

Article on the Right to Petition

There was a debate as to whether the declaration should include an article setting forth the right of the individual to petition his Government or the United Nations. The *New Zealand* delegate indicated that her delegation regarded the right to petition as a fundamental human right, which should be incorporated as one of the general principles stated in the declaration. The Committee as a whole felt that the right should not be included until effective international machinery for handling petitions was set up. A resolution was therefore passed asking the Commission on Human Rights to give further study to the problem of petitions and to report back to the next regular session of the Assembly.

In subsequent debate in the General Assembly the *New Zealand* representative took the opportunity, in dealing with the problem of implementation, to refer to the clear need for establishing procedures and machinery for receiving and dealing with petitions from individuals, groups, associations, or states.

Adoption of the Declaration

At its eighty-third meeting on the question of human rights the Third Committee adopted the declaration by 29 votes (N.Z.) with 7 abstentions. The *New Zealand* delegation in explaining its affirmative vote said that it still believed that a more nearly perfect declaration would have resulted from more mature consideration. Such, however, was the importance of an authoritative statement of human rights and so much work had gone into the declaration that the delegation believed it would be unfortunate if the present Assembly did not proclaim it to the world.

Later, the delegation reaffirmed the position it had taken in the general debate by introducing a draft resolution calling attention to the draft covenant and draft measures of implementation. This draft resolution, with the deletion of the more controversial passages, was accepted by the Committee, and later adopted by the General Assembly by 44 votes with 8 abstentions.

It reads as follows :—

“ The General Assembly,

“ Considering that the plan of work of the Commission on Human Rights provides for an International Bill of Human Rights, to include a Declaration, a Covenant on Human Rights and measures of implementation,

“ Requests the Economic and Social Council to ask the Commission on Human Rights to continue to give priority in its work to the preparation of a draft Covenant on Human Rights and draft measures of implementation.”