

III

FIRST (POLITICAL) COMMITTEE

One of the first tasks of the General Assembly at each annual session is to elect the President, who with the Chairmen of the main Committees and the 13 Vice-Presidents forms the General (or Steering) Committee (*see* Appendix II). The Committee not only makes recommendations to the Assembly on the adoption of the agenda but also suggests the body in which the questions raised by agenda items ought to be debated in the first instance. So far as political questions are concerned, those of a more universal scope and interest are usually assigned, for initial consideration, to the First Committee, while others of more direct interest to a limited number of countries or of a more technical and detailed character are normally sent to the Special Political Committee. The recommendations of these Committees are, of course, forwarded to the General Assembly for final approval before the end of the session.

A few political questions of such exceptional moment or importance as to be of urgent concern to most member countries are dealt with exclusively in plenary meetings of the General Assembly. Among these at the seventeenth session was that of the so-called Declaration of Colonial Independence (which is reported on in Chapter IX below). Moreover, the Assembly approved the recommendations of the Security Council in respect of new members and the appointment of the Secretary-General. Other questions considered by the Assembly without reference to a committee included the following:

Chinese Representation

For the second year in succession, a substantive debate on the question of the representation of China took place in the General Assembly. A Soviet resolution calling for the removal of Nationalist Chinese representatives from all United Nations organs and their replacement by representatives of the government in Peking was defeated by a vote of 42 in favour, 56 opposed (Canada), with 12 abstentions. The vote on a similar Soviet resolution at the previous session in 1961 was 37 in favour, 48 opposed (Canada), with 19 abstentions. On both occasions, a major factor influencing delegations which refused to support the Soviet resolution was that the resolution sought to extinguish the political identity of Formosa and the right of its people to a voice in international affairs.