

External Affairs
Supplementary Paper

No. 57/1 ENLARGING THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Statement by the Hon. Roch Pinard, M.P.
Vice-Chairman of the Canadian Delegation, in the Plenary Meeting
of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, on December 18,
1956.

We have before us a very important resolution submitted by a number of delegations in paper A/3446 of December 12. It is important because my Delegation considers the Security Council a body of paramount interest to the United Nations in spite of the frustrations under which it has had to operate in the past eleven years. Therefore any amendment to the Charter affecting the operations of the Security Council must be examined by this Assembly with great care.

The sponsors of this resolution have very competently explained the reasons for suggesting an expansion of the Security Council and I need hardly repeat them here. There is little doubt in my mind that certain areas of the world would be inadequately represented in the Council unless some expansion were approved. The composition of the United Nations has changed radically, not only since the admission of twenty new members in the last year, but since the creation of the United Nations at San Francisco.

The Canadian Delegation has long felt that the countries of Asia were inadequately represented in the Security Council, and one of the more desirable effects of the expansion proposed in the resolution before us would be a more satisfactory representation for this area. At the same time it would be improper not to recognize that the large increase in the number of European members requires an improvement in their representation in the Council, if Europe is to be properly represented.

It is our understanding that a reasonable allocation of the non-permanent seats in the Security Council, in rough proportion to the countries members of the United Nations, should, under the new dispensation, provide an additional seat for Asia and an additional seat for Western Europe. It would also be our understanding that in the allocation of the original non-permanent seats the Assembly would give full effect to the original arrangement under which these seats were to go to Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth, Latin America, Western Europe, and the Middle East and Africa.

I do not want to suggest that the sole criterion for electing countries to the Security Council is "equitable geographical distribution". We must, in the opinion of my Delegation, continue to pay due regard to the contributions of members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and other purposes of this Organization, as laid down in Article 23(1) of the Charter. I think the regional considerations and the so-called functional considerations are both taken care of in the distribution of seats I have just mentioned.



I agree with the Representative of the United Kingdom that some formal agreement is required setting out this allocation. The Canadian Delegation would certainly respect an agreement providing for this division of seats and I would hope that other delegations would also be able to support it. We cannot deny the reasonable expectations of any given group of countries, members of this Organization, to adequate representation on a continuing basis in the major organs of the United Nations. We may strongly disagree with the policies of their governments. We may even doubt that some of them have all the attributes required for participation in the United Nations. But, so long as they are members, we must, in the opinion of the Canadian Delegation, accept their right to join in the work of the Security Council.

If this resolution is passed, the Canadian Delegation will, therefore, specifically recognize the existence of an Eastern European seat. In our view the vote of the Assembly a few days ago in favour of the Philippines to replace Yugoslavia for the remainder of the latter's term simply reflected the general opinion that it was the only way to avoid another undignified dispute, and was in accordance with the agreement worked out last year among the majority of the countries concerned. The Canadian Delegation, for its part, has never departed in principle from its policy of recognizing the existence of an Eastern European seat.

I now wish to refer briefly to two of the statements made in this debate.

The Representative of the USSR has implied that Soviet support for this Charter amendment would depend not only on an agreement regarding an Eastern European seat (which I have already touched on) but also on a change in Chinese representation in the United Nations. I think this Assembly as a whole will be deeply offended if a proposal, adopted (as I hope) by a large majority, is frustrated or long-delayed because one member decides to make its ratification conditional on the settlement of another problem. This attitude would show little respect for the deep and genuine desire of, for example, the Asian countries for proper representation on the Council.

The Canadian Delegation also followed attentively the comments yesterday of the distinguished representative of India. We did not agree completely with his arithmetic, nor even, in all respects, with his geography, but our main misgiving arises from his proposal to refer this question to the Charter review committee, or some similar body, before Assembly action is taken. The net result of this would be that nothing will be done, for at least another year, to begin the process of amending the Charter.

After that, if the Assembly should act next year, a second year would elapse before ratifications could be completed and additional members could actually be elected. We believe that the new members of the United Nations and areas of the world now under-represented deserve something better than this.

In conclusion, therefore, Canada strongly supports the 20-power resolution on this subject and hopes that it will be given overwhelming approval.