

GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY

## SEVENTH SESSION

## Official Records



## SIXTH COMMITTEE, 349th

## MEETING

Saturday, 13 December 1952, at 3 p.m.

Headquarters, New York

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Chairman: Prince WAN WAITHAYAKON (Thailand).

*In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Lachs (Poland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

**Measures to limit the duration of regular sessions of the General Assembly: memorandum by the Secretary-General (A/2206, A/C.6/339/Add.1) (continued)**

[Item 50]\*

1. Mr. EL-TANAMLI (Egypt), speaking on a point of order, noted that the summary records were not always accurate or complete. For example, the record of the 347th meeting had not recorded a point of order he had raised, under rule 79 of the rules of procedure, on the question whether the Norwegian draft resolution (A/C.6/L.278) should be put to the vote without discussion. It had equally failed to record the Uruguayan representative's remark in support of the point of order and the Chairman's reply. He asked that the relevant section of the summary record should be amplified to include that part of the discussion.

2. Mr. TARAZI (Syria) wished to raise the same point. The record of the meeting in question had not included a remark made by him. Without discussing the substance of the item, he had stated that the adoption of the United Kingdom proposal to vote at once on the Norwegian draft resolution would be contrary to the Charter. Another intervention which he had made, in reply to a remark by the Greek representative, had also been omitted.

3. He noted that records of meetings would be of no use subsequently if they were too short and did not faithfully reflect the course of the discussion.

4. Mr. VALLAT (United Kingdom) emphasized that what had been referred to as the United Kingdom proposal had been merely an informal suggestion, as the Chairman had made clear at the meeting in question.

5. Mr. STAVROPOULOS (Secretary of the Committee) said that summary records were of necessity

short and could not include everything that was said in a meeting, particularly on procedural questions. Otherwise, the records would cease to be summaries and would become verbatim records. By decision of the General Assembly, however, verbatim records were made only of the proceedings of the First Committee and the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee. He regretted that the Egyptian and Syrian representatives should find fault with the records. The summary record writers endeavoured to be as accurate as possible, and, if they failed, representatives were free to submit corrigenda.

6. Mr. EL-TANAMLI (Egypt) was sorry he could not agree with the definition of summary records given by the Secretary of the Committee. He considered that there was a difference between ideas and the way those ideas might be expressed. He thought that a summary record should summarize the expression of the idea. Even in the summary record, the Secretariat was not authorized to alter or mutilate the ideas expressed by delegations. He cited one of a number of cases in which his statements had not been satisfactorily recorded.

7. The CHAIRMAN asked the Secretariat to take note of the preceding remarks and to endeavour to record the discussions as fully as possible.

8. Mr. MOROZOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) wished to make a few supplementary remarks on the proposed amendment to rule 38 of the rules of procedure. The other proposed amendments in the Secretary-General's memorandum (A/2206) while unacceptable in substance for reasons he had explained earlier (347th meeting), were certainly within the Committee's competence. The proposed change to rule 38, on the other hand, was objectionable not only in substance but also from a procedural point of view, because it was entirely unrelated to the item under discussion. None of the speakers who had supported the amendment had been able to adduce a single argument to the contrary.

9. The Secretary-General had used the item under discussion to propose amendments to the rules of procedure which actually had nothing to do with shorten-

\* Indicates the item number on the agenda of the General Assembly.

ing the duration of General Assembly sessions. That was not only improper but dangerous, since it might give rise to a whole series of amendments to the rules of procedure which would be equally unrelated to the question under consideration. Hence, before taking action, the Committee should decide on its competence to deal with the amendment. If it decided that it was competent to act, he would vote against both the proposed amendment to rule 38 and the other amendments to which his delegation had stated its objections (347th meeting).

