

## HUNDRED AND FORTY-EIGHTH MEETING

*Held at Lake Success, New York, on Saturday, 1 October 1949, at 10.45 a.m.*

*Chairman: Mr. LACHS (Poland).*

### **Methods and procedures of the General Assembly: report of the Special Committee (A/937) (continued)**

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to continue its consideration of the amended text of rule 59 proposed by the Special Committee (A/937, paragraph 27).
2. Mr. HSU (China) stated that the arguments advanced by speakers who were opposed to the Special Committee's text for rule 59 had not caused his delegation to alter the conclusion which it had reached in the Special Committee. The question whether the proposed rule differed from the old was purely academic; any amendment worthy of that name must involve a change. The change was not, however, one of substance, but consisted merely of a restatement of the existing provisions. The reason for the restatement was the desire to make the rule automatic in operation. The existing rule 59, designed to prevent waste of the General Assembly's time by irresponsible persons, had failed of its purpose because it could not come into operation unless invoked by the President or a Member of the General Assembly. The conscientious objectors to the rule proposed by the Special Committee, as contrasted with those who objected to that rule on political grounds, might perhaps say that the President and the Members of the General Assembly could be trusted to exercise that power; there was little likelihood, however, that they would in fact do so for a long time to come.
3. That situation was an outcome of the past. When the existing rule 59 had been adopted, the General Assembly, in the hope that all its Members would co-operate to prevent needless debate, had failed to put it into practice, thereby creating a precedent. Therefore, unless a rule could be made to operate automatically, the current practice would undoubtedly be continued. It was precisely in order to remedy that situation that the General Assembly had set up the Special Committee. The proposed new text of rule 59 would do more than any other measure suggested by the Committee to enable the General Assembly to function more effectively; if it were defeated, the Special Committee's work would have been largely wasted.
4. For all those reasons, the Chinese delegation would vote in favour of the Special Committee's text for rule 59. If that text were rejected, however, the existing rule 59 would still stand; it was not dead and could be revived by application. He hoped that the General Assembly would have the courage to apply it.
5. Mr. RODRÍGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) asked whether the Chilean representative could not introduce and explain his recently submitted amendment (A/C.6/L.10).
6. The CHAIRMAN remarked that the amendment would be circulated to those delegations which had not yet received it, and called on the Chilean representative to introduce it.
7. Mr. SORO (Chile) stated that he had drafted his amendment after listening attentively to the divergent views expressed on the proposed rule 59. The purpose of the existing rule was clear and laudable; it was to prevent a repetition in plenary meeting of lengthy debates which had taken place in Committees, and thus to avoid waste of time and propaganda speeches. The rule was, however, so stated that it was inapplicable in practice. As it was possible under rule 68 of the rules of procedure to effect the closure of a debate by a simple majority vote, it seemed inadvisable to invoke rule 59, which required a two-thirds majority.
8. It should be noted that the original text of the provision now laid down in rule 59, as drawn up by the Preparatory Commission, had been put in the negative form and had then been changed to a positive form.<sup>1</sup> The Chilean delegation agreed with many other delegations that the General Assembly had a full and inalienable right to discuss any question which fell within its competence under Article 10 of the Charter, and that no rule should be made to abrogate that right. The General Assembly, however, also had the right to regulate the conduct of its business and to avoid abuses. Unfortunately, the Special Committee's text of rule 59, which had been designed with that purpose in mind, appeared to deny the right of the Assembly to free discussion because it was stated in a negative form. The Chilean amendment, which was stated in a positive form, fully respected that right and, at the same time, was designed to avoid abuse. While its effect was the same as that of the existing rule 59, it provided that the General Assembly could decide by a two-thirds majority not to discuss the report of a Main Committee. Reports adopted by an overwhelming majority in the Committee would then not be subject to a renewal of debate in plenary meeting; if new amendments were submitted or new considerations arose, however, the General Assembly would no doubt decide to hold a plenary discussion.
9. By stating the rule in positive terms, the Chilean amendment upheld the principle of freedom of discussion; at the same time, it would eliminate existing abuses. The text of the amendment (A/C.6/L.10) follows: "The General Assembly may, by a two-thirds majority of Members present and voting, decide that a report of a Main Committee shall not be discussed in plenary meeting. Any proposal to this effect shall immediately be put to the vote without debate."
10. The representative of Chile noted that his amendment spoke of "a report of a Main Committee". If the majority preferred, however, he was ready to replace that phrase by the following words, taken from the Special Committee's text: "questions on which a Main Committee has submitted a report".
11. He made it clear once more that the purpose of his amendment was to maintain the right of the General Assembly to discuss all reports unless, by a two-thirds vote, it wished to make an exception to that rule.

