

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



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WORLD REFUGEE YEAR

Statement by Mrs. H.H. Steen, Canadian Representative on the Third (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) Committee of the United Nations, on October 27, 1960.

At its thirteenth session in 1958, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution that brought into being World Refugee Year. That resolution, 1285 (XIII), sparked one of the most far-reaching co-operative efforts in the humanitarian field the world has ever seen. As originally conceived, World Refugee Year aimed at focussing world attention on the problem of refugees - all refugees and not simply those coming under the mandates of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees. It was hoped that, by stimulating an interest in refugee problems, it would be possible to encourage not only additional financial contributions from governments, voluntary agencies and the general public but additional opportunities for permanent refugee solutions through voluntary repatriation, re-settlement or integration on a humanitarian basis.

New Awareness of Refugee Plight

The Secretary-General's report on World Refugee Year, incomplete as it admittedly is, gives ample evidence that these objectives have, in a great measure, been achieved. Through their participation in national committees for World Refugee Year, local committees and other voluntary organizations concerned with refugee questions, millions of people round the world have become aware of the magnitude of the suffering and needs of refugees. This awareness has spurred them to remarkable heights of ingenuity in devising imaginative plans to help meet these needs. It has, of course, been impossible for the Secretary-General to report in any detail on these private efforts but, through our discussions of this report, I am sure that a more vivid picture will emerge.

As a result of the interest in refugees generated during World Refugee Year, the Secretary-General has been able to report so far a total of approximately \$80 million contributed, pledged or raised from all sources, in cash and kind, in addition to the sums normally contributed and raised each year for refugees. These contributions come from governments, national committees, local voluntary organizations and