

CANADA AT THE UNITED NATIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL VETO: The Interim Committee of the General Assembly, by 19 votes to 7, with 10 abstentions, adopted July 9 an Argentine resolution recommending that the Third Session of the General Assembly (which meets in Paris in the Fall) should consider whether the time has not come to call a general conference of the United Nations, as provided in article 109 of the Charter, for revision of the United Nations Charter.

The seven opposing votes were those of Canada, France, Norway, India, South Africa, United Kingdom and United States.

An original Argentine proposal would have made a direct appeal to the General Assembly to call a conference to study the world political situation and to consider abolishing the veto power of the five permanent members of the Security Council. To this proposal, Colombia proposed two amendments and it was amended by Colombia, that the resolution was adopted.

The Interim Committee, at an earlier sitting, adopted a report of its sub-committee on voting procedure in the Security Council. This report recommends to members of the Security Council that certain items in the list of possible decisions should be considered procedural and that members of the Council should conduct themselves accordingly.

(On questions of procedure, voting in the Security Council is by affirmative vote of any seven members. There is no veto on procedural questions).

CANADA'S ATTITUDE

Speaking in the Interim Committee, July 9, R. G. Riddell, (Canada) made the following statement:

The attitude of the Canadian Government towards the general problem of voting procedure in the Security Council is well known from statements which have been made by Canadian delegations in previous discussions of this problem. What I wish to do this morning is to make a few remarks about this particular report.

I think it would be unfortunate if the Canadian delegation seemed, because it associated itself with the preparation of this report and gave its support to this report, either to be modifying its desire for a more radical solution to the problem of voting procedure in the Security Council or to be modifying its discontent and disappointment over the way in which the use of the privileged voting procedure of the permanent members in the Security Council had inhibited the work of that body.

I think I should make it clear, therefore, that the Canadian delegation regards this report merely as a first step in what must necessarily be a long and arduous journey.

This is by no means the last time that the problem of voting in the Security Council will be discussed. This is by no means the last expedient that will be resorted to as a method of solving that situation. The report represents the consequences of a decision taken by the sub-committee when it first met, on tactics. It was necessary to decide then whether a frontal attack should be made on the problem, by considering the possibility of revising the Charter, or whether a more gradual approach should be taken by considering what should be done in existing circumstances to improve the voting procedure. The sub-committee chose the latter course.

NOT SIMPLY VOTING PROBLEM

I think it made this choice wisely in existing circumstances, not only because of the atmosphere of tension which has developed in the world in recent months, but also because the problem is not simply a problem of voting procedure. It is a much greater problem than that. It is a problem that arises whenever an attempt is made to associate a number of members of varying sizes and strengths in a composite organization. It is a problem that is as old as the history of federalism and those of us who live in federal countries know how difficult a problem it is how it requires constant scrutiny and repeated adjustments in the arrangements that are made to meet it. I do not think for a moment that this problem can be solved merely by a constitutional reform. If, by constitutional reform, the veto were to be removed tomorrow, I do not think we would be free of the problem which is created either by the immediate difficulty arising out of lack of unanimity among permanent members of the Security Council or by the long range difficulty that arises out of disparity in size, in strength, in willingness and ability to accept responsibility amongst the members. That is not to say for a moment that the present method of solving the problem is satisfactory.

ROUGH AND READY METHOD

It is a very rough and ready method of meeting that problem that has never been acceptable to the member states that do not enjoy the privilege of that voting procedure. On the other hand, the ultimate satisfactory solution to the problem will not be easy to find. I think it would be misleading the public if we represented this report as going very far but we would be misleading them further if we lead them to believe that more substantial progress could be made now by more radical measures. With reference to this report itself, I think, Mr. Chairman, it is a mistake to assume, as was suggested yesterday by Sir Carl Berendsen, (New Zealand), that the report is

without practical significance. It may very well be, as he suggested, that we have gone no further on our journey than the Hudson tunnel. I am not sure, however, that we have not got as close to our destination as if we had wrapped ourselves up in a rocket and set off on a more spectacular journey.

