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Fifth Report on the activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Report

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1. Introduction

1. The memorandum transmitted by the High Commissioner to the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe at its previous session contained an account of the establishment of the new UNREF programme for permanent solutions and emergency aid to the most needy refugees, authorised by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its Resolution 832 (IX). The programme is now in full operation. As of May 1956 projects to the amount of approximately $2,800,000 were being implemented, and it is estimated that they had already benefited some thing like 10,000 refugees.

2. The fulfilment of this programme is, however, considerably handicapped by the fact t h a t governmental contributions are falling short of the annual targets. Thus, in 1955, these contributions amounted only to §2,653,697 out of $4,200,000, while, in t h e current year of operations, i t is expected t h a t contributions will fall short of the total cumulative target of §5,946,303 by approximately §3,376,303. Much still remains to be done, therefore, if the overall target of §16,000,000 is to be reached by 1958 and solutions found for the problem of the refugees who are not yet assimilated into the economies of the countries in which they reside, particularly those who have been living in camps since the end of the Second World War.

3. The Office has continued its activity of international protection, a detailed account of which is to be found in Chapter III of this memorandum. This activity consists of action taken by the Office of the High Commissioner to promote the ratification of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the inclusion in intergovernmental agreements of specific references to the situation of refugees wherever applicable and, on the other hand, efforts to promote the improvement by Governments of their legislation insofar as it affects refugees.

4. It is appropriate here to evoke the memory of the first United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the late Dr. van Heuven Goedhart, under whose guidance the UNREF programme for permanent solutions and emergency aid was elaborated, and whose vision, untiring efforts and perseverance has made it possible considerably to improve the situation of thousands of refugees in the different countries in which they reside.

2. CHAPTER I - Programme of the United Nations Refugee Fund

2.1. General remarks

5. In accordance with the terms of General Assembly Resolution 832 (IX), the High Commissioner's Advisory Committee established the target for governmental contributions for the four-year period 1955-1958, during which the programme for permanent solutions and emergency aid authorized by the Assembly was to be carried out, at an overall amount of $16 million and the target for the first year at «4,200.000.

6. The Advisory Committee and the UNREF Executive Committee expressed the view that, in carrying out the UNREF programme, the main emphasis should be placed on the reduction of the numbers of refugees in camps, of whom there were, at the beginning of 1955, approximately 84,000 in Austria, Germany, Greece and Italy

2.2. Contributions to the Fund for 1955

7. Under the terms of Resolution 832 (IX), the Negotiating Committee for Extra-Budgetary Funds was requested to negotiate with the Governments of States Members and nonmembers of the United Nations for voluntary contributions towards a target of $4,200,000 set for 1955 by the Advisory Committee. The Negotiating Committee held pledging conferences on 6th April 1955 and on 3rd November 1955. The following governmental contributions to UNREF for 1955 were received, totalling 82,653,696 :

2.3. Governmental Contributions to UNREF for 1955

Country - Contribution

Australia - $ 167,839

Austria - 2,200

Belgium - 160,000

Canada - 126,856

Colombia - 10,000

Denmark - 72,390

France - 142,857

Germany, Federal Republic of - 23,810

Israel - 5,000

Korea, Republic of - 2,000

Liechtenstein - 467

Luxembourg - 2,000

Netherlands - 359,157

New Zealand - $ 28,000

Norway - 83,998

Sweden - 115,98

Switzerland - 116,822

Turkey - 4,286

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland - 2 2 4,027

United States of America - 1,006,000

TOTAL[1] - $ 2,653,696

8. In addition, an amount of 8947,368 was made available to UNREF by the Netherlands Committee for Aid to Refugees, which were the proceeds of a national campaign organized by that Committee in 1954, and $7,788 was available from miscellaneous donations, so that a total amount of 83,608,652 was contributed for the implementation of the plan of operations for 1955. With the inclusion of miscellaneous income and the unobligated amount carried over from the former United Nations Refugee Emergency Fund, the total amount available in the Fund in 1955 was 83,738,568.

2.4. Supporting contributions for the 1955 plan of operations

9. Contributions in the approximate amount of $3,965,000 to the projects for permanent solutions authorized for implementa- tion by the UNREF Executive Committee were made from sources within the countries of residence, in accordance with the terms of paragraph 5 of Resolution 832 (IX). These contributions included $2,205,000 from Governments and $1,760,000 from other sources. Further sizeable contributions were also made from Governments and other sources to projects for settlement of difficult cases.

2.5. Allocations in the UNREF plan of operations for 1955

10. In the plan of operations for 1955 the amount of $3,823,160 allocated by the UNREF Executive Committee for projects for permanent solutions was distributed over the countries of residence of refugees as follows :

Austria - $1,964,923[2]

Germany - 420,000

Greece - 924,967[3]

Italy - 280,000

Other countries - 234,000

The following allocations were also approved :

Settlement of difficult cases - $ 793,800[4] Shanghai operation 226,000

Emergency aid - 115,000

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1. In addition, a contribution was received from the Greek Government in the form of 30 tons of raisins.
2. Including $748,094 to be financed from the grant made by the Netherlands Committee for Aid to Refugees (§524,193 for Austria and $223,901 for Greece).
3. Including $748,094 to be financed from the grant made by the Netherlands Committee for Aid to Refugees (§524,193 for Austria and $223,901 for Greece).
4. Including $189,800 to be financed from the Netherlands Committee's grant and $10,000 from residual funds pf the International Refugee Organization.

2.6. Implementation of the 1955 plan of operations

11. There is no doubt that the beginning of the UNREF programme has aroused great interest in all the countries of residence of the refugees and t h a t the responsible governmental authorities have been stimulated to increase their efforts on behalf of the refugees. Many more projects in the plan of. operations for 1955 could have been implemented if there had not been a shortfall of $1,546,303 in governmental contributions to UNREF in 1955 and if it had been possible for all Governments to make available their contributions at an earlier date in the year. The delay in the payment of governmental contributions, the greater part of which were not received into the Fund until the second part of the year 1955, resulted in the implementation of many projects being postponed for several months after they had been approved. As a result, projects such as those for the construction of housing, which const i t u t e the major part of the programme for permanent solutions and the settlement of difficult cases in Austria, Germany and Greece, could not for the most part be carried out during the winter. Consequently, although in most cases the agreements with the implementing agencies were concluded as soon as the funds necessary to finance the projects were made available, the construction of the houses had to be postponed until the beginning of the spring of 1956.

12. It has, nevertheless, been possible during the first twelve months of operations of the UNREF programme to put into effect projects to the amount of §2,802,466, including projects to the amount of §2,082,419 for permanent solutions, §460,702 for the settlement of difficult cases, §196,058 for the Shanghai operation and §63,187 for emergency aid[5]. Projects to the amount of §2,278,417 could not be implemented, mainly for lack of the necessary funds.

13. Information concerning the implementation of the 1955 programme in t h e various countries is given in the following sections of this chapter.

2.7. Number of refugees to benefit from the 1955 plan of operations

14. As of May 1956, approximately 10,000 refugees were already benefiting in various degrees from the projects which have been put into effect, while approximately 11,000 who had already been selected were due to benefit from these projects very shortly.

