

## HUNDRED AND FORTY-SIXTH MEETING

*Held at Lake Success, New York, on Thursday, 29 September 1949, at 3 p.m.*

*Chairman: Mr. LACHS (Poland).*

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

1. The CHAIRMAN requested the Committee to continue the discussion of the addition to rule 31 of the rules of procedure proposed by the Special Committee in its report (A/937, paragraph 38).
2. Mr. ZIAUDDIN (Pakistan) said that the proposed addition in no way altered the substance; it merely specified the powers of any President of a constituted body and, without affecting the right of members freely to express their views, enabled the President to shorten debates. His delegation, convinced that the President of the General Assembly would use his powers with moderation, would vote for the Special Committee's proposal.
3. Mr. MATTAR (Lebanon) said that the experience of the past four years had led his delegation to believe that the only practical means of enabling the General Assembly and its Committees to fulfil their functions more efficiently and diligently was to limit the number and length of speeches. That was why his delegation had spoken in favour of rules 1 (a) and 19 (b) which the Special Committee had suggested should be added to the rules of procedure. His delegation would vote also for the amendment to rule 31, which would enable the President to reduce the length of debates.
4. Mr. FERRER VIEYRA (Argentina) would support the addition proposed by the Special Committee provided it was understood that the list of powers conferred on the President was not ex-

haustive and that he would continue to enjoy powers other than those enumerated in rule 31. In the opinion of his delegation, it would have been preferable to redraft rule 31 in general terms.

5. Mr. TRUJILLO (Ecuador) feared that the provisions which the Special Committee had suggested adding to rule 31 might have an opposite effect to the one desired, and might, in practice, give rise to two separate debates, one on the question under discussion, the other on the motion submitted by the President in virtue of those provisions.

6. The President, like any other representative in the General Assembly, certainly had the right to propose the limitation of the time to be allowed to speakers or the closure of the debate; the addition proposed by the Special Committee therefore seemed superfluous.

7. Unless convincing arguments in favour of the adoption of that addition were put forward, his delegation would vote against it.

8. Mr. PEABODY (Liberia) supported the Special Committee's proposal, for the same reasons as those enunciated by the Pakistan representative. Since the President was empowered only to make proposals, which the General Assembly could either accept or reject, there was no reason to fear the effect of the addition proposed by the Special Committee.

9. Mr. FITZMAURICE (United Kingdom) drew attention to paragraph 38 of the Special Committee's report, which set forth the reasons for the amendment to rule 31. In the absence of explicit

provision in the rules of procedure, the President of the Assembly might hesitate to assume the initiative in proposing to limit the length of representatives' speeches or other measures of that kind lest doubt be cast on his impartiality. The addition proposed by the Special Committee would be very useful in that connexion, and the United Kingdom delegation would therefore vote for it.

10. Mr. KOVALENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that his delegation doubted the usefulness of the proposed amendment. The additional provisions which the Special Committee recommended for rule 31 did not confer any new power on the President of the General Assembly and gave no binding force to the powers which he had in fact hitherto exercised. On the contrary, the enumeration in a single rule of powers some of which, incidentally, were provided for in various other rules of procedure, seemed to indicate a certain desire to limit the President's freedom of action. The Ukrainian delegation could not, therefore, support the proposed addition, which it considered superfluous.

11. Mr. TRUJILLO (Ecuador) regretted that the arguments of the United Kingdom representative did not convince him.

12. The President clearly had the power to propose to the Assembly such measures as a limitation on the number and duration of representatives' speeches. In his opinion, however, the President should not be encouraged to do so by insertion in the rules of procedure of precise provisions for the purpose, because the exercise of that power would inevitably involve a discussion tending to prolong the debate on the main question.

13. He was definitely opposed to the President's power to propose a limitation "in the course of the discussion of an item". Delegations which had shown a lively interest in some particular question and then had to limit the number or duration of their speeches would feel that their right of expressing the views of their Governments with all desirable fullness had been infringed.

14. For all those reasons, the delegation of Ecuador would vote against the Special Committee's proposal.

15. Mr. MAÚRTUA (Peru) supported the remarks made by the representative of Ecuador.

16. The Peruvian delegation was of the opinion that any limitation of a representative's freedom of speech was contrary to the essential purpose of the United Nations, which was to make the General Assembly a tribunal where each Member could freely express its ideas. Moreover, the President's exercise of the power to propose measures for curtailing or closing a discussion might cast doubts upon his impartiality or create the impression that he was seeking to influence the course of the debate.

