

at Geneva, Switzerland, on Apr. 26, 1954, of representatives of the Big Four, the Peking régime, the two Koreas and other countries whose armed forces had participated in the Korean conflict. At the close of the period under review, Canada had agreed to participate in this conference and general preparations were going forward.

The General Assembly, 1953-54.—Although most of the Korean developments took place outside the United Nations proper during this period, the eighth session of the General Assembly, which opened in mid-September and recessed early in December 1953, was concerned with a range of important problems. At the opening of the Assembly, the Hon. L. B. Pearson, as Chairman of the Canadian Delegation, said that the Assembly was meeting at a time when many thought that the successful negotiation of some of the outstanding differences between the two major power groupings might be possible. This possibility, he said, arose mainly from the fact that in recent years a large part of the free democratic world had learned to co-operate in purpose, policy and action for the defence of peace. As it turned out, the eighth session of the Assembly was somewhat of a transitional stage between the conclusion of a Korean armistice and whatever international relationships were to be established in its wake. It could not be said that the eighth session was marked by any basic change in Soviet attitudes. Acrimonious debate took place on several questions influenced by East-West tensions. These included: reports of Communist atrocities in Korea, the fate of World War II prisoners, and charges of bacteriological warfare and forced labour. The Assembly also considered the problems of Chinese representation, on which it postponed decision, and admission of new members on which no further decision was made.

The eighth session concerned itself also with a number of problems relating to the progress of certain areas toward self-government. A highly controversial issue in this field—and one that was much to the fore in debates on the situation in Tunisia and Morocco—was the extent to which the duty of the United Nations, under the Charter, to concern itself with questions of human rights and self-determination of peoples should have a bearing on the interpretation of Charter provisions which place domestic matters outside the Assembly's competence. Canada has long held the view that the domestic jurisdiction clause should not be so interpreted as to render meaningless other important provisions of the Charter, and that the Assembly's essential role should be to develop goodwill on both sides from which agreed solutions might be achieved.

One or more Commonwealth countries were involved in three important items on the agenda: treatment of Indians in South Africa; racial policies in South Africa, and the status of South West Africa. On the first, the Assembly reconstituted the Good Offices Commission which in the past had vainly endeavoured to arrange negotiations between the parties concerned. The Assembly's decision on racial policies involved the re-affirmation of previous resolutions concerning human rights and fundamental freedoms and the re-establishment of the Commission set up in 1952 to study this problem. On these two issues, Canada made clear its concern regarding allegations that human values were being disregarded, and joined with those seeking solutions that would be in keeping with the importance attached to human rights in the Charter and yet would not represent too broad an interpretation of the domestic jurisdiction clause.