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Work of the Special Liaison Committee

Communication

Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population

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1. The Committee on Population and Refugees considers it proper to submit a Report to the Assembly on the work connected with refugees and over-population carried out by the Special Liaison Committee, which was set up in 1952 by agreement of the Consultative Assembly (Recommendation 13 adopted on 7th December, 1951) and the Committee of Ministers (Resolution [52] 11). This Report is intended to supplement the information on the subject communicated to the Assembly in the various reports by the Committee of Ministers and, in particular, in the relevant Resolutions included in those Reports.

2. The Special Liaison Committee consists of three members of the Committee on Population and Refugees and an equal number of members of the Committee of Ministers. It has issued invitations (which have been accepted) to the following international bodies to send observers to its meetings : I. C. E. M., I. L. O., the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and O. E. E. C.

3. By its terms of reference, the Special Liaison Committee is called to consider Recommendations adopted by the Assembly and proposals made by the Committee on Population and Refugees or the Committee of Ministers which are designed to promote the settlement or emigration of refugees and surplus elements of population. This direct contact and collaboration between the Committee on Population and Refugees and the S. L. C. was recommended by the Assembly and approved by the Committee of Ministers in pursuance of the Recommendation and Resolution mentioned in para. 1 above.

4. In the course of its first meeting the S. L. C. adopted its Rules of Procedure, which are appended to this Report. These stipulate that the S. L. C. shall, among other things, aim at " securing the active support of European public opinion for the solution of the pressing problems of refugees and over-population ". It is in this field, in particular, that the S. L. C. has sought to develop its activities, in accordance with Recommendation 13 of the Assembly, which received the approval of the Committee of Ministers (Resolution [52] 11), and with the programme contained in the document appended hereto. This indicates the manner in which it proposes to inform public opinion of the problems involved and to stimulate research into the solution of those problems.

5. The S. L. C. , furthermore, has the task of :

5.1. co-ordinating and promoting the work of the Council of Europe in the field of refugees and over-population;

5.2. promoting and facilitating the vocational training of young refugees and unemployed persons in countries with a surplus of population.

These two objectives have not as yet been fully exploited, but the S. L. C. proposes to develop its activities in this connection in the near future.

6. In connection with the second point mentioned above, that is to say the vocational training of young refugees and unemployed persons, the S. L. C. has set up a group of experts which have proposed the adoption of methods of ensuring the vocational training of these young people, including the provision of



facilities for the training of apprentices in countries other than their own, whether by way of exchange with their opposite numbers or otherwise. This proposal is in conformity with the intentions of Recommendation 13 of the Consultative Assembly which provided, particularly, for the vocational training of young refugees and unemployed persons.

7. With regard to point (1) above " co-ordinating and promoting the work of the Council of Europe in the field of refugees and over-population " the Council is now entering upon a more active phase as a result of the decision taken by the Committee of Ministers to appoint "—an eminent European personality as special Representative who will devote himself particularly to the problem of refugees and over-population ". The appointment of this personality had been recommended by the Assembly (Recommendation 13) and approved by the S. L. C. If only on this score, the existence of the S. L. C. has proved to be of value, since the Representatives to the Assembly were able in that committee to explain their views to the representatives of the Committee of Ministers and, after discussion, to reach agreement with the latter, with the result that in its turn the Committee of Ministers gave a favourable reception to the proposal for the appointment of a Special Representative.

8. The S. L. C. has also considered Recommendation 35 of the Assembly on measures to be taken for increasing This Recommendation received the support of the S. L. C. Subsequently, the Committee of Ministers, in its Message of May, 1953, [Doc.126](#), decided to call on non-European Governments to facilitate the flow of European emigration towards their countries and drew their attention, inter alia, to the desirability of increasing the financial means available to the international organisations which are particularly interested in problems of migration.