17. Mr. FITZMAURICE (United Kingdom) said he would like to state that no recommendation of the Special Committee had been made with the intention of restricting the freedom of speech of the Members of the United Nations. Any interpretation in that sense would be truly regrettable.

18. As the representative of Peru had said, the General Assembly was and should be a forum where subjects of common interest might be

freely discussed. It should not be overlooked, however, that the Assembly did not always have unlimited time at its disposal. Experience had demonstrated that the sessions of the General Assembly were increasing in length, so that it was becoming difficult for statesmen who wished to represent their Governments in it to be present throughout the session. It was therefore necessary to seek a compromise solution, and it appeared that the Special Committee had succeeded in finding one by proposing its amendment to rule 31.

19. He drew the attention of the representative of Ecuador to the fact that the adoption of that amendment would only serve to strengthen the President's authority and to spare him some embarrassment when he considered it his duty to propose measures for curtailing the discussion. He asked the members of the Committee to adopt that amendment, and all the others that had been proposed for the same purpose.

20. Mr. RODRÍGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) paid tribute to the Special Committee for the efforts it had made to find a solution to the problem that had been submitted to it. The decisions of that Committee were the result of numerous discussions devoted to the careful examination of all aspects of the question.

21. He wondered, nevertheless, whether the proposed amendment to rule 31 was really necessary. The existing rules of procedure guaranteed certain inalienable rights to States Members, one of which was to decide on the length of speeches. It was clear that in certain cases, when delegations abused that right and expounded their views at great length, it was the President's duty not to allow the discussion to be unduly prolonged and, in order to expedite the proceedings, he should be able to suggest measures to shorten the debate. But, while it was true that the Members of the United Nations wished their President to have all the authority necessary to bring the work of the Assembly to a successful issue, it was also true that they were not always ready to assign to him rights which belonged exclusively to them. A happy medium should be found between those two extreme positions.

22. As the Special Committee had drawn up a series of recommendations regarding many of the rules of procedure, and as it was impossible to form an exact idea of the general procedural system which would result from the adoption or rejection of those recommendations, the Uruguayan delegation would abstain from expressing its opinion on some of them. It was reserving its right to do so when it was in a position to compare the new system with the existing one.

23. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the proposal of the Special Committee that the following sentences should be added to rule 31:

"The President may, in the course of the discussion of an item, propose to the Assembly the limitation of the time to be allowed to speakers, the limitation of the number of times each representative may speak on any question, the closure of the list of speakers or the closure of the debate. He may also propose the suspension or the adjournment of the meeting or the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion."

*That proposal was adopted by 31 votes to 4, with 7 abstentions.*

24. The CHAIRMAN invited the members of the Committee to state their views on the new rule 34 (a) which the Special Committee proposed should be inserted in the rules of procedure (A/937, paragraph 19). The rule read as follows:

"Chairmen of committees upon which all Members have the right to be represented and which are established by the General Assembly to meet during the session, shall be entitled to attend meetings of the General Committee and may participate without vote in the discussions."

25. Mr. GRAFSTRÖM (Sweden) explained that the Special Committee, in recommending the addition of the new rule 34 (a) to the rules of procedure, had wished to confirm a practice followed at the previous session of the General Assembly. In his opinion, a debate on that rule was unnecessary; he suggested that it should be put to the vote immediately.

*The new rule 34 (a) was adopted by 46 votes to none, with 1 abstention.*

26. The CHAIRMAN opened the debate on the Special Committee's recommendations regarding rules 35, 35 (a) and 35 (b) of the rules of procedure. The Special Committee considered that those articles should be drafted as follows:

"Rule 35<sup>1</sup>

"The General Committee shall, at the beginning of each session, consider the provisional agenda, together with the supplementary list, and shall make recommendations to the General Assembly with regard to each item proposed, concerning its inclusion in the agenda, the rejection of the request for inclusion, or the inclusion of the item in the provisional agenda of a future session. It shall, in the same manner, examine requests for the inclusion of additional items in the agenda, and shall make recommendations thereon to the General Assembly.

"In considering matters relating to the agenda of the General Assembly, the General Committee shall not discuss the substance of any item, except in so far as this bears directly upon the question whether the General Committee should recommend the inclusion of the item in the agenda, the rejection of the request for inclusion, or the inclusion of the item in the provisional agenda of a future session, and what priority should be accorded to an item the inclusion of which has been recommended."