10. It could not be claimed that the proposed amendment to rule 38 had been necessitated by the emergence of a new procedural situation. The situation was by no means new; the General Assembly had already set up an *ad hoc* political committee at five sessions. Rule 38 in its present form anticipated the establishment of such *ad hoc* committees and clearly and deliberately drew a distinction, in the General Committee, between the rights of their Chairmen and the rights of the Chairmen of the Main Committees. The right to vote was expressly reserved to the Chairmen of the Main Committees and to the President and Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly. So long, therefore, as the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee retained its present status—and there had been no proposal to turn it into a Main Committee—it would be improper for its Chairman to have the right to vote in the General Committee.

11. The Australian representative had gone even further in the attempt to limit the rights of the General Assembly under the pretext of shortening its sessions. Mr. Morozov had already (347th meeting) stated his objections to the change proposed in the first Australian amendment (A/C.6/L.282) to the Norwegian draft resolution (A/C.6/L.278). The second Australian amendment was undemocratic and unreasonable. Anyone who had ever followed the proceedings of the General Assembly knew that representatives were frequently forced to speak repeatedly on the same question in the course of a debate. An explanation of vote provided them with the opportunity to restate their position. It also made it possible for them to record how they would vote, which was particularly important when no roll-call vote was taken. The explanations were, as a rule, short; curtailing them would not result in any appreciable saving of time, while it would deprive representatives of an established and important right.

12. He therefore urged all representatives, in the interests of free discussion, to oppose the amendments to the rules of procedure set forth in the Norwegian draft resolution and the Australian amendments thereto.

13. Mr. ROBERTS (Union of South Africa) agreed with the USSR representative that the question of rule 38 was not related to the item under discussion and that the Committee was therefore not competent to deal with it. It might be well for the Committee to decide whether it was competent to discuss, as a whole, the question of measures to shorten the duration of General Assembly sessions, or whether it should confine itself to the drafting of the proposed amendments referred to it by the General Assembly.

14. Mr. BARTOS (Yugoslavia) noted, in reply to the representative of the Union of South Africa that, according to the letter (A/C.6/339/Add.1) from the

President of the General Assembly to the Chairman of the Sixth Committee, the Sixth Committee had been asked to examine measures to limit the duration of regular sessions, including the amendments to the rules of procedure proposed in the Secretary-General's memorandum (A/2206). Hence, the question whether the change proposed in rule 38 was pertinent did not arise. The composition and voting procedure of the General Committee definitely affected the progress of the General Assembly's work. Nevertheless, it might be well for the Chairman to make a ruling in order to clarify the procedural situation.

15. The CHAIRMAN said there were two questions before the Committee. The first was whether the Committee had the right, in connexion with the item on its agenda, to go into the substance of the rules of procedure, or whether it should deal with the proposed amendments solely from the drafting point of view. In his opinion, the Committee was fully competent to go into the substance of the matter. The second question was whether rule 38 was related to the item under discussion. He suggested that that question could be decided later, after the general discussion on the item had been completed and before the Committee voted.

16. Mr. NISOT (Belgium) explained his amendments (A/C.6/L.281) to the Argentine draft resolution (A/C.6/L.279).

17. First, his delegation proposed to delete all but the first sub-paragraph from the operative part of the Argentine draft resolution. The effect of that amendment, if adopted, would be to delete the word "target" from rule 2 of the rules of procedure. As a result, the General Assembly would henceforth fix a definite date for the closing of the session. The Assembly could, however, change that date later, if it seemed advisable in the light of the debates. That solution, while having the advantage of flexibility, would make it possible to calculate the duration of sessions on a firmer basis and, therefore, to organize the work of committees, delegations and the Secretariat more efficiently.

18. Secondly, the amendments would leave open the question of the procedure to be followed in respect of agenda items which were not dealt with during a session. The issue was so controversial that there was no point in taking a position on it, as the Argentine draft resolution proposed.

19. Mr. DONS (Norway) pointed out that only five of the six amendments to the rules of procedure proposed in the Secretary-General's memorandum (A/2206) were included in the annex to the Norwegian draft resolution (A/C.6/L.278). The proposed amendment to rule 74 [114] had been omitted, because the Norwegian delegation had not considered it desirable, for the same reasons which had prompted the USSR representative to oppose it (347th meeting). He was sorry to see it included in the Australian amendments (A/C.6/L.282) which had just been circulated.

