

United Nations

At the fifth session of the General Assembly in 1950, member states had expressed a desire for "rapid elimination of remaining maladjustments in the United Nations scale"². In its report to the sixth session of the Assembly, the Committee on Contributions proposed changes in the rates of contributions for 1952 for 33 countries. While recognizing the desirability of the early establishment of a more stable scale of assessments, the Committee concluded that inadequate statistics from certain countries, problems of converting estimates of national income into a common currency, and the difficulties experienced by some countries in obtaining foreign exchange would make it very hard to recommend the immediate establishment of a more permanent scale. The Committee on Contributions therefore decided that it should "continue to move, step by step, in making adjustments and satisfy itself that the changes recommended are fully supported by evidence of relative capacity to pay and are in accordance with the directives of the General Assembly". Applying this principle, it recommended adjustments which would reduce apparent inequities by approximately one third during 1952. Increases were proposed for 15 countries and reduced assessments for 18.

Among the important changes recommended by the Committee was an increase in the contribution of the Soviet Union from 6.98 per cent to 9.85 per cent (a 42 per cent increase) and comparable increases in the rates for other Soviet bloc countries. In earlier scales these countries had been given special consideration because of "the temporary dislocation arising out of the Second World War". The Contributions Committee concluded that their economic recovery fully justified increases above their current contributions. The Committee also proposed a reduction (from 38.92 per cent to 36.9 per cent) in the United States assessment as a further move towards full application of the principle, enunciated in a 1948 Assembly resolution, that the largest contributor should not be assessed more than 33 1/3 per cent. An increase of .05 per cent was recommended for Canada in recognition of the growth of Canada's national income.

When the recommendations of the Contributions Committee were examined by the Assembly's Fifth Committee, the representatives of the Soviet Union and Soviet bloc countries vigorously opposed the increases recommended for their countries on the grounds that their economies were not fully recovered from the effects of the war and that they were experiencing serious difficulty in obtaining the required hard currencies. At the same time, the United States Representative contended that the proposed reduction in his country's assessment did not go far enough. He called for the immediate and full implementation of the 1948 resolution which recognized that "in normal times" no country should pay more than one third of the expenses of the United Nations.

²For a description of the principles on which the apportionment of expenses is based and the history of past efforts to translate these principles into precise mathematical scales, see *Canada and the United Nations 1950*, pp. 149-152.