

The Canadian Government's contributions and assessments to the United Nations and its related bodies do not, of course, include the generous donations made by individual citizens and private groups in Canada. Canadian citizens have played an active and humanitarian role by assisting, through donations, children, refugees, victims of national disasters and less-fortunate people in other lands. Furthermore, the above data do not include the Canadian Government's gifts of emergency relief (food, clothing, medical supplies) or the over \$1 billion the Government has given in bilateral foreign aid to the developing areas of the world.

#### RELIEF FUNDS

##### UNHCR and Refugees

A "refugee" is defined by the United Nations as a person who has left the country of his normal residence because of fear of persecution. At the end of the Second World War, the number of refugees in Europe was close to 2,200,000. Immediately after the War, Canada and other countries formed the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees in order to assist refugees in their emigration, re-establishment in their country of present asylum or voluntary return to their original homes. In 1946, a United Nations Specialized Agency, the International Refugee Organization, was established to continue this work. Canada became a member of the IRO in 1947, and, from 1946 to 1951, contributed about \$18.8 million to the organization and accepted 123,479 refugees and displaced persons for resettlement.

At its fourth session in 1949, the General Assembly decided to appoint a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for a three-year term to continue to protect the interests of refugees after the termination of the IRO. In 1953, the Assembly extended the term of the High Commissioner's Office for another three-year period, and in 1957 the term was extended for a further five-year period, from January 1, 1959, to December 31, 1963. The seventeenth session voted in favour of a further renewal to December 31, 1968, and the twenty-second session again renewed this to December 31, 1973.

The High Commissioner's role was at first a non-operational one, limited mainly to the protection of refugees. In 1952, however, he was authorized to appeal for funds to enable emergency aid to be given to the most needy groups of refugees within his mandate. Funds raised by this decision were contributed to the United Nations Refugees Emergency Fund (UNREF). In 1954 this fund was incorporated in a new voluntary fund, the United Nations Refugee Fund (UNRF), whose programme was aimed principally at the promotion of a permanent European refugee solution by assimilation within European countries and the promotion of emigration to other countries.

On January 1, 1959, the UNREF was replaced by a new programme of the High Commissioner for Refugees, administered by the Office of the High Commissioner under the guidance of an Executive Committee composed of representatives of United Nations member governments. Canada has been a member of this Committee since 1957, and chaired it in 1965. From 1951 to 1968, Canada contributed over \$3.8 million to the UNHCR, and it donated \$650,000 in 1956-57 to the Canadian Red Cross for assistance to Hungarian refugees. In 1965, the Canadian Government increased its contribution to \$350,000 from the previous figure of \$290,000.