

The Committee on Information from Non Self-Governing Territories year by year examines one particular aspect of the reports transmitted to the Secretary-General; in its report (A/3647) to the twelfth session of the General Assembly the subject considered was the economic conditions in the territories in question. When the report was discussed in the Fourth Committee of the Assembly, attention was drawn to the possible effects of the European Common Market on the non-self-governing territories to be associated with it. The "six" (Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany¹) through their spokesman, France, were of the opinion that it was not appropriate to discuss the possible effects of a treaty which was not yet in force, in the context of reports which were not yet submitted. (In 1957 the Assembly considered reports on conditions in the territories in 1955). Nevertheless the apprehensions of a number of countries that association with the Common Market would not be in the best interests of the dependent territories concerned led the Assembly to adopt a resolution requesting the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the question for the thirteenth session, taking into account other relevant studies made by United Nations organs such as the Economic and Social Council, the Regional Economic Commissions and GATT. The resolution was adopted by 51 in favour, 13 against and 8 abstentions.

The Fourth Committee spent a great deal of time discussing whether or not the Assembly was competent to decide which territories should be classified as non-self-governing and thus subject to the provisions of Article 73(e). During the eleventh session of the General Assembly this question had also been debated at some length but in a slightly different context. The Secretary-General, by a letter dated February 24, 1956, had requested the sixteen members admitted to the United Nations in 1955 to indicate whether they had any territories under their administration which fell within the scope of Chapter XI of the Charter (Declaration regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories). Fourteen of the sixteen new members had answered this letter in the negative and two had not replied. A draft resolution was tabled which would have set up an *ad hoc* committee "to study the application of the provisions of Chapter XI of the Charter in the case of members newly admitted to the United Nations" and to report on "explanations that may be given by the member states as to the status of territories under their administration". This draft resolution was approved by the Fourth Committee but was rejected in plenary session after the Assembly had decided that it was an "important question" in the terms of Article 18 of the Charter (Voting Procedures) and thus required a two-thirds majority for its adoption.

At the twelfth session the Representative of Mexico to the Fourth Committee raised the question as to whether or not a two-thirds majority should apply to all resolutions on non-self-governing territories and the issue of what general rule should apply to voting on matters in connection with Chapter XI of the Charter was referred to the Sixth (Legal) Committee with a request for its opinion.

The Fourth Committee, without waiting for the Sixth Committee's reply, considered a draft resolution which would have established a six-member committee to be elected by the Fourth Committee to report to the General Assembly at the thirteenth session on the transmission of information under Article 73(e). To aid the committee in making its study the Secretary-General was requested to prepare summaries of the opinions furnished by member states and of discussions which had taken place in organs of the United Nations in connection with the whole problem of the

¹Non-member of the United Nations.