

In our efforts during the past year to make peace, and to make peace secure, we have found, time and again, the rule of unanimity insisted upon, not to secure unanimity, not to secure agreement, but to block action. Time and again we have found the rule of unanimity insisted upon to compel the majority to yield to a minority which was unwilling, on its part, to make the concessions necessary to make common understanding possible."

Dr Evatt had made the point in another way on 8 August :—

"A peace treaty must be agreed to unanimously, but the method of getting unanimity is just as important. You can get unanimity by dictation, but that is not what we stand for."

Again, those delegations which claimed that equal sacrifice in fighting the war won them the right of equal participation in writing the peace were not allowed to forget that the forces of the Four, not of the twenty-one, were in occupation of the ex-enemy countries, and that the seal of the Four Powers on the peace treaties was needed (and was sufficient) to make operative their most important clauses⁽¹⁾.

The attitude of the Great Powers made clear their opinion that in a power-operated world due weight must be given to power. In such a context, they maintained in effect that the idea of "international democracy" is irrelevant; that international society is not organized on a democratic basis, but on an artificial basis (the sovereign equality of all states) which, if it were allowed to operate "democratically" would give to the vote of 1½ million people (with a small army) the same value as the vote of 350 million people (with a very large army). The idea of democracy in international relations would only become relevant were a democratic world government to be established. In the meantime the best that could be done was for the Great Powers to temper their exercise of power by listening not only to their own consciences, but also to the "conscience of mankind," in so far as it might be expressed by the representatives of the smaller sovereign and equal States.

This was the background to the discussion on voting in the Plenary Conference and in the Procedural Commission which is summarized in the section of this report dealing with procedure.

III. RULES OF PROCEDURE

The Plenary Conference at its opening session on 29 July set up a Committee of the Whole to consider the Rules of Procedure suggested to the Conference by the Council of Foreign Ministers. The rules of procedure, which were to determine the very nature of the Conference, were adopted only after more than two weeks of discussion. The summary given below indicates the trend of the discussion and the rules as they were finally approved by the Plenary Conference.

(1) Mr Byrnes, for instance, stated in the Plenary Session on 29 July: "But peace treaties which determine boundaries and the disposition of colonies and territories cannot be made practically effective if they are not accepted by the principal allied and associated Powers."