

Canada agreed to be a member of this working group together with Cameroon, India and Egypt.

The Canadian group worked extensively on this subject and has submitted guidelines currently in use in Canada. In Bucharest, our colleague Senator Bacon was elected as chairperson of this working group. Throughout the week, she and Ms Barnes worked on a text that was presented to the Inter-Parliamentary Council. The adoption of the proposed text will take place at the next Inter-Parliamentary Conference in April 1996.

• (1500)

The first topic on the agenda of our conference was "Parliamentary action to fight corruption and the need for international commitments in this field." At this conference, we were using a new format whereby the debate on the specific subjects took place at committee meetings rather than in plenary. Accordingly, Ms Barnes spoke on this subject in the Committee on Parliamentary, Juridical and Human Rights Questions.

Fourteen countries, including Canada, submitted draft resolutions for consideration. Canada was one of 12 countries nominated to serve on a drafting committee. I am pleased to report that Ms Barnes was selected chairperson. Most of the Canadian draft resolution was included in the final text. I would like to report that there was considerable interest in the mechanisms developed by Canada to handle questions relating to codes of conduct and conflict of interest, both by other delegates and by the Romanian journalists.

The second topic on the agenda was "Strategies for effective implementation of national and international commitments adopted at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen." Again, the debate occurred at a meeting of the Committee on Economic and Social Questions, where Ms Chamberlain presented a joint statement on behalf of herself and Mr. Wells. Canada was one of 19 countries that submitted a draft resolution for consideration.

At each conference, there is an opportunity to vote on a supplementary item to be included on the agenda. Subjects are selected because they are topical and of international concern. This is one activity where the IPU carries out valuable work. An examination of the voting patterns on those supplementary items is a useful guide in plotting shifts in parliamentary attitudes and, ultimately, policy decisions.

Following our last IPU conference, I reported on the voting patterns concerning the Iraqi proposal for a debate on lifting the economic sanctions imposed on that country. At seven of the past eight conferences, the Iraqi group has submitted this subject, and the Bucharest conference was no exception. However, the Iraqi group withdrew its proposal in favour of a proposal made by the Arab group for a debate on the status of the Holy City of Jerusalem.

On this occasion, there were seven proposals for the supplementary item, but several countries withdrew or combined

their proposals. Votes were held on three subjects: the rights of minorities, Jerusalem, and nuclear tests. "To comprehensively ban nuclear weapons testing and halt all present nuclear weapons tests" was the subject selected as the supplementary item. Our colleague Senator Comeau represented Canada at these meetings and spoke about the need for parliamentarians to request strongly that a stop be put to nuclear testing.

There was also a plenary debate on "the general political, economic and social situation in the world." I used this opportunity to speak about land mines. On a couple of occasions this subject had been proposed as a supplementary item but had not been selected. This subject was especially timely, since the first formal review of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons was under way in Vienna. This meeting focused our attention on the gravity of the problem, and the thousands of innocent victims who die or are injured each year.

I would also like to mention the report of the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. As you are aware, the Canadian group has been very active in the work of this committee. Our colleague retired Senator Joan Neiman, who was instrumental in its establishment, was a member for a number of years. During the Bucharest conference, the violations of the rights of 69 members or former members of Parliament in 12 countries were brought to the attention of the delegates. The 69 cases involved one from Albania, one from Bulgaria, five from Burundi, six from Cambodia, six from Colombia, one from Honduras, one from Indonesia, two from Maldives, 17 from Myanmar, formerly Burma, seven from Nigeria, three from Togo and 19 from Turkey.

In conclusion, I want to speak briefly about the achievements of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Sometimes we wonder whether the work at these conferences is significant and whether our participation is worthwhile. The response of our Romanian colleagues and their overwhelming enthusiasm for the support of the union during the transition from a communist state to a multi-party democracy reinforced my belief in the value of such international gatherings.

At the inaugural ceremony, the President of the Romanian Senate, Mr. Olivu Gherman, expressed his appreciation for the Inter-Parliamentary Union, noting that it was a "real school of modern democracy" for Romanian parliamentarians. He said:

Many of the steps forward made by the Parliament of Romania in the past few years are the fruit of our participation in IPU activities and a consequence of the constant support we have received.

This statement, made by a prominent Romanian parliamentarian of an emerging democracy, speaks volumes about the importance of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The Hon. the Speaker: If no other honourable senator wishes to speak, this inquiry is considered debated.

The Senate adjourned until Wednesday, November 29, 1995 at 1:30 p.m.