"Rule 35 (a)<sup>2</sup>

"The General Committee shall make recommendations to the General Assembly concerning the closing date of the session. It shall assist the President and the General Assembly in drawing up the agenda for each plenary meeting, in determining the priority of its items, and in the co-ordination of the proceedings of all committees of the General Assembly. It shall assist the President in the general conduct of the work of the General Assembly which falls within the competence of the President. It shall not, however, decide any political question."

"Rule 35 (b)<sup>3</sup>

"The General Committee shall meet from time to time throughout each session to review the

*progress of the General Assembly and its committees, and the General Committee shall be convened by the President at such times as he deems necessary, or upon the request of any three members of the General Committee."*

27. The Chairman, noting that no member of the Committee wished to make any remarks regarding the Special Committee's draft rule 35 (a), put that rule to the vote.

*Rule 35 (a) was adopted by 46 votes, with no abstentions.*

28. The CHAIRMAN opened the debate on rule 35 (b) (A/937, paragraph 18).

29. Mr. GOTTLIEB (Czechoslovakia) stated that his delegation did not object to draft rule 35 (b) in so far as it would allow the General Assembly to organize its work in a better manner, but it objected strongly to that part of the rule which laid down that the General Committee should meet when three of its members so requested.

30. The Czechoslovak delegation was not unaware of the reasons for the Special Committee's recommendation, but it considered that the goal aimed at would be attained equally as well and minority rights would be better guaranteed if rule 35 (b) laid down that the General Committee should meet when two of its members so requested. He recalled that the General Committee was composed of fourteen specially qualified members of the General Assembly chosen with a view to ensuring equitable geographical distribution. They could be relied upon, and any two of them should have the right to request that the General Committee should meet each time that they felt it was necessary.

31. The Czechoslovak representative pointed out that, even if that right were abused, it would be preferable that the General Committee should hold a short meeting to study the problems which two of its members felt they should submit to it rather than that there should be a breach of the right of the minority to express its views. His delegation suggested that the words "upon the request of any three members of the General Committee" in rule 35 (b) should be replaced by the words "upon the request of any two members of the General Committee."

32. Mr. KORETSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) was surprised that the Special Committee had proposed a rule which not only would limit the duration of sessions, but would restrict the activity of a body essential to the co-ordination of the Assembly's work. If that rule were adopted, it would result in a considerable reduction in the number of meetings of the General Committee, whereas the Committee should on the contrary meet as often as possible in order that the work of the General Assembly might run smoothly. It was therefore inadvisable to prevent a member of the General Committee from calling a meeting when he felt it was necessary.

33. Mr. Koretsky proposed therefore that the condition laid down in the last part of rule 35 (b) should just be deleted. If the Committee did not agree with his view, it should at least accept the Czechoslovak proposal to reduce the required number of requests for a meeting from three to two.

34. Mr. FERRER VIEYRA (Argentina) entirely agreed with the USSR representative's view. He considered that frequent meetings of the General

<sup>1</sup> Appears in paragraph 10 and the first part of paragraph 25 of the mimeographed report (A/937). Because of an error in that report, this text was distributed during the meeting under the symbol A/C.6/L.5.

<sup>2</sup> See A/937, paragraph 25.

<sup>3</sup> See A/937, paragraph 18.

Committee could only help the progress of the General Assembly's work. Moreover, as it was always possible to seek and obtain the support of two other members for calling a meeting, the provision in the last part of the rule would be more likely to result in a loss of time rather than a gain. He suggested that the words in question should be replaced by: "upon the request of any one member of the General Committee".

35. Mr. FITZMAURICE (United Kingdom) supported the USSR representative's remarks but not the conclusions he had reached. In recommending the adoption of that rule, the Special Committee, far from wishing to lessen the role of the General Committee, had wished, on the contrary, to strengthen it. The United Kingdom delegation wished, however, to go even further than the Committee and to propose an amendment providing that the General Committee should meet not from time to time but regularly, at least once a week, with a view to studying the progress of the Assembly's work and also to making recommendations for speeding up its work. Experience proved that the General Committee did not meet often enough and was not carrying out its duty of guidance and control. Referring to the number of requests necessary for a meeting to be called, he considered that that was a question of secondary importance. He would not have any objection if the number were reduced to two or even to one, if that was the wish of the Committee.

36. Mr. TATE (United States of America) shared the United Kingdom representative's view. He stated that he would be very willing to accept the Czechoslovak amendment to reduce the requisite number of requests for convening the General Committee from three to two.