20. He failed to understand the opposition to rule 73 [113] which had been expressed so strongly by the USSR (347th meeting), Uruguay (347th meeting) and other representatives. The amendment did no more than specify which parties could initiate proposals of

the kind dealt with in the rule; it did not propose any new limitation of the freedom of speech, nor did it give the President or the Chairman any function that he did not already possess under rule 35 [106]. The records of the General Assembly showed that, in practice, it was almost always on the proposal of the President or the Chairman that a limitation of the time allowed to speakers was imposed. The initiative rarely came from one of the members. The Uruguayan representative had spoken of the long debates that had been necessary before the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee had been able to reach a decision of the Palestine question at the current session. But, on the unanimously accepted proposal made by the Chairman at that Committee's 38th meeting, a time-limit of ten minutes per speaker had been imposed during the last two meetings on the Palestine question. The amendment to rule 73 [113] was intended precisely to meet such a situation. It had not been proposed out of any desire to curtail freedom of speech.

21. The Uruguayan representative had suggested (347th meeting) that a special committee should be set up to study the Secretary-General's proposals and had stated that he had not had time to give the proposals the examination they required. The Norwegian delegation, as was the case with the United States delegation (384th meeting), would strongly oppose any such procedure. The Secretary-General's memorandum had been in the hands of members since early October, and there had been ample time to study what were, in effect, very moderate and simple proposals. Paragraph 2 of the operative part of the Norwegian draft resolution proposed that the Secretary-General should be requested to make further studies on the matter and to present other proposals at an appropriate time. If the Committee felt that that additional task should be entrusted to a special committee, the Norwegian delegation would raise no objection, although it would prefer its own proposal. It would urge, however, that the Committee should as soon as possible approve at least the five amendments in the annex to the Norwegian draft resolution.

22. He had understood the Netherlands representative to object to the last sentence of the revised rule 38 appearing in the Norwegian draft resolution. As the existing text of rule 38 contained that very sentence, he could only assume that the Netherlands representative would like to see it deleted from the present rule 38. The Netherlands representative had argued that the sentence would be superfluous if the proposed amendment to the first sentence, which would give the Chairman of the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee full rights as a member of the General Committee, were adopted. Mr. Dons did not altogether agree, for the last sentence extended those rights not only to the Chairman of the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee, but to the Chairman of any committees upon which all Members of the General Assembly were represented and which met during a General Assembly session. The *Ad Hoc* Political Committee was admittedly the only one of that kind at present, but there had been the case in the past of the League of Nations Committee on the transfer of League of Nations assets, and there might well be others in the future. Moreover, it was to be noted that the rule applied only to committees meeting during a General Assembly session. He hoped that his explana-

tions would induce the Netherlands representative to withdraw his objection.

23. It had been suggested that the third paragraph of the preamble to the Norwegian draft resolution might with advantage be reduced to the following short sentence: "Noting the observations and suggestions presented by the Secretary-General with respect to the rules of procedure". That suggestion was quite acceptable to the Norwegian delegation, as it would also be, he felt, to the USSR delegation, and was included in the revised text of the Norwegian draft resolution (A/C.6/L.278/Rev.1).

24. As for the voting procedure in the Sixth Committee, he would suggest that the annex to the revised Norwegian draft resolution should first be voted upon, paragraph by paragraph. If none of the paragraphs were adopted, paragraph 1 of the operative part of the revised draft resolution would become meaningless and would accordingly be withdrawn. That procedure would render the Syrian amendment (A/C.6/L.280) superfluous, and he therefore urged the Syrian representative to withdraw it. It would also make it possible for the Yugoslav representative and others to vote for some of the proposed amendments, and for the draft resolution as a whole if only those amendments of which they approved were accepted.

25. Mr. CUTTS (Australia) explained that, since speaking in support of the Norwegian draft resolution at the previous meeting, he had concluded that that draft resolution could be improved by the addition to its annex of two further amendments: to rules 74 [114] and 88 [127]. That was why his delegation had submitted its amendments (A/C.6/L.282).

