

No. 53/34 THE REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR REFUGEES

Text of a statement made on October 19, 1953, in the Third Committee of the eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly, by the Canadian representative, Mr. G.B. Summers, on agenda item 28.

I should like to compliment the High Commissioner for Refugees on the report which he has presented for our consideration. I should like in addition to express the particular pleasure of the Canadian delegation for having had this opportunity to hear from the High Commissioner himself an account of the great and good work that he has been doing and to be able to offer to him our sincere appreciation of the ability and devotion which he accords to this humanitarian task, in which as a member of the United Nations we are so deeply interested.

Our compliments in respect of the report are due, not only because of the activities which it recounts, but as a document in itself. In the introduction to the report and the chapter of historical background, the High Commissioner, has, I think, been wise to set out in simple clarity just how his office came into being and what is the scope of his activities. This is to begin at the beginning and it was a wise approach for I believe it is not untrue to say that the public in many countries, and perhaps even many officials of government who are or should be interested in this work, which is so properly a United Nations activity and a world wide responsibility, have not always had too clear an idea of what the Office of the High Commissioner is intended to do and what he is in fact doing. This misapprehension, if such there has been, is perhaps due to a feeling that a problem of such vast dimensions, if not beyond solution, is at least beyond the capacity of one man with a small staff and small funds. Because of it, perhaps, there has not been such full and widespread support as many of us would like to see and which is so well deserved and so badly required.

The High Commissioner has made clear to us that while the problem is vast and the means are small, he is certainly not engaged in a one man effort to carry on where the IRO left off and directly engage in resettlement operations of some millions of displaced persons.

He does set out clearly how ably he is carrying out the different parts of his mandate.

In the first place, his activities for the international protection of refugees---in promoting national legislation, administrative measures to overcome legal disabilities of refugees---in securing travel documents---and in the other ways described,