

POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN

REPORT OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE

Rapporteur: Mrs. Aase Lionaes (Norway)

1. During the course of the second part of the first Session of the General Assembly, the delegation of Denmark addressed a letter to the Secretary-General, asking him to take the necessary steps to have the following draft resolution placed on the agenda of the General Assembly and submitted to the committee concerned (document A/BUR/43):

"In the Preamble of the Charter the Peoples of the United Nations have reaffirmed faith in the equal rights of men and women, and in Article 1 declare as purposes of the United Nations to achieve international co-operation in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to sex, and to be a centre for harmonizing the action of nations in the attainment of these common ends. Certain member states, however, have not yet granted women political rights equal to those granted to men.

"The General Assembly, therefore, recommends

"that all Member States which have not already done so, adopt measures necessary to fulfil the purposes and ends of the Charter in this respect by granting women the same political rights as men,

"and invites the Secretary-General to communicate this recommendation to all Governments of Member States.

"The General Assembly recommends that the Security Council and the General Assembly in dealing with applications for membership give consideration to the political rights of women in the applicant States."

The General Assembly at its forty-sixth plenary meeting on 31 October 1946, decided to place this draft resolution on the agenda and to refer it to the Third Committee. It was suggested that the Chairman of the Third Committee should consult with the Chairman of the First Committee on the question raised in the last paragraph of the draft.

2. The Third Committee discussed this draft resolution during the course of three meetings.

The Chairman opened the discussion by reminding the Committee that the Economic and Social Council had adopted, on 16 February 1946, a resolution establishing a Sub-Commission to report on the question of the status of women to the Commission on Human Rights. The Sub-Commission met in May 1946, and recommended, in its report, that priority be given to the consideration of the political rights of women. The Council, during its second session, decided to confer upon the Sub-Commission the status of a full Commission to be known as the Commission on the Status of Women. The Commission is expected to meet early in 1947.

3. The first part of the Danish draft resolution underlined a principle which had been stated in more general terms in the Charter and had thus already been accepted by all Member States. The question of the application of this principle is under consideration by the appropriate advisory commission and the Third Committee had to decide whether it should leave the matter to the Economic and Social Council or adopt the additional measure proposed by the delegation of Denmark.

4. It was decided that the Committee should discuss and vote upon the two parts of the draft resolution separately.

5. In the general discussion which ensued, the United States representative stated that, since the resolution was a restatement of principles already contained in the Charter, passing such a resolution might be an empty gesture. She suggested, therefore, that the resolution be referred to the Economic and Social Council for effective action. Other delegations, while agreeing that the Council should concern itself with the matter, considered that to refer the resolution to it, without the endorsement of the General Assembly, would mean unnecessary delay. Adoption of the resolution by the Assembly would give it moral backing and would render the work of

/the Commission

the Commission on the Status of Women more effective. Some representatives felt that the resolution should be widened to ensure that full equal rights were accorded to women, while others thought that civil rights should be added. The representative of Panama, at the close of the discussion, moved an amendment to omit the word "political" before the words "rights as men". On learning that it would be necessary to circulate the amendment in writing, he asked permission to withdraw it to which no objection was raised.

6. A vote was then taken on the first part of the draft, and the forty-one members of the Committee present adopted it unanimously.

7. The representative of Denmark made a statement on the second part of the resolution, pointing out that the First Committee, after a protracted debate, had concluded its business on the question of the admission of new Members. In the circumstances, it was felt that a debate on the second part of the Danish proposal might lead to duplication of that discussion; therefore, in the interest of expediting the business of the Assembly, the delegation of Denmark, with the consent of the Committee, withdrew that part of the resolution.

8. The Third Committee, therefore, recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following resolution:

POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

WHEREAS

In the Preamble of the Charter the Peoples of the United Nations have reaffirmed faith in the equal rights of men and women, and in Article 1 it is stated that purposes of the United Nations are, among others, to achieve international co-operation in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to sex, and to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends;

/ WHEREAS

WHEREAS

Certain Member States have not yet granted to women political rights equal to those granted to men;

THEREFORE RECOMMENDS:

- (a) That all Member States which have not already done so, adopt measures necessary to fulfil the purposes and aims of the Charter in this respect by granting to women the same political rights as to men;
- (b) Invites the Secretary-General to communicate this recommendation to the Governments of all Member States.
