

repeated appeals by the Agent-General, relatively little progress has been made and the financial situation of the Agency is becoming increasingly difficult.

Assistance to Palestine Refugees

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the Director-General of which was to be assisted by an Advisory Commission of six member states, was established by the General Assembly in 1949 to provide for the relief and resettlement of about 950,000 refugees left homeless by the hostilities in Palestine in 1948.

Under a three-year plan approved in 1952 (the Blandford Plan) UNRWA was to undertake a \$250 million programme for the combined relief and rehabilitation of the refugees. Of the total sum \$50 million was to be devoted to immediate relief expenditures on a decreasing scale up to June 30, 1954, when it was expected that all the refugees would be resettled and the Agency's operations would end. Though UNRWA has been able to launch a limited number of projects for long-term rehabilitation, it soon became apparent that the re-integration of refugees would be much slower than expected and that heavy expenditures for relief would continue to be necessary, and the Assembly has accordingly twice authorized an upward revision in the relief budget.¹

On June 30, 1953, as the Director-General reported to the eighth session of the General Assembly, 872,000 refugees were still unsettled. In a report submitted jointly with the Advisory Commission, he accordingly recommended that the mandate of the Agency be extended as an interim measure from June 30, 1954 to June 30, 1955 on the understanding that a thorough examination of the refugee problem in all its aspects would be prepared for consideration at the ninth session in 1954. The Assembly approved this recommendation by a vote of 52 in favour (including Canada) none against and 5 abstentions. An increase in the 1953-54 relief budget from \$18 million to \$24.8 million was authorized and a tentative relief budget of \$18 million for 1955 approved.² In common with a number of other countries, Canada expressed concern at the limited progress achieved in the resettlement of refugees and urged the Arab countries concerned and Israel to co-operate as fully as possible in solving the problem.

Canada is one of the largest contributors to the relief of Palestine Arab refugees, its total contributions since 1948 being slightly over \$3.5 million, including \$500,000 which in April 1954 was made available for the 1953-54 UNRWA budget. In making this contribution the Canadian Government indicated that its future financial support would be dependent upon the progress made towards a final settlement of the refugee problem. On December 31, 1953 the total of all government contributions to UNRWA (exclusive of unpaid pledges) was \$133,534,842.

¹See *Canada and the United Nations 1952-53*, pp. 36-37.

²An increase in the membership of the Advisory Commission was also authorized and as a result Belgium and Lebanon were added. The other members are Egypt, France, Jordan, Syria, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.