9. Recommendation 35 of the Assembly on the international financing of the integration into the economic system of refugees and surplus elements of population was also examined by the S. L. C. and a favourable opinion submitted to the Committee of Ministers. The latter decided to invite Member States and the competent international organisations to grant, so far as possible priority to any investment plan which would encourage such integration. so far as possible priority to any investment plan which would encourage such integration. Furthermore, the Committee of Ministers decided to invite Governments to cooperate with the Committee on Population and Refugees of the Assembly in preparing concrete and limited plans for the integration into the national economies of refugees and surplus elements of population, the financing of which would be ensured by a special fund in accordance with the Recommendation of the Assembly. The Committee of Ministers, however, decided that consideration of the establishment of this special fund should only take place after these plans had been submitted (Report of the Committee of Ministers, May, 1953, [Doc. 122](#)).

10. Other questions have also been discussed by the S. L. C. for example, the ratification of the Geneva Convention of 28th July, 1952, on the status of refugees. The S. L. C., and at a later stage the Committee of Ministers, adopted the opinion of the Assembly in this matter, and the Committee of Ministers recommended that Member Governments should ratify the Convention within the shortest possible time (Report of the Committee of Ministers, May, 1953, [Doc. 122](#))

11. The recommendation on measures to be taken in order to assist refugees in West Berlin, which was directly submitted by the Committee on Population and Refugees to the S. L. C., was also approved by the latter. The Committee of Ministers adopted this Recommendation and invited Governments to afford to the refugees in West Berlin material aid and the maximum facilities for emigration and to instigate measures which might facilitate the liquidation of refugee camps and the construction of living accommodation (Resolution [53] 21 of the Committee of Ministers, contained in its Message to the Assembly, [Doc. 126](#)).

12. Other recommendations were also submitted by the S. L. C. to the Committee of Ministers calling for assistance to refugees in Trieste and to other so-called " hard core " refugees. These were adopted by the Committee of Ministers.

13. A plan for the construction of living accommodation for refugees now living in camps in Western Germany was also considered by the Committee on Population and Refugees of the Assembly. The latter asked the S. L. C. to give favourable consideration to a plan for its further study by Government experts. This suggestion was adopted by the S. L. C., which decided to set up a group of experts who will hold their inaugural meeting in the near future.

14. It may perhaps be said that the results so far obtained by the S. L. C. have been somewhat limited. As a general rule the S. L. C. has only expressed opinions based on the Recommendations of the Assembly or of its Committee, the responsibility for the implementation of any decisions subsequently taken by the Committee of Ministers on the basis of these opinions remaining in the hands of Member Governments. This

limitation to its possibilities of action has necessarily somewhat restricted its scope, all the more so since the problem of refugees and over-population, as it exists to-day, calls for continuous consultation and day-to-day action.

15. It should not, however, be forgotten that the S. L. C. has only recently been formed and is finding its feet. There is no doubt that it will find a way to develop and extend its influence. The S. L. C. sets great store by the appointment of a " Special Representative " in accordance with the Recommendation of the Assembly. This appointment having now been agreed, the S. L. C. trusts that the European personality concerned may become its permanent delegate and be given a precise and practical task.

16. It should also be emphasised that the creation of the S. L. C. has provided a meeting-ground of the Assembly and the Committee of Ministers for the study in common of certain problems. In the course of the discussion in the S. L. C. it has been possible for Representatives to the Assembly to exchange ideas with representatives of the Committee of Ministers and to present the point of view of the Assembly directly to them.

17. The S. L. C. has a promising future before it, and the appointment of this " eminent European personality " as Special Representative will give great impetus to its activities. Your Rapporteur concludes by submitting to the Assembly his opinion that the action of the S. L. C. has been positive and that the success it has so far obtained justifies the continued confidence of the Assembly.

Appendix INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC

Terms of Reference

1. One of the objects of establishing a Committee on Population and Refugees within the Consultative Assembly was to enlist the aid of public opinion in solving the problem of refugees and over-population. While specifying the tasks entrusted to the Special Liaison Committee, the Committee of Ministers moreover instructed this Committee to "aim at securing the active support of European public opinion for the solution of the pressing problems of refugees and over-population".
2. This Memorandum is designed to give a few general details on the means whereby the organs of the Council of Europe might accomplish this task of "enlisting the aid of public opinion" and "aiming at securing its active support" in solving the problem of refugees and over-population.

