

December 23, 1943

CANADA'S ROLE IN U.N.R.R.A.

Representatives of all United and associated nations met at Washington on November 9, 1943, to sign an agreement establishing the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. In the agreement these nations expressed their determination to bring relief to the victims of war, immediate upon the liberation of countries enslaved by the enemy.

The following day the first session of the Council of the Administration convened at Atlantic City, New Jersey, to determine the organization of U.N.R.R.A. and to formulate the broad policies that will govern its work. Each of the member countries of U.N.R.R.A. appointed one delegate to the Council. The Council had before it the following tasks:

- (1) To outline the nature and scope of relief activities to be undertaken;
- (2) To define the relationship of U.N.R.R.A. with existing inter-governmental supply and shipping agencies, so that effective prosecution of the war would not be impeded;
- (3) To decide the policies to be followed in distributing relief supplies in liberated areas, and to ensure that supplies should be equitably apportioned;
- (4) To establish methods of determining the needs of liberated peoples;
- (5) To prescribe the procedure for obtaining supplies;
- (6) To work out a method for the equitable sharing of the burden among the contributing nations;
- (7) To frame the rules that are to govern the conduct of U.N.R.R.A. itself, so that interested nations may have effective representation in the development of policies, and to facilitate the work of the Director General in carrying out these policies.

These questions, all involving decisions of considerable difficulty, were approached in an encouraging spirit of co-operation and with a minimum of emphasis on prestige. There was no struggle during the conference at Washington by the large powers or obstruction on the part of the small. Consequently, it was possible in all matters to find satisfactory and workable solutions. The scope of relief and rehabilitation under U.N.R.R.A. is to be confined to limits which are practical and necessary. The Administration is destined to cope with an emergency, to make available the food and supplies considered essential to prevent starvation and disease.

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