

It is reasonable to expect that, by processes such as these, many of the difficulties of the Charter will be ironed out, and that a sort of jurisprudence, the first signs of which are even now discernible, will eventually support and complete the Charter.

I would not wish to leave the impression that the way will be clear or the going easy. You are all aware that there are special difficulties in the Charter to which I have already made a passing reference. I have no wish to minimize these difficulties. I refer particularly to those which arise out of the so-called "Great Power Veto" in the Security Council - or to what some states prefer to call "the principle of the unanimity of the Great Powers". Unanimity, when people are convinced that their interests are in conflict, is a scarce product. I stated recently, in New York, the following as our attitude in that regard:

"This veto privilege, attacked and defended with equal vigour, if it continues to be abused, may well destroy the United Nations, because it will destroy all confidence in the ability of the Security Council to act internationally, to act effectively, and to act in time. There is no point in deceiving ourselves. Our peoples cannot be expected to accept indefinitely and without alteration, voting procedures and practices which, in the name of unanimity, underline disunity; and which reduce agreement to a lowest common denominator of action that in practice often means inaction."

Of course we must not shut our eyes to the fact that seems to be just what our Russian friends want most of the time and that it is not any new or even unexpected development.

From the very outset Mr. Stalin seems to have had grave misgivings about the wisdom of allowing us smaller nations to have anything to do about the settlement of world affairs.

During the war rapid and concerted action was necessary and a pattern was set of International Conferences of Mr. Stalin, Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt. All important decisions were made by them and it must have appeared to Mr. Stalin to be the proper course to follow.

When Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt suggested a United Nations organization, Mr. Stalin agreed, but stipulated that the organization would have nothing to do with the peace terms to be imposed upon our former enemies and these terms would be determined by the foreign ministers of the big three, which might become the big four if France joined them. He also stipulated that the United Nations would only act through a Security Council and that no important decision in the Security Council could be made without the concurrence of his representatives i.e. that each of the big powers would have an absolute veto.

When the rest of us signed the United Nations Charter at San Francisco we had to accept these conditions and we did accept them after it had been stated by representatives of the big powers, in the presence of the Russian delegates, that the veto would be used sparingly and with a due sense of responsibility. Since then, the Russian representatives have used it over twenty times and, as a consequence, they have made the Security Council practically unworkable as the main instrument of the United Nations to secure and maintain peace. Notwithstanding this, they are now waxing very indignant over what they call the efforts of the United States, the United Kingdom and the powers friendly to them to by-pass the United Nations and get something accomplished in spite of their vetoes.