Let us consider what has actually taken place. The voting procedure in the Security Council is stated in the Charter in a very few lines. It is a relatively brief statement. It is obvious that that statement is an inadequate definition of this procedure and that further definition and further interpretation will be required.

FIVE-POWER STATEMENT

In fact, before the Charter itself was eventually signed, there was in interpretation of that section of the Charter, an interpretation which was embodied in the five power statement, covering the use to which the veto would be put. That is the only formal interpretation that has ever been given to the procedure since that time. I think it is a mistake to assume that the five powers who were associated with that statement are alone entitled to interpret this particular section, that they alone have the right to define and interpret the privilege which is set forth for them in a very few words in the Charter. I think that the process of definition and interpretation is one in which all members of the United Nations should participate in a variety of ways. They should participate in that process of interpretation and definition in the manner which has been adopted in this Committee and actual participation in the Security Council from time to time in discussions and decisions which in themselves modify this procedure. What has been done in this document is to elaborate a further definition and interpretation of the voting procedure in the Security Council to put alongside the one already in existence.

RESULTS OF SIGNIFICANCE

It is a definition and interpretation in which, if present indications are correct, the vast majority of members will concur. This interpretation has also the concurrence of four of the members who participated in the previous interpretation. Even though the interpretation which is embodied in this document is never formally put into effect by any single or precise action, it is nevertheless bound to have results in the same way that any general interpretative process has a result on a constitutional structure. It seems to me, therefore, that the results of this process which was begun by the Committee are bound to be of very considerable significance. It is true that what we have done is to initiate a very gradual process but it seems to me that it is only by a gradual process, by trial and error, by interpretation such as the one which we have now completed that the voting procedure in the Security Council can be altered in present circumstances. It may be that before

long we can as it were, shift gears, and consider the more direct approach of constitutional amendment. In the meantime, it seems to the Canadian delegation that this constitutes a very useful and practical step towards the gradual solution of this problem and the Canadian delegation is very happy to associate itself with this report.

INDIAN PREFABRICATED SCHOOLS: Erection of five prefabricated schools in isolated parts of British Columbia by the Indian Affairs Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources has been authorized.

The buildings, one-storey structures with teachers' residences attached, are to be erected on the Klemtu Reserve in the Bella Coola Agency, on the Stony Creek and Alexis Creek Reserves in the Williams Lake Agency, and on the North Thompson and Neskaingli Reserves in the Kamloops Agency.

Erection of these prefabricated buildings was decided in view of the difficulty of securing contractors willing to undertake construction in the isolated districts and the high cost of shipping materials to the building sites.

RECORD AIR PHOTO SURVEY: RCAF photo survey aircraft, having taken advantage of good weather conditions, have broken all records for aerial photographic coverage of Canada. With the expected photographic season somewhat more than half over, planes of the RCAF's two photo survey squadrons have rolled up an impressive total of more than 456,000 square miles.

Total coverage for 1947 was slightly over 400,000, the largest single season's operation since the RCAF began the job of covering the Dominion by aerial photography in 1921. In that year 281 square miles was done by Air Force photo planes.

Officers of 22 Photo Wing, which controls the operations, are cautious about making predictions of total coverage by the end of the season, pointing out that weather conditions, extremely capricious in the Far North, play a big part in the work. In some northern areas only a week or two of suitable photographic weather is normally encountered. They expect, however, that well over 500,000 square miles will have been done by end of the summer, and that 600,000 is a possibility.

Although operations are taking place in many parts of Canada this year, greatest individual coverage by areas has taken place in Labrador, the western portion of Northern Quebec, and Baffin Island. Nearly all of Labrador has been photographed this year, a total of 118,000 square miles having so far been done. About two-fifths of Baffin Island, amounting to 107,000 square miles, has been done.