15. In the course of 1955, the refugee camp population in Austria, Germany, Greece and Italy, which on 1st January of t h a t year was 84,330, decreased to 70,650, as may be seen from the following table giving the total num-bers of refugees within the mandate of the Office of the UNHCR in these countries :

As at 1st January 1955

In camps - Out of camps - Total

Austria - 45,700 - 141,850 - 187,550

Germany - 29,580 - 191,370 - 220,950

Greece - 2,800 - 12,500 - 15,300

Italy - 6,250 - 22,750 - 29,000

84,330 - 368,470 - 452,800

As at 1st January 1956

In camps - Out of camps - Total

Austria - 36,550 - 112,400 - 148,750

Germany - 27,900 - 187,100 - 215,000

Greece - 2,400 - 12,300 - 14,700

Italy - 4,000 - 20,800 - 24,800

70,650 - 332,600 - 403,250

5. Including unallocated balances.

2.8. Revised plan of operations (1956)

16. The UNREF Executive Committee, at its second session, agreed that, if the possibility of achieving t h e overall target of $16 million for governmental contributions was to remain open, the value of unimplemented projects within the plan of operations for 1955 should be taken over into the revised plan of operations (1956). As a consequence, the total value of projects in the revised plan of operations (1956) was brought up to $6,611,416. Taking into account the governmental contributions for 1955 in the amount of $661,883!, which were not obligated at the time of the approval of the revised plan of operations (1956), the Executive Committee decided that the combined financial target for 1956 should therefore be $5,949,533, as is shown in the following table :

Value of unimplemented projects and unallocated balances in the plan of operations for 1955 - $2,211,416[6]

Target for 1956 - 4,400,000

Total value of projects to be included in the revised plan of operations (1956) - 6,611,416

To reproduce - 6,611,416

Amount - 6,611,416

Less :

Excess of governmental contributions for 1955 over value of implemented projects in the plan of operations for 1955 - 661,883[7]

Combined financial target for 1956. - $5,949,533

17. The allocations for projects for permanent solutions approved by the Executive Committee for the Revised Plan of Operations (1956) were :

Austria - $2,141,422

Belgium - 70,000

France - 280,000

Germany - 372,025

Greece - 1,040,251

Italy - 517,768

Various countries - 100,000

$4,521,466

18. The following allocations were also approved :

Settlement of difficult cases - 8 945,002

Shanghai operation - 331,120

Emergency aid - 105,564

19. The Executive Committee at its second session approved the Revised Plan of Operations (1956) and authorized for implementation, as funds become available, projects to a total value of 82,359,747.

20. At its third session the Executive Committee approved additional projects, making the total value of projects authorized for implementation in the revised plan of opera

2.9. Governmental contributions pledged or promised for 1956

21. At 6th August, official notification had been received from the following Governments of their intention to make contributions to UNREF in 1956 to the amounts stated :

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6. Subject to adjustment.
7. Subject to adjustment.

Country - Contribution

Austria - S 3,000

Belgium - 200,000

Brazil - 15,000

To reproduce - 218,000

Amount - 218,000

Canada - 125,000

Denmark - 72,390

Dominican Republic - 5,000

France - 274,120

Germany (Federal Republic of) - 23,806

Liechtenstein - 467

Luxembourg - 3,000

Netherlands - 96,000

New Zealand - 28,000 (see paragraph 22 below)

Norway - 84,000

Sweden - 115,987

Switzerland - 116,822

United Kingdom - 280,000 (see paragraph 22 below)

$1,442,592

22. The Government of New Zealand has announced its intention to contribute the equivalent of £20,000 NZ to the Shanghai operation; this sum will be divided between the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration and the Office of the UNHCR. The United States Government has announced that its contribution will be one-third of the total governmental contributions, and Congress has appropriated a sum of $1,900,000 maximum, including its potential contribution for the first six months of 1957. The U. S. Government has also authorized the carry-over of the unused portion of the 1955 contribution, amounting to $194,000 to be used primarily for difficult cases in Austria. Twenty per cent of the United Kingdom contribution of $280,000 is subject to governmental contributions of more than $3,250,000.

2.10. Relations with private organizations

23. In all the countries mentioned below in which the UNREF programme is being carried out, the international and national voluntary agencies working on behalf of refugees are making a most valuable contribution to its success. In view of the fact that the Office of the UNHCR, under its statute, is not authorized to undertake operational activities, i t must rely to a great extent on the voluntary agencies working on behalf of refugees for the implementation of the UNREF programme.

2.10.1. A. Austria

Plan of operations for 1955

General remarks

24. Austria, out of 187,544 refugees within the mandate of the Office of the UNHCR, an estimated number of 104,000 unsettled refugees, including 45,700 refugees living in camps.

25. The high number of unsettled refugees in Austria is to be explained chiefly by the considerable shortage of housing, as illustrated by the number of refugees still in camps, and by the thousands of refugees who, though not living in camps, are still living in sub-standard dwellings.

26. At the beginning of 1955, t h e Austrian economy had made considerable progress towards recovery from the immediate post-war period, but it had not yet developed sufficiently to provide all unsettled refugees with adequate employment and housing. In addition to the financial contributions needed from outside to provide refugees with housing, it has been found necessary to elaborate projects to help refugees to overcome the special difficulties which delay their integration into the Austrian economy.

Summary of projects

27. The UNREF plan of operations for 1955 included permanent solutions projects for refugees in Austria, requiring UNREF contributions to the value of §1,964,193. Of this amount, §1,440,000 represents the allocation within the overall target for governmental contributions and §524,193, t h e amount granted by the Netherlands Committee for Aid to Refugees towards the financing of permanent solutions projects in Austria.

28. The total allocation of §1,964,193 was broken clown as follows :

Credit facilities - $ 384,615

Establishment in agriculture - 270,000

Housing settlements - 1,007,190

Vocational training - 116,346

Aid to University students - 69,923

Aid to high school pupils - 24,308

Employment counselling and placement 74,885

Assistance for naturalization - 1.0,000

Unallocated - 6,926

29. In view of the housing shortage the major part of the allocation for Austria was devoted to the financing of housing projects. Due attention was further paid to the establishment in agriculture of refugee families, which is the most efficient manner of establishing refugees of rural background in Austria and which, at the same time, strengthens the Austrian economy, inasmuch as the establishment of refugees in agriculture counteracts to some extent the flight from the land.

30. The credit facilities project was designed to fill a gap in the Austrian credit system. In spite of t h e great number of refugees residing in Austria for many years, no special measures could be taken at an earlier date to enable refugees to obtain loans on terms appropriate to their needs or means. The other UNREF projects were designed to give refugees better opportunities to find adequate employment and to equalize to some extent their opportunities for education with those which are available to the Austrian population.

Implementation of projects

31. Permanent solutions projects included in the UNREF plan of operations for 1955, requiring contributions from UNREF amounting to $962,462 within the total allocation of $1,964,193, are being implemented. The total UNREF contributions to these projects included $524,193 granted by the Netherlands Committee for Aid to Refugees and $438,274 from governmental contributions to UNREF.

32. The breakdown of projects in the course of implementation is as follows :

Credit facilities - $ 236,233

Establishment in agriculture - 100,000

Housing settlements - 527,577

Vocational training - 14,896

Aid to university students - 23,492

Aid to high school pupils - 8,077

Employment counselling and placement - 52,192

33. To the projects listed above, contributions to the approximate value of $2,600,000 are being made from Austrian sources, bringing the total cost of these projects to an amount of approximately S3,560,000. It is expected t h at something like 8,830 refugees will benefit from these UNREF projects, but it will not be possible to assess the exact number before the end of 1956, when most of these projects will be completed.

