

tation and communication facilities, already disrupted by last year's cyclone have been further hampered by guerilla activities. Rail transport has had its capacity reduced by 75%, road transport is limited by an inadequate supply of trucks and by damaged bridges and roads, water transport has suffered from an inadequate supply of transport vessels and from guerilla activities. When the food supply does get through to various areas there has been the additional problem that the normal commercial distribution system is not working. Shops had been closed in many cases and the Pakistan government was not successful in organizing free distribution outlets.

The Committee noted the opinion of the President of CIDA that before the outbreak of war the West Pakistan army authorities had done what they could to distribute the food supplies in view of the existing difficulties. Before war broke out the UN East Pakistan Relief Operation (UNEPRO) and UNICEF staffs were endeavouring to monitor the arrival and distribution of food supplies in East Pakistan. However, the UN supervision of relief distribution was forced to cease operation when the war broke out.

The Committee was pleased to learn from the President of CIDA that Canada's contribution of food to East Pakistan was the first to reach that country through the United Nations System. However, unfortunately, as a result of the distribution problems above-mentioned, this food was still in warehouses in Chittagong in late October.

(b) In India.

From the accounts of all visitors to the refugee camps, it is agreed that India deserves high praise for its efforts in supplying the millions of refugees with minimum shelter facilities and food under the most difficult circumstances. At the insistence of the Indian Government, Canadian aid as well as that from other donor countries and international agencies is channelled to the refugees in the camps through the Indian Government administration which has, from the beginning, exercised control of the organization of relief. Voluntary agencies in co-ordination with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and the Indian administration have been an important source of supplementary assistance. The Committee heard testimony which described the crucial importance of the voluntary agencies which have the flexibility and freedom essential to initiate new pilot projects. The Committee noted that CIDA officials considered the main problems in the camps to be the extra nutritional needs of children, sanitation facilities, blankets, clothing and shelter materials, transportation and truck maintenance, and paramedical staff and social aides. Although much remains to be done, it is agreed that Canadian aid has been adequately distributed to the refugees in the Indian camps for whom it is intended.

The Committee noted the testimony of CIDA officials and by representatives of voluntary agencies that there appears to be a lack of long-term planning on the part of the Indian administration in regard to refugee relief. Although it is understandable that India wishes to regard the refugees as "temporary", it will obviously be a con-

siderable length of time before most of the refugees can be repatriated even under the best of conditions.

VI A New Situation

The outbreak of war between India and Pakistan presented the international community with a new situation. India has recognized East Pakistan as the independent state of Bangla Desh and West Pakistan forces there have surrendered unconditionally. During recent weeks UN officials have not been able to function in East Pakistan and international relief operations have been interrupted there.

(a) Mediation.

It was particularly distressing for Canada to see two members of the Commonwealth at war. The Canadian Government was among many governments which urged the parties to exercise restraint and which sought to establish machinery for negotiation before hostilities erupted. However, while fighting continued, the Committee did not believe that Canada could play a useful role in mediating the conflict. The surrender of Pakistan forces in East Pakistan and a cease-fire between India and Pakistan created an entirely new situation and the Committee cannot anticipate future needs at this stage.

Now that fighting has stopped, there may be need for some kind of United Nations presence. The Committee is pleased to note that the Secretary of State for External Affairs has stated that Canada would be prepared to participate in any supervisory arrangements if asked. The Committee recalls that Canada already has men attached to the UN observer mission in Kashmir.

The Committee considers that it is important to preserve Canada's acceptability as a contributor to a possible peacekeeping mission and its capability to assist in the repatriation and resettlement of refugees. In this crisis, Canada's most valuable function is to provide humanitarian assistance. Such involvement accords with the sentiments of Canadians.

(b) Continuation of Aid.

The Committee is deeply concerned lest the military action have the unfortunate effect of diverting the world's attention from the plight of the hapless millions, not only in Indian refugee camps, but those in East Pakistan who have been buffeted first by cyclones, then by the civil disturbances and now by war and its aftermath. The Canadian Government should go ahead with the distribution of its \$18 million for the refugees, since continued assistance remains essential on humanitarian grounds. There appears to be no reason why Canadian aid should not go forward as long as Canada is sure that the aid is reaching the refugees for whom it is intended.

It is impossible to know at this stage how the political situation in the area will develop. The need for a large scale programme for the repatriation and resettlement of refugees appears inevitable. But apart from the requirement for food and shelter, there will be a need for outside assistance in resettling and in reviving the eco-