

must register its vote with the Communist side on every substantive agreement reached by the conference. As regards neutral participation, the United States suggested that some or all of the governments which had been, or were, actually working in Korea might participate as non-voting observers. This formula would have admitted the governments represented on the NNRC, i.e. India, Sweden, Switzerland, Poland and Czechoslovakia. By December 8, both sides had put their proposals in writing.

Meanwhile, the General Assembly was nearing the end of the session, scheduled for December 8, and while a majority of delegations wanted the Korean problem discussed at the eighth session they did not consider an immediate debate would contribute to the success of the Panmunjom negotiations. There was, however, a difference of opinion as to whether the Assembly should recess to a fixed date, or should adjourn subject to recall if and when Korean developments should make it desirable. A resolution proposing an indefinite adjournment was submitted by Brazil. The Indian Delegation favoured a fixed date because of the responsibilities undertaken by India as Chairman and Executive Agent of the NNRC which, as Mr. Menon pointed out to the Assembly, would have to decide by January 22 what to do with the prisoners of war in its custody if the political conference had not by then convened. He had therefore proposed a resolution providing that the Assembly should stand recessed until February 9, 1954, although the President might call it together "for good and sound reasons" either before or after that date. This procedure would give the General Assembly the opportunity to endorse any decision taken by the NNRC as to the disposition of prisoners. The Indian and Brazilian Delegations finally reached an understanding and submitted a joint resolution providing that the President, with the concurrence of a majority of members, could reconvene the session if in her opinion Korean developments warranted it, or if, for the same reason, she were requested to do so by one or more members. This resolution was adopted by a vote of 55 in favour (including Canada) none against and 5 abstentions (Soviet bloc).

At the year's end, the Indian Custodial Force on behalf of the NNRC continued to hold more than 22,000 prisoners, some 21,700 of whom had refused repatriation to the Communist side. During the period ending December 23, when representatives of both sides were allowed access to the prisoners to encourage them to choose repatriation, the Communist Representatives had actually conducted explanations for only ten days and had persuaded some four per cent of those interviewed to return to their control. Finally, explanations on both sides came to a halt when the prisoners refused to be interviewed.

The question now arose as to what the NNRC would decide regarding the disposition of the prisoners. As the United Nations Command interpreted the NNRC's terms of reference, if the political conference did not meet within 120 days, or if it met but failed to agree within 30 days on the disposition of the prisoners, the Commission was bound to release them to civilian status (as it worked out, on January 23, 1954). With this interpretation the Canadian