37. Mr. BARTOS (Yugoslavia) was opposed to the new rule 35 (b) on account of the condition laid down in its last provision. In his opinion, the General Committee, which was composed of notable persons representing the most important political groups and geographical regions, was the body best qualified to resolve technical difficulties which might arise in the course of the Assembly's work. It was therefore desirable that every political group represented within the General Committee should have the possibility of seizing it of any question that group deemed important without having to seek the support of another group. Mr. Bartos therefore considered that the request of a single member should be sufficient to convene the General Committee.

38. Mr. LOUTFI (Egypt) agreed with the United Kingdom representative. He recalled that the figure three had been a compromise solution in the Special Committee. For his part, he would be prepared to accept the Czechoslovak representative's proposal to reduce that figure to two.

39. Mr. GRAFSTRÖM (Sweden) in turn supported the United Kingdom representative's remarks, and stressed the importance of the new rule 35 (b), which would help to make the General Committee a steering body. He added that he had no objection to the Czechoslovak representative's proposal.

40. Mr. MAYRAND (Canada) pointed out that, since the President of the Assembly was himself a member of the General Committee, it would be better to say "and of any two other members of the General Committee".

41. Mr. KORETSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) stated that he would accept the Czechoslovak representative's proposal if the majority of the Committee were in favour of it. With regard to the amendment proposed by the United Kingdom representative, he did not think it opportune to decide in advance how often the General Committee would meet.

42. In any case, in view of the fact that the Committee did not have the written text of the United Kingdom amendment before it at the moment, Mr. Koretsky requested the Chairman to postpone voting on rule 35 (b) until the following day.

43. The CHAIRMAN agreed to that request and invited members to comment on the new text of rule 35 proposed by the Special Committee (paragraph 26 above).

44. Mr. MAYRAND (Canada) emphasized the fact that, in practice, the existing rule 35 of the rules of procedure had proved ineffective in curtailing remarks on substance. Although it was not always easy to decide just when a speaker was entering into a discussion of substance, the President's authority to call speakers to order when he considered that they were touching on the substance of a question should be strengthened. Moreover, with rule 35 as it stood, the General Committee had occasionally hesitated to propose the rejection or deferment of a question because such powers had not been expressly granted to it. It was therefore important to strengthen the General Committee's powers in that respect.

45. Mr. KHOMUSKO (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) stated that his delegation was ready to accept the new text of rule 35 on condition that the word "directly" in the English text was deleted. That word would in fact make interpretation of the rule difficult and might raise the question of the extent to which a discussion dealt directly with the item which had been proposed for inclusion in the agenda.

46. Mr. CHAUMONT (France) pointed out that that word did not appear in the French text.

47. Mr. GRAFSTRÖM (Sweden) accepted the deletion of the word "directly", which had no doubt been included in the text in error.

48. The CHAIRMAN stated that, in the circumstances, the word "directly" would be deleted from the English text.

49. Mr. KHOMUSKO (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) was satisfied with that explanation and withdrew his amendment.

50. Mr. ZIAUDDIN (Pakistan) pointed out that the English text would have to be redrafted slightly as a result of the deletion of the word "directly". That, however, could be left to the drafting committee.

51. The CHAIRMAN accepted that suggestion.

52. Mr. JORDAAN (Union of South Africa) gave his full support to the Special Committee's draft rule 35. It settled two highly important questions of principle, which had hitherto raised great difficulties. It was indeed essential that the General Committee should have the authority to curtail any discussion on substance and to establish priorities so that the agenda of the sessions should not be too heavy.

53. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the new text of rule 35 proposed by the Special Committee.



*The text was adopted by 46 votes to none, with 2 abstentions.*

54. The CHAIRMAN opened discussion on the new rule 56 (a) (A/937, paragraph 40) as follows:

*"Immediately after the opening of the first plenary meeting and immediately preceding the closing of the final plenary meeting of each session of the General Assembly, the President shall invite the representatives to observe one minute of silence dedicated to prayer or meditation."*

55. Mr. KERNO (Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Legal Department) explained that the Secretary-General had received hundreds of letters from all countries Members of the Organization, asking that the General Assembly should devote a few moments to prayer in the course of its yearly meetings. The Secretary-General had been aware of the difficulty of drafting a text satisfactory to all Members of the Organization in which all the faiths and philosophies of the world were represented. Nevertheless, in view of the fact that the Organization had pledged itself to the ideals of justice and of peace, he had thought it desirable to draw the Special Committee's attention to the wish expressed by a representative part of world public opinion by proposing that one minute of silence should be devoted to prayer and meditation.

