

“Even if the Soviet delegation had proved that they were possessed of substantial evidence of war-mongering in the proper sense of that term, and had this resolution been so worded as to approach directly a solution of the difficulty which we will all agree that true war-mongering would present in these troubled times, or indeed at any time, I venture to suggest to you that not a single one of the delegates of those nations represented at this table who are free to make a decision could possibly have supported this resolution after hearing the language with which it was introduced and supported. And I think we must take note of that language, and the tone of voice and the gestures with which it was used.

“I am not without lengthy experience in international discussion, and I have no hesitation whatever in saying that I have never heard such language as has been used in this and previous discussions at this Assembly by the Soviet delegate, and by some who think with him. I have never expected to hear such language; I hope never to hear it again. It is quite inappropriate to the type of discussion that we are undertaking here, and quite unlikely to assist in any way towards the achievement of the objects and the principles of this great organization. Indeed, such language must be destructive of any such object, and I consider it to be deplorable.

“I am quite sure that had Mr Vyshinsky really wished the proposal which he placed before us to be approved by the Assembly he would never have dreamt of using such language which in itself ensures its own defeat.

“Had our Soviet colleague genuinely expected approval of his proposed resolution, how different would have been his approach. He would have asked in temperate language for explanations. He would have placed the best construction—unless malice should be proved—on the intentions of others. He would have invited comparison with official and press pronouncements in his own country—the exact opposite of the line which, in fact, he did take.

“How, then, should this resolution be disposed of? I have no strong feelings on the matter, provided the resolution is disposed of, and in the right way. If and when the Soviet resolution comes to a vote I shall vote against it—every paragraph—but I cannot entirely share what I understand to be the view of Senator Austin that we should merely vote the Soviet resolution down. We admitted the subject on to the agenda, and in doing so we agreed that it was a matter which could and should be discussed. There are some steps that we might take, not necessarily because of, even perhaps despite, the point of view that has been so intemperately expressed here by Mr Vyskinsky. We must not ignore the difficulty of the problem, the possibility of ‘war-mongering’ in the real sense of that term. It is a serious risk, and it must be treated seriously.

“The New Zealand delegation supports those who attach fundamental importance to freedom of information and of expression, with all the risks that that freedom entails. It agrees entirely with the point of view so admirably expressed by Dr Evatt that the correct way to deal with any abuses of this freedom is to expose them and not to repress them. A thorough examination of what freedom of information should mean in contemporary terms is contemplated at the Conference to be held in March, and in the meantime the New Zealand delegation will support a resolution on the lines of the Australian proposal.”