34. The progress reports submitted by the agencies implementing these projects have so far been satisfactory if account be taken of the fact that several projects, particularly those for housing settlements, could not actually be started before the spring of this year. Experience shows that for many types of projects the numbers of applications from refugees exceed by far the opportunities provided under the programme which, because of the considerable discrepancy between the target figures and the contributions actually received by UNREF, are much less t h a n those which were planned.

35. Particular attention should be drawn to the so far successful implementation of the credit facilities project. The great need for special loans to refugees is emphasized by the fact t h a t the Austrian Government has recently initiated a special loan scheme for naturalized refugees which will be carried out on the same lines as the UNREF project. 36. Between 1st January 1955 and 1st January 1956 the number of refugees in Austria decreased from 187,550 to 148,750, mainly through acquisition of Austrian nationality by 30,130 and through emigration from Austria of 9,050. The number of refugees in camps, including unofficial camps, was reduced from approximately 45,700 to approcimately 36,350.

36. Between 1st January 1955 and 1st January 1956 the number of refugees in Austria decreased from 187,550 to 148,750, mainly through acquisition of Austrian nationality by 30,130 and through emigration from Austria of 9,050. The number of refugees in camps, including unofficial camps, was reduced from approximately 45,700 to approcimately 36,350.

Revised Plan of Operations (1956)

37. At the beginning of 1956 the number of unsettled refugees in Austria was estimated at 79,000, including 36,350 refugees in camps.

38. In view of this high number of unsettled refugees a considerable amount, 81,160,000, was again allocated for permanent solutions in Austria within the UNREF target for 1956. I t was further decided to add to this allocation projects requiring UNREF contributions to the value of $981,422, which had been included in the plan of operations for 1955 but which eould not be implemented through lack of funds.

39. The total allocation of $2,141,422 for projects for permanent solutions in Austria is broken down as follows :

Credit facilities - $ 448,382

Establishment in agriculture - 320,000

Housing settlements - 1,038,190

Rehabilitation of handicapped refugees - 75,462

Vocational training - 132,396

Aid to university students - 20,000

Aid to secondary school pupils - 16,205

Employment counselling and placement - 67,169

Case workers in camps - 10,000

Assistance for naturalisation - 10,000

Unallocated - 3,618

40. In the revised plan of operations (1956) emphasis is laid, as in the plan of operations for 1955, on the basic needs of unsettled refugees in Austria, which continue to be housing, credit facilities and facilities for establishment in agriculture. New projects have been elaborated for the rehabilitation of handicapped refugees and also to provide special case workers in the camps.

2.10.2. B. Germany

Plan of Operations for 1955

General remarks

41. At the beginning of 1955, out of a total of some 220,950 foreign refugees within the mandate of the Office of the UNHCR in the Federal Republic of Germany and West Berlin, the number of unsettled refugees was estimated at some 97,000, of whom 29,580 were living in camps.

42. The relatively large population of refugees who have not yet been fully integrated was to a large extent due to the continuation of the camps and to the fact t h a t many refugees still live in areas with few employment possibilities. There are, furthermore, among the refugees considerable numbers of persons who come within the category of difficult cases or of those who, for reasons of age or health, cannot be integrated without a special effort.

43. Although the general economic situation of Western Germany has improved rapidly during the last few years, and although the numbers of unemployed has diminished, experience has shown that the unsettled refugees have benefited only to a limited extent from these improvements. Special assistance had therefore to be planned within the UNREF programme in order to permit the firm establishment of a greater number of refugees in Germany.

Allocations

44. An amount of §419,975 was allotted in the UNREF plan of operations for 1955 to projects for permanent solutions in Germany and was broken down as follows :

Housing settlements - S 335,952

Vocational training - 35,000

Aid to university students - 15,357

Small loans - 15,000

Employment counselling and placement - 18,666

45. It will be noted that by far the largest amount within the total allocation has been allotted to housing.

46. It is estimated that approximately 5,000 refugees will benefit from the projects prepared within these allocations.

Implementation of projects

47. All the permanent solutions projects for refugees in Germany were approved and authorised for implementation by the UNREF Executive Committee and are at the present time in course of implementation.

48. Some delays occurred in the implementation of the projects for housing settlements in view of the fact that these projects had to be integrated into the governmental social housing programme — and that thep rojects were authorized for implementation after the allocation of funds to German district authorities within the latter programme had been made for the year 1955.

49. Most of the other UNREF projects, such as those providing for vocational training, aid to university students and employment counselling and placement, have already yielded successful results. Again, in view of the fact t h a t the implementation of projects could start only late in 1955 and, in some instances, only in the first months of 1956, the complete results of the permanent solutions programme in Germany will be known only by the end of 1956.

50. The UNREF projects are in all cases being carried out in close co-operation with the German Federal and Land Governments, as well as with other organizations working on behalf of refugees. The Federal German Government is at the present time planning a resettlement programme which includes a provision for the transfer of 5,000 refugees within the mandate of the Office of the UNHCR from areas where employment possibilities are scarce to areas where there is a shortage of labour.

51. Between 1st January 1955 and 1st January 1956 t h e number of refugees within the mandate of this Office decreased from 220,950 to 215,000, mainly through emigration from Germany and through acquisition of German nationality. During the same period, the number of refugees in camps diminished from '29,580 to 27,900.

Revised Plan of Operations (1956)

52. Although the overall number of refugees residing in Germany, as well as the number of refugees residing in camps, decreased in t h e course of 1955, i t was estimated t h a t there were still in Germany at the beginning of 1956 some 82,000 unsettled refugees.

53. In the Revised Plan of Operations (1956) the allocation for permanent solutions in Germany amounts to $372,025, broken down as follows :

Housing - $ 290,263

Rehabilitation of handicapped refugees - 14,286

Vocational training - 30,000

Aid to university students - 5,000

Small loans - 10,714

Employment counselling and placement - 21,762

2.10.3. C. Greece

Plan of Operations for 1955

General remarks

54. The number of unsettled refugees in Greece was estimated, at the beginning of 1955, to be some 7,800, including 2,800 refugees in camps. The total number of refugees within the mandate of the Office of the UNHCR residing at the same date in Greece was estimated at 15,300.

55. As in other countries, the provision of employment and of adequate accommodation was the main need of the refugees who cannot be resettled overseas.

56. Although the number of unsettled refugees in Greece was small, it was necessary to undertake within the UNREF programme a considerable effort on their behalf. The situation of refugees in Greece must be considered against the background of the general economic and social situation of the country, which is reflected in a very low per capita income and a considerable shortage of housing. Moreover, it must be remembered that Greece has been repeatedly stricken in recent years by natural catastrophes (earthquakes and floods) and t h a t the country is further burdened by a high rate of natural increase of its population.

57. For these reasons projects for the integration of refugees in the UNREF programme had to cover the needs of each refugee family in a much more comprehensive manner than similar projects in other countries. This has a direct effect on the per capita cost of UNREF projects in Greece and, therefore, on the overall allocation required to help in the firm establishment of a relatively small number of refugees.

Allocations

58. The UNREF Plan of Operations for 1955 included permanent solutions projects for refugees in Greece requiring ÜNREF contributions in the amount of 1924,967. Of this amount, $701,066 represented the allocation within the overall target for governmental contributions, and $230,425 the amount granted by the Netherlands Committee for Aid to Refugees towards the financing of permanent solutions projects in Greece.