<sup>1</sup> See *Report of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations*, chapter I, section 3, rule 101 of the provisional rules of procedure for the General Assembly.

12. He called attention to an error in the Spanish text of his amendment: the words *no se discutir * should be replaced by *no se efectuar *.

13. Mr. RODR GUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) thanked the Chilean representative for his explanation of the aims of his amendment. He fully agreed that, as a rule, the reports of Main Committees should be debated by the General Assembly, but he was unable to accept the provision in the Chilean amendment to the effect that a vote on the matter should be taken in the General Assembly without debate. He urged the Chilean representative to introduce some provision for two speakers in favour and two against a plenary debate; representatives would then be afforded at least the opportunity of stating for what reasons their Governments wished to be able to express their views before the General Assembly.

14. Turning to the text of rule 59 proposed by the Special Committee, he said that he agreed fully with the objections made by the Cuban and Australian representatives at previous meetings. Others, however, had maintained that the difference between the existing rule 59 and the proposed text was merely academic, and that by re-stating the rule in a negative form repetition of debate would be avoided and much time saved. The United Kingdom representative had said that the Sixth Committee was a technical body which should consider only the technical aspects of the proposed rule and vote for it if its application would economize the time of the General Assembly. The representative of France had endorsed that view, and had added that the public could follow the work of the Committees as easily as that of the General Assembly. Yet if it was agreed that both the Committee and the subject it discussed were technical, there was all the more reason to subject the report of the Committee to the scrutiny of that most representative and entirely political organ of the United Nations, the General Assembly, which would consider the same matter from a different point of view. Moreover, as that viewpoint was admittedly different, it could certainly not be said that the work of the Main Committees and of the General Assembly was of the same interest to the public.

15. The argument that the Committees were composed of the same delegations as the General Assembly was irrelevant, since on a number of occasions the same delegations had voted one way in committee and another in plenary meeting. The Fifth Committee, for example, had rejected the proposal that Spanish should become a working language; yet the General Assembly had reversed that decision, and had adopted the proposal by the overwhelming vote of 39 to none, with 11 abstentions. Another such example was provided by a plan for the disposal of the Italian colonies which had been approved by the Committee and rejected by the General Assembly.

16. Furthermore, most of the items dealt with in plenary meeting were previously studied, analysed and discussed by the Main Committees, which then drew up resolutions and reports to be submitted to the General Assembly. At that moment only did the question become ripe for discussion by the plenary meeting. Such items made up the most important part of the Assembly's work, and it was only by first debating them in plenary meeting that the delegations could prop-

erly cast their votes. It was for that reason that the existing rule 59 made the affirmative statement that there should be a debate on a report submitted by a Main Committee if—and it contained this limitation—one-third of the Members present and voting so desired. The proposed rule 59, being cast in the negative form, would on a number of occasions do away with such debate; worse than that, since it called for a vote without preliminary debate, that rule would even deprive representatives of the right to state why their Governments desired a debate in plenary meeting. Unless they could transmit those reasons by telepathic means, representatives would be forced to plead privately with other delegations to vote in favour of a debate and thus to enable them to state the views which their Governments had instructed them to present.

17. While he agreed with those speakers who, like the United States and Chilean representatives, wished to put an end to the existing abuses of the right of free speech, in objecting to the negatively stated text proposed by the Special Committee he was defending not the abuse, but the right itself. The existing rule 59 was a sufficient guarantee against possible abuses, especially in conjunction with the amended rules 19, 31 and others already adopted by the Committee and imposing various limitations upon debates in the General Assembly. At the same time, the existing rule 59 did not abrogate the inalienable right of the General Assembly to a free and full debate.

