

REPORTS ON THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

COMMISSION I COMMITTEE 1

GENERAL PROVISIONS: PREAMBLE, PURPOSES, AND PRINCIPLES

NEW ZEALAND REPRESENTATIVES

Delegate MR. C. A. BERENDSEN

Alternate MR. J. V. WILSON

Terms of Reference

THE terms of reference of the Committee were "to prepare and recommend to Commission I draft provisions for the Charter of the United Nations relating to matters dealt with in Chapters I and II of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals, and to the comments and suggestions relevant thereto submitted by the Governments participating in the Conference."

Title

THE TITLE used in the Dumbarton Oaks proposals, and in the general discussion on the subject throughout the world, was "United Nations," and much discussion arose at the Conference on the question whether this really was in fact a satisfactory title. A considerable number of alterations were proposed: Association of United Nations, Union of Nations, International Juridical Association, Juridical Community of States, Permanent Union of Nations, Association of Nations, and Associated Nations were among the various titles suggested and debated. Two objections were made to the term "United Nations"—firstly, that it already possessed a special significance in international documents, and in common use, as the term used to describe those nations which were banded together in arms in the fight against Germany and (for the most part) also against Japan, and that as the new organization was intended in time to cover a considerably wider field, including neutrals and, perhaps, ultimately, ex-enemy Powers, there was some confusion of thought in using the same title for two separate bodies. A practical difficulty also was the clumsiness of the phrase and its difficulty of translation into tongues other than English. Its plural connotation would tend to destroy the essential unity of the body that it was proposed to establish, and there would be confusion of thought and of language involved in the use of both singular and plural verbs when referring to the Organization. A proposal to avoid this difficulty by using the phrase "Association of United Nations" met with considerable support, despite the objection that the word "Association" had acquired a very wide meaning by reason of its use in commerce and other fields—for example, to signify such organizations as insurance companies and bodies of employers and workers—while a similar criticism was made of the term "United Nations" itself, that the word "United" had become associated in the public mind with such organizations as United Press, United Fruit, United Air, &c. It was pointed out, however, that the term "United States," which had suffered no loss of dignity, was open to the same objection, and, in addition, that, although it possessed a plural signification, no serious difficulty had been experienced.

The Committee's decision to adopt the term "United Nations" was finally made on two considerations—firstly, because it was believed to be the title suggested by President Roosevelt, and,