59. The total allocation of $924,967 was broken down as follows :

Establishment in agriculture - $ 118,335

Establishment as industrial workers - _ 249,167

Establishment in crafts and trades - 350,000

Consolidation of economic and social position in urban centres - 161,667

Vocational training - 6,733

Aid to university students - 21,065

Pre-selection of refugees - 18,000

60. The UNREF projects were drawn up in close consultation with the Greek Government in order t h a t they might fit in with governmental plans for the development and reconstruction of the country, taking into account at the same time the particular aptitudes of the refugees. As the majority of refugees are of urban origin, the emphasis of the programme was laid on the establishment, through loans, of refugees in crafts and trades and in industry in as many different areas as possible. The Greek Government has made available, however, reclaimed agricultural land, which will permit the establishment in agriculture of a number of refugee families of rural background.

Implementation of projects

61. Permanent solutions projects requiring UNREF contributions to the value of $483,745, as against a total allocation of $924,967, have been put into effect in the autumn of 1955 and in t h e early months of 1956. The total UNREF contributions to these projects included $260,815 from governmental contributions and $222,930 granted by the Netherlands Committee for Aid to Refugees. The breakdown of projects in the course of implementation is as follows :

Establishment in agriculture - $ 118,335

Establishment as industrial workers - _ 67,500

Establishment in crafts and trades - 172,250

Consolidation of economic and social position of refugees in urban areas - 79,833

Vocational training - 6,733

Aid to university students - 21,065

Pre-selection of refugees - 18,031

62. To the projects listed above, contributions in the approximate value of 8362,000 are being made by the Greek Government, bringing the total cost of these projects up to an amount of approximately 8846,000. It is expected that some 823 refugees will benefit from these UNREF projects.

63. The Greek Government has established a Co-ordination Council for Refugees and a Special Government Service responsible for the implementation of the UNREF projects. Considerable work has already been done by the voluntary agencies in the refugee camps and centres in order to select the refugee families who are suitable for the various projects.

64. Quite apart from these preparatory measures, substantial progress has been made on a number of projects, such as that for establishment in agriculture, under which twenty of the fifty houses planned have already been completed, and the project for aid to university students. The fact that implementation of tangible projects for their firm establishment has been started has had a noticeable influence on the morale of those refugees in camps who have been living there for many years without any prospects under the prevailing economic conditions.

65. During the year 1955, the number of refugees in Greece diminished from 15,300 to 14,700 and the number of refugees in camps and centres decreased from 2,800 to 2,400.

Revised Plan of Operations (1956)

66. At the beginning of 1956, the number of unsettled refugees in Greece was estimated at 5,900, of whom 2,400 were in camps.

67. An allocation of $600,000 for permanent solutions in Greece was approved by the Executive Committee within the overall target for 1956. It was also decided to add to this amount unimplemented projects requiring UNREF contributions to t h e value of $440,251 which were taken over from the Plan of Operations for 1955,

68. The total allocation of $1,040,251 for permanent solutions in Greece is broken down as follows :

Establishment in agriculture - $ 140,700

Establishment in crafts and trades - 342,875

Consolidation of economic and social position of refugees in urban areas - 467,563

Housing settlement - 43,000

Rehabilitation of handicapped refugees - 7,495[8]

Vocational training - 6,733

Aid to university students - 16,927

Pre-selection of refugees - 22,062

Unallocated - 391

69. The general features of the programme for 1956 are similar to those of the Plan of Operations for 1955. In the detailed projects, various adjustments have been made in the light of experience gained in the early stages of the implementation of the projects for 1955.

70. New projects have also been included to provide for the rehabilitation of handicapped refugees and for a housing settlement for destitute Armenian refugees among the approximately 6,000 Armenian refugees, most of whom live in the Athens area.

2.10.4. D. Italy

Plan of Operations for 1955

General remarks

71. The total number of some 29,000 refugees within the mandate of the Office of the UNHCR residing at the beginning of 1955 in Italy (including Trieste) was estimated to include 19,000 unsettled refugees, including 6,250 refugees in camps.

72. As in Greece, the position of unsettled refugees in Italy must be considered against the economic and social background of the country. Whereas economic and social condi-tions in the northern part of Italy are generally good, the situation in the South, where most of the refugee camps are located, is very similar to that described in respect of Greece in the preceding section of the present report.

Allocations

73. In the UNREF Plan of Operations for 1955 an allocation of §280,000 was included to help finance the following permanent solutions projects in Italy :

Promotion of emigration - S 60,000

Establishment in crafts and trades - 138,200

Vocational training - 14,032

Unallocated - 67,768

74. Special efforts had to be made within the Plan of Operations for 1955 on behalf of several hundreds of refugees who cannot be integrated into the local economy and for whom resettlement opportunities could not be found over the last years. A relatively high amount had to remain unallocated in view of the fact t h a t various projects for the rehabilitation of handicapped refugees could not be finalized through lack of sufficient supporting contributions.

Implementation of projects

8. Supplementary project, to be financed from grant of the Netherlands Committee for Aid to Refugees.

75. All permanent solutions projects for refugees in Italy included in the 1955 Plan of Operations were approved and authorized for implementation by t h e Executive Committee or the Standing Programme Sub-Committee, and are at the present time in the course of implementation. The Italian authorities are contributing 8218,500 to these projects, the total cost of which amounts to approximately 8431,000, and it is estimated that 945 refugees will benefit when the projects are completed.

76. Satisfactory reports have been received in respect of the projects concerned with the promotion of emigration. Out of a total of 500 refugees who will benefit from this category of projects, approximately 100 had already left Italy for overseas countries early this year.

77. Several families have also been established in crafts and trades. In this respect, the progress reported is, however, somewhat slower as the utmost care must be exercised in establishing each refugee family in crafts or trades.

78. Between 1st January 1955 and 1st January 1956, the total refugee population in Italy diminished from 29,000 to 24,800, mainly through the emigration of 2,500 refugees. The number of refugees in camps decreased during the same period from 6,250 to 4,000.

Revised Plan of Operations (1956)

79. The number of unsettled refugees in Italy was estimated at the beginning of 1956 to be about 14,500, including some 4,000 refugees in camps.

80. The allocation for permanent solutions in Italy, approved by the Executive Committee within the overall| target for 1956, amounted to $450,000. Including a carry-over from the Plan of Operations for 1955 to the value of $67,768, the total allocation of $517,768 will be used to finance, within the Revised Plan of Operations (1956), the following types of projects :

Promotion of emigration - $ 60,000

Re-establishment of refugee families in Belgium - 20,400

Establishment in crafts and trades - 260,000

Rehabilitation of handicapped refugees - 33,282

Unallocated - 144,086

81. In addition to the projects for promotion of emigration and establishment in crafts and trades, prepared on the same lines as the similar projects in the first Plan of Operations, i t was possible to include in the Revised Plan of Operations (1956) projects for the rehabilitation of handicapped refugees, particularly post-tubercular cases. Another new project provides, with the agreement of the Belgian Government, for the re-establishment in Belgium of refugee families difficult to resettle overseas. It is further planned to use a part of the unallocated balance to draw up additional projects for the rehabilitation of handicapped refugees.

2.10.5. E. Other countries

Plan of Operations for 1955

82. The Plan of Operations for 1955 included allocations for permanent solutions projects in other countries to the value of 8234,000 including 84,000 for a project in Belgium and 8230,000 to finance projects designed to promote the resettlement of refugees in various countries overseas.

