

refugees from Czechoslovakia who left the country as a result of the Russian intervention in August 1968.

UNRWA

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees was established in 1949 to provide relief and rehabilitation for about 950,000 Arab refugees who lost their homes and their means of livelihood as a result of the Palestine hostilities of 1948-49. Owing to natural population increase, these refugees now number more than 1.3 million. To this number must be added the 350-400,000 "new refugees" created by the June 1967 Middle East hostilities. The Agency was set up to co-operate with local governments in direct relief and works programmes in the Middle East and to consult these governments on measures to be taken until such time as international assistance for relief and works programmes were no longer available or the refugees were able to exercise the choice between repatriation and compensation offered to them by resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations. As originally envisaged, the Agency's mandate was to run for a limited period. However, political considerations have impeded plans for solving the refugee problem and the General Assembly has found it expedient to renew the mandate several times. It was last renewed to June 30, 1972.

To finance its various current activities, UNRWA needs about \$39 million annually. Owing to increasing demands for relief, health and educational services and to rising costs in the countries where the Agency operates, it has in recent years faced serious financial difficulties. Accordingly, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA has urged regular contributors to continue granting assistance and has appealed to others to help in meeting the Agency's needs.

Canada has customarily ranked high among the regular annual contributors to UNRWA. In total contributions since 1949, Canada stands third, behind the United States and Britain. In response to special conditions for the fiscal year 1967-68, the Canadian Government contributed about \$3 million to UNRWA. Of this amount, \$1.3 million was emergency assistance which Canada agreed to provide following UNRWA's appeal to countries for additional contributions to meet the urgent needs of persons uprooted by the June 1967 hostilities in the Middle East. This contribution to UNRWA for 1967-68 consisted of \$500,000 in cash and \$2 million in foodstuffs and delivery charges. However, in 1968, Canada reverted to its regular contribution in the order of \$500,000 in cash and \$700,000 in food aid, with a supplemental food grant of \$300,000 made at the end of that fiscal year. For the fiscal year 1969-70 Canada has made its regular contribution of \$700,000 food and commodities and \$500,000 cash. Canadian assistance to UNRWA is motivated primarily by humanitarian considerations. The Canadian Government also believes that UNRWA's subsidiary educational and vocational-training programme is vital to the maintenance of peace in the area and to the ultimate liquidation of the problem of refugees by facilitating their rehabilitation.