Scope

1. A publicity campaign might, to this end, be organised to call public attention to the gravity of the situation and enlighten it on the following matters :
 - a. Origin and magnitude of the problem;
 - a. Various aspects of the respective problems of refugees and over-population;
 - a. Measures taken or contemplated by the Governments and international authorities;
 - a. Prospects of the active co-operation of the population of the countries concerned.
2. Since the Consultative Assembly and the Committee of Ministers are in full agreement as to the desired remedies, the Committee on Population and Refugees, the Special Liaison Committee and the Secretariat-General will have no problems of principle to discuss. The information campaign might therefore call attention to the various possibilities of redistributing the surplus populations both within and outside Europe, and describe the advantages and disadvantages of each of these remedies.

Arguments to be employed

1. The human and social aspects should obviously predominate. An appeal to people's benevolent instincts might already meet with some response from one sector of the public. It is only necessary to recall the "Save Europe Now" campaign conducted by the British publisher, Victor Gollancz, just after the last war. With little money at his disposal but possessed of a special knack of touching the hearts of people less affected by the war Victor Gollancz successfully ran a campaign which did much to aid the mental and material recovery of those more sorely tried.
2. This humanitarian response would still further be strengthened by an appeal to European solidarity. That this solidarity exists was strikingly proved by the recent aid given by European peoples to the Italian flood victims. It is true that a disaster of this kind naturally stirs the imagination more than a latent evil of long standing, even though the latter may be the graver and more permanent. The refugee problem must be presented in an original and continuous manner, since originality and regularity are the bases of all public information.
3. A campaign, based solely on social and humanitarian sentiments, could not, however, be fully effective were it not backed by economic facts. The problem of refugees and over-population is essentially economic and closely linked with that of manpower and emigration. So interdependent indeed are the economies of the European countries that the general social level can never be raised so long as certain of them have to carry the burden of human beings they are unable to absorb into their economic systems. It might also be shown that these refugees and surplus population represent a valuable asset for Europe since the future of our Continent depends entirely on the amount of work provided. Among the refugees there exist many skilled workers who could well serve European economy in the effort to increase production in accordance with OEEC's public announcement on 29th August, 1951 and also to meet the needs of rearmament.
4. When enlisting public support for the removal of impediments to the free movement of labour one of the first steps should be to persuade the trade unions—often opposed to any immigration policy—to re-examine the whole question. The objections of the British trade unions to the integration into the British economy of Italian miners, less well paid than their own members and thus liable to jeopardise the wages of the latter, are well known. The implementation of the draft Convention on the reciprocal treatment of nationals and the Agreements on migrant workers might provide a first solution to the problem.

5. The Governments . and international organisations concerned are already trying to solve the refugee and over-population problem along two main lines: establishment in Europe within the national or European framework and establishment outside Europe by overseas emigration. Information given should vary according to the effects of such measures on the people of each country:

Methods of implementation

1. The information services of the Council of Europe have made various contacts which could be used for circulating press articles, preparing and distributing pamphlets, publishing lecture programmes, organising radio broadcasts and including suitable references in certain films. In particular, a pamphlet could be published in the Council's series of popular publications. Material for articles, illustrations such as sketches and photographs could be made available to the press. The subject has already been discussed in the Council's normal radio programmes and this method might be continued with the help of certain leading figures in this field. Congresses and mobile exhibitions on the refugee problem might also be organised. Finally, certain recent achievements give reason to consider the production of films in which the Council of Europe would participate. In this as in other matters the help of members of the Consultative Assembly can be of particular value. An appeal to members in the form of an Assembly Resolution would impose a moral obligation on Representatives, who would certainly not hesitate to vote in favour of it.