18. For all those considerations, and in an effort to preserve the democratic spirit of the United Nations which alone could help it to blaze new paths for mankind, he would vote against the text of rule 59 proposed by the Special Committee and support the existing rule.

19. Mr. GLASHEEN (Australia) remarked that the real issue before the Committee was only beginning to emerge. That issue was whether to apply the provisions of rule 59 in any one of its three versions—the existing rule, the Special Committee's text, and the Chilean amendment—or to continue the present practice of not applying the rule.

20. The three versions did not differ from one another in substance; on the whole, he found the Chilean amendment preferable in many ways. The choice, however, did not lie among them. The existing rule 59 was in fact a dead letter, and the reason was that its provisions were contrary to the political judgment of Members of the United Nations. Therefore, if the Committee did not adopt the amended text of the Special Committee, it should, to be logical, recommend the deletion of the existing rule.

21. He wished to call attention to two points. First, as the Egyptian representative had noted, under the Special Committee's rule as many as eighteen Member States could be denied the right to speak before the central debating organ of the United Nations, while on the other hand, if the Special Committee's proposal for rule 98 were adopted, as few as twenty Member States would constitute a quorum. That situation could only be described as anomalous.

22. Secondly, it was an error to think that the provision ruling out plenary debate unless one-third of the Members was for it would save much time. In the past, subjects discussed for one to two weeks in committee had not required more than one and a half day's debate in the General

Assembly. There was consequently a danger of sacrificing a basic principle in return for small gain.

23. He suggested that the present practice should be continued. In other words, Members should still be able to speak on all reports which should always be open for discussion, and formal matters should, at the President's suggestion, be put to the vote without debate.

24. His delegation would consequently vote against the Special Committee's text for rule 59.

25. Mr. ABDON (Iran) stated that the Iranian delegation had supported the proposed amendment to rule 59 in the Special Committee, and that arguments advanced against that proposal in the Sixth Committee had not changed his delegation's stand. It considered that the Special Committee's proposal for rule 59 would serve to accelerate the work of the General Assembly without in any way impairing the right of Members of the United Nations to state their views. All questions would be fully discussed in the Main Committees of the General Assembly and, under the proposed rule, also in plenary meetings if one-third of the Members of the General Assembly so desired.

26. The discussion seemed to indicate, however, that the Special Committee's proposal would not be accepted by the Sixth Committee, in which case the existing rule 59, the provisions of which were not very clear, would stand. Although under the existing rule the President of the General Assembly could ask for a vote on the question whether the discussion of certain reports previously debated in a Main Committee should be re-opened in plenary meeting, the provision had not been applied, and the practice had been to open a debate on important questions and to put the less important ones to the vote without prior discussion. The result had frequently been a delay in the Assembly's work.

27. Mr. Abdoh therefore felt that, if the Special Committee's proposal was rejected, the original rule 59 should be amended to state clearly that the President could, on his own initiative or on the proposal of a Member of the General Assembly, ask for a vote on the question whether a discussion of a report of a Main Committee was necessary. The amendment (A/C.6/L.12) which he proposed was to add to the existing rule 59 the following sentence: "Any proposal to this effect shall be put to the vote immediately and without debate."

28. If the Committee considered such an amendment to the existing rule 59 to be unnecessary, he would propose that attention should be drawn in the Committee's report to the General Assembly to the fact that the President had the right to call for a vote on the question whether a matter previously considered by a Main Committee should be re-opened for consideration.

29. The Iranian delegation would therefore vote in favour of the text recommended by the Special Committee and, if that were rejected, would formally present the above proposal.

30. Mr. FERRER VIEYRA (Argentina) wished to state his delegation's view on that important question. He agreed almost entirely with the representatives of Australia and others who had spoken against the Special Committee's proposal for rule 59.

31. With regard to the view, expressed at the preceding meeting, that the Committee was called upon to deal only with the technical aspect of the problem and that its political aspects should be left for consideration in plenary meeting, he thought that was an argument which could be advanced against rule 59 as proposed by the Special Committee. Indeed, if it was argued that the Main Committees should deal with the technical aspects of questions and that all political considerations should be left to be discussed by the General Assembly, there would be no reason to adopt a proposal that would prevent the General Assembly from considering the political aspect of questions, which would not have been previously discussed.

