

resolution if an amendment proposed by Albania, which would have added a further seven states to the Commission, was also accepted. The Soviet proposal and the Albanian amendment were both defeated, and the six-power resolution adopted by a vote of 60 in favour (including Canada) and 9 against (Soviet bloc), with 11 abstentions. Debate on the disarmament item was brought to a conclusion on November 19, the Soviet Representative having again made plain his Government's intention not to serve on the Commission in its new composition.

Effects of Atomic Radiation

At the tenth session of the General Assembly in 1955, the question of the co-ordination of information on atomic radiation, on which agenda items had been proposed by India and the United States, was considered in the First (Political and Security) Committee. The introduction of these items was a reflection of the concern of many governments, organizations and individuals over the possible hazards of radiation and especially those resulting from the fall-out from nuclear weapons tests. On December 3, 1955 the General Assembly unanimously adopted resolution 913 (X), establishing the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation¹. The Committee was given the task of collecting information concerning the effects of ionizing radiation on man and his environment. It was to submit yearly progress reports and to prepare by July 1, 1958 a summary and evaluation of information received.

The Committee held three sessions during 1956 and 1957 and has arrangements for meeting early in 1958 with a view to preparing the required report. It has undertaken several fact-finding surveys, requesting, for example, all available information on the amount of natural radiation to which man is exposed in various areas, the level of artificial radiation caused by radio-active fall-out and other factors. Although the Committee will not publish its summary report until the middle of 1958, it has already made a number of specific observations designed to guard against known hazards such as those which may result from medical uses of radio-active substances.

On August 26, 1957, the Government of Czechoslovakia, expressing its concurrence with the "imperative and justified demand of the nations" for further United Nations activity, proposed the inclusion in the agenda of the twelfth session of the General Assembly of an item on the "Effects of Atomic Radiation". The explanatory memorandum accompanying the Czechoslovak proposal called upon the United Nations "to take immediate steps capable of preventing any further increase in the levels of radio-active radiation", and suggested that consideration be given "to the possibility of convening a broad scientific Conference on the Effects of Atomic Radiation . . .".

Prior to the debate on this item in the First Committee, a draft resolution setting forth the above points was tabled by the Czechoslovak Delegation. A second draft resolution, tabled by eight co-sponsoring states, referred to the investigations of the Scientific Committee and called upon it to complete its work as soon as possible. It was agreed, however, among the sponsors of the two resolutions that neither would be pressed to a vote, and after further consideration in the First Committee, a compromise resolution co-sponsored by 16 states (including Canada)² was tabled. This resolution was adopted in the First Committee, and later unanimously approved by the General

¹The Committee is composed of Representatives of Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, France, India, Japan, Mexico, the United Kingdom, the United States and the U.S.S.R.

²Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, France, India, Japan, Mexico, Poland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States and Yugoslavia.