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Naturally, the ability of individual translators varies somewhat, and the quality of their work likewise depends considerably on the clarity and fluency of the speaker at the rostrum and the complexity of his subject-matter. For instance, the finest piece of translation I heard came from a man who transposed a very fluent and flowery speech delivered in French by a delegate from Haiti into equally flowery and fluent English complete with dramatic emphasis and even "apt alliteration's artful aid." In this particular case, however, I suspect that the translator may have been working from a written script of the speech handed him before the session began. Almost equally as interesting to listen to, and certainly more fun to watch, was the effort of the translator who turned into English Andrei Y. Vishinsky's speech on the International Declaration of Human Rights. Even when you can't understand a word of Russian, Mr. Vishinsky gives the impression of being a most eloquent speaker, if scarcely a concise one; and on this particular occasion anyway this particular translator seemed to be doing him full justice, punctuating his phrases with stabs of his hand, carving the air with sweeping gestures, and adding verbal emphasis as needed. It must be exhausting, but it certainly seems to make for a better job of translation when the translator is thus able to enter, into the French phrase, *dans la peau du personnage*.

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When the Declaration of Human Rights came before the General Assembly it had already been studied, sifted, debated, amended, and wrangled over by various committees, commissions, and other organs of the UN, not to mention individuals, for nearly two-and-a-half years. But there still remained the tedious processes required to turn an idealistic idea into an acceptable document; and from the time the Declaration was first mooted at San Francisco in 1945 until its acceptance at the session of the Assembly in Paris, New Zealand played a keenly-interested part and frequently made useful contributions towards hammering the Declaration into shape. When the draft eventually emerged from the hands of the Third Committee for adoption by the Assembly, the roles played by various countries and individuals in its preparation were mentioned by Dr. Charles Malik, Lebanon delegate, who as chairman of the Social Committee and a member of the Human Rights Commission had himself fought for the Declaration from the outset. Among the individuals thus singled out for special reference by Dr. Malik was Mrs. A. M. Newlands, of the New Zealand delegation to Paris, because of her notable contributions towards clarifying the work in the committee stages.

Another New Zealander who made a very worthwhile contribution towards bringing the Declaration into being was Colin Aikman. His activity, as so often happens in such cases, was largely behind the scenes; but he emerged into the public eye when he was chosen to speak for New Zealand at the closing Assembly session and explain his coun-

try's attitude. But before this, Mr. Aikman had scored something of a personal success when he steered through an amendment to Article 24 which, as now adopted, says that everyone has the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his interests. As the article was originally phrased, the word "freedom" was used instead of "right," but Mr. Aikman's argument in favour of changing it carried the day. To the ordinary person, there may seem little difference between "right" and "freedom," but to an international jurist it apparently means a lot in such a context; and nobody can really say that, in the time scale of the centuries by which such a

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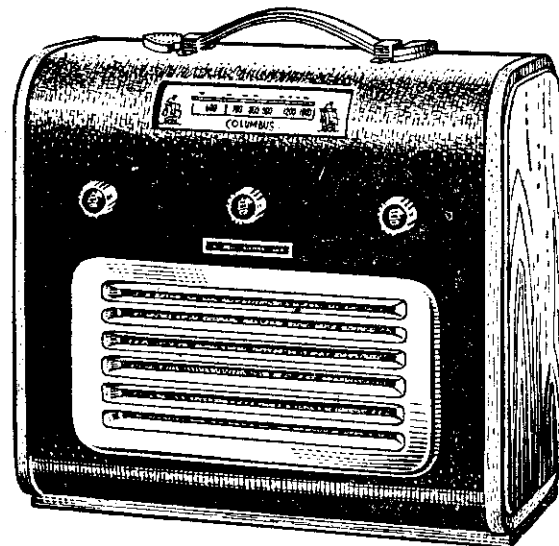
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