26. The USSR representative had noted at once that the change in rule 74 [114] which the Australian delegation was proposing was identical with that proposed in the Secretary-General's memorandum (A/2206). On the question of cancelling or adjourning meetings because of a lack of speakers, the Australian delegation would welcome any amendment that offered a prospect of dealing with the problem. It had originally (348th meeting) been content merely to state its views on the subject; it had not felt that any amendment could offer a satisfactory solution, since the question really depended upon the co-operation of delegations. Equally, the text proposed by the Secretary-General had not been entirely in accordance with the Australian delegation's ideas. Since then, however, it had reached the conclusion that the Secretary-General's proposal could be of value in discouraging delegations from the type of conduct that so often led to the premature adjournment of meetings. Just such a provision appeared, in fact, in rule 52 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council, and he was not aware that there had ever been any opposition to it in the Council. He now saw, however, that some members of the Committee considered the proposed wording somewhat rigid, in that it appeared to make it mandatory upon the President or the Chairman to declare the debate closed if there were no other speakers. He would therefore introduce a small but significant change in the proposed amendment to rule 74 [114], replacing the words "shall declare" by the words "may declare" (A/C.6/L.282/Rev.1).

27. With regard to the proposed amendment to rule 88 [127], which formed the second part of the Australian amendments, his delegation saw no reason why special provision should be made for the right of members to explain their votes. It was surely absurd to imagine that any delegation could not make its position perfectly clear by its interventions and subsequent vote. The right to explain votes was, in fact, the most abused of all the provisions in the rules of procedure; it had been repeatedly used as a pretext for an additional long statement, which was nothing but a waste of time. The USSR representative had argued that it was possible for the situation to be changed during the course of a long discussion by the introduction of a new draft resolution or amendment, thus rendering it necessary for a member who had stated his position early in the debate to explain his vote or his change of attitude. Mr. Cutts agreed that some explanation was certainly necessary, but he felt that it could be made by a normal intervention during the debate and need not be the subject of an explanation of vote.

28. The Syrian amendment (A/C.6/L.280) proposed the deletion of the annex to the revised Norwegian draft resolution (A/C.6/L.278/Rev.1), and consequently of all the amendments to the rules of procedure. It would therefore have the effect of deleting the revised Australian amendments (A/C.6/L.282/Rev.1) also. Hence, Mr. Cutts felt justified in commenting upon the Syrian amendment.

29. The Syrian delegation clearly felt that the proposed amendments should be rejected *en bloc* and not even studied one by one. That was a surprising attitude. The amendment proposed to rule 75 [115], for example, was quite unobjectionable, since it contained no alteration of substance but only a useful clarification. He hoped the Committee would reject the Syrian amendment and would consider the proposed amendments to the rules of procedure one by one.

30. The proposed amendment to rule 72 [112] had aroused some opposition, which was possibly due to a confusion between points of order and procedural motions, sometimes referred to as motions of order. While procedural motions required the Assembly's or the Committee's decision, points of order came within the competence of the President or the Chairman and must be provided for separately in the rules of procedure, since no provision was made for them elsewhere.

31. While the Australian delegation was in full sympathy with the motives that had prompted the Argentine delegation to submit its draft resolution (A/C.6/L.279) proposing a revision of rule 2, it could not support the draft resolution, because it felt that each General Assembly should be free to decide the duration of its session in the light of the business on its agenda. It would be most unwise to tie the General Assembly's hands by adopting such a provision.

32. The USSR and South African representatives had raised the question of the Committee's competence to deal with the amendment to rule 38 proposed in the Secretary-General's memorandum (A/2206) and included in the annex to the revised Norwegian draft resolution. It was clear to the Australian delegation that, as a Committee of the General Assembly, the Sixth Committee was competent to deal with any matter referred to it by the General Assembly. The letter

(A/C.6/339/Add.1) of the President of the General Assembly to the Chairman of the Sixth Committee, referring the item to the Committee, stated that it had been agreed at the 388th plenary meeting of the General Assembly that the Sixth Committee "should be instructed to consider and report to the Assembly on the amendments contained in the annex to document A/2206...", where the proposed revision of rule 38 in fact appeared.

