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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

STATEMENT MADE BY THE NEW ZEALAND DELEGATION

Before the conclusion of the discussion on paragraphs six and seven of the Chairman's plan of work, there are a few general remarks that I feel I should make on behalf of the New Zealand Delegation. After the discussion which has taken place in this Committee, and the earlier debates in Committee III of the General Assembly, there can be no doubt in our minds that the creation of new international machinery, to deal effectively with this problem, is of the utmost importance and urgency.

The New Zealand delegation considers that such international machinery to be effective must be part of the United Nations Organization. This would seem to us to be the means of ensuring the widest possible cooperation in the work of the new organization by Member States, and, further, the means of achieving the maximum efficiency and economy of operation.

The organization should, through the Economic and Social Council be exclusively dependent on the General Assembly, and should derive its authority solely from a resolution of the General Assembly. We think that a Commission of the Economic and Social Council, as provided for by Article 68 of the Charter might prove to be the best type of organization for the solution of the refugee problem. It would no doubt be possible to ensure that a Commission working under the general direction of the Secretary-General of the United Nations would be given fairly wide powers within the scope of which it could freely exercise its administrative functions. Since the

resolution of the General Assembly of 12 February, 1946, underlined the fact that the problem is international in scope and character, we do not consider that entirely separate machinery created by intergovernmental agreement, independent of the United Nations, would be able to provide an effective solution to a problem of this magnitude.

The type of organization to be set up under the authority of the United Nations will, no doubt, be discussed in detail in the deliberations of the sub-committee foreseen in paragraph six of the Chairman's plan. If, after careful study of the various proposals for relationship with the United Nations it is decided that this Committee should recommend the creation of a specialized agency under the Economic and Social Council, the New Zealand Delegation would like to see the closest possible financial integration between the agency and the United Nations Organization. We would prefer an agreement which would confer upon the General Assembly the responsibility of voting the budget of the specialized agency. Members not represented on the Economic and Social Council would thus have an opportunity for full and frank discussion of the progress of the work of the new organization. Moreover the publicity given to the meetings of the wider body would ensure to the organization the whole hearted support of world opinion in favour of help for the genuine refugee or displaced person, and crystallize sympathetic understanding of their position.

If our suggestion concerning a Commission of the Economic and Social Council proves acceptable, special arrangements may have to be made for the staffing of the Organization. The Staff of the Economic and Social Council, which forms an integral

part of the United Nations secretariat, may not be best suited for the widespread contacts with individual refugees, and the field work necessary in the various countries, which the Organization will be required to perform. The spirit of the new organization should be truly international and humanitarian; the staff should be recruited on this basis. It should include the most experienced and highly qualified personnel available, and must, we consider, inevitably include, individuals from existing organizations, such as the Intergovernmental Committee and UNRRA, who are already working in this field. I do not think that any one of us would consider recommending the wholesale recruitment of entire staffs of existing organizations, but there are certain outstanding individuals whose experience and capacity would be invaluable to the new organization. We do not agree that the national aspect of the staff should correspond to the national aspect of the refugee problem: it is an international problem and the staff should be recruited on a United Nations basis.

While cogent reasons may be advanced in support of the creation of an international committee for refugees on the lines suggested by the French Delegate in his most illuminating paper, we consider that it might prove a cumbersome arrangement. Political and administrative questions arising out of the protection and assistance of refugees could be dealt with by the Economic and Social Council or the Assembly. We are assuming that the new organ will have an Executive Committee of representatives of member states to whom the Director, or administrative head, would be responsible. The Executive Committee would meet at fairly frequent intervals and would be responsible to the higher authorities - the Council and the Assembly. The existence of another committee with wider representation might prove a fifth wheel to the coach.

We earnestly hope that the recommendations made by this Committee to the Economic and Social Council on the machinery of the new organization will be of such a sound and practical nature that they will prove acceptable to the majority of the members of the Economic and Social Council and in turn to the General Assembly when it meets in September. The responsibility for the care and protection of refugees, now in the hands of UNRRA, the Intergovernmental Committee, and the Military Authorities should pass smoothly to the new organization, and this can only be done if the necessary machinery is created in time.
