

"During the debate on the project, the Soviet delegate—a woman—said we might be interested in knowing that there was a representative of the Cuban Embassy in Tokyo sitting in the visitors' gallery. Other countries, you know, could come and listen to our Board's discussions but they couldn't take part. She said she thought it might be interesting to hear from him what his feelings were. Well, some of us held our breath. We didn't know what was being cooked up.

"And the suavest young man you ever saw, very well dressed, very well educated, perfect English and everything else, leaned forward. The chairman, Tabibi from Afghanistan, said, 'Yes, of course.' He did not know what to say, the poor man, he had to let him speak. And so the Cuban diplomat said he was grateful for the opportunity to speak, although it wasn't appropriate for a country that was not a member of the Board to take part in its decisions. However, as he had the floor, he would like to express the profound thanks of Cuba to UNICEF for the aid which they had already been given.

"Well, I swallowed hard and I thought, 'I should know if they've been given any aid or anything else.' But it turned out they had, and it was a lovely story.

"You see, everybody was in a state after Flora happened, but, when they pulled themselves together and began to look at the extent of the damage, the Cubans came to the conclusion that what they really needed was milk for children. They could afford to pay for it, but they didn't know where to get it or how to get it to Cuba. So they phoned UNICEF in New York and I suppose they got Ed Bridgwater [another Canadian] in the Supply Division, and said they were willing to pay for so many million gallons of milk, but did not know where to get it. The UNICEF staff person said, 'We'll find out. Give us a few hours.' Well, they knew where all the milk supplies were throughout the world and they were pretty sure there were some in Montreal. So they telephoned Montreal and it turned out that there were 100 million pounds of milk at a dockside warehouse which Canada would love to sell to somebody. It also turned out that there was a Russian ship unloading in Montreal with no outward cargo.

"So our supply people got hold of the Russians and asked if they would be willing, in a great rush, to take this milk on and get it down to Cuba. And the Russians said they would—I think they were paid in advance for their help and that was all right—and the Cubans were prepared to reimburse this payment. And the milk was there, I think, in 72 hours. For the Cubans this was the greatest kind of relief. So the Cuban representative stood up in the gallery in Bangkok and said, 'This milk got down, and it just saved the day for us ... we certainly have more needs, but this was the crucial thing and UNICEF has already done that for us.'

"This just simply floored all the opposition. It was very dramatic. He did it awfully well, and that put a little bit of an end to the argument."