33. Mr. MOROZOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), replying to the Belgian representative's explanation of his amendments (A/C.6/L.281) to the Argentine draft resolution (A/C.6/L.279), said that he had already stated the USSR delegation's opinion that it was impossible for the General Assembly to decide in advance how long its session should last. Furthermore, any proposal that items not disposed of at any given session should be transferred to the agenda of the next session was unacceptable, for it would mean that embarrassing questions could be dragged on from session to session and never properly discussed.

34. The Belgian amendments did nothing to make the Argentine draft resolution more acceptable. The Belgian representative's reservation that it would always be open to the General Assembly, as its debates developed, to revise its decision on the closing date completely nullified both the Argentine draft resolution and the Belgian amendments. To state that the General Assembly must fix its closing date in advance and then to add that it had the right to change that date, left the effect of the present rule 2 unaltered. There was therefore no need to adopt the Argentine draft resolution, either with or without the Belgian amendments.

35. With regard to the Norwegian representative's suggestion that the Committee should consider the proposed amendments to the rules one by one, he pointed out that it was essential to regard the rules of procedure as a complete whole. The Syrian amendment (A/C.6/L.280) was probably based on that collective view, which showed that the Secretary-General's proposed amendments were incorrect in principle. It was clear that they were designed to achieve one object: that items on the General Assembly's agenda should no longer be considered as freely and thoroughly as they were considered at present. The aim was to deprive delegations, although they were composed of representatives of sovereign States, of the right to present their views as fully as they might wish.

36. Had any member of the Committee doubted that that was indeed the purpose, the Australian representative's statement would surely have dispelled those doubts. He had said that the explanation of vote was an abuse of a right, but he had given no examples to support that accusation. It was indeed a serious charge. He had never seen that right abused; moreover, the Australian representative had himself made use of it.

37. The Australian representative had described as significant the replacement of the word "shall" in the first Australian amendment (A/C.6/L.282) to the revised Norwegian draft resolution (A/C.6/L.278/Rev.1) by the word "may" (A/C.6/L.282/Rev.1). In effect, however, that was not a change, for it still gave the President or the Chairman the right to close a debate before all members were ready to speak. It was a proposal of far-reaching political implication, which would



establish an anti-democratic procedure in the General Assembly. In making it, the Australian representative was showing a complete lack of respect for the General Assembly, for he obviously considered that its members were not eager to complete the work allotted to them. He should remember that there were many complex questions which required much consideration and research before delegations were ready to state their views.

38. The USSR delegation was unable to accept either of the Australian amendments. The Australian representative was obviously trying to conceal their true purpose, but his arguments were so unconvincing that it was impossible to think that he himself believed in them.

39. Mr. COCK (Colombia) wished to make a few comments in the light of his experience in parliamentary bodies.

40. He was convinced that, whatever restrictions were imposed, a representative would always find some way of giving full expression to his views. If restrictions were imposed on the length or number of speeches made by each representative, speakers would resort to points of order, explanations of vote, the right of reply and the like. Even if a point of order was defined as relating only to questions within the President's or the Chairman's competence, a clever speaker would still be able to adjust his speech in order to bring it within that fairly wide definition, and it would only waste more time in the end if the President or the Chairman were to attempt to call him to order.

41. Again, although an explanation of vote should be brief, the speaker himself was the only judge of what it should cover, and there was no possibility of imposing restrictions in that respect without rendering the right of explanation useless. The right of reply was also difficult to define, and speakers could easily make use of it to evade any limitations on the general debate.

