

periods — first until December 31, 1958 and, at the twelfth session of the General Assembly, until December 31, 1963. The Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees forms an integral part of the United Nations. Its role is to promote, organize, co-ordinate and supervise international action on behalf of refugees under its mandate. Those coming within this mandate are persons who have fled from their native lands for fear of persecution on either political, racial or religious grounds and who are unwilling or unable to claim the protection of their own governments.*

In 1954, to assist the High Commissioner in the exercise of his mandate and to provide the funds necessary to undertake a comprehensive programme to achieve permanent solutions for the refugee problems which still remained after the termination of the International Refugee Organization, the General Assembly established the United Nations Refugee Fund (UNREF). A target of \$16 million was set for UNREF's four-year programme and by December 31, 1958, when the Fund was liquidated, a total of \$17.1 million had been raised from governmental and private sources. During this period the contributions of the Canadian Government to UNREF amounted to \$650,000.

The record of the four-year UNREF programme in finding permanent solutions to refugee problems is impressive. At the beginning of 1955, 350,000 non-settled refugees in Europe came within the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Of this number, 85,000 were living in camps. By the end of 1958, 160,000 remained, of whom it is estimated some 25,500 were still in camps. These results were achieved despite, in some instances, a considerable time lag in governments making their pledged financial contributions available to UNREF and in spite of an influx into Austria and Yugoslavia of 200,000 new refugees from Hungary. Canada accepted some 37,500 of the Hungarian refugees for permanent residence in this country.

In introducing his report to the General Assembly covering the period May 1957 - May 1958, the High Commissioner, Dr. Auguste R. Lindt of Switzerland, stated that the refugee situation was by no means hopeless as many people seemed to think. Illustrating his point, he recalled that despite an increase of 300,000 people in the non-settled refugee population — chiefly newly-arrived refugees from Hungary — permanent solutions had been found for the problems of some 440,000 refugees within his mandate and the camp population had been decreased by 45,000.

Three resolutions dealing with refugee matters were considered by the General Assembly at its thirteenth session and were subsequently passed by large majorities including Canada. The first [General Assembly, Resolution 1284 (XIII)], dealing with the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, welcomed the recommendation of the UNREF Executive Committee that the protection activities of the Office of the High Commissioner should be increased, and appealed to governments members of the United Nations and of the Specialized Agencies to support the High Commissioner's programme either through financial contributions or through offers of re-settlement or both. This resolution was approved by 59 votes in favour, 9 against with 6 abstentions. The second resolution [1285 (XIII)] approved the designation of the period June 1959 to July 1960 as World Refugee Year and requested the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps to assist in its promotion. The idea of a World Refugee Year originated

*The UNHCR is not responsible for the nearly one million Arab refugees left homeless as a result of the 1948 hostilities in Palestine. These Arab refugees are the concern of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).