

Article 18 (3) of the Charter, which meant that this question would have to be decided by a two-thirds majority. In the calculation of a two-thirds majority only the "yes" or "no" votes are considered; abstentions are not included. Canada supported this "important question" resolution and voted against the proposal to seat the People's Republic of China. At the same time, it was indicated that Canada was willing to consider carefully any proposal to settle the question of Chinese representation equitably. Canada voted the same way each year until 1966.

Canada's Initiative

In 1966, the Canadian delegation again took an initiative on the question of Chinese representation in an attempt to end the impasse in which the United Nations found itself. For this purpose Canada had consulted closely with a number of governments on a suggestion that the political realities could be reflected by: (a) participation of the "Republic of China" in the General Assembly as representing the territory over which it exercised effective jurisdiction, (b) the participation of the People's Republic of China as a member representing the territory over which it exercised effective jurisdiction and (c) the participation of the People's Republic of China in the Security Council as a permanent member. In relation to this interim seating proposal, Paul Martin, the then Secretary of State for External Affairs, made it clear that the solution was in no way intended to imply the existence of two Chinas. It was simply recognized that the real situation was that there were two governments exercising control over two areas of territory, each claiming to be the government entitled to the Chinese seat in the United Nations.

Although Canada would have liked to see its proposal translated into a resolution, it was apparent that it would not be acceptable to the majority of the General Assembly or the parties immediately concerned. What emerged from the discussions was a proposal for the establishment of a committee to explore the whole question of Chinese representation and to make appropriate recommendations to the next session of the General Assembly. Canada supported this, but the Canadian Government did not consider that it represented much forward movement over the proposal which Canada had initiated in 1950. The proposal was, in the event, defeated.

In deciding on Canada's voting position on the resolution providing for the

seating of the People's Republic of China, it was considered that, having suggested an interim seating of representatives of the two governments and having, in effect, rejected both the existing situation and the solution proposed by the co-sponsors of the resolution providing for the seating of the PRC, the Canadian position could best be reflected in voting terms by abstention. In 1966, therefore, the Canadian vote on the resolution to seat representatives of the People's Republic of China changed from a negative role to an abstention. Canada continued to abstain in the voting on the resolution in 1967 and in the two subsequent years but continued to vote for the "important question" resolution.

The Canadian effort of 1966 failed for two basic reasons: the unwillingness of the parties concerned to accept a formula which would have permitted representation, and the inability of the international community to press such a resolution in the light of the attitudes of those most directly affected. This resulted to the conclusion that, if it was possible to establish contact with an effective government of China through multilateral action, consideration would have to be given to a bilateral approach. It was in this direction that the Canadian attitude was evolving. In May 1968, Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau declared that it was Canada's aim to recognize the People's Republic of China as soon as possible and to enable that government to occupy China's seat at the UN.

Reversing the order

The order of business, it will be noted, was reversed. Negotiations with representatives of the People's Republic of China culminated on October 13, 1970 with the announcement of mutual recognition and the establishment of diplomatic relations.

After that announcement, the Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations, Yvon Beaulne, stated in the General Assembly, on November 13, 1970, that the Canadian Government believed that the government of the People's Republic of China should occupy the seat of China in the United Nations. Canada would, therefore, vote in favour of the resolution proposing this. He added that Canada would also vote in favour of the "important question" resolution. But he emphasized that Canada's vote on this resolution in the past had not been a procedural tactic designed to frustrate the will of the majority of the membership but that its purpose had been to ensure that a decision on