

CANADIAN DELECATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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REPORT OF THE UNITED MATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

Statement by Mrs. M. Konantz, M.P. Canadian Representative on the Third Committee in the General Debate

Mr. Chairman,

The Canadian Delegation would like to commend the High Commissioner for Refugees and his staff for the report which is evidence of the very excellent work they have done over the past year. Canada has always been appreciative of the dedication the High Commissioner has shown to his responsibilities in dealing not only with the refugee problems which arose as a result of World War II, but with new refugee situations which have continued to occur. By extending his "good offices" to new problems, the High Commissioner has often been able to provide assistance before the situation has become acute.

It is particularly heartening to note in this year's report of the High Commissioner that the major aid programmes for assistance to European refugees will be completed by 1965. My delegation was also gratified to note that greater responsibility for assistance to these refugees is being assumed by national authorities. The considerable assistance which the High Commissioner has also made available to refugees in various parts of Africa is also gratifying.

The Canadian Government has endeavoured to show its appreciation for the High Commissioner's work by giving generously over the years to the High Commissioner's programmes, by playing an active role in the High Commissioners Executive Committee, and by settling in Canada over 300,000 refugees since the end of World War II. Since World Refugee Year alone Canada has admitted well over 9,000 refugees.

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Over 4,000 of these were included in special refugee programmes which provided for admission to Canada without reference to regular terms of admission.

Inc ded in the 4,000 refugees were over 1,800 refugees from Italy, Austria and Germany; 1,200 refugees who came to Canada under the private citizenship scheme which permits any individual group or agency in Canada to sponsor refugees; 300 tubercular refugees who were hospitalized and cared for and 500 of their dependents; 200 to 300 Chinese refugees from Hong Kong; 200 stateless persons from Greece and the Middle East and a small number of handicapped refugees admitted under a special scheme inaugurated in 1962.

Canadian Government continually receives representations on behalf of refugees and is always ready to consider what action can be taken to enable them to take up a new life in our country. Canada has profited from the assistance and the cooperation of the High Commissioner and his staff whose suggestions and recommendations are always most carefully and sympathetically considered.

It is a sad commentary on our times that refugees have become one of the continuing problems with which we must deal. The arduous task of providing a solution to this problem is all too often long, frustrating and extraordinarily complicated. In the meantime, the plight of those who have fled from the lands from which they came is a very disturbing one. To find the necessary funds to provide even for their most basic needs is not easy and, living as many of them do in wqualor and misery, there must remain for some only a hope that somehow they may become again useful members of society. The existence of the office of the High Commissioner for Refugees is one of the reasons they manage to retain hope in their adversity. Canada will continue to play its part in supporting the office of the High Commissioner and other erganizations engaged in this vital work with the firm conviction that by common efforts we can do much to alleviate the sufferings of these people who need our help.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.