56. Mr. TATE (United States of America) was convinced that all representatives had the noble principles of the Charter at heart and he was sure that they would support the proposal to devote a few moments to meditation on those principles. For its part, the United States delegation would unreservedly support that rule.

57. Mr. CHAUDHURI (India) also gave his whole-hearted support to the Special Committee's proposal; prayer made for the spiritual progress of mankind.

58. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the new rule 56 (a) proposed by the Special Committee.

*The rule was adopted by 44 votes to none, with 7 abstentions.*

59. The CHAIRMAN opened discussion on the amendment to rule 59 proposed by the Special Committee (A/937, paragraph 27) as follows:

*"Questions on which a Main Committee has submitted a report shall not be discussed in plenary meeting unless, after a vote taken without debate, at least one-third of the Members present and voting indicate that they consider discussion necessary."*

60. Mr. GLASHEEN (Australia) considered that that amendment endangered the basic principle of free discussion, to which Australia had always attached great importance. His country was gratified to see the Assembly gain in importance and become a universal forum where the political problems of the world were debated. The length of its sessions was not so much a result of imperfect procedure as an indication of the large number and the gravity of the questions raised in international relations.

61. Hitherto—and its attitude would not change—the Australian delegation had given its approval to all measures likely to expedite the Organization's work and which did not prejudice the right of its Members to express their opinions freely before all its bodies. The new draft of rule 59, however, did in fact tend to restrict the right of free discussion by preventing the minor-

ity from putting before the Assembly its views on a question which had already been discussed in one of the Main Committees. For that reason the Australian delegation would vote against that amendment, since it considered that the Special Committee's aim had already been achieved in practice, in view of the fact that whenever a question discussed in a Committee came before the Assembly, the President suggested that the Committee's proposals be considered adopted if there was no objection.

62. Mr. KORETSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) shared the opinion of the Australian representative. The rights of delegations should be the decisive factor in drawing up the rules of procedure. To prejudice those rights would be to shake the democratic foundations of the Organization itself and to hinder the friendly co-operation between nations which was the principal aim of the Charter.

63. The right of delegations to address themselves directly to the General Assembly was one of considerable importance. As was known, only some members of each delegation were present at the meetings of the Main Committees, which functioned simultaneously. It was therefore essential, when the gravity of the problem in question warranted it, that the Member State concerned should be able to uphold its point of view before the full delegations in the General Assembly, where discussion took place under the eyes of public opinion and the Press, which was seldom the case in the meetings of the Committees.

64. If the new rule 59 were to be adopted, that right would be subject to further restrictions. Some delegations would find it impossible to explain the correctness of their viewpoint to all the members of the delegations and to the representatives of world opinion. In that case, the Assembly would be reduced to the role of a voting machine, whereas the Charter specifically stated that the Assembly had the right to discuss and study any questions falling within its competence. That was the Assembly's basic function: it was through discussion that States could come to a better mutual understanding of political, economic and social problems; it was through the debates that differences of opinion could be reconciled in a compromise solution. Care should therefore be taken not to limit freedom of discussion, which was already sufficiently restricted by the rules of procedure.

65. For all those reasons, the USSR delegation would oppose amending the existing rule 59.

66. Mr. CHAUMONT (France) thought that there was no cause to dramatize the consequences of the Special Committee's amendment to such an extent. After all, the new text proposed only re-stated in a negative form what was positively expressed in the rule as it stood: the idea remained the same, but the drafting was clearer.

67. The Special Committee could not be accused of having wished to prevent delegations from expressing their viewpoint, since they had had time to do so amply in a Main Committee, and since, under rule 71 of the rules of procedure, they could always submit to the Assembly any amendments or proposals relating to the question under study.

68. If the USSR representative was anxious that there should be an opportunity for the Assembly to discuss any fresh aspects of a question which might arise after the debates in the relevant

committee had been closed, it might be possible to satisfy him by stating in the new text of rule 59 that its provisions only concerned amendments and proposals already fully debated in Committee.

69. Mr. RODRÍGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) criticized the part of paragraph 27 of the report (A/937) which stated that in many cases it was useful to allow a general discussion in the Assembly of the principles on which the Committee's recommendations had been based. It was not enough to state that such debate was useful, particularly when it was subsequently stated that in some cases it should not be encouraged. Discussion was, in fact, the Assembly's major function; the Special Committee did not seem to have been sufficiently convinced of that fact.

