

External Affairs
Supplementary Paper

No. 53/67

U.N. HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

Text of a statement made on October 26, 1953, by Mr. S.D. Hemsley of the Canadian Delegation to the eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly, on agenda item 28 - work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

I should like to thank the High Commissioner for his clear and persuasive statement on the work of his office.

After our statements in the Third Committee I need hardly assure the High Commissioner of the appreciation that the Government of Canada has of his work. We know he is endeavouring to carry out very difficult and far-reaching responsibilities and we would not like to see any step taken that would hamper him in fulfilling the responsibilities given him by the Assembly. We, therefore, have a great deal of sympathy for the position taken by the distinguished delegate of the Netherlands.

I must, however, revert to an earlier statement, repeated this afternoon, by the distinguished Chairman of the Advisory Committee in which he mentioned that a tight budget is a good budget; and that if the Secretary-General (in accepting the cuts recommended this year) found himself in any part of the budget in a difficult position, he could rely upon a sympathetic hearing from the Advisory Committee. For this reason I am tempted to vote for the recommendation of the Advisory Committee. I will, however, reserve our position until we have heard further from the High Commissioner before voting; for no doubt in his concluding statement, the High Commissioner will wish to give Ambassador Agnides' comments full consideration.

Note - The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had recommended cuts of \$58,000 in the 1954 budget estimates of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (\$743,000). The High Commissioner was unable to convince the Fifth Committee that the recommended cuts would hamper him in the discharge of his important responsibilities. The Advisory Committee's recommendation for a total administrative budget of \$685,000 was approved by 40 in favour (including Canada) and 5 against, with 4 abstentions. The text of the Canadian statement in the Third Committee on agenda item 28 is available in Supplementary Paper 53/35.

Resolution: Following is the text of the resolution adopted by a plenary meeting of the Assembly on agenda item 28 on October 23, 1953 by a vote of 47 in favour (including Canada) to 5 against, with 3 abstentions (Docs. A/RESOLUTION/117 and A/2523):

"The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 319 (IV) of 3 December 1948 and 428 (V) of 14 December 1950, by which the Assembly decided to establish the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and adopted the Statute governing the operation of that Office.

Considering the continuing need for international action on behalf of refugees,

Considering the valuable work which has been performed by the Office of the High Commissioner both in providing international protection for refugees and in promoting permanent solutions for their problems,

1. Decides to continue the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for a period of five years from 1 January 1954 on the basis of the Statute of the Office contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 428 (V);

2. Decides to review, not later than at the twelfth regular session of the Assembly, the arrangements for the Office of the High Commissioner with a view to determining whether the Office should be continued beyond 31 December 1958;

3. Decides that the High Commissioner shall be elected for a period of five years from 1 January 1954, and that the High Commissioner shall appoint a Deputy High Commissioner of a nationality other than his own."

NOTE: - Following upon the adoption of A/RESOLUTION/117, the General Assembly at its 454th plenary meeting on October 25, 1953, on the nomination of the Secretary-General in accordance with chapter III, paragraph 13, of the Statute, elected Mr. G. J. van Heuven Goedhart (Netherlands) to the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Mr. van Heuven Goedhart has served in this capacity since January 1, 1951.

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