

petence, the chairmanships are divided up among states in order to satisfy considerations of national prestige and to secure an adequate geographical distribution of chairmanships. Under such a system, it is only by luck if a chairman turns out to be efficient.

Canadian delegations have opposed this system but so far without much success. We recognize that there must be adequate geographical distribution of chairmanships, that all the chairmen should not come, for example, from Europe or from the English-speaking countries or from Latin America. But we do not believe it is beyond the wit of man to find at any Assembly six competent chairmen who, together, would represent the main geographical areas of the world. This cannot be done as long as the powers which are most influential in drawing up slates draw up their slates on the basis that it is time that "Ruritania" and "Amazonia" were given chairmanships and make no inquiries about the personal competence of the chief representatives of "Ruritania" and "Amazonia". The United States has so far been an offender in this respect. This is perhaps due to the fact that the United States practices this sort of system in its own legislature. In the United States Congress, chairmen of committees are appointed on the basis of seniority.

This same theme of efficiency versus adequate geographical representation appears in the diplomatic discussions which go on over elections to the various councils of the United Nations. The position of the Canadian Government on this question was stated clearly over four years ago by the Prime Minister when, on July 9, 1943, in the House of Commons, speaking on the problems which were likely to face us in the post-war period, he said that representation on the governing bodies of international institutions should be determined on a functional basis under which those countries, large or small, would be members which had the greatest contribution to make to the particular objects in question. The Canadian delegation at San Francisco was largely responsible in having this principle of functionalism set forth in Article 23 of the Charter, which governs the election of non-permanent members of the Security Council. According to this article, the primary consideration which should determine the election of the non-permanent members of the Security Council should be their contribution "to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization". "Equitable geographical distribution" should be a secondary consideration.

This functional principle, however, has not always been adhered to in practice by the Assembly. On the contrary, there is danger of a convention growing up which combines the worst features of regionalism and of the rotation of honours. Under this convention certain groups of states would each be entitled to a certain number of seats on the Security Council and on the Economic and Social Council; each of these groups of states would have the right to choose which of its members should at any time serve on these Councils; in making their choice these groups of states would follow the principle of the rotation of honours. The logical final result of this absurd and dangerous convention would be that ultimately the six non-permanent members of the Security Council might be the six Members of the United Nations which had the least to contribute to the work of that council.

Another aspect of the role which Canada has played in the United Nations is that it has been foremost in insisting on the necessity for use of clear and unambiguous language in the resolutions and conventions adopted by the Assembly. One ever-present temptation at an international conference is to welcome with a sigh of relief any resolution on which everyone says they are in agreement, even though that resolution is so badly drafted that it can be given a number of conflicting meanings. Experience, particularly during the past few years, has amply demonstrated the danger of succumbing to this temptation. The passage of an ambiguous resolution will save time at the moment but, if it deals with important matters, it may lead to a prolonged waste of time in the future, to charges of bad faith and even to grave international resentment.