

Two main types of resolution emerged in the debate on South-West Africa at the Fifth Session of the General Assembly: those dealing with the implementation of the Court's opinion and those relating to the submission of a trusteeship agreement.

In the first category a proposal was adopted by a narrow majority in the Fourth Committee, sponsored by a number of Latin American and Asian delegations, headed respectively by Brazil and India. This resolution requested the South African Government to submit reports on its administration of South-West Africa for the years 1947 to 1950 and, in due course, for subsequent years. It also requested the South African Government to transmit all petitions relating to South-West Africa to the Secretary-General, and proposed the establishment of a commission for South-West Africa to assist the General Assembly in the consideration of annual reports, petitions and all other matters relating to the mandated territory.

The Canadian delegation opposed the resolution because the delegation preferred a proposal sponsored by eight powers which endorsed the International Court's opinion and proposed to set up a committee to confer with South Africa concerning the measures necessary to implement that opinion. The eight-power proposal was not voted on in Fourth Committee, however, in view of the adoption of the Latin American-Asian resolution.

The position resulting from the debate in the Fourth Committee was satisfactory neither to the sponsors of the Latin American-Asian resolution nor to the supporters of the eight-power draft. It was accepted that, under Article 18 of the Charter, any resolution on South-West Africa, in implementation of the Court's opinion, would require a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting in plenary session. The Latin American resolution had carried only by the narrowest majority. A compromise proposal was, therefore, worked out between the sponsors of the two resolutions for submission to the plenary session of the Assembly. The new proposal accepted the basic provision of the eight-power draft that the committee to be established by United Nations resolution should be a "negotiating" rather than a "supervisory" committee. At the same time the new resolution contained provisions relating to petitions, reports and "other matters" which had not been dealt with in the eight-power draft.

When the General Assembly considered the question of South-West Africa in plenary session on December 13, it adopted the compromise (six-nation) proposal by a vote of 45 in favour (including Canada), 6 against and 5 abstentions. The Assembly also adopted an additional "trusteeship" resolution supported jointly by India and a number of Latin American delegations. The vote on this resolution was 30 in favour, 10 against (including Canada) and 16 abstentions.

The Canadian delegation supported the compromise resolution as it thought the setting up of a negotiating committee offered best promise of a solution to the difficult South-West African question. Canada opposed the trusteeship resolution in the light of the Court's opinion that the South African Government was not legally obliged to submit such an agreement, and in view of the immediate importance of working out arrangements to give effect to the Court's opinion as a whole.

Admission of New Members

The only state to secure admission to membership in the United Nations in the course of the Fifth Session of the General Assembly was the Republic of Indonesia, which was formally admitted on September 28. Although there is now a marked trend in favour of universal membership, in recognition of the fact that the United Nations should be an organization representative of the widest possible stratum of international opinion, no further progress was made toward the admission of the 14 other outstanding applicants.