32. On the other hand, Mr. Ferrer Vieyra disagreed with the view that it was an exclusively political problem. If that were so, the Sixth Committee would not have been required to deal with it.

33. The proposed amendments, he felt, did not solve the problem involved; the Chilean proposal was, in its requirement of a two-thirds majority to prevent discussion, more exacting than the existing rule 68, which required a vote by a simple majority for closure of a debate.

34. He wished to know whether there was any difference between the expression "discussion of a report" in the original text of rule 59, and the words "questions on which a Main Committee has submitted a report" as contained in the text proposed by the Special Committee.

35. In conclusion, he stated that his delegation was opposed to rule 59 as proposed by the Special Committee, as well as to the amendments to it.

36. Mr. ROBLEDO (Mexico) stated that he would confine his remarks to the Special Committee's proposal for rule 59, since he had not yet had the time to study the Chilean proposal.

37. The Mexican delegation was opposed to the Special Committee's proposal for a number of reasons. While appreciating the Special Committee's motives in proposing a new rule 59, his delegation felt that the debates of the General Assembly could be shortened by application of the existing rule 59, which so many speakers had supported.

38. The Special Committee's proposal for rule 59 might cause increased doubt regarding the parliamentary techniques of the General Assembly, whose function it was to discuss all questions falling within its competence on as wide a basis as possible.

39. In reply to the argument that the composition of the Main Committees and the plenary meetings was the same, Mr. Robledo pointed out that public opinion was primarily interested in the proceedings of the latter. Furthermore, there was frequently a need to discuss questions of vital importance in plenary meeting after they had been considered in a Main Committee. In general, he would prefer the "tyranny of verbosity", to which certain representatives had referred, to a tyranny which might save the time of the General Assembly but would violate the freedom of expression of Members of the United Nations. In view of those considerations he was in favour of maintaining the existing rule 59, and expressed the hope for its constant and effective application.

