

No. 18

December 23, 1943.

CANADA'S ROLE IN U.N.R.R.A.

Representatives of 44 united and associated nations met at Washington on November 9, 1943, to sign an agreement establishing the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. In the agreement these nations expressed their determination to bring relief to the victims of war, immediately upon the liberation of countries enslaved by the enemy.

The following day the first session of the Council of the Administration convened at Atlantic City, New Jersey, to determine the organization of U.N.R.R.A. and to formulate the broad policies that will govern its work.

Each of the member countries of U.N.R.R.A. appointed one delegate to the Council. The Council had before it the following tasks:

- (1) To outline the nature and scope of relief activities to be undertaken;
- (2) To define the relationship of U.N.R.R.A. with existing inter-governmental supply and shipping agencies, so that effective prosecution of the war would not be impeded;
- (3) To decide the policies to be followed in distributing relief supplies in liberated areas, and to ensure that supplies should be equitably apportioned;
- (4) To establish methods of determining the needs of liberated peoples;
- (5) To prescribe the procedures for obtaining supplies;
- (6) To work out a method for the equitable sharing of the burden among the contributing nations;
- (7) To frame the rules that are to govern the conduct of U.N.R.R.A. itself, so that interested nations may have effective representation in the development of policies, and to facilitate the work of the Director General in carrying out these policies.

These questions, all involving decisions of considerable difficulty, were approached in an encouraging spirit of co-operation and with a minimum of emphasis on prestige. There was no attempt during the conference at domination by the large powers or obstruction on the part of the small. Consequently, it was possible in all matters to find satisfactory and workable solutions.

The scope of relief and rehabilitation under U.N.R.R.A. is to be confined to limits which are practical and necessary. The Administration is designed to cope with an emergency, to make available the food and supplies considered essential to prevent starvation and disease.

DUTIES OF  
THE COUNCIL

SCOPE OF  
U.N.R.R.A.

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The conference did not attempt to reach ambitious objectives either with regard to the functions of the Administration or to detail in its recommendations. The assistance of U.N.R.R.A. in making repairs and in providing equipment and supplies for the rehabilitation of industry and services is to be confined to what is necessary for relief and early recovery of the liberated areas from dependence upon outside help. The resources of U.N.R.R.A. are not to be used for long-term reconstruction.

CO-OPERATION  
WITH EXISTING  
AGENCIES

Since the successful prosecution of the war is the first objective of the United Nations, it was agreed at Atlantic City that the activities of U.N.R.R.A. in obtaining relief supplies must be co-ordinated with the existing wartime arrangements for the allocation of both supplies and shipping. Consequently, all requirements for relief and rehabilitation which have been drawn up or approved by U.N.R.R.A. are to be brought before the Combined Boards. These requests will be considered as an additional claim on available supplies, and will have to be balanced with military requirements and the needs of the civilian populations in the supplying countries. In cases of scarce commodities which the Combined Boards wish to control, the Boards will consult with the Director General of U.N.R.R.A. and the Chairman of the Supplies Committee, and then determine the amounts that may be devoted to relief. This will ensure that the flow of supplies necessary for the war effort will not be impeded.

DISTRIBUTION  
OF RELIEF

Responsibility for the distribution of relief within a receiving country will be borne by the recognized government exercising administrative authority in the area. U.N.R.R.A. may not operate in the area without the consent of the recognized government, or if such a government does not exist, the military command.

FINANCE

After considerable discussion, the conference decided that each member government whose home territory has not been occupied by the enemy shall make a contribution approximately equivalent to 1% of its national income for the year ended June 30, 1943, as determined by the member government. As much as possible, but not less than 10% of the contribution, shall be in the form of currency that can be expended outside the country, with the balance in the form of a credit in local currency, available for the purchase of the contributing country's goods. It was not thought desirable to establish a fixed and overall formula, and each country is left free to decide for itself whether there are special circumstances which would make the 1% contribution excessively

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On the assumption that Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and one or two of the other Dominions would make their full contribution, the United States would contribute between \$1,300,000,000. and \$1,500,000,000., the United Kingdom between \$300,000,000. and \$400,000,000., and Canada between \$80,000,000. and \$90,000,000. Attogether a fund of between \$2,000,000,000. and \$2,500,000,000. would be provided. No commitments were made regarding further contribution, but should this fund not be sufficient, the question of further contributions would have to be considered at a later meeting of the Council in the light of circumstances which then exist.

