

Third (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) Committee

The Third Committee devoted most of the month to the draft Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, many of whose articles it had previously approved. Since 1954 the Committee has had before it two draft Covenants on Human Rights drawn up by the Commission on Human Rights, one on economic, social and cultural rights, the substantive articles of which it has already adopted, and the other on civil and political rights. During the current session, the Committee adopted Articles 19 to 26 of the draft Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Article 19 of the draft Covenant deals with the right of everyone to hold opinions without interference and to exercise freedom of expression, including the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers. The Committee rejected various amendments put forward and approved the article as originally drafted by a vote of 82 to 1, with 7 abstentions. Canada voted in favour of the article as a whole.

Article 20, recognizing the right of peaceful assembly, was adopted unanimously with little debate.

The Committee adopted by a vote of 74 in favour (including Canada), none against, and two abstentions a slightly amended text of Article 21, dealing with the right of freedom of association, including the right to join trade unions.

Article 22 deals with the protection of the family by society and the state, the right of men and women of marriageable age to marry and found families, the right to free consent to marriage and the equality of rights and responsibilities of spouses. After amending the original text slightly, the Committee adopted the article by a vote of 75 in favour (including Canada), 1 against, with 3 abstentions.

The Committee adopted Article 23 as originally drafted by a vote of 71 in favour (including Canada), none against, and 4 abstentions. This article guarantees the right and opportunity of every citizen to take part in the conduct of public affairs, to vote and be elected, and to have access to public service in his country. The article was approved with little debate.

Article 24, as amended by the Committee, was adopted by a vote of 72 in favour (including Canada), none against, with 5 abstentions. This article deals with the equality of all persons before the law and, in this respect, with the prohibition by law of all sorts of discrimination.

Article 25, as originally drafted, was adopted by a vote of 80 in favour (including Canada), none against, with 1 abstention. This article guarantees the right of ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities to enjoy their own cultures, to profess and practice their own religions or to use their own languages in those states where such minorities exist.

Earlier in the session, the Committee adopted, by a vote of 52 in favour to 19 against, with 12 abstentions and 18 absent, an amended version of Article 26 prohibiting any propaganda for war and any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes an incitement to discrimination, hostility or