

question which was important *per se* did indeed reflect the considered judgment of a significant proportion of the membership. Mr. Beaulne made it clear, however, that if in its judgment the continued support of such a resolution could in the future frustrate the will of the General Assembly, the Canadian Government would change its position.

Voting pattern

Over the years during which the question of China's representation had been considered in the United Nations, the voting was consistently against seating the People's Republic of China. Although the vote was tied in 1965 (47-47), after that the vote was decisively defeated by majorities in the order of 12 to 14 votes. In 1970, for the first time, the resolution proposing the seating of the People's Republic of China received a majority, although a very slight one, of two votes. The vote was 51 in favour to 49 against, with 25 abstentions. It was not approved because the General Assembly had previously decided that the issue was an important one requiring a two-thirds majority. (A two-thirds majority would have required 67 votes in favour on the basis of the actual vote).

In the months after the vote on Chinese representation in 1970, a number of other governments recognized the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China. It was apparent there was now a clear trend towards the seating of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations and that the resolution on this question would receive a much larger majority than in 1970. The Canadian Government therefore decided, in the light of this trend, that the "important question" procedure had served its purpose of ensuring against an ephemeral and reversible majority, and that it would no longer support the usual resolution that the question was an important one, nor would it support any resolution which stated that a proposal to expel the representatives of the Republic of China was an important question.

There then occurred the development which had a substantial impact on the attitude of the members of the UN toward the question — the announcement of the decision that U.S. President Richard Nixon would visit China. Shortly afterward, the United States announced that it would support action at the General Assembly calling for the seating of the People's Republic of China. At the same time, the United States announced that it would oppose any action to expel the

Republic of China or otherwise deprive it of representation in the United Nations.

In support of their policy, the United States and a number of other countries tabled two resolutions. One stated that any proposal which would result in depriving the "Republic of China" of representation in the United Nations was an important question under Article 18 of the Charter. The second proposal would have affirmed the right of representation of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations and would have recommended that it be seated as one of the five permanent members of the Security Council. This draft resolution also affirmed the continued right of representation in the United Nations of the "Republic of China" and recommended that all UN bodies and the Specialized Agencies take into account the provisions of the resolution in deciding the question of Chinese representation.

Albania and other countries had before this submitted their usual draft resolution on the "Restoration of the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China". By this resolution, the Assembly would decide to restore all its rights to the People's Republic of China and "to expel forthwith the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek from the place which they unlawfully occupy at the United Nations and in all the organizations related to it".

The U.S. resolutions providing for representation of both the People's Republic of China and the "Republic of China" in the UN posed political and legal difficulties for many countries, including Canada. The main difficulty was political. As noted above, a variant of this type of solution had already been cavassed by Canada in 1966 (although never formally submitted), but it was quite evident that the political accommodation that would have been required to make this solution work could not be achieved at that stage.

Hardening of positions

Since 1966, moreover, the positions of the parties had, if anything, hardened. The PRC had stated over and over again, publicly and privately, that it would not appear at the United Nations if Taiwan continued to be represented and Taiwan continued to claim that it represented all of China, a position it reiterated in its final speech before the General Assembly. In the absence of agreement between the two contending parties, an attempt to impose a solution of the type suggested in the U.S. resolution would obviously not have resulted in the seating of the People's Republic of China. Moreover, it would