

Assembly by a vote of 55-0, with 1 abstention. In the Canadian view, this resolution which received Canada's support, left the way open for further negotiations and for quiet diplomacy.

West New Guinea

During the negotiations which preceded the transfer of sovereignty over the former Netherlands Indies to Indonesia, the two parties could not agree on the future status of West New Guinea. As a result, Article 2 of the Charter of Transfer of Sovereignty (Round-Table Agreements) signed in 1949 stated: "The *status quo* of the residency of New Guinea shall be maintained with the stipulation that within a year from the date of transfer of sovereignty to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia the question of the political status of New Guinea be determined through negotiations between the Republic of the United States of Indonesia and the Kingdom of the Netherlands." The negotiations thus envisaged continued intermittently for more than the specified year but were eventually broken off without agreement. The Government of Indonesia then requested that the question of West New Guinea be placed on the agenda of the ninth session of the General Assembly.

At the ninth session¹, a resolution calling on the two parties to continue their efforts to find a solution to the dispute in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter and requesting them to report progress to the tenth session failed to receive the necessary two-thirds majority. When the item came before the tenth session, Representatives of Indonesia and the Netherlands announced that their Governments had agreed to hold discussions on a number of outstanding issues. The Assembly then adopted a mild resolution expressing the hope that the negotiations would be fruitful.

The West New Guinea item, proposed by 16 African and Asian members, was included on the agenda of the eleventh session after a vote in which the Canadian Representative abstained because, while the right of the 16 to bring the matter before the Assembly was recognized, there seemed no likelihood that the Assembly would be able to further a solution, especially in the atmosphere created by abrogation of the Round-Table Agreements and the continued imprisonment and trial of Netherlands nationals by Indonesia. Statements by both Indonesian and Netherlands Representatives in the debate in the First (Political and Security) Committee were firm but moderate in tone. A resolution tabled during the debate by 16 members, noting that negotiations between the parties had so far not resolved the issue and requesting the President of the Assembly to appoint a good offices commission of three members with a view to assisting in negotiations and reporting at the twelfth session of the Assembly, was adopted by the First Committee with a simple majority. This resolution however failed to obtain a two-thirds majority in plenary session.

The Canadian Delegation took the position that it would assist in reaching a fair judgment on the dispute if the International Court of Justice were requested to give an advisory opinion on the legal points involved. In the absence of such an opinion the Canadian Delegation was not convinced

¹See *Canada and the United Nations 1954-55*, pp. 21-22.