40. Mr. RIVERA HERNÁNDEZ (Honduras), quoting the existing text and the Special Committee's

- text of rule 59, pointed out that there was a substantial difference between them, contrary to the view of some representatives. Under the existing rule, there could be a debate before a vote was taken on the question whether a Committee report should be discussed by the plenary meeting of the General Assembly, while under the provisions of the Special Committee's proposal the General Assembly would automatically vote on that question without prior debate on the desirability of such a discussion. In his view, further discussion of questions in the General Assembly was extremely important since it was the duty of every Member of the United Nations who had firm convictions on certain matters to seek to convince the other Members of his views. Those who did not speak up at meetings either did not wish to cooperate with the other Members or had no views to offer. Voting alone was not enough.
41. Discussion in plenary meetings was also of great importance to countries which for financial reasons were unable to send a sufficient number of representatives to attend all Main Committee meetings, and which for that reason could state their position at plenary meetings only.
42. In view of those considerations, he was in favour of maintaining rule 59 in its existing form, and would vote against the Special Committee's proposal. His delegation was also opposed to the Chilean amendment, which precluded the possibility of discussion before taking a vote on a proposal made under it. Such procedural discussion was necessary and did not constitute a repetition of debates held in Main Committees.
43. Mr. ZIAUDDIN (Pakistan) did not share the apprehensions of the representative of Poland and others. If, as was generally agreed, the General Assembly sessions should be shortened, it would be necessary to prevent repetition of debates which had been held in Main Committees.
44. The rule proposed by the Special Committee would apply only after a question had been thoroughly discussed in a Main Committee; furthermore, there was no likelihood that the representatives, who had received full and definite instructions from their Governments on the questions under consideration, would change their views after further discussion in plenary meeting. Mr. Ziauddin therefore supported the Special Committee's proposal.
45. Mr. MAYRAND (Canada) asked for clarification of the Chilean amendments, in particular with regard to the possibility of discussing amendments to reports submitted to the General Assembly by the Main Committees if a decision against further discussion of such reports had been taken by a two-thirds majority. He thought that the Chilean text might be changed as follows: "The General Assembly may, by a two-thirds majority of Members present and voting, decide that the questions on which a Main Committee has submitted a report, shall not . . .".
46. Mr. SOTO (Chile) stated that there was no difference between his formulation and that proposed by the representative of Canada because any report presented by a Main Committee involved a particular question. He did not object, however, to substitution of the words suggested by the Canadian representative if the Committee so desired. As regards the Canadian representative's question, he explained that, if an amendment was submitted before a motion was made for a vote without discussion, it would be considered by the General Assembly, which would then decide whether or not the amendment was new and should be discussed.
47. Mr. HSU (China) stated that his delegation was unable to support the Chilean amendment, which suffered from an unnecessary attempt to protect the principle of freedom of expression; all questions were fully discussed in the Main Committees of the General Assembly. On the other hand, it did not serve the purpose of preventing waste of the General Assembly's time; like the existing rule 59, it did not provide for the automatic application of its provisions. At the same time, it raised the question of a two-thirds majority vote on a matter of procedure. He therefore preferred the rule proposed by the Special Committee, and, if that was rejected, the original text of rule 59.
48. Mr. FITZMAURICE (United Kingdom), in reply to certain representatives who had seen a contradiction in his earlier remarks, pointed out that it was the view advanced by the representative of Uruguay which had been contradictory. That representative had cited the example of the question of Spanish as a working language; that proposal, the representative of the United Kingdom pointed out, had been referred to the Fifth Committee for a study of its financial implications. After a purely technical consideration of the matter, the Fifth Committee had rejected the proposal. The matter had also had a political aspect, however, and when it had been submitted to the General Assembly, the Members who for technical reasons had voted for its rejection in the Fifth Committee had supported the proposal because of the political considerations involved.
49. Many representatives had held that the Special Committee's proposal would preclude the possibility of discussing in plenary meeting questions submitted by Main Committees. That was not correct. The proposal would merely limit the possibility to some extent by requiring an affirmative vote of Members of the General Assembly. As pointed out by the Special Committee, whenever there was a desire in the General Assembly to re-open a matter for discussion, the required number of votes could always be found. The question of Spanish as a working language was also a good illustration of that fact, since nothing could have prevented a discussion of that important question under the proposed rule.
50. In view of those considerations, Mr. Fitzmaurice felt that the apprehensions of certain representatives were unfounded. The Special Committee's proposal had the advantage of preventing repetition of a debate when there was no possibility of reversing the decision of a Main Committee and when no new elements could be added for further clarification.
51. Mr. ROLING (Netherlands) stated that he would vote for the Special Committee's proposal. The essential difference between the existing rule and the proposed rule was that the latter provided that there should be no discussion before a vote was taken on the question whether a Committee report should be opened for debate in plenary meeting. Such procedural debate was unnecessary and wasteful since the discussion in committee would already have shown whether or not the Members desired a debate in plenary meeting; there would be consequently no need for representatives to explain, before the vote,

the reasons why a report should be opened for debate.