70. With regard to rule 59, he felt that there was more than one slight difference of meaning between the text as it stood and the new draft proposed by the Special Committee. In the first case, it was enough for one-third of the Members to desire a debate for that debate to take place; in the second, a third of the Members must consider it necessary if it were even to become possible. The commentary which followed the text of rule 59 as proposed by the Special Committee showed that, if that condition was not fulfilled, there would be no debate and, what was more, that there might not even be any explanations of votes, since rule 80 left that matter to the President's discretion.

71. Discussion, which there was an attempt to suppress, was essential. In fact, it could not be claimed that a question had been clearly defined until it had been studied in Committee. Consequently, it was only when the Committee's report came before the Assembly that the matter was really ready to be discussed and that the delegations could form an opinion on it with full knowledge of the facts. They should therefore be left the opportunity of referring the matter to their Governments and expressing their final opinion in the light of any new instructions they might have received.

72. The Australian representative had been correct in maintaining that rule 59, as it stood, was preferable to the Special Committee's draft. The present rule contained a considerable number of restrictions; additional ones should not be added.

73. Mr. Rodríguez Fabregat added that, if the new text were adopted, the unforeseen and somewhat illogical result would be that when a third of the Members did not request a debate in the Assembly, the author of a new proposal would, under rule 71, be able to speak in defence of his amendment without being entitled to speak on the substance of the question, that was to say on the proposal which he hoped to amend.

74. It must therefore be admitted that the amendment proposed by the Special Committee was completely unsatisfactory: the delegation of Uruguay would consequently oppose its adoption.

75. Mr. BARTOS (Yugoslavia) would also vote against the Special Committee's amendment.

76. Rule 59 as it stood already restricted freedom of discussion. It had, however, been the custom to apply it in such a way that it had never given rise to any protests. That custom was based on the presumption that, if two-thirds of the Members did not request the suppression of the debate, it should be understood that at least a

third of the Assembly was in favour of discussion. The new text, however, tended to transform that presumption; it ceased to be positive, and became negative. Only a vote could reverse it.

77. Thus, the freedom of speech of delegations would be seriously restricted. They might find that by a negative vote they were refused the right to speak before the Assembly on a question which was of vital interest to their country on the pretext that they had already had an opportunity to do so in one of the Committees. Moreover, it was not true to state, as the report did, that the composition of the main Committees was identical with that of the General Assembly. There was nominal but not qualitative identity, because the representatives who attended the Committee meetings were generally technical experts on the delegations, whereas in the General Assembly the delegations were present as political bodies. Consequently, it was to the Assembly, the only sovereign body, that Member States should be able to appeal in the last resort; it was before the Assembly that the minority should be able to defend its viewpoint and discuss a report which might influence readers, even those with the best intentions, because of its one-sided conclusions if the opposition were not entitled to make itself heard.

78. It was with a view to safeguarding the fundamental right expressed in the words *audiatur et altera pars* and to ensuring respect for that freedom of speech which was the foundation of parliamentary and democratic principles that the Yugoslav delegation would oppose the adoption of the Special Committee's amendment.

79. Mr. GRAFSTRÖM (Sweden) said that his delegation would maintain the position which it had adopted in the Special Committee and would vote in favour of the amendment, which seemed to him of undoubted value.

80. Repetition of debates should be avoided and it could not be alleged that the rights of delegations would necessarily be undermined thereby. In a parliamentary body where the committees were composed of a very small number of members, debates at plenary meetings were essential; the United Nations did not function along the same lines: all its Members were represented on the main Committees and the debates in those Committees, like those in the General Assembly, were public.

81. Furthermore, the fact that two-thirds of the Members of the Assembly were opposed to the repetition of a debate meant that the Committee's decision would be confirmed.

82. Mr. SHOUKAIRI (Syria) spoke against the adoption of a rule which would constitute a flagrant violation of freedom of speech, a denial of justice and tyranny. All rules of procedure were intended to facilitate the exercise of rights; they could not annul those rights.

83. Voting without debate was a rapid operation, of course, but it was contrary to parliamentary principles. An assembly which voted without discussion would no longer be the General Assembly of the United Nations. An assembly which refused to examine certain problems could no longer be considered as the forum for the peoples of the world.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.