The representatives of a number of the occupied countries, including the French Committee of National Liberation, and the exile governments of the Netherlands and Belgium, have indicated that they intend to pay for the whole or part of their relief needs. In order to achieve an equitable apportionment of available supplies, it was provided that all member governments shall keep the Administration fully informed of their intentions concerning the importation of relief and rehabilitation supplies, regardless of how these are to be financed. On the basis of this information the Director General may present to the Combined Boards such recommendations or objections as he may deem necessary to obtain a fair distribution of supplies among all the liberated areas. In this way supplies will be equitably distributed whether or not the receiving country is in a position to pay for them.

In the case, however, of countries not in a position to pay for the relief supplies furnished them, they will return to U.N.R.R.A. the local currency received from the sales of such supplies to their peoples. U.N.R.R.A. will then use this local currency for all its expenses arising out of any relief work it undertakes within the country concerned.

In addition to the general policy decisions outlined above, the Council had the task of setting up the organization to carry these policies into effect. The executive and administrative functions are assigned by the Agreement to the Director General, whose position is analogous to that of the general manager of a corporation. The Council appointed the Honorable Herbert Lehman to this office. Mr. Lehman's attitude and contribution to the work of the Council created a high degree of confidence among all the representatives.

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A considerable part of the session at Atlantic City was devoted to defining the relationships and the division of responsibility between the Council, the Director General and the Standing Committees of the Council. The Canadian delegation took an active part in working out a satisfactory system of organization. The functional principle of international representation was found to be a highly appropriate principle, and received widespread support. By this system, countries having most to contribute to certain aspects of the work of U.N.R.R.A. were given corresponding responsibility in the development of policy with regard to those aspects. In the final decisions of the Council, the role of the representative bodies of the Administration in the formulation of policy was firmly established.

Aside from the Council itself, the policy-making organs of the Administration consist of the Central Committee, the Standing Regional Committees for Europe and the Far East, the Standing Committees on Supplies and Financial Control, and the Standing Technical Committees on agriculture, displaced persons, health, industrial rehabilitation, and welfare.

Central Committee --

The Director General is also chairman of the Central Committee which deals with general policy matters between sessions of the Council. Representatives of the United Kingdom, United States, China and Russia are members of this Committee. The relative importance of the Central Committee has been considerably reduced since the presentation of the initial proposals, and all its decisions must be reported promptly to each of the member governments, and must later be ratified by the Council.

Regional Committees --

The Regional Committees for Europe and the Far East will prepare recommendations for the Council regarding the bases for the determination of relief requirements in those areas, and will advise the Director General with respect to equitable apportionment of relief supplies within their respective regions. The Committee for the Far East is under the chairmanship of the representative of China and consists of representatives of all member governments in that region. The United Kingdom representative is chairman of the Committee for Europe, which is composed of the representatives of all the member governments in Europe together with the representatives of Brazil, Canada, and the United States.

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Committee on Financial Control --

The United States representative is chairman of the Committee on Financial Control, set up to deal with matters concerning the administrative budget and the auditing and accounting control of the Administration's operations.

Standing Technical Committees --

The Standing Technical Committees are intended to be expert bodies to advise the Council, the Regional Committees and the Director General on technical matters in their field.

Committee on Supplies --

The Committee on Supplies, of which the Canadian representative is chairman, will play an important part in the affairs of the Administration. The countries represented on this Committee are: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, the French Committee of National Liberation, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. The Committee will advise the Council, the Central Committee and the Director General on general policies regarding the provision, financing and transport of supplies. The chairman of the Committee will appoint a special sub-committee to determine whether or not a recipient country is in a position to pay for relief extended to it. The chairman of the Committee on Supplies, together with the Director General, will be consulted by the Combined Boards when matters affecting the Administration are under discussion. The chairman will also participate in the meetings of the Central Committee when matters concerning supply are being considered.

The Committee on Supplies held its first meeting at Atlantic City on November 30, at which the Canadian representative was elected chairman. A second meeting was held in Washington on December 10, and the Committee has already begun its function. The Director General has received specific requests regarding arrangements for the future provision of relief goods. Important matters remain to be worked out with the military authorities who will be responsible for relief during the interim period immediately following the liberation of any territory. The circumstances and time at which U.N.R.R.A. will take over are of considerable interest to the supplying countries, and are among the matters which the Committee on Supplies now has under consideration.

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