42. The problem had been studied in the Colombian parliament, and it had been found that the only moderately effective method of speeding up the proceedings was for the parliament to remain in permanent session day and night until the consideration of a subject had been completed. That was a somewhat radical measure, and he doubted whether it could be applied to the United Nations. In any event, if it was adopted, it would have to be applied only on the initiative of an authorized majority of all delegations, and not on the initiative of the President or the Chairman or of the majority of members present and voting on any given occasion. In fact, the only effective way to limit the duration of regular sessions of the Assembly was for governments themselves to avoid creating problems with which the Assembly would have to deal.

43. The presiding officer's function was always a very delicate one. It was particularly delicate when he was obliged to call a representative to order and prevent him from speaking. He doubted the wisdom of the suggestion that the President or the Chairman should declare the debate closed as soon as there were no more speakers. The disadvantages of such a procedure became perfectly clear if the Committee's own 347th meeting was taken as an example. On that occasion, no one

had been prepared to speak at the beginning of the meeting, not because the debate on the item had been concluded but because the Norwegian draft resolution (A/C.6/L.278) had not been circulated in all the working languages. The rules should be adapted to life rather than vice versa.

44. He did not agree with the Argentine draft resolution (A/C.6/L.279), because he did not think it would be practicable arbitrarily to fix the closing date of the session in advance.

45. With regard to rule 38, he felt that the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee was an extremely important body and that its Chairman should be represented in the General Committee.

46. He reserved the right to make further comments on the specific proposals at a later stage.

47. Mr. KHAN (Pakistan) said that his delegation would support any proposal which was likely to enable the Assembly and its Committees to discharge their functions more expeditiously and without any loss in efficiency. His delegation believed that it would be practicable to limit the duration of regular sessions and that suitable means of achieving that purpose should be sought. He agreed with the Secretary-General that the Assembly could fulfil its responsibilities more effectively by a careful examination of the items on its agenda, with a view to selecting those with which it could profitably deal during a given session.

48. There appeared to be no objection to the proposed amendment to rule 72 [112] aimed at clarifying the nature of a point of order.

49. He fully agreed with the Secretary-General that any drastic measure which might be suggested for limiting the duration of regular sessions of the Assembly must be seriously scrutinized; he felt that the amendments proposed were in fact drastic and demanded serious scrutiny. There seemed to be seeds of discord and danger in those proposed amendments. Any limitation of the length and number of speeches might work to the detriment of the smaller countries. He was therefore unable to support the proposed amendments in their present form. His delegation considered that the subject should be further examined by a suitable committee, which should report to the Assembly's eighth session.

50. Mr. CUTTS (Australia) said that his amendments (A/C.6/L.282 and Rev.1) had been submitted in a constructive spirit, and he was perfectly prepared to accept the Committee's decision on them. He explained to the USSR representative that he had never implied that explanations of votes necessarily constituted an abuse of a right. He had simply said that he considered them to be entirely unnecessary and liable to lead to abuse.

51. Mr. VALLAT (United Kingdom) emphasized that his delegation did not wish to place any undue limit on debates nor to restrict the right of delegations, particularly the smaller ones, to free expression. He quoted the remarks made on the subject by Sir Gladwyn Jebb at the 387th plenary meeting, stressing that the proposed amendments must obviously be acceptable to the smaller delegations before they could be adopted, but pointing out at the same time that the Secretary-

General had taken the views of delegations into consideration and had eventually submitted proposals which were both cautious and modest. In the light of that general approach, the revised Norwegian draft resolution (A/C.6/L.278/Rev.1) was entirely acceptable.

52. There had been some criticism of the reference, contained in the third paragraph of the preamble to that text, to the observations and suggestions presented by the Secretary-General. Merely to note those suggestions, however, did not imply any approval and, although the Committee should clearly confine its discussion to the question of amendments to the rules of procedure, it was perfectly proper for it to consider the Secretary-General's memorandum (A/2206) as the background for its decision and to mention his observations and suggestions in the preamble to its resolution.

