# PALESTINE REFUGEES

A statement by Mr. Arthur R. Smith,
Canadian Representative on the Special
Political Committee, on November 24, 1959

...Our thanks are due both to the Secretary-General and
the Director for the two reports which they have presented to us -
documents at once succinct and comprehensive. It is not invidious
to mention especially our debt to the Secretary-General, partly
because his effort has been an added burden on top of his already
heavy duties and partly because, or so it seems to us, his report
is hitherto received insufficient acknowledgement. Every page in
it of this document reflects the careful and indeed anxious
thought he gave not merely to the future of UNRWA but to the whole
tragic problem resulting from the state of Arab-Israel relations.

Mr. Hammarskjold himself remainded us in his short statement
at the opening of this debate that it was not necessary for the
Committee to assess the reasons which led him to his conclusions.
The Delegation has no intention of departing from this advice, so the
responsible under the circumstances. We shall go no further in the
particular connection than to express the view that it is only thro
and imaginative, venturesome and, above all, generous measures
that there is hope for an easing of the international situation in
which the fate of these refugees seems at present to us inextricab
ished. The eloquent statement given us a few days ago by the dis-
guished and learned representative of Ceylon has made it super-
fluous for me further to elaborate this point.

If this Assembly decides to extend the life of UNRWA, as
the Secretary-General has recommended, we shall naturally be anxio
see the Agency function as effectively as possible. The two re
fore us have pointed out specific areas where improvement can an
ould be made. I do not intend to discuss all the matters mentio
the reports where progress is highly desirable. Without minimi
importance of the other technical considerations, however, I th
ticular mention should be made of the need to rectify ration ro
to increase programmes for self-support.

We strongly support the Director's intention to make a new
effort to clear up the situation which has existed for some years,
a number of persons have been receiving assistance from UNRWA
when they are not entitled and whereby in consequence, over 100,000
of registered refugees have had to be deprived of rations fo
they are eligible. We urge the Director to give the solution o
problem a high priority and we have been encouraged by the
progress in his report to the co-operative attitude of the authorit
concerned.

Similarly we urge that every effort be made to ensure that
governmental work of UNRWA not be hampered by any host government
of full recognition of the Agency's status as a subsidiary organ
the United Nations.

We also place considerable importance on the need for self-
support programmes and have been pleased to hear expressions in favou
such programmes. In our view the Agency should do all it can with
prevailing political and financial conditions to assist the refug