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STATEMENT BY MRS. H.H. STEEN, CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE AT THE 1960 PLEDGING CONFERENCE ON CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PROGRAMMES OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

Mr. President,

In recent months we have witnessed the successful conclusion of an outstanding example of international co-operation in the humanitarian field -- World Refugee Year. That project, conceived by four enterprising young citizens of the United Kingdom in 1958, was intended to encourage nations to make an extra effort for one year to try to deal with one of the greatest human tragedies of our times -- the tragedy of the victims of war and political upheaval.

World Refugee Year officially ended on June 30 of this year. During the preceding twelve months, it was a major preoccupation of a great number of nations which joined together "to encourage additional opportunities for permanent refugee solutions through voluntary repatriation, resettlement or integration, on a purely humanitarian basis and in accordance with the freely expressed wishes of the refugees themselves."

The recent meeting of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has revealed what a notable success this World Refugee Year has been. We have been told that the High Commissioner's camp clearance programme has been assured of achievement and that important resources have become available for programmes for refugees living outside camps. We have also heard of the significant step forward which has been made in re-settling handicapped refugees and their dependents -- an achievement which has exploded the myth of the "hard-core" or unemigrable refugees.

Equally significant is the new hope which has thus been brought to refugees, and the new awareness which has been brought to peoples throughout

the world of the material suffering still being experienced by many refugees. The stimulus that World Refugee Year has given to governments, voluntary agencies and the general public to continue their efforts in helping to find permanent solutions to the refugee problem will undoubtedly assist the High Commissioner in continuing his work for refugees.

A great deal of credit for the success of World Refugee Year must go to the High Commissioner for Refugees. In concluding his period of service as High Commissioner, Dr. Lindt may take justifiable satisfaction in his accomplishments. I wish, on behalf of the Canadian Government and people, to congratulate him on his achievements and to thank him for his tireless efforts in meeting his immense responsibilities.

Canada welcomed the opportunity to participate in World Refugee Year. Even prior to World Refugee Year, Canada had been maintaining a large programme of refugee resettlement within the context of the normal Canadian immigration programme. In addition, Canada had been making annual contributions to the regular programmes of the United Nations refugee agencies in excess of two million dollars. Nevertheless, it was clear that special efforts were needed during World Refugee Year and the Canadian Government immediately considered what could be done to increase its support of the United Nations refugee programmes. For this purpose, special contributions were made which brought the total Canadian expenditure in support of these programmes in 1960 to close to $4 million.

It was decided to waive Canada's immigration regulations to permit a substantial number of tuberculous refugees and their families to be admitted to Canada for treatment and rehabilitation. In accordance with that decision more than two hundred refugees afflicted with tuberculosis, along with about 350 dependents, have arrived in Canada from the European camps. Provincial governments co-operating in the project undertook to pay most of the cost of medical treatment and the Federal Government paid all other costs, including transportation to Canada and maintenance of their families until they were reasonably able to support themselves. The final cost of this programme cannot be predicted, but it is obvious that the Federal Government alone will

spend hundreds of thousands of dollars before the project is completed. I am happy to say that the refugees admitted to Canada under this programme have responded well to medical treatment and have shown themselves able to integrate rapidly into Canadian society. It is clear that they will become valuable members of the communities in which they have been re-settled.

In addition to the federal and provincial governments' efforts, there have been important contributions made by the Canadian people through the Canadian Committee for World Refugee Year, its local committees, and its various sponsoring organizations. I cannot give you the final figures of the contribution made by these voluntary groups. I can, however, mention that at the beginning of July the Canadian Committee for World Refugee Year and its local committees had received $916,798. In addition, the sponsoring organizations had been able to report special contributions to the United Nations Refugee Assistance Programme totalling $128,495, and an increase of $747,263 over their normal revenue for their separate refugee assistance programmes. When final figures are available, they are expected to be substantially higher.

Although World Refugee Year has, as I have indicated, achieved a considerable degree of success, it is obvious that the refugee problem is not yet solved and that the efforts of United Nations member governments in this field cannot be relaxed. A great deal remains to be done and it is reassuring to note that there is a widespread awareness of this continuing need. World Refugee Year set out not only to raise increased funds for refugee assistance and to provide more numerous opportunities for permanent refugee solutions, but also to assist governments and peoples to become better informed concerning the requirements of refugees in many areas. The broader understanding of the refugee problem which has been developed through World Refugee Year will not end with World Refugee Year. Along with other nations, Canada will continue during the forthcoming year to do its share towards solving the refugee problem.

To this end the Canadian Government has decided to offer a contribution of $290,000 Canadian, subject to Parliamentary approval, to the programmes of the High Commissioner for Refugees. It has also decided to ask

Parliament for a further $60,000 for use in transporting refugees under the closely related programme of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration.

Thank you, Mr. President.