

When the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee again studied the problem at the tenth session of the General Assembly in 1955, the South African Delegation announced that it would not participate in the debate nor be present when the item was being discussed, although it reserved the right to vote on any proposal which might be made. Nevertheless, India pressed ahead with a draft resolution which requested the Commission "to continue to keep under review the racial situation in South Africa . . . and to report to the General Assembly at its eleventh session". The *Ad Hoc* Political Committee approved this resolution by a vote of 37 in favour to 7 against (including Canada), with 13 abstentions. The Chairman of the South African Delegation then announced that his Government could no longer tolerate United Nations enquiry into the legislation of his country and had decided "to recall the South African Delegation, and also the Permanent Representative to the United Nations, from the present session".

The Canadian position was explained in the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee. The Canadian Representative said that Canada was willing to support "practical efforts designed to win universal respect for human rights without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion", but that Canada did not think that renewing the mandate of the Commission would be a practical step in trying to clear up the dispute. The Canadian Representative also stated that Canada was "not at all sure whether the discussion of this subject, session after session at the General Assembly, has advanced or retarded the cause of the inhabitants of South Africa, whose interests should be our only concern in raising the issue". The Canadian Delegation therefore opposed the resolution.

The South African walk-out influenced several delegations to take another look at their policies, and in plenary session the operative paragraph of the resolution which called for a renewal of the mandate of the Commission failed to receive the necessary two-thirds vote. With this paragraph removed the revised resolution was adopted by 41 votes in favour, 6 against, with 8 abstentions (including Canada).

### Treatment of Indians in South Africa

The General Assembly has considered this question at all its regular sessions except the fourth one in 1949. The seventh session in 1952 set up a Good Offices Commission<sup>1</sup> (GOC), consisting of Cuba, Syria and Czechoslovakia to arrange and assist in negotiations between the Government of the Union of South Africa and those of India and Pakistan. The General Assembly also called on the South African Government to suspend implementation of the Group Areas Act restricting various racial groups to specific areas of residence and economic activity until negotiations were concluded. Canada, although wholeheartedly supporting the principles expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the Charter, abstained in the vote on the resolution setting up the GOC because, in the absence of an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice, there is a legitimate doubt whether the United Nations may properly intervene in the issue. South Africa has refused to recognize the GOC, maintaining that its establishment was an unconstitutional act since Article 2 (7) of the Charter forbids intervention in the domestic policies of any state belonging to the United Nations; the Commission has consequently been unable to carry out its task of assisting in negotiations.

<sup>1</sup>See *Canada and the United Nations 1952-53*, pp. 12-13.