

have accepted under the United Nations Charter we must by that fact accept some limitation on our complete independence in international affairs. There are now 80 members in the United Nations Assembly with widely varied resources, traditions and political experience. The Assembly's decisions which are, after all, merely recommendations and not laws, although this is sometimes forgotten, necessarily involve a great deal of give and take. We cannot expect always to have our own way on matters which are decided by the wisdom, or if you like the unwisdom, of a majority of 80 sovereign states with differing interests, differing loyalties and unfortunately with different conceptions of peace and justice.

The activities of the United Nations Assembly in recent weeks in regard to the Middle East have given us some ground for hope that the organization can be used effectively and swiftly in bringing about a cessation of hostilities, though it remains to be seen whether it will be as effective in bringing about a just settlement of the issues that brought about those hostilities. That will be for the United Nations a more important and I suspect a more difficult task. We can take satisfaction over what has already been done in the Assembly, but recent developments have raised in our minds some questions regarding its future and I want to mention one or two of these.

In the first place, Mr. Speaker, we have become more aware than we were previously of the gap between responsible and irresponsible membership; between the membership of those democratic countries such as the United Kingdom and France who are loyal members of the organization and as such take heed of its recommendations and those totalitarian despots such as the Soviet Union which treat such recommendations with contempt when they cut across their own national policies.

This has led to a demand in some quarters that somehow or other the United Nations Assembly should take action to enforce effectively its own recommendations. This of course ignores the fact that such compulsory enforcement procedure through the Assembly is not in accordance with the terms of the Charter as drafted; and also that resolutions that may be passed by an irresponsible majority in the Assembly may be such that we ourselves would find great difficulty in accepting them and the enforcement of which we would in certain circumstances resist.

Mr. Diefenbaker: What does the Minister mean by irresponsible?

Mr. Pearson: Well, I mean by exercising the right of membership in an irresponsible fashion against the principles of the Charter which was accepted by all members. This leads to another question which causes some anxiety in our minds, and that is the growing tendency in the Assembly, which is of course facilitated by the one-state one-vote principle, and regardless of the powers of

state, to force through, by sheer voting strength, resolutions that are impractical and at times quite unreasonable. In reverse, there is the power of a minority of one-third plus one to prevent reasonable and useful resolutions of the majority which we may consider ourselves to be both practical, reasonable and desirable.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, in a very real sense the effectiveness of this unique instrument for the preservation of peace, the United Nations Assembly, rests with a majority of small nations now operating at least to some extent in blocs. If the group veto or the bloc veto in the Assembly, irresponsibly exercised, replaces the single-power veto in the Security Council, the larger body will soon become as futile as on so many occasions the smaller body has become. I suggest therefore that each member of the Assembly has now a greater duty than ever before to exercise its rights with a clear and unprejudiced understanding of their implications for the future of the organization and for international peace and security. If they do it in that way they will be showing a sense of responsibility.

The need for a constructive and moderate approach to complex political and economic problems without which the General Assembly will not be able to function effectively and may not even survive can be illustrated, this is only one illustration, by the attitude taken by some members of the Assembly to what are called the colonial powers. Incidentally, those who use that term at the United Nations often exclude from its meaning the greatest colonial power of all and the one which exercises that power in the most arbitrary and tyrannical fashion, the Soviet Union. The old colonialism is disappearing inevitably and, if the process is orderly, desirably; but that is all the more reason why those countries which still have direct responsibilities for non-self-governing territories should not be made to feel at the United Nations or elsewhere that they are oppressors to be deprived arbitrarily of their rights or indeed their reputations. The actual fact is that these countries for the most part have been leading participants in the great twentieth century experiment of bringing national consciousness and self-government to peoples who have never known them before.

There is another danger, Mr. Speaker, which faces the Assembly of the United Nations, the tendency to forget that while the world organization can perform and is performing, as I see it, an indispensable role it is no substitute for the national policies of its members. It reflects those policies, it influences them, but it rarely creates them. I think it is wrong, even dangerous, to suggest that it does or to try to replace the necessity of hammering out wise and constructive policies among one's friends merely by a resort to high-sounding moral platitudes at the Assembly. As Mr. Dean Acheson put