83. The project approved for refugees in Belgium is being implemented. This project provides for the establishment of a small employment counselling and placement service. 84. The projects for the promotion of resettlement could not be authorized for implementation through lack of funds, and had to be abandoned.

84. The projects for the promotion of resettlement could not be authorized for implementation through lack of funds, and had to be abandoned.

Revised Plan of Operations (1956)

Belgium and France

85. An estimated number of over 60,000 refugees reside in Belgium and 306,000 in France as a result of the generous policy followed in respect of the admission of refugees.

86. Although there are no refugee camps in these two countries, the great numbers of refugees include several thousands who, for various reasons, particularly their state of health and age, cannot easily be integrated in the local economies. The number of unsettled refugees was estimated to be, at the beginning of 1956, some 10,000 in Belgium and some 40,000 in France. For these reasons the Executive Committee approved, within the revised plan of operations (1956), a total allocation of $350,000 to enable UNREF to participate in the financing of permanent solutions projects which would benefit, in these two countries, those refugees who, owing to their living conditions or their disabilities, are unfit for normal integration.

Belgium

87. Of the total allocation of 8350,000 an amount of 870,000 was allocated for perma-nent solutions in Belgium according to the following breakdown :

Employment counselling and placement - S 20,000

Rehabilitation of handicapped refugees - 30,000

Credit facilities - 20,000

France

88. The allocation for permanent solutions projects in France was fixed at $280,000 according to the following breakdown :

Vocational training and employment - $ 230,828

Integration of refugee intellectuals - 16,663

Establishment in crafts and trades - 28,571

Unallocated - 3,938

Promotion of resettlement

89. The Revised Plan of Operations (1956) includes projects to promote the resettlement in overseas countries of refugees residing in Europe to the value of $100,000. These projects are designed to enable the voluntary agencies concerned with the resettlement of refugees to grant special loans in order to facilitate the admission and establishment of refugees in trades and professions in the countries of immigration.

2.10.6. F. Settlement of difficult cases

Plan of Operations for 1955

General remarks

90. In the last Memorandum the number of identifiable difficult cases requiring institutional or special care was shown as at least 15,500.

91. Despite the great number of difficult cases and dependents, only limited allocations for projects on their behalf could be made within the target for 1955. According to the wish expressed by the former Advisory Committee at its fifth session, when the target for the year 1955 was fixed, it was necessary to keep an adequate balance between the allocations for permanent solutions and those for other types of UNREF projects.

92. In distributing t h e target allocation for the settlement of difficult cases over the various countries of residence, due consideration was given not only to the number of difficult cases identified in each country, but also to the prospective openings for the settlement of difficult cases either in or outside the countries of present residence.

Allocations

93. The Plan of Operations for 1955 included projects for the settlement of difficult cases requiring UNREF contributions in the amount of 8793,800. Of this, 8594,000 represented the allocation within the overall target of S4,200,000 for governmental contributions, 8189,800 the amount granted by the Netherlands Committee for Aid to Refugees towards the settlement of difficult cases in Austria (8133,000) and Greece (856,800), and 810,000 residual IRO funds for the financing of difficult cases projects in Austria.

94. The total allocation of 8793,800 was broken down as follows :

Austria - $ 348,000

China - 120,000

Egypt - 20,000

Greece - 121,800

Iran - 12,000

Italy - 133,000

Jordan, Lebanon, Syria - 8,000

Turkey - 31,000

95. The projects for settlement of difficult cases provide mainly for two types of solutions : settlement in institutions in the country of residence, and settlement in institutions in other, mainly European, countries. In view of the few openings available, the settlement of difficult cases outside their present country of residence is, as far as possible, reserved for those difficult cases i e persons who cannot easily be settled in the countries where they are residing through lack of appropriate facilities. This applies to all difficult cases among refugees of European origin in China, as well as to the majority of difficult cases in the Near and Middle East.

96. The difficult cases are settled in institutions either through a grant from UNREF ! for their admission into an existing institution, or by a contribution from UNREF towards the building of an extension to, or the cons-traction of, an institution. In all projects due care is taken to ensure that refugees will be given life-long care and maintenance, as well as appropriate medical care and supervision.

97. Unfortunately, settlement opportunities for the chronically sick and the mental cases are inadequate. In most cases the openings which are available are for aged refugees, who require only normal care and maintenance and medical supervision. Special attention has been given by the Office to difficult cases among refugees of European origin in China, of whom some 1,100 cases were identified as of 1 January 1955.

Implementation of projects

98. Projects for the settlement of difficult cases requiring UNREF contributions to the value of $460,702, as against a total allocation of $793,800, were in course of implementation in May 1956. The total UNREF contributions to these projects include $268,248 from governmental contributions, $183,276 from the grant of the Netherlands Committee for Aid to Refugees, and $9,178 from residual IRO funds.

99. The break down of these projects, according to the country of residence of the difficult cases, is as follows :

Austria - S 258,109

China - 34,500

Greece - 88,516

Iran - 2,333

Italy - 61,244

Turkey - 16,000

100. To the projects listed above considerable direct and indirect supporting Contributions are made from non-UNREF sources, mainly from within the countries where the difficult cases are settled or re-settled. These supporting contributions, which consist particularly of guarantees of life-long care and maintenance and medical services, are given either by Governments and local authorities or by voluntary societies. Although it is not easy to evaluate these contributions in view of the different standards of living in the countries where

refugees are settled or re-settled, a very conservative estimate shows that the direct or indirect supporting contributions to the projects for settlement of difficult cases in the course of implementation exceed by far Sl.000,000.

101. The reports received on the progress of projects in course of implementation are very satisfactory. As of May 1956 two hundred and sixty-three refugees had already benefited under these projects. This number includes twenty-seven refugees settled in institutions in their countries of residence, 176 cases settled in institutions in other countries, and sixty aged refugees for whom annuities have been provided. The countries where difficult cases have been re-settled are Belgium, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, and arrangements are being made for re-settlement of other cases in France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Switzerland and other European countries.

102. A total number of 742 difficult cases will benefit from the projects implemented under the Plan of Operations for 1955. In addition, a considerable number of refugees in the category of difficult cases was admitted without grants from UNREF for resettlement in several European countries, including seventy- seven aged refugees from Austria, Italy and Germany admitted to the United Kingdom under the " Two Thousand Scheme ". Moreover, a number of aged refugees are being admitted to the United States of America under the Refugee Relief Act.

Revised Plan of Operations (1956)

103. Although at the beginning of 1956 the prospects concerning the successful implementation of various projects for settlement of difficult cases included in the Plan of Operations for 1955 were excellent, the impact of those projects on the overall case-load was too limited to alter the general situation. It appears, on the contrary, that the number of refugees in the category of difficult cases is increasing rather than decreasing. This is due not only to the identification of cases which were previously unknown to the Office, but also to the deterioration of refugees health, particularly in the age—-groups of fifty and over.

104. Until recently old persons among the refugees were classified as difficult cases, and thereby eligible for grants from UNREF when they reached the age of sixty-five, unless reasons of sickness would justify such a classification before attaining t h a t age. The planning and implementation of the UNREF programme have made it clear that there are in and out of camps a certain number of needy refugees in the age group sixty to sixty-five for whom no other solution can reasonably be envisaged than their settlement as difficult cases. The Office has, therefore, decided to extend the definition of difficult cases to this age-group. Although this will increase to a sizeable extent the number of difficult cases which will be recorded by this Office, it has been found unrealistic to suggest that other permanent solutions could be found for this group of refugees.

