

following:

"The systematic diffusion of deliberately false or distorted reports which undermine friendly relations between peoples and states."

When the Indian motion came before the Fourth Committee, Mr. Désy opposed it. The amendment was however carried by 13 for, 3 against, and 10 abstentions. Mr. Désy voted against.

The Conference, at a plenary session on April 20th, approved by 26 for, 7 against, and 2 abstentions, the new wording of Article 17 as recommended by the Fourth Committee. This included the Indian amendment. In voting for the Article as a whole, Mr. Ford, on behalf of the Canadian delegation, made a reservation on the Indian amendment. Mr. Ford said:

"I want briefly to place on record the position of the Canadian delegation in regard to its vote on the Convention.

"We voted for it because we believe its primary purpose is the maintenance of the principle of freedom of information as we understand it, and the extension of its application. However, we wish to reserve our position in respect to Article 2 of the Covenant and particularly to the section which reads: 'The systematic diffusion of false or distorted reports intended or likely to injure friendly relations between peoples and states.

"We fully realize that

freedom of information cannot be absolute but we believe restrictions should be of a character which cannot be used by any government as an excuse for suppressive measures.

"Worthy as are the objectives of this clause, we feel that it might open the door to abuses by governments and offer them opportunity to curtail the freedom of the press and of other media of information."

UNITED KINGDOM  
DRAFT CONVENTION

The same amendment also appeared as sub-paragraph (j) of Article 2 of the United Kingdom Draft Convention on Freedom of Information. While voting for the convention, Mr. Ford made a reservation on the sub-paragraph in the following letters, addressed to the Secretary of the Conference:

Geneva, April 22, 1948.

Dear Sir:

In view of the appeal of the President to the delegates to place in writing any explanations on their vote on the Convention on Freedom of Information, we are formally placing on record the position of the Canadian delegation.

We voted for the Convention because it enunciates the principles in which we believe. However we make a reservation on Article 2 and particularly on the restrictive clause (j)

which reads as follows:

'The systematic diffusion of deliberately false or distorted reports which undermine friendly relations between peoples and States.

We feel that this clause could lead to abuses of censorship on the part of governments.

Yours sincerely,

"Arthur R. Ford."

Acting Head of Delegation

John Humphrey, Esq.,  
Secretary of the United Nations Conference on Freedom of Information, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

The Conference adopted the First Convention by 28 votes for, 6 against and two abstentions. The Canadian delegation voted for the Convention with a reservation. The Second Convention was adopted by 33 for, 7 against and no abstentions. The Canadian delegation voted for the Convention. The Third Convention was adopted by 31 for, 6 against, with 2 abstentions. The Canadian delegation voted for the Convention with a reservation.

(The report of the Canadian delegation, with text of conventions and resolutions adopted, will shortly be available from the Information Division, Department of External Affairs, Ottawa.)

### EXTERNAL AFFAIRS PUBLICATIONS

A revised "Catalogue of Available Publications" listing publications of the Information Division of the Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, has been prepared and is available for those interested. Most of these publications are only for distribution outside Canada. Mailing lists are maintained for the Canadian Weekly Bulletin, Reference Papers, Reprints, Fact Sheets and Speeches. The Information Division will be pleased to add the names of individuals and organizations outside Canada to its mailing lists for these publications.