

After the elections had been held the Egyptian representative on the Committee proposed that Rule 78⁽¹⁾ of the Provisional Rules of Procedure be amended, and Supplementary Rule S⁽²⁾ deleted. The amendment, which read,

“ The term of office of each member shall begin immediately on election by the General Assembly, provided the seat to which such member has been elected is vacant, or, if the election takes place before the expiry of the term of office of the member previously elected, immediately it becomes vacant.”

would, if accepted, enable members elected for one-year or longer terms to hold office for exactly the period specified. Thus a member elected on 12 January, 1946, for a one-year term would hold office until 12 January, 1947. Elections would still take place in September, 1946, but those members elected would not take up their offices until January, 1947.

The arguments for the Egyptian proposal were that the provisions of Articles 23, 61, and 86 of the Charter must be strictly applied ; that where the Charter said one year it meant one year ; and that consequently the eight-month term contemplated at the time of the elections was unconstitutional. Sir Hartley Shawcross, for the United Kingdom, led the opposition to the Egyptian proposal and argued that the elections had taken place on the basis of the eight-months period, that the arguments for the proposal called for too rigid an interpretation of the Charter, and that the “ lame duck ” period of four months was dangerous.

The Egyptian proposal was carried by 26 votes to 16.

The United Kingdom delegation were unhappy about the result because of the “ lame duck ” period, and Sir Hartley Shawcross spoke in this sense when the General Assembly considered the Committee's report embodying the Egyptian proposal. He suggested that the difficulty would be avoided if members elected for eight months should hold office for twenty months, &c. This meant that there would not be another election until September, 1947. Such a suggestion was facilitated by the decision of the General Assembly to adopt the recommendation of the General Committee that the second regular session of the Assembly should not take place until September, 1947 ; the meeting to be held in September, 1946, would be known as the second part of the first regular session. Sir Hartley Shawcross was therefore able to point out that the rejection of the report would leave Rule 78 and Supplementary Rule S as they were and his object of a twenty-months' term would be attained without further amendment.

(1) *Rule 78*: “ The term of office of each member shall begin immediately on election by the General Assembly and shall end on the election of a member for the next term.”

(2) *Supplementary Rule S*: “ The term of office of members of Councils elected for one, two, and three years shall end on the day of the elections held at the second, third, and fourth regular sessions respectively of the General Assembly.”