

GENERAL COMMITTEE

SUMMARY RECORD OF NINTH MEETING

Held at the Capitol, Havana, Cuba, on Friday, 23 January 1948 at 6.00 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. M. SUTTEMS (Belgium), First Vice-President

1. CONTINUATION OF THE DISCUSSION ON THE PROGRESS OF THE CONFERENCE

The EXECUTIVE SECRETARY gave a review of the progress of work which he believed was such as to prove the correctness of the General Committee's decision at the preceding meeting and to justify the hope that Sub-Committee work could be completed by the end of January or the early days of February and the Conference itself in the first part of February.

He then read a letter from the President of the Conference transmitting a request from a group of Latin-American delegations for a meeting of Heads of Delegations and for the setting-up of a conciliating committee similar to the one which was proposed in document E/CONF.2/BUR/25. This letter suggested that such a committee should be constituted not on a technical but on the political level.

The CHAIRMEN of Committees II, III and VI, agreed with the Executive Secretary's review of progress.

Mr. PHILIP (France) also agreed and stated that it seemed to him unwise at the present stage to superimpose a new committee on the existing structure, as he feared it would retard the progress of work and perhaps lessen the chances of conciliation in the sub-committees now functioning; he thought such a procedure would only serve to reopen the general discussion.

Mr. TINOCO (Costa Rica), Vice-President, stated that, although he had previously considered such a conciliatory committee unnecessary and continued to be optimistic over the progress of the Conference, he would favour a meeting of the Heads of Delegations to inform them of the progress made and setting up of a co-ordinating group to consider the more difficult and inter-related questions as a whole. He believed this would hasten the work of the Conference.

Mr. COLBAN (Norway), Chairman of Committee VI, thought that the Conference should be grateful for the proposal of the delegation of El Salvador, which had been

had been considered at an earlier meeting, as it had resulted in accelerating the pace of the Conference. He considered that its purpose was now accomplished and he would prefer not to risk interference with the present work of the sub-committees. He did not think that the appointment of a group of conciliators would add anything to the work of conciliation which was constantly taking place as a natural result of the work of sub-committees.

Mr. HOLMES (United Kingdom), agreed with Mr. Colban. He thought the purpose of calling a meeting of Heads of Delegations could be achieved merely by circulating the statement of the Executive Secretary and, with regard to the consideration of inter-related questions, he considered that this was provided for by the various joint sub-committees and working parties set up for this purpose. He considered that the Conference had reached the stage where the different questions were proving capable of solution by the methods normally adopted at international conferences.

Mr. CHARLONE (Uruguay), Chairman of Committee IV, stated that the request transmitted in the President's letter had been made by fifteen Latin American delegations. He feared that the progress referred to by previous speakers was one of quantity rather than quality and that, at least for the Latin American delegations, the major questions remained unsolved. While it might be possible now to sign a Charter acceptable to a majority, he believed that the Conference had a duty to the United Nations to create an organization that could contain all countries. The lack of balance which the Latin American countries had found in the proposed text between small underdeveloped countries and developed countries still remained, and he did not believe that the solutions arrived at in the sub-committees and working parties would be considered definitive or completely acceptable when the questions came again before the principal committees and plenaries. He believed that a solution could only be arrived at on a political level. The progress of the last few weeks had been made possible, he considered, by the last meeting of the Heads of Delegations, which took place immediately after a very difficult problem had been discussed in a main committee, and for that reason he considered a meeting now might be equally useful. The effort at conciliation would have to be made at some stage, in his opinion, and it should be made as soon as possible.

The CHAIRMAN was alarmed at the possible establishment of the conciliating committee in the form proposed by Mr. Charlone as he understood that it was intended it should be able to over-ride solutions already reached.

Mr. CHARLONE (Uruguay), Chairman of Committee IV, explained that he had only intended to say that it seemed to him preferable to reach a solution satisfactory to all rather than to a majority.

/Mr. TINOCO

Mr. TINOCO (Costa Rica), Vice-President, asked the Committee to decide whether to call a meeting of the Heads of Delegations, since a proposal of fifteen delegations should not be lightly set aside, and let the Heads of Delegations themselves decide whether a conciliating committee were desirable.

Mr. NASH (New Zealand), Vice-President, agreed that the proposal should be given serious consideration but suggested that, in order to avoid retarding the present pace, it might be advisable to consider it in four or five days time and continue meanwhile as before.

Mr. COLBAN (Norway), Chairman of Committee VI, wished to remind the Committee of the serious consequences of any delay at this stage which might mean that the International Trade Organization could not be established until the autumn of 1949.

Mr. MALIK (India), Second Vice-President, said that, although he had at the last meeting been in favour of a conciliating group, he was so much impressed by the recent progress that he believed there was every prospect of settlement of the remaining questions by ordinary methods. He, therefore, wished to support Mr. Nash.

Mr. ABEILO (Philippines), Vice-Chairman of Committee II, said that he was in the same position as Mr. Malik and agreed with Mr. Colban. However, he thought that there should be no difficulty in calling a meeting of the Heads of Delegations to explain the progress made. He did not wish to lose any working time of the sub-committees and proposed that the meeting take place on Sunday.

Dr. AUGENTHALER (Czechoslovakia), Vice-President, agreed that the committee had no right to refuse the request for the meeting of the Heads of Delegations. He suggested that, since the deadline of 31 January set for sub-committees to finish their work was only one week away, the meeting might well take place then and be preceded on the thirtieth by a meeting of the General Committee which would decide on the report to be presented to the Heads of Delegations.

This was agreed.

2. The EXECUTIVE SECRETARY suggested that it might be wise to postpone the meetings scheduled for the following day in view of the loss recently suffered by the Cuban Congress of one of its members and of the ceremony that was to take place in his honour in the Capitol.

Mr. GUTIERREZ (Cuba) suggested that, in order not to delay the work of the Conference too much, meetings might be held in the morning.

The members of the Committee decided that the Conference should not use the Capitol at all on Saturday out of respect to the Cuban Congress.

The meeting rose at 8.20 p.m.