospects for attaining the target figures for the United Nations Refugee Fund for 1955 and 1956 are not promising.

In the field of human rights the Third Committee devoted a large part of its time to debating the question of self-determination, mainly in the context of Article I of the draft International Covenants on Human Rights. The efforts of the Western Powers have been directed to preventing precipitate and questionable action on this subject in the various United Nations bodies which have been dealing with it. The Afro-Asian delegations have, however, been most assiduous in pressing, with the support of the Soviet bloc and many of the Latin-American countries, for universal recognition of self-determination as an inalienable right of all peoples and for legal formulation of such a right in the draft Covenants on Human Rights. These efforts were intensified during the tenth session and, as the outcome of a difficult and inconclusive debate, a text was adopted for Article I of the draft Covenants which was far from satisfactory to many delegations. The adoption of this article would seem to prejudice objective consideration of a constructive proposal of the Secretary-General for the establishment of an *Ad Hoc* Committee which would attempt to reach agreement on certain basic principles concerning the whole question of self-determination. Prospects for achieving any real progress in this important matter are therefore most uncertain.

Trusteeship Questions

One of the many achievements of the Fourth Committee was the adoption of a resolution whereby the Assembly recommended that the United Kingdom organize and conduct without delay, under the supervision of the United Nations, a plebiscite in British Togoland. The plebiscite—the first of its kind to be held in United Nations Trust territory—is to ascertain the wishes of the inhabitants concerning their political future; that is, whether the territory should be linked with an independent Gold Coast, or continue under trusteeship pending final determination. The Fourth Committee also endorsed the views of a visiting mission to French Togoland that implementation of the political reforms contemplated by the French would be helpful in enabling the inhabitants of that territory to decide their future status at an early date. In these developments the anti-Colonial powers showed a spirit of accommodation; but on the question of South West Africa they pressed their attack against the Union Government which had continued to resist United Nations efforts to bring the territory under the trusteeship system.

Legal Questions

The most important matter discussed by the Sixth Committee was the draft Convention on Arbitral Procedure. It was apparent that whereas most member states agreed that arbitration was a necessary means of solving disputes between states, few (and in particular the Soviet Union) were prepared to underwrite a provision of the draft Convention aimed at ensuring that an obligation to arbitrate once entered into could not be repudiated. The discussion on this subject—as was generally the case in the Sixth Committee this year—was free from political controversy.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding the disappointment caused by the rapid evaporation of the Geneva spirit, most delegations seemed satisfied at the end of the session