

External Affairs
Supplementary Paper

No. 53/45

PALESTINE REFUGEES

Text of a statement made on November 6, 1953, by the alternate Representative on the Canadian Delegation, Mr. G.B. Summers, Q.C., in Ad Hoc Committee of the eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly, dealing with agenda item 19 - Report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (resolutions 302 (IV) of December 8, 1949, and 614 (VII) of November 6, 1952).

(Note - Text of the resolution passed by the Ad Hoc Committee on November 12, 1953 is included at the end of this Supplementary Paper).

On behalf of the Canadian Delegation I would like to comment briefly on the reports now before this committee and the draft resolution which has been presented for our consideration.

The report of the Director contains certain points from which we can draw some small measure of encouragement in considering the difficult and tragic problem of the refugees. The Agency is to be complimented on the practical steps which are being taken for the preservation of the refugees' health and in respect of education and rehabilitation. It is gratifying to note that a number of programme agreements have been signed. No one can deny, however, that the report places before us in plain and blunt terms a discouraging situation. In considering this third report of the Director, we do not find that progress has been made towards the solution of this problem to the extent which had been hoped when the Agency was established. The number of refugees dependent upon relief provided by the international community is almost exactly the same as that registered at the end of 1951, and there is a yearly increase. There are serious obstacles to be overcome if tangible progress is to be achieved in implementing the provisions of the three-year plan. We are faced moreover with the plain statement from the Director and the Advisory Commission that in spite of all efforts, it is now clear that the rehabilitation of all the Arab refugees in existing economic and political circumstances is for all practical purposes impossible and that projects contemplated cannot be expected to provide for more than a proportion of the refugee population.

In the light of the facts set out in these reports the recommendations which the Director and the Advisory Commission invite us to approve should, we think, receive the support of this committee.