

Most Serious Problem

The most serious problem we face here, of course, is the Agency's precarious financial position. We have noted with concern the absence of broad financial support from governments to assist the Agency in meeting its commitments. The host countries have borne a substantial share of the burden of caring for the refugees. Among countries from outside the Middle East area, the United States has been an outstanding contributor, while the United Kingdom and France have also borne a large share of the Agency's financial responsibilities. We feel that we too have some right to speak because Canada, although it is a distant and not a very populous country, has made the fourth largest contribution to programmes in aid of the Palestine refugees. With respect to the UNRWA budget now before us, the Canadian Government intends to seek Parliamentary approval for a contribution of \$750,000 to the UNRWA relief programme for the current eighteen month fiscal period. This will bring Canada's contribution to UNRWA to nearly \$5½ million. We are taking steps which we trust will enable this contribution to be made available promptly when it obtains Parliamentary approval.

We appeal to other governments also to contribute to the work of the Agency at a time when it is in such great need. You will remember the Director's urging us the other day -- I quote him -- "to remember that we are not dealing here with abstract financial figures but with stark realities -- the lives and welfare of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children". It should be clear to us that if sufficient contributions are not forthcoming during the current fiscal year to finance the Agency's operations, the Agency may be required to liquidate some of its major operations and member governments will have then to contend with the inevitable human and political repercussions. We firmly believe that if the work of the Agency requires additional funds, they should be provided from additional sources. We see no reason why this essentially humanitarian work which the Agency is performing should not have the support of all members of the United Nations.

If sufficient funds are not forthcoming, then my Delegation sees no alternative to the Agency's taking steps to reduce its services. We still hope that the extent of contributions during the fiscal year will be such as to allow the Agency to maintain, if not to improve, its present facilities and services for the feeding, shelter and health of the refugees in its care and, in addition, to provide these facilities and services to those refugees who have not been registered with the Agency in the past but have gradually used up their resources and are now in great need. We think this latter category of bona fide unregistered refugees cannot be penalized for their earlier attempts at self-support and should be cared for, if funds allow it.

It is with much regret that we find that, in view of the Agency's limited funds and in the absence of action by the Government of Jordan to remove ineligible persons from the