105. In the Revised Plan of Operations (1956) the total allocation for settlement of difficult cases amounts to $945,002, including unimplemented projects requiring UNREF contributions to the value of $331,002, which were taken over from the Plan of Operations for 1955.

106. This total allocation is broken down as follows, according to the present country of residence of the cases :

Austria - $ 277,569

China - 150,500

Egypt - 52,500

France - 50,000

Greece - 96,010

Iran - 25,867

Italy - 163,756

Jordan, Lebanon, Syria - 28,800

Turkey - 45,000

Various countries - 55,000

107. In distributing the total allocation over the various countries and in drawing up the detailed projects included in the Revised Plan of Operations (1956), the same policy was followed as outlined in respect of the Plan of Operations for 1955.

2.10.7. G. Shanghai operation

Plan of Operations for 1955

General remarks

108. Following the termination of the operations of the International Refugee Organisation on 1st February 1952, the Office of the UNHCR undertook, together with the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration, a joint operation on behalf of this group of refugees, and a large part of the funds available in the former United Nations Refugee Emergency Fund were devoted to this operation, including the provision of emergency aid and the settlement of difficult cases.

109. Following the recommendations of the former Advisory Committee at its fifth session, the Executive Committee decided to include the Shanghai operation within the UNREF programme.

110. The number of refugees of European origin in China was estimated at the beginning of 1955 at 14,000 persons.

Summary of projects

111. The Executive Committee approved at its first session an allocation of S226,000 to cover expenditure under the Shanghai operation for the period 1st April to 31st December 1955, on the understanding that the expenditure for the first part of the year would be financed out of the available balance in the former United Nations Refugee Emergency Fund.

112. This allocation was designed to finance direct expenditure by the Office, including monthly allowances, welfare expenses, medical supplies and services for refugees on the Chinese mainland, the maintenance of the Emergency Staging Centre in Shanghai and the administrative costs of the Shanghai Office.

113. The allocation also covered allotments to two voluntary agencies to provide emergency aid to 700 refugees in China at a rate not exceeding 86 per month.

Implementation of projects

114. The actual expenditure under the UNREF projects for the period 1st April to 31st December 1955, amounted to 8196,058, broken down as folloM's :

Direct UNREF expenditure - $ 162,458

Assistance through voluntary agencies - 33,600

To the above total should be added an amount of $69,727 spent in the earlier part of the year, making a total expenditure for 1955 of $265,785.

115. During the year 1955 a total of 547 refugees were re-settled, mainly in Brazil, Australia, the United States of America, Chile, Turkey and Japan. This number includes forty-two difficult cases who were admitted to institutions in Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland, thanks to the generous co-operation of the respective Governments and of voluntary societies. The administration of the United States Escapee Program also made a contribution to the care and maintenance of the refugees to cover some of the costs incurred in Hong Kong pending their resettlement.

116. The total number of refugees resettled during the year 1955 compares unfavourably with the number resettled in the two previous years, which reached a total of 3,321 in 1953 and 1,463 in 1954. This is due to the difficulties encountered in obtaining exit permits from China.

Revised Plan of Operations (1956)

117. At the beginning of 1956 there were still at least 13,300 European refugees in China, including 920 identified difficult cases for whom no openings were as yet available.

118. The Executive Committee approved within the Revised Plan of Operations (1956) an allocation of $331,120 including :

Direct UNREF expenditure - $ 273,520

Assistance through voluntary agencies - 57,600

2.10.8. H. Emergency aid

Plan of Operations for 1955

General remarks

119. In the years before the establishment of the UNREF programme, the Office of the UNHCR provided, from the former United Nations Refugee Emergency Fund, emergency aid to the most needy groups among refugees residing in countries where they could not benefit from public relief allowances or social security measures sufficient to cover the minimum required for subsistence and medical care.

120. In accordance with the recommendations of the former Advisory Committee at its fifth session, the Executive Committee included in the Plan of Operations for 1955 an overall allocation of $105,000 for emergency aid projects, to which was added a small reserve account of $10,000 to cover unforeseen emergencies, making a total of $115,000.

Allocations

121. The total allocation of $115,000 was broken down, according to the countries of residence of the refugees, as follows :

Egypt - $ 10,000

Greece - 25,000

Iran - 12,000

Italy - 21,000

Jordan, Lebanon and Syria - 18,000

Turkey - 9,000

Imprest account - 10,000

Reserve account - 10,000

122. The above distribution of allocations was based on the estimates of the number of needy refugees in the respective countries and on the nature of emergency aid to be given to refugees according to existing local conditions.

123. Most of the UNREF projects for emergency aid include provisions to enable the implementing voluntary agencies to provide supplementary feeding and medical care to the refugees. In Italy, the emergency aid project was restricted, however, to a medical insurance scheme in view of the relief allowances provided to refugees by the Italian authorities.

124. In a few instances the projects enabled the voluntary agencies to provide to refugees assistance to obtain lodgings or small cash grants to meet special needs :

125. The imprest account is designed to enable voluntary agencies in various countries to assist refugees with small cash grants not exceeding $10 in special emergency cases. These grants are reimbursed to the voluntary agencies by the Office of the UNHCR in Geneva or by its Branch Offices.

Implementation of projects

126. The actual expenditure under the emergency aid projects, including the reserve account, amounted, in the course of 1955, to $63,187. The limited expenditure on emergency aid projects was due on the one hand, to the stringent criteria applied in extending emergency aid to refugees, and also to the fact that, as the projects were approved only in May 1955, the agreements could cover only a shorter period of the year 1955 than originally planned.

127. To the above amount should be added, however, expenditure to the value of $15,027 made in the earlier part of the year out of the available balance from the former United Nations Refugee Emergency Fund, making a total emergency aid expenditure of $78,214 for the year 1955.

Revised Plan of Operations (1956)

128. The Executive Committee approved an allocation of $105,564 for emergency aid projects within the revised plan of operations (1956), which is broken down as follows :

Egypt - $ 7,000

Greece - 23,500

Iran - 10,000

Italy - 20,400

Jordan, Lebanon and Syria - 16,000

Turkey - 9,000

Imprest account - 10,000

Reserve account - 9,664

129. The distribution of the allocations was made on the same principles as outlined above in respect of the allocations for 1955, after a re-assessment of the needs in each area.

3. CHAPTER II - Repatriation and resettlement

3.1. A. Repatriation

130. During 1955, various Governments of the countries of origin renewed their efforts to encourage repatriation by sending repatriation missions to the countries of residence of refugees and through interviews conducted by the members of diplomatic or consular missions. Publicity favouring repatriation, calling attention to recent decrees of amnesty, and promising free transportation and loans to refugees wishing to return to their countries of origin, has also greatly increased. This has resulted in a temporary increase in applications for repatriation. In Germany, fifty-six such applications were received during the summer and autumn of 1955, and the return of thirty-one refugees of Soviet nationality before the expiry of their prison sentences for crimes committed in Germany has also been reported. The Ministry of the Interior in Austria has notified the UNHCR Branch Office in that country t h a t 263 persons were repatriated from Austria from 1st April to 31st October 1955.

