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SECOND SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND EMPLOYMENT

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRTY-FIRST MEETING  
OF COMMISSION B HELD ON 17TH AUGUST 1947  
AT 2.30 P.M. IN THE PALAIS DES NATIONS,  
GENEVA.

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Chairman : The Hon. L. D. Wilgress

The Commission resumed its discussion of voting and membership of the Executive Board.

Subject to minor modifications, the alternative texts and appendix on the former subject, prepared by the Secretariat, were approved.

Mr. ANGUS (Canada) submitted a third alternative text embodying the Canadian and Chinese compromise solution.

Dr. COOMBS (Australia) pointed out that this text was substantially different from the proposal which had been made at the previous meeting in that it meant that any Member who was dissatisfied with the result of a vote on the basis of one state/one vote should request and obtain a weighted vote on any question.

Mr. HELMORE (United Kingdom) proposed an amendment to the text, in view of Dr. Coombs' remark.

The text for alternative (c) as amended was adopted.

The Commission then commenced a discussion of the question of composition of the Executive Board, considering at the same time the Report of the Committee, together with an alternative proposal which had been submitted by the Norwegian delegation.

Sir R. PILLAI (India) stated that India stood seventh among the countries of greatest economic importance in the world before partition, and that this position was not affected to any great extent by partition. He considered, therefore, that India should be given a permanent seat upon the Executive Board, the total membership of the Board being increased to 18.

Mr. COLBAN (Norway) introduced his alternative proposal and disagreed with the text presented by the Committee. He did not consider it wise to provide that Members of the Board should be elected by groups of countries and not by the Conference. If countries were to be grouped for purposes of elections to the Board, they should have an opportunity of expressing their views upon the groupings before they were finally agreed. He considered that the Commission should not take a decision upon this subject at the present time, but that it should forward alternative proposals to the World Conference.

Dr. COOMBS (Australia) pointed out that his delegation did not consider a system of permanent seats was necessary. He agreed with the delegate of India that India should be entitled to a permanent seat upon the Board. It was difficult to see in the text of the Committee how the permanent seats upon the Board had been allocated. Also certain difficulties lay in the way of applying successfully a number of representation of groups upon the Board. In certain cases geographical representation was convenient, but in the case of countries like Australia and New Zealand, it resulted in an oddly assorted collection of economies and interests. Under the scheme of composition which had been presented by the Committee, representation upon the Board was by no means proportionate to

economic importance. This was a serious weakness in the Committee's method of approach. For all these reasons the Australian delegation proposed that if the system of permanent seats upon the Board were to be adopted in the World Conference, there should be 8 permanent seats allotted to the most important economic countries in the world in accordance with a periodical assessment. The remainder of the seats should be filled by open elections.

Mr. AUGENTHALER (Czechoslovakia) stated that some examination of the Committee's proposal showed that representation upon the Board did not reflect truly the economic importance of the different groupings. For this reason he supported the proposal of the delegate of Norway.

Mr. EDMINSTER (United States) agreed with the delegate of India that India should have a permanent seat upon the Board. Although the United States delegation had been a Member of the Committee, it had some doubts whether the Committee's proposal was the best scheme which could be formulated.

Dr. GUTIERTEZ (Cuba) said that the Cuban delegation considered that the most important economic nations in the world should have a permanent seat upon the Board, but that they should be elected by all the Members. Article 61 of the Charter of the United Nations, which established the Economic and Social Council, laid down a good precedent for the Executive Board.

Mr. De GAIFFIER (Belgium/Luxemburg) supported the criticisms of the text prepared by the Committee made by the delegate of Norway. However, he thought that that text had real advantages. He proposed that two alternative texts should be sent to the World Conference - the Committee text and the text of the delegate of Norway, as amended by the delegate of Australia.

Mr. SPEEKENBRINK (Netherlands) supported the proposal of the delegate of Norway, as well as the remarks made by other delegates, criticising the text prepared by the Committee.

Mr. PARANAGUA (Brazil) said that the text of the Committee had been based upon the precedent of the International Monetary Fund, which had worked well. He thought that the three texts before the Commission should be sent forward to the World Conference as alternatives.

Mr. FAIVOVICH (Chile) proposed the text prepared by the Committee and supported the proposal of the delegate of Norway.

Dr. WUNSZ KING (China) supported the claim of the delegate of India that India should have a permanent seat upon the Board. He also summed up the debate and replied to some of the criticisms of the text of the Committee which had been made. He had no serious objection to sending alternative drafts to the World Conference, but personally favoured a decision being taken at this time.

Dr. HOLLOWAY (South Africa) criticised the text of the Committee in that instead of making the Members of the Board responsible to all the Members of the Organization, it made them responsible merely to certain groups of such Members.

Mr. ROYER (France) maintained the French delegation's support of the text prepared by the Committee, but agreed that alternative texts should be sent to the World Conference.

It was agreed that three alternative texts, firstly that proposed by the Committee, secondly that proposed by the delegate of Norway, and thirdly that proposed by the delegate of Australia, should in that order be forwarded to the World Conference.

The Commission then commenced to consider the drafting of the three alternative texts.

The text prepared by the Committee was adopted subject to minor alterations.

Mr. HELMORE (United Kingdom) introduced certain amendments to the text prepared by the delegate of Australia. It was agreed that these amendments, together with certain amendments which the delegate of Cuba intended to propose to the text prepared by the delegate of Norway, should be circulated to Members of the Commission before they were discussed.