52. Mr. MENDOZA (Guatemala) stated that the question under discussion was substantive as well as procedural, and was of vital importance to the functioning of the United Nations. The Committee had before it three versions of rule 59: the existing one, that proposed by the Special Committee and the Chilean amendment.
53. His delegation considered that, while all three were unsatisfactory because of the limitation placed on the principle of free discussion in the General Assembly, that proposed by the Special Committee was the most objectionable, whereas the existing version seemed least prejudicial to the principle of free discussion in the General Assembly. It has been said at San Francisco that the Security Council must act, and the General Assembly must discuss. Mr. Mendoza stressed that the basic function of the General Assembly was to discuss all questions falling within its competence under the Charter. The Main Committees had been set up to facilitate the work of the General Assembly, but it was at the plenary meetings of the General Assembly, the supreme organ of the United Nations, that final decisions were taken. The existing rule 59, as well as the Special Committee's proposal and the Chilean amendment, tended to restrict the right of the General Assembly freely to discuss all questions put before it. The General Assembly would not be able to adopt, reject or amend any proposals or draft resolutions submitted to it without previous discussion.
54. In cases where discussion had been found to be unnecessary, a vote had been taken immediately. Yet there were many important questions which had required further discussion and on which representatives had, in the Committee, reserved the right to state their views in plenary meeting. That right had never been contested, but if rule 59 as proposed by the Special Committee was adopted, the General Assembly would have to confine itself to taking votes.
55. The delegation of Guatemala considered that the right to discuss any question in plenary meeting should not be limited in any way, and it would prefer that the existing rule 59 should be abolished altogether.
56. It could not be denied that there had been abuse of that right, and the representatives supporting the Special Committee's proposal had wished to prevent it. Mr. Mendoza felt, however, that the principle of free speech should not be restricted in order to put an end to such abuse. Rule 68, which provided for the closure of a debate, provided a better method of terminating debates when it became clear that they were repetitions of previous Committee discussions.
57. Consequently, his delegation preferred the original rule 59 to the more restrictive proposals made by Chile and the Special Committee.
58. Mr. CHAUDHURI (India) agreed with the representatives of Australia and France that the Special Committee's proposed amendments to rule 59 did not introduce a great change in the original rule. It was a compromise between defence of the principle of freedom of expression in the General Assembly and the necessity of accelerating the Assembly's work. The proposed new rule was dangerous. It infringed upon the principle of freedom of expression. The abuse of lengthy debates should be stopped, but to adopt the proposed amendment would risk making the remedy worse than the ill it was intended to cure. The delegation of India did not favour its adoption.
59. That delegation had not yet had the opportunity to study the proposed Chilean amendment.
60. Mr. MAÚRTUA (Peru) stated that his delegation would vote against the Special Committee's proposed amendment because it believed that nothing justified the limitation of the General Assembly's right to evaluate the work of the Committees. It must not be forgotten that political problems, as well as technical problems, were dealt with by the General Assembly. The desire to save time should not influence the consideration of those problems.
61. Moreover, limiting the prerogative of the General Assembly might damage the prestige of the United Nations. In some parts of the world, a decrease of confidence in the United Nations had been noted recently. The views of all States, large and small, must be heard in the General Assembly.
62. The Peruvian delegation would therefore support the retention of the original rule 59, which protected the rights of all States to express their views.
63. The CHAIRMAN announced that there were four more names on the list of speakers. He proposed that the list should be closed.
64. Mr. RODRÍGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) recalled that there were several other amendments to the rules before the Committee which could not be considered if the list were closed; nor could other proposals be presented.
65. The CHAIRMAN stated that the Committee had before it the new rule proposed by the Special Committee, the Chilean amendment as modified by Canada, and the Iranian suggestion, which could not be considered as a formal proposal because it was not an amendment to the text proposed in the report of the Special Committee (A/937), the matter under discussion, but an amendment to the original rule 59.
66. Mr. GRAFSTRÖM (Sweden) proposed the closure of the debate, on the ground that the new rule had been under discussion for almost two days, and that most of the members had presented their views twice.
67. The CHAIRMAN explained that there were still four speakers on the list who had not been heard. In the circumstances, he requested the representative of Sweden to withdraw his motion.
68. As Mr. GRAFSTRÖM (Sweden) declined to do so, the CHAIRMAN stated that, under rule 106, two speakers could be heard against the motion to close the debate. Thereafter, the motion would be put to the vote.
69. Mr. RODRÍGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) opposed the proposal to close the debate on the ground that all the members whose names were on the list should be heard.
70. Mr. NASS (Venezuela) was also opposed to closure, since he had just handed in an amendment which he hoped would be satisfactory to the Committee.
71. The CHAIRMAN then put to the vote the Swedish representative's proposal to close the debate.

