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STATEMENT DELIVERED BY MISS HELEN MARSH,
CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE ON THE THIRD COMMITTEE
ON THE QUESTION OF THE RENEWAL OF THE MANDATE OF THE
UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE FOR REFUGEES ON
NOVEMBER 19, 1962.

Mr. Chairman,

Throughout its history, Canada has been fortunate in not being afflicted to any great extent by grave refugee problems. To my mind this fact explains perhaps why my compatriots and the Canadian Government have shown such a willingness and a desire to bring relief to the plight of refugees in various parts of the world. 1962 has been no exception, and I should like to review briefly the leading part played by my country in the search for these solutions which High Commissioner Schnyder has so thoroughly described to us.

During 1962, Canada maintained its past policy of co-operating with the High Commissioner's programme to find permanent solutions to the outstanding refugee problems in Europe. Unsponsored refugees from this area were therefore accepted without numerical limitation. Particular and increasing emphasis was given to the difficult-to-resettle cases which are of particular concern to the High Commissioner.

Our normal immigrant selection criteria were relaxed, as had been the case during and since World Refugee Year, in order to permit any refugee with reasonable prospects of employment in Canada to migrate regardless of age, occupation or minor physical handicaps. The educational and occupational requirements established under the new Canadian Immigration Regulations were also interpreted with special leniency in the case of these refugees. Those who failed to meet even these limited standards were considered under the private sponsorship scheme or the Canadian Government handicapped refugee programme.

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With the help of private organizations and individuals, the refugee private sponsorship scheme which began in World Refugee Year was carried on in 1962. A number of other refugees were also admitted to Canada within the ordinary immigration provisions under the sponsorship of their close relatives in Canada.

Furthermore, special refugee programmes were carried out by the Canadian Government during this year. A special authorization was granted for the admission of fifty families of stateless persons from the Middle East to be settled in Canada under private auspices. The normal occupational, age and education standards were not applied to this group. The majority of these families have already arrived and are being settled satisfactorily.

Although, this year, there were no Canadian Government-sponsored movements of refugees affected by tuberculosis, the treatment and integration of those who had arrived previously continued successfully. The three movements which took place between December 1959 and March 1961 included 325 tubercular patients and their dependents for a total of 826 persons. Most of these persons have now succeeded in establishing themselves firmly in Canada, and we consider that, on the whole, this movement has been very successful.

In May 1962, the Canadian Government decided to accept 100 families of Chinese refugees from Hong Kong. Some 45 families have already arrived in Canada and their settlement is proceeding without undue difficulties with the co-operation of individuals and private organizations across the country. This was a special movement, initiated against the background of the emergency in Hong Kong earlier this year. It must be borne in mind, however, that Canada has, in the past 13 years, received under its normal immigration provisions approximately 25,000 Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong, most of whom had fled Mainland China.

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On an experimental basis, the Canadian Government has made careful plans for the movement to Canada of a small number of handicapped refugees who were capable of employment, or who had, in their families, at least one person capable of earning the family livelihood. It is expected that careful advance preparation and selection of employment could enable these families to establish themselves successfully without becoming a burden to their sponsors or without need for extensive public assistance. A number of cases are at present under consideration, and it is hoped that some will reach Canada this year.

Canada's general refugee policies will be continued in 1963. Unsponsored refugees from Europe will be admitted without numerical limit and without applying the usual Canadian immigration standards of occupation and education. The refugee private sponsorship programme will also be continued.

It is hoped that the experimental movement of handicapped but employable refugees under Canadian Government auspices will begin to produce results in 1963. To bring more cases into this programme the High Commissioner will be invited to refer cases on a regular basis to Canadian immigration missions in Europe. Naturally, although no numerical limitation has been set, the number of such cases accepted will depend on the ability of Canadian immigration settlement officers in Canada to find suitable employment and establishment opportunities. Approval has been granted for the admission to Canada in 1963 of another 50 families of stateless persons from the Middle East on the same basis as in 1962.

These are some of the refugee resettlement programmes which the Canadian Government intends to carry out in 1963. Other projects are under consideration. For example, approval in principle has been given to the acceptance by Canada of some European refugees from the Far East, provided a number of

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technical details in respect to Canadian immigration procedures can be worked out. Of course, my Government is always prepared to consider action in the light of new events and changing situations. As always, in planning its refugee programmes, Canada has profited from the assistance and co-operation of the High Commissioner and his staff, and their suggestions and recommendations have always received most careful and sympathetic consideration.

It should be emphasized that in addition to Canada's special refugee programmes in which the normal immigrant selection standards are greatly relaxed, Canada's new immigration regulations permit refugees anywhere in the world to apply for admission to Canada as ordinary immigrants subject to the usual standards of selection.

But we realize, Mr. Chairman, that the efforts of the Canadian Government and of all other governments concerned are not sufficient to wipe out those refugee problems, and that action by the international community is needed. The Canadian Government is therefore prepared to play its role in this international action.

The agenda item which we are now studying is not a new one. Every year the General Assembly has been called upon to re-examine the plight of refugees all over the world. And every year the international community has felt that it was its duty to devise formulas as regards refugee problems and to provide for their execution. It seems to my Delegation that the end of the present mandate of the UNHCR gives us an opportunity to re-evaluate these formulas and to re-examine the usefulness of this Office.

An evaluation of the problems involved and of the means devised to deal with them would seem to indicate that the following criteria should characterize the operation of the Office.

It should be a dynamic organization capable of taking the necessary initiatives and of carrying them to their final

conclusion. This dynamism should be especially apparent in these new refugee situations which must be dealt with quickly before they reach critical proportions and become disastrous.

It should also be an efficient organization. The resources at its disposal are limited and it would seem logical that an efficient organization would more easily attract the necessary voluntary contributions. Even more important, however, is the fact that the humanitarian aspect of the work would not permit any delay in providing solutions which the refugees are anxiously expecting. By the same token, a good deal of prudence and caution is needed for the Office not to undertake tasks clearly beyond its capabilities, thus endangering the other programmes already in force. This body should also have a clear vision of its objectives and should be in a position to devise a flexible approach for dealing quickly and effectively with new refugee problems. This flexible approach would then permit that organization to encourage and stimulate the joint participation of governments, international organization and voluntary agencies.

Those, Mr. Chairman, are the criteria which in the eyes of my Delegation, should preside over the activities of the Office of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees.

The Canadian Government believes that the Office has fulfilled its duties according to these criteria. Consequently, the Canadian Government has seen fit to contribute $290,000 towards the maintenance and the operations of that Office.

I wish to assure the High Commissioner that the size of the Canadian contribution is a tangible manifestation of the satisfaction with which my Government views the activities of his Office. It is also a tribute to his leadership and to the painstaking efforts of his staff.

From the report of the High Commissioner contained in Document A/5211/Rev.1 and from the explanations which the High

Commissioner himself has given to this Committee, it is clear that the refugee problems facing the international community will not be completely resolved before the end of the present mandate of the High Commissioner, that is at the end of 1963. My Delegation, therefore, believes that the Office should be continued in existence. Since its activities have met with the wishes of my Government, and as far a s we know with the wishes of most governments, it should be continued along the same lines as before and with similar terms of reference.

After consulting with many other Delegations, we came to the conclusion that their thinking closely parrallels the Canadian view. From this meeting of the minds emerged the draft resolution contained in Document A/C.3/L.1029 and we are confident that it will meet with the approval of our distinguished colleagues.