

amend the Charter would be premature at this stage and of no practical effect, since the Great Powers, whose consent was necessary, could prevent them from being adopted. The Australian purpose was to attempt to apply the Charter in its present form, and to ensure that the Security Council became an effective instrument for the maintenance of peace.

Mr. Hasluck then reviewed the Security Council's activities since it had been set up, early in 1946, and considered how far the Great Powers had fulfilled their responsibilities and justified the confidence which the smaller Powers had placed in them. He pointed out that during this period the Soviet Union had used the veto ten times, sometimes in matters of secondary importance. The Australian representative dealt in detail with these occasions.

He contended that experience showed, first of all, that the Charter had not been respected. Moreover, the Great Powers, which had signed a declaration at San Francisco concerning the voting-powers of the Security Council, had not even respected the principles laid down in that declaration regarding the exercise of the rule of unanimity in connection with the pacific settlement of disputes.

The second lesson taught by experience was that the use of the unanimity rule hampered the work of the Security Council and undermined the trust which the peoples of the world had placed in it. The threat of the exercise of the veto had always hung over the Security Council to such an extent that instead of trying to find the best possible solution the Council had been concerned with only one thing, to avoid the exercise of the veto.

The third lesson to be learned from the past was that at least one member of the Council, using the unanimity rule as an instrument of national policy, seemed to have lost sight of the principle contained in Article 24 of the Charter—namely, that the Security Council acts on behalf of the United Nations as a whole.

So long as there was no possibility of amending the Charter, the only hope was that the Great Powers would use the unanimity rule with moderation and in the interests of the effective functioning of the Council; that they would consult together more frequently, and that there would be a greater spirit of compromise between them.

In moving his proposals for a revision of the Charter, the representative of Cuba (Mr Belt) said that the United Nations had been created under the pressure of the fear aroused by the Second World War. It might be said that the essential factor had been the desire of Great Britain and the United States to secure the participation of the Soviet Union in the war against Japan. The essential purpose of the United Nations, however, was to form, not a military alliance of States, but a genuine community of nations living in peace. The right of the "veto" had been admitted by the small Powers at San Francisco because of the pressure which had been exercised against them, and Mr Belt deduced from this fact that this provision was, in effect, null and void.