53. With regard to the amendments listed in the annex to the revised Norwegian draft resolution, several of them were designed only to clarify the existing rules. That applied to the amendments to the opening parts of rules 73 [113], 75 [115] and 76 [116]. Those amendments certainly did not confer any arbitrary power on the President or the Chairman, since the actual decision was left to the Assembly or the Committee concerned. The only new point was the addition of a sentence to rule 73 [113] and, as the representative of Ecuador had shown (347th meeting), that addition was well based on precedent. It was designed simply to prevent a procedural discussion aimed at shortening a debate from absorbing more time than the debate itself.

54. The proposed amendment to rule 74 [114], which had been omitted from the Norwegian draft resolution, had now been taken up in the Australian amendments (A/C.6/L.282). Mr. Vallat had some doubts about the usefulness of such an amendment, although it had certainly been improved by the substitution of the word "may" for the word "shall" (A/C.6/L.282/Rev.1).

55. Some delegations had questioned the definition of a point of order given in the proposed amendment to rule 72 [112], and he believed that the difficulty was based on a slight confusion between a point of order and a procedural motion. It was quite apparent from the text of rule 72 [112] that a point of order must relate to a question within the President's or the Chairman's competence, because the rule itself provided that, when a point of order was raised, it must be immediately decided by the President or the Chairman. Replies to questions or clarifying remarks were not, strictly speaking, points of order, but when they wished to make such statements representatives could raise a point of order and request the President or the Chairman to allow them to speak, possibly before other speakers whose names were on the list. It was within the President's or the Chairman's power to call on speakers and, in Mr. Vallat's opinion, the request for permission to speak could properly be called a point of order even though the statement itself could not. He believed that it was within the President's or the Chairman's competence to allow a representative to make a procedural motion. If the motion came within any specific rule of procedure which gave it priority, the President or the Chairman was entitled so to rule. If,

on the other hand, the procedural motion did not fall within any such rule, it would still be within the powers of the President or the Chairman, by virtue of his general authority to direct the discussions of the Assembly or the Committee concerned, to take the sense of the members as to whether or not they wished to give priority to the motion. The question of priority was a point of order, but the procedural motion itself was not and should not be raised as such. Indeed, it was considerations of that kind which made it salutary to adopt the clarification proposed for incorporation in rule 72 [112].

56. With regard to rule 38, he considered it reasonable that the Chairman of the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee should have a vote in the General Committee. That also appeared to be in the interests of the good conduct of the business of the Assembly. He would therefore vote in favour of the amendment to rule 38.

57. Some representatives had suggested (347th and 348th meetings) that the whole problem should be referred to a committee of experts, but he doubted whether such a suggestion was strictly within the Committee's terms of reference. In fact, the Committee could refer to a committee of experts the question of the proposed amendments to the rules of procedure only, and that would not serve any useful purpose. The possibility of a thorough examination of all the rules of procedure by a committee of experts at some appropriate time was not, however, excluded.

58. With regard to the Argentine draft resolution (A/C.6/L.279), he did not think it was feasible to place an arbitrary limit on the length of regular sessions. He also had considerable doubt about the procedure suggested for dealing with any items pending at the end of the session. It might not always be desirable simply to refer such items to the next regular session. His delegation could not therefore accept the procedure suggested in the last sentence of the Argentine draft resolution. He would, however, be prepared to accept the first paragraph of the operative part, if it was submitted separately, as an amendment to the existing text of rule 2. Psychologically, it would have a good effect to fix the actual closing date at the beginning of each session rather than simply to set a target date.

59. With regard to the second Australian amendment (A/C.6/L.282/Rev.1), concerning explanations of votes, he fully sympathized with the motives which had led to its submission. At times the opportunity to explain a vote had been used very freely, either to repeat remarks already made during the general debate or simply as a vehicle for propaganda. That was extremely unfortunate, and all delegations should exercise great restraint in their use of the right to explain their votes. In practice, however, the Australian amendment would not have the desired effect. Often the situation changed during the course of a debate or after the list of speakers had been closed, or even during the course of the voting. In such circumstances, it would be wrong to prevent representatives from explaining their votes simply because they had participated in the general debate at some stage.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.