*The proposal was rejected by 23 votes to 14, with 10 abstentions.*

72. Mr. CHAUMONT (France) stated that he did not share the Chairman's opinion that the Iranian representative's proposal could not be accepted because it applied to the original rule and not to the Special Committee's draft rule. The Iranian representative wished to add a sentence to the text of the existing rule. The existing rule with that addition could be considered as an amendment to the Special Committee's text.
73. Mr. ABDOH (Iran) agreed with that interpretation of his proposal and requested that it be considered as an amendment to the text of the Special Committee's draft rule.
74. The CHAIRMAN stated that it would be so considered and would be put to the vote.
75. Mr. FITZMAURICE (United Kingdom) stated that the Committee was discussing methods and procedures of the General Assembly and that the Special Committee's report was the basis of that discussion. He had asked, earlier in the discussion, if members could submit proposals, not only in regard to the recommendations contained in the report, but to the original rules. His delegation had then circulated several suggestions (A/C.6/L.8) on the subject of procedure, which were not amendments to the report. The Committee might wish to propose amendments to rules which the Special Committee had not changed at all, and he believed that it was authorized to do so. He therefore considered that the Iranian representative's proposal was in order.
76. The CHAIRMAN agreed that the report was the basis of the discussion on procedure. He added that the Committee could not revert to consideration of the existing rules while the suggestions of the Special Committee were still under discussion. However, the Committee could submit additional proposals. He recalled that it had been decided that the work would be divided into two parts: the Committee would first consider the draft report of the Special Committee and then take up the specific proposals which it wished to submit. For the time being, it could therefore consider only the proposals and recommendations of the Special Committee, and amendments to them.
77. Mr. WENDELEN (Belgium) stated that the Committee had adopted a procedure which had not given rise to any objection, and it should therefore follow that procedure, as far as possible. He pointed out again, however, that it would be more logical to consider the additional proposals of the Committee as and when the text of each rule was discussed, rather than to return to those same rules again, perhaps days later, and reconsider them in connexion with the specific suggestions of the Committee.
78. Mr. FERRER VIEYRA (Argentina), Rapporteur, explained that, in accordance with the procedure which the Committee had decided to adopt, the text of the Special Committee's amendments should be considered first; the amendments to that text submitted by the members of the Sixth Committee, next; and lastly, the amendments submitted by the latter to the original text of the rules.
79. A vote should be taken thereafter on the amendments to the Special Committee's text, first; then, on the amendments to the existing rules; and finally on rules as amended as a whole.
80. Mr. BARTOS (Yugoslavia) did not agree with the Rapporteur's explanation of the procedure. He thought that a distinction should be made between amendments and proposals. The Committee had before it the proposals submitted by the representatives of Chile and Iran to the Special Committee's text, and not amendments to the existing rules. Moreover, he did not think that the debate should be closed before the Chilean amendment had been considered and the other amendments circulated.
81. The CHAIRMAN considered that the discussion had covered both the Special Committee's draft rule and the amendments to it, including that of Chile.
82. He recalled that four speakers, whose names were on the list, were yet to be heard, and called upon the representative of Venezuela to speak.
83. Mr. NASS (Venezuela) said that since objections to the draft rule and the amendments under consideration were due, not so much to substance as to the wording of the text, he thought that an acceptable text could be drafted by retaining the first sentence of the Chilean proposal, as amended by Canada, and by replacing the second sentence by the following:  
"The President shall in each case consult the General Assembly in this respect and the question shall be put to the vote without debate."
84. That would make the application of the rule about discussion of Committee reports in the General Assembly automatic. Such a rule would provide for discussion and free expression of views in the General Assembly, unless a great majority of the Members objected, and at the same time it would avoid the problems arising under the existing rule.
85. Mr. MELENCIO (Philippines) stated that his delegation was in favour of the Special Committee's amendment and did not consider it restrictive. Not all the questions that came before the General Assembly merited lengthy discussion; some of them should be decided in Committees. If it were considered necessary to discuss reports or questions of importance, it would not be difficult to muster the necessary votes. Representatives who attended Committee meetings gave reports to their delegations on the proceedings in the Committees. The delegations almost always knew, before the meetings of the General Assembly, whether or not it would be possible to obtain the votes necessary to re-open discussions.
86. If the new rule 59 were accepted, no principle would be sacrificed. The number of items on the agenda was increasing with every session. The Special Committee's draft rule, if adopted, would expedite the proceedings and add to the record of achievements of the United Nations.
87. Mr. LOUTFI (Egypt) stated that it was the opinion of his delegation that the Chilean amendment to rule 59 was not very different from that of the Special Committee. Application of the rule proposed by Chile might deprive the minority of freedom to express its views. The Egyptian delegation wished to avoid that. It considered that the current practice should be retained. It would vote against the amendment of the Special Committee and against that of Chile.
88. Mr. SORO (Chile) stated that he considered the Venezuelan representative's amendment to

the Chilean proposal to be very appropriate and that he was prepared to accept it. It ensured the automatic application of the rule, which the Chilean delegation wished to retain.

