

We were not surprised to learn that there was widespread feeling, even among some of our NATO allies, that while our resolution was a good thing it was perhaps not quite good enough, and that a more equitable and satisfactory list of countries could still be found. In short, Mr. Speaker, we continued to negotiate with the same intensity after our resolution was introduced as we had before. Twice the discussion of our resolution was postponed and once the Assembly was adjourned for this purpose.

At length it became clear that India, Sweden and Yugoslavia would be satisfied with an amendment to our resolution which we ourselves had been considering, namely the addition of four more countries, Egypt, Mexico, Norway and Poland. When it was clear that this amendment could be accepted by all of our Sub-Committee allies we tabled a revised version of our resolution, one which was in our view very much more satisfactory and which would add all of these 14 countries and thus give the Disarmament Commission a membership of 25 countries. We were particularly pleased to obtain for our resolution the co-sponsorship of all the middle powers most concerned, namely, Canada, India, Japan, Sweden and Yugoslavia. Later Paraguay joined the sponsors as a representative of Latin American countries . . .

In discussing the reaction to this proposal, Mr. Nesbitt stated that there had been some degree of optimism that the Soviet Union would not be opposed, and would indicate its willingness to return to the Disarmament Commission. "However," he commented, "such was not to be the case". At the last minute an amendment to the resolution was put forward by the Albanian Delegation, according to which a further seven countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Ceylon, Finland, Indonesia, Romania, and the Sudan) would have been added to the fourteen already proposed. Speaking in support of the Albanian amendment, the representative of the Soviet Union stated that, unless it were accepted, his country would not be willing to participate in the work of the expanded Disarmament Commission.

Mr. Nesbitt continued with a description of the voting on these proposals:

The voting on our resolution and on the Soviet proposal showed that the Soviet Union had allowed itself to become completely isolated on this matter. Many neutral countries were offended by this abrupt Soviet rejection of a serious negotiated compromise on which much labour had been expended. Yugoslavia in particular expressed its regret that our resolution had not been generally accepted. Because of this disappointment Yugoslavia declined to vote on the resolution in any way. After the Albanian amendment had been defeated by a vote of 19 for and 38 against with 19 abstentions, our resolution was then passed by the impressive majority of 60 for to 9 against, with 11 abstentions. Only the hard core of the Soviet bloc voted against our resolution. I might say, Mr. Speaker, that our resolution was supported by most of the Asian countries and almost the entire Arab group, including Egypt, Jordan and Syria. The Soviet proposal for a permanent 82 member commission received only the 9 votes of its own block.

Where Responsibility Rests

Mr. Nesbitt then commented on the overall results of the long discussion of the question of expansion, and the progress which had been achieved by Canadian efforts to devise a satisfactory solution. He spoke, in part, as follows:

If the U.S.S.R. persists in its refusal to negotiate, one may well ask what Canada's efforts in this matter have achieved. I think that question was probably in the mind of the hon. member for Algoma East (Mr. Pearson) when he made his remarks this afternoon. We have at the very least shown a constructive willingness to make reasonable concessions in order to continue serious talks on this vitally urgent question. No one can say that Western stubbornness on the mere machinery of United Nations disarmament talks has been an obstacle to progress . . .

It would, of course, serve no constructive end to allow the Commission to become a mere sounding board for Soviet propaganda. In our negotiations we were constantly mindful of this danger. But since the passage of our resolution all of our Sub-Committee allies have indicated to us that they have no misgivings at all about the composition of the new Commission . . .

The new larger Disarmament Commission of 25 members does not rule out further meetings of a small Sub-Committee. If the major powers concerned will agree, there can be further meetings of the old, indeed of a new, Sub-Committee . . .