131. In accordance with Resolution 925 (X) adopted by the Assembly at its tenth session, which called upon this Office to continue its efforts to solve the problems of refugees by repatriation and resettlement, while at the same time applying due safeguards to ensure the protection of refugees, the Office has requested the Governments of the countries of residence of refugees to ensure that UNHCR Branch Offices be advised of any impending visit to refugees of a repatriation mission and be invited to send a representative to accompany the mission in the capacity of an impartial observer to ensure that no undue influence is exercised. This procedure is working satisfactorily; and Branch Offices have been notified a number of times of such visits, and representatives have accompanied the missions.

3.2. B. Resettlement

General remarks

132. Resettlement opportunities for refugees complying with current immigration criteria have increased slightly during the past twelve months. This was partly due to the fact that the United States Refugee Relief Act was implemented more effectively and to the fact that, under t h e immigration schemes of major immigration countries such as Australia and Canada, further facilities were given to refugees. It was also due to the increased interest shown in the refugee problem as a result of the new UNREF programme.

133. There has also been an increase in the settlement of difficult cases who have been accepted by a larger number of countries than previously, including Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland.

134. For refugees who cannot comply with current immigration criteria and who do not fall within the category of difficult cases, however, resettlement possibilities tend to diminish;- It is becoming more and more evident that if these refugees are to benefit from resettlement possibilities, admission criteria must be liberalised to allow the admission of refugee families which include one or more members who do not fully comply with current immigration requirements.

Intra-European resettlement

Belgium

135. Following negotiations by this Office, the Belgian Government agreed to admit 500 refugee families within the mandate of the High Commissioner. Under an UNREF project, 70 refugee families will be admitted into Belgium from camps in Italy. This project will be the first of what it is hoped will be a series of similar projects designed to take advantage of this offer. The selection criteria to be applied will be extremely liberal, and families including members suffering from various handicaps will be able to be accepted, provided that the family unit can become selfsupporting within the Belgian economy. The UNREF grant made to these refugees will be used primarily for the acquisition of accommodation and furniture after their arrival in Belgium.

136. In the month of August, the Belgian Government admitted 675 refugees within the mandate of this Office from Gherovo camp in Yugoslavia, under a scheme initiated by the US Escapee Program Administration. This project was successfully implemented and, within a relatively short space of time, practically all the persons in this group had been placed in employment in Belgium.

Netherlands

137. The Netherlands Government has during the period under review implemented its scheme to admit 250 refugee families within the mandate of the UNHCR. Selection teams have already visited Greece, Trieste and Austria, and, by May 1956, 132 families (totalling 610 persons) had been accepted. Ninety families (totalling 406 persons) had by the middle of May 1956, been admitted to the Netherlands. It is proposed that another visit of the Netherlands Selection Mission will be made t o Austria in autumn of this year.

138. The scheme is for refugee families of which one or more members are experienced in the building trade. On arrival, families are installed in furnished accommodation placed at their disposal by the various Netherlands municipalities.

139. The Government of the Netherlands has continued to accept a number of refugee students for full-time university training and permanent residence. Fifteen refugee students, including three tuberculosis patients, were admitted in 1955 under the auspices of the University Asylum Fund.

140. The efforts of the Netherlands Government on behalf of difficult cases are referred to elsewhere in the present report.

Sweden

141. As a special contribution to the UNREF programme, the Swedish Government agreed to the admission in 1955, under extre-mely liberal criteria, of some 600 refugeeswithin the mandate of the UNHCR from Austria. The only requirement was t h a t refugee families would be capable of becoming selfsupporting. Among the persons selected were sixty-one tubercular cases and a number of aged and handicapped refugees. The selection mission, which visited Austria in August 1955, was given wide discretion in the exercise of its functions. As a result, this scheme was most successful and, within a period of three months, more than 600 refugees were resettled in Sweden. Tuberculosis patients were placed in sanatoria and their dependents were offered employment in the vicinity. The refugees enjoy the same wage scales, social security and unemployment benefits as Swedish nationals.

142. During 1956 the Swedish Government agreed to the admission of a further 1,000 refugees including at least 30 tubercular cases, under similar conditions to those of the 1955 scheme. Swedish Selection Missions, in the spring and autumn of 1956, completed this programme, accepting approximately 850 persons from Austria and 150 from Germany.

143. A Swedish Mission visited Greece in August 1956, for the purpose of selecting refugees suffering from tuberculosis, for cure and eventual integration in Sweden. On this occasion, 13 families (26 persons) were accepted, with prospects of acceptance of a further small group of similar cases.

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

144. A further selection of refugees for admission to the United Kingdom under the " Two Thousand Scheme " took place in November and December 1955, when a visiting mission selected migrants from Austria, Germany, Italy and Trieste. As a result of the visit a further fifty-one refugee families were accepted for permanent resettlement in the United Kingdom.

Overseas resettlement

United States of America

145. The effective implementation of the Refugee Relief Act of 1953 has resulted in an increase in the number of refugees within the mandate of the UNHCR to be admitted to the United States during 1955. With the assistance of the Inter-governmental Committee for European Migration 11,438 refugees were transported to the United States during 1955. This is more than twice the number moved under the auspices of the Committee during the preceding year.

146. The majority of refugees indicate a preference for resettlement in the United States, and it is hoped, therefore, that certain administrative changes will permit a greater number of refugees to take advantage of t h e resettlement opportunities offered under the Refugee Relief Act, 1953, before its expiration at the end of 1956.

Canada

147. Canada continues to be one of the major countries of resettlement for those refugees who are able to comply with normal immigration criteria. There is no limitation upon the number of refugees possessing the requisite skills who may be admitted to that country. The Canadian Government has also indicated its willingness to accept a certain number of refugees within the fifty to sixty age group, as well as widows with dependent children.

148. During the year 1955, 2,395 refugees were resettled in Canada with the assistance of ICEM and there are indications that a larger number of refugees will be admitted during 1956.

149. The decision of the Canadian Government to extend travel loans to entire refugee families is extremely helpful.

150. In the latter months of 1955 the services of UNHCR Branch Offices in Austria, Germany and Italy were made available to two senior representatives of the Canadian Department of Immigration and Citizenship, who visited refugee camps in those countries with a view to assessing what further efforts Canada might be able to make towards the admission of a greater number of refugees to its territory. As a result of this visit, admission criteria for refugees, particularly in cases of family reunion have been somewhat liberalised,

Australia

151. Through bilateral agreements with Austria, Germany, Greece and the Netherlands, the Government of Australia undertook to accept over 2,000 refugees for resettlement within its territory during the year 1955. A special quota of 500 visas was set aside for refugees from Italy. Under this quota, which expired on 30th June 1956, approximately 400 refugees left for Australia. It is most likely t h a t a similar quota will be reserved in the current year.

152. The Australian Government has initiated a further scheme, in conjunction with t h e Administration of t h e United States Escapee Program and ICEM, for the admission of Yugoslav refugees from Austria, and is willing to admit up to 1,000 single men and women and married couples. A considerable number of privately sponsored refugees are also admitted to Australia each year.

New Zealand

153. During 1955, the Government of New Zealand has demonstrated a growing interest in migration generally and it is the hope of this Office t h a t the Government of t h a t country will, during the coming year, continue to admit those refugees who are in possession of assurances of employment and accommodation.

New Zealand has displayed a sympathetic interest in t h e work of the Office of the UNHCR and has contributed annually to UNREF in respect of the joint operation of ICEM and this Office for European refugees in China.

Latin America

154. The resettlement of refugees has continued in a number of Latin American countries through the joint efforts of the voluntary agenoies, ICEM, USEP and this Office.

