

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF PROCEDURAL COMMISSION

Dr Evatt (Australia) nominated Mr Paul Henri Spaak, Foreign Minister of Belgium, "who had presided with success over the General Assembly of the United Nations." His proposal was seconded by the representatives of Greece, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. Mr Molotov, who maintained that the question of the chairmanship was political rather than technical, and that respect should be paid to a people who had taken an active part in the war, proposed Dr Edouard Kardelj, Vice Premier of Yugoslavia. This nomination was seconded by the representative of the Ukraine.

After a three-hour debate a secret ballot resulted in the election of Mr Spaak as President, with 13 votes, and Dr Kardelj as Vice-President with 7 votes.

ORDER OF REFERENCE OF THE CONFERENCE

The sixteen States not members of the Council of Foreign Ministers were invited "to participate in the examination of the treaties of peace" with Italy, Roumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Finland. A rule of procedure suggested to the Conference by the Council read—

"The draft treaties prepared by the Council of Foreign Ministers will be submitted to the Plenary Conference composed of all member States represented by the heads of their delegations. The Conference will refer them to Commissions for study, the various sections of the treaties being referred to the competent Commissions.

"The Plenary Conference shall receive reports drawn up by Commissions, discuss and adopt all recommendations it deems appropriate."

It could be argued from this that the Conference must confine itself within the clauses of the draft treaties. These, however, did not cover certain questions which some delegations thought should appear in the final treaties. Greece, for instance, wished to raise its claim to Northern Epirus. The treaty did not mention this territory specifically, but implied that it should be part of the reconstituted Albania. The Greek delegation therefore proposed that the Plenary Conference should consider not only the draft treaties, but also—

"Any related question which it might decide by a simple majority to place on the agenda at the request of one or more delegations."

This general principle was approved, and the text finally adopted was—

"At the request of one or more delegations, the Conference may place on its agenda any question connected with the draft treaties."

This provision brought little advantage to Greece. When her delegation raised their claim to Northern Epirus, the Slav nations took advantage of the occasion to brand the Greek Government as unrepresentative and undemocratic, and the acrimonious and irrelevant debate which ensued forced still wider the breach between the Allied Powers.