

## 20. CONFERENCE ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

At the fifth session of the Economic and Social Council in July-August, 1947, a resolution was adopted providing for the convening of a United Nations Conference on Freedom of Information and approving a provisional agenda which had been prepared by the Sub-commission on Freedom of Information at its first session in May and June, 1947. Mr. G. F. Ferguson, editor of a Canadian newspaper, serves as an expert on this Sub-commission. During the meetings of the Economic and Social Council there was extensive discussion on the inclusion of certain items in the provisional agenda and on the method of voting at the conference. In regard to voting, the Council decided that States not Members of the United Nations which were invited to the Conference on Freedom of Information would not be granted the right to vote. This decision was opposed by the Soviet Union which at the Second Session of the General Assembly, introduced a resolution in the Third Committee to reverse the decision of the Council concerning voting rights and to place on the agenda of the forthcoming conference a statement of Soviet views on the principles of freedom of information and of the press.

These principles had already been proposed by the Soviet representative at both meetings of the Sub-commission on Freedom of Information and in the Economic and Social Council. It was the view of the United States representative and of the majority of members of the Third Committee that it would be preferable to leave detailed consideration of the Soviet proposals to the conference itself. The Soviet resolution was rejected by the Committee with the exception of the following words, "the proposal of the Economic and Social Council that the conference be held at Geneva beginning March 23, 1948, be accepted". This part of the resolution was approved.

The Indian representative eventually introduced a resolution which merely took note of the provisional agenda of the forthcoming