

APPENDIX I

Extracts From Speech Delivered by Mr J. Thorn at the Plenary Meeting of the Assembly Held on 27 September, 1948

I join with my fellow-delegates in expressing, on behalf of the New Zealand delegation, a very deep sense of pleasure that we should be privileged to attend the General Assembly in this beautiful city, the historic capital of France—a nation to which the world owes so much in the achievement of human liberty . . .

. . . The New Zealand delegation comes to the General Assembly with the single-minded object of advancing the purposes of the United Nations. We cannot remind ourselves too often of what those purposes are. They are—first, to maintain international peace and security; second, to develop friendly relations among nations; third, to achieve international co-operation in solving problems of an economic, social, or humanitarian character; and, fourth, to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of the nations. Of course, nothing is easier or more sterile than to dwell solely on the defects of international institutions—I shall mention later one or two matters which have caused us special concern—but at the outset I propose to strike a more hopeful note. Whatever its defects, the United Nations is a vital organization; it is very much alive; further, its action makes itself felt in almost every part of the world. Such is the strongest impression made upon us by the Secretary-General's report.

This, however, does not in itself prove that its action is beneficial. This is a matter which cannot be judged from day to day or even from session to session. We shall need longer perspectives to state with confidence whether here the United Nations action contributed to the alleviation of tension, here it tended to promote respect for human rights, and here it served to harmonize the conduct of the nations. Still, we feel it is now not too soon to say that in some areas—for instance, Greece—the vigilance of the United Nations has resulted in a lowering of the international temperature. In other cases, as in Indonesia and Kashmir, the United Nations has also attempted its pacific role with some limited success and some co-operation from the interested parties.

With other delegations we deplore the tragedy of the death of Count Bernadotte. The murder of this devoted man throws a blinding light upon the spirit of evil violence which stalks abroad. It is this very spirit as it affects international relations which the United Nations was called into existence to conquer. Each evidence of its strength is a challenge to the members of the United Nations to walk in the way they have chosen—the way of the Charter and especially of the Preamble to the Charter.

The task of international organization is not to promote the advantage of any one country, group, interest, or doctrine, but to affirm certain principles of international conduct which will enable human society to hold together. In a world deeply divided against itself the principles of the Charter provide a bridge which still swings perilously across the gulf. The New Zealand delegation feels that, in spite of structural defects, notably the veto provisions of Article 27, which we continue to regard as a major obstacle to the fulfilment of United Nations purposes,