

These contributions are expressed here in terms of dollars. In practice, it is difficult to obtain payment from a member nation in a currency other than its own. Thus, a large part of IRO's receipts are in non-convertible or "soft" currencies. The search for commodities, shipping and services which can be obtained in exchange for these currencies of limited convertibility has been a constant preoccupation of the IRO financial administration. Thus, Belgian francs are used to repair ships in Belgian docks, English pounds to buy English ships, and Dutch guilder credits are used to purchase food for refugees in the camps. A financial administration has been established which is capable of supervising expenditures in 38 different currencies.

A fund of \$5,000,000 for large-scale resettlement schemes (in effect, colonization schemes), to which Governments were to contribute voluntarily, was also proposed by the General Assembly, but few such contributions were received.

By far the heaviest demand on IRO's resources during its first year of operation was for the programme of Health, Care and Maintenance. The Organization's major effort has been to free sufficient funds from this form of expenditure, which supports a mere "holding" action, for use in the programme of repatriation and resettlement, which alone can solve the problem. In its first fiscal year, IRO was forced to spend 75 per cent of its funds merely to keep refugees alive. Only 18 per cent was available to help them begin new lives. In its second year, increased opportunities for resettlement and greater availability of shipping will permit IRO to reverse this emphasis. In its third year, IRO hopes to complete its task.

A NOTE IN CONCLUSION

The International Refugee Organization represents the United Nations in vigorous, effective action towards solution of a concrete operational problem.

Because of IRO's efforts in its first, difficult year of operation, 256,000 people have exchanged the twilight existence of the refugee for hopeful, productive citizenship either in their old country or in a new land. Many more will follow them in the next two years. Each of them, through the most direct personal experience, will have acquired renewed faith in the ability of the United Nations to overcome international problems through international co-operation.

The editors of this booklet have made a sincere attempt to put into it only facts. It is a fact that 205,000 persons were resettled during IRO's first year of operation. But statistics alone do not tell the human side of the story. Behind the figures are men and women and children eager to board the ship or train that leads to a new start in life.

But too many of those who boarded ships and trains in that first year were men—young, strong, unattached men culled from the refugee population by programmes of selection designed to fill the manpower needs of the nations rather than to contribute to solution of the problem.

War-born shortages of housing facilities have forced some nations to adopt this formula of recruitment. Others have agreed to accept the families of selected workers "as soon as housing becomes available". Meanwhile, tragic separations take place.

IRO has repeatedly warned that this "skimming of the cream" must be checked because it is both a denial of the Organization's humanitarian aims and an economic heresy. The refugees are a community. Like any community, this one has its economic producers and those who are dependent upon the producers. Like any community, this one will suffer if its workers and producers are taken away from it. They will leave behind them a "hard core" of those who cannot maintain themselves and who may long remain dependent upon the world's charity. This group will include not only those who cannot work because they are too young or too old, or too busy with family duties, but also those who are too well qualified—that is the intellectual workers, victims of that "embargo on brains" which has been described.

This need not happen. The United Nations General Assembly has urged the nations of the world each to accept into its territory a fair share of all elements among the displaced persons. A generous response to this appeal would mean that the entire number of non-repatriable refugees could be absorbed with ease by the world—those who can work supporting the few who cannot.

For nearly a million people today IRO—the International Refugee Organization—is the point of contact with the United Nations. They believe that IRO can solve their problem. IRO can justify that faith if it receives the generous, intelligent support of its member Governments—that is to say, the support of the individual citizens whose will is supreme in those Governments.

It is to them that this pamphlet is directed—and dedicated.