89. The CHAIRMAN read the text of the Chilean proposal as amended:

"The General Assembly may, by a two-thirds majority of Members present and voting, decide that questions on which a Main Committee has submitted a report shall not be discussed in plenary meeting. The President shall in each case consult the General Assembly in this respect and the question shall be put to the vote without debate."

90. Mr. KORETSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked what was meant by the word "consult", and added that he did not understand how the President could consult the General Assembly, if there was to be no debate.

91. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the representatives of Chile and Venezuela should redraft the last sentence of the proposed rule together. He recalled that the Committee had before it an amendment (A/C.6/L.12) submitted by the representative of Iran which read:

"Discussion of a report of a Main Committee in a plenary meeting of the General Assembly shall take place if at least one-third of the Members present and voting at the plenary meeting consider such a discussion to be necessary. Any proposal to this effect shall be put to the vote immediately without debate."

92. He added that the Special Committee's amendment must also be put to the vote.

93. Mr. KORETSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) pointed out that it was not advisable to put to the vote amendments which the members of the Committee did not have before them in writing.

94. The CHAIRMAN agreed. He stated that, if there were no objection, the vote on the amendments would be postponed until the following meeting, when the Members would have the texts of the amendments before them in writing.

95. He then took up consideration of rule 35 (b), which had been discussed previously (146th meeting) and the amendment submitted by the representative of the United Kingdom as amended by the representative of Czechoslovakia. The text of that amendment (A/C.6/L.6) follows:

"The General Committee shall meet at regular weekly (or if necessary more frequent) intervals throughout each session to review the progress of the General Assembly and its committees and to make recommendations for furthering such progress. It shall also be convened by the President at such other times as he deems necessary or upon the request of any other [two] of its members."

96. Mr. KORETSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), remarking that he did not think that the United Kingdom amendment had been sufficiently discussed, requested that members should be permitted to express their views on it.

97. The CHAIRMAN opened the amendment for discussion.

98. Mr. KORETSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the amendment was a new proposal and placed new obligations on the General Committee. It regulated the work of that Committee too strictly; it set a rule for the frequency of its meetings. He did not consider that advisable. In case there was no business to deal with, there would be no necessity for the Committee to meet. On the other hand, it might be necessary to meet daily or, in any case, more often than once a week. The frequency of meetings should depend on the amount of work to be accomplished, and not on the request of any specified number of Committee members. The Chairman should be free to call meetings when he considered it necessary. The Sixth Committee should not try to establish a trusteeship over the General Committee. He was in favour of retaining the original rule.

99. Mr. FITZMAURICE (United Kingdom) explained that his delegation had not wished to restrict the General Committee, but had wished merely to assure that it should meet fairly often, and regularly; the frequency of meetings should not be left to the discretion of any one person.

100. The Special Committee's draft rule said that meetings should be held "from time to time". That might mean only twice during a session. Since the General Committee was to act as a steering committee, it should meet regularly to ascertain the progress of the work of the Committees.

101. The delegation of the United Kingdom wished to emphasize the necessity for regularity of the meetings. He proposed that the words "at regular weekly (or if necessary more frequent) intervals", in the first sentence of the United Kingdom amendment, should be replaced by the word "periodically".

102. He was also prepared to substitute for the words "any two of its members", in the second sentence, the words "any other of its members", if the Sixth Committee so desired.

103. In conclusion, he called attention to the phrase: "and to make recommendations for furthering such progress", which was contained in the first sentence of the amendment. That was a phrase which did not appear in the Special Committee's draft rule.

104. Mr. GOTTLIEB (Czechoslovakia) accepted the amendment reading "any other of its members".

105. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the text of the draft rule 35 (b) submitted by the delegation of the United Kingdom, as amended by the delegation of Czechoslovakia.

*The rule was adopted by 40 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.*

The meeting rose at 1.50 p.m.