155. During the year 1955, 402 refugees were resettled with the assistance of ICEM in Brazil, 662 in Chile, 136 in Venezuela and small numbers in Argentina, Colombia and other Latin American countries. Particularly valuable has been the willingness of Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Venezuela to accept refugees resident in China, whose migration has been arranged through the joint ICEM/UNHCR Office in Hong Kong.

156. The Government of Colombia has approved a standing quota of 100 visas monthly for refugees whose placement is guaranteed by the Colombian Catholic Immigration Committee. Efforts are being made to increase the publicity for this scheme so t h a t the full quota of visas may be utilised.

157. During April and the first part of May 1956, the late High Commissioner for Refugees visited certain countries in Latin America including those countries which are members of the Economic and Social Council or of the UNREF Executive Committee or which have signed the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The countries were Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

158. One of the main objectives of this visit was to consult with the heads of Governments and Ministers for Foreign Affairs on t he refugee problem and, in particular, on the possibility of increasing resettlement opportunities for refugees in Latin America, and also to discuss the question of further ratifications and accessions to the 1951 Convention.

Other countries

159. Small groups of refugees are also being moved to countries of permanent resettlement in other parts of t h e world, with the assistance of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration. This applies particularly to those refugees with very little chance of integration in certain areas of the Middle East and in Ethiopia. The Committee has succeeded in securing residence permits and work contracts in the Central African Federation for about twenty refugees in Ethiopia; their movement is being financed from the IRO Trust Fund.

4. CHAPTER III - Legal aspects of international protection

4.1. A. International instruments affecting refugees

4.1.1. 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees

160. Since the last Memorandum was issued the following States have ratified the Convention : Ecuador, the Holy See, the Netherlands and Iceland. The following eighteen States are now parties to the Convention : Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Ecuador, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Holy See, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

161. In several other countries ratification of the Convention is under active consideration. This Office continues its efforts to promote the accession of the greatest possible number of States to the Convention.

4.1.2. Convention on the Declaration of Death of Missing Persons

162. Since the last Memorandum, the Federal Republic of Germany and Pakistan have acceded to this Convention. In Germany the Convention also applies to Land Berlin. It was in force as of 1st April 1956 between China, the Federal Republic of Germany, Guatemala, Israel and Pakistan.

4.1.3. Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons

163. The Government of Denmark ratified this Convention on 17th January 1956. Six ratifications or accessions are required in order that the Convention may come into force.

4.1.4. Universal Copyright Convention

164. Protocol No. 1 to the Universal Copyright Convention, adopted as a result of an initiative taken by UNHCR by the Intergo-vernmental Copyright Conference held in Geneva in August to September 1952 under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, provides t h a t " Stateless persons and refugees who have their habitual residence in a State party to this Protocol shall, for the purposes of the Convention, be assimilated to the nationals of that State ". The Protocol entered into force on 16th September 1955. As of 1st April 1956 the following States had ratified or acceded to the Protocol : Andorra, Cambodia, Costa Rica, France, t h e Federal Republic of Germany, Haiti, the Holy See, Israel, Japan, Laos, Luxembourg, Monaco, Pakistan, the Philippines, Switzerland and the United States of America.

4.2. B. Admission and expulsion

4.2.1. Determination of eligibility

165. In the last Memorandum reference was made to the importance of establishing a procedure for the determination of refugee status by a central authority in Austria. A new procedure for the determination of the status of persons who enter Austria illegally in order to seek asylum was established by an instruction issued by the Austrian Ministry of the Interior in February 1956.

166. According to this instruction the status of the persons concerned is to be determined by special screening units of the Ministry of the Interior. The UNHCR Branch Office in Vienna will be notified officially of all cases where a claim to be recognised as a refugee under the 1951 Convention has been rejected and it will thus be in a position to make representations on behalf of the claimant.

167. The UNHCR representative in Belgium received 3,000 applications for recognition as refugees during 1955. Of these, more than 200 were applications by refugees coming directly from their country of origin who were declared eligible under the terms of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Of the others, approximately 2,700 were from refugees who had been residing in Belgium for many years.

168. In France, 20,144 refugees, i. e. twice as many as in 1954, registered with the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons in the course of 1955. This number includes 467 refugees who entered France in 1955 and 19,677 who were alreadyresiding in France, mostly refugees resettled in France by IRO or pre-war immigrants who no longer wish to avail themselves of the protection of their country of origin. The total number of refugees registered by the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons amounted by the end of 1955 to 374,617.

169. In the Federal Republic of Germany, the procedure established under the Asylum Ordinance of 6th January 1953 is still in force. Since the coming into effect of this procedure on 6th February 1953 until 31st December 1955, of the 7,300 applications for recognition submitted to the Eligibility Board in Nuremberg, decisions had been given in respect of 5,090 persons. During this period 2,009 persons were recognised as refugees and 1,468 were rejected, while 1,613 cases were eliminated for various reasons. Of the 1,468 persons rejected by the Eligibility Board, 126 were recognised on appeal. On 31st December 1955, 2,210 cases were pending before the First Boards in Nuremberg and Kaiserslautern and there were seventy-seven cases before the Board of Appeal in Nuremberg.

170. During 1955, of the 1,949 applications for recognition submitted, 702 persons were recognised, 461 were rejected and 960 were eliminated. The apparent discrepancy of 174 cases is due to the fact that the cases dealt with by the Boards are not identical with those submitted during the year. Up to 29th February 1956, 155 persons had filed further appeals with the Administrative Court in Ansbach. In eleven cases the Court had accepted the refugees; sixty-eight appeals were rejected; in six cases the appeal was withdrawn. The remaining seventy cases are pending.

171. In Italy, the Government agreed in April 1955 to the establishment of a special joint commission composed of representatives of the Italian Government and of my Office, for the special purpose of determining the eligibility of refugees arriving in the Trieste area. This new commission is parallel to and has the same terms of reference as the joint commission already established in Rome, which was mentioned in the last Memorandum. The new joint commission is functioning in Udine, where a transit camp for newly arriving refugees has been established.

172. In the course of eighty-four meetings held in 1955, the joint commission in Rome examined 1,174 cases. 803 refugees were declared eligible and 201 ineligible; 667 cases are in suspense. During the same period the commission in Udine examined 709 cases in the course of nine meetings; 334 refugees were declared eligible and 240 ineligible; 135 cases are in suspense.

173. In the Netherlands, a new procedure for the determination of the eligibility of refugees, in which this Office will take part, is being established.

174. In the course of 1955 the UNHCR Branch Office in the Netherlands issued 388 certificates entitling the holders to the benefits provided for by the Convention.

4.2.2. Problem of illegal entrants

175. In Germany, the problem of illegal entrants became more acute during the summer and early autumn of 1955. Upon the coming into force of the Austrian State Treaty several hundred refugees entered Germany illegally; from July to October 1955 approximately 400 of these refugees were received at the Federal Reception Centre at Nuremberg alone. As a result of reassuring declarations by the Austrian Government the flow of illegal entrants subsided and the situation is now normal.

176. The opening of the Zirndorf Camp, near Nuremberg, by the Administration of the United States Escapee Program made it possible to transfer a number of illegal entrants from the Nuremberg Reception Centre and to place them in favourable conditions pending their emigration or integration in Germany. At the initiative of the Office of the UNHCR, the Mittelfranken Government issued an ordinance under which refugees to whom the right of asylum in Germany had been refused may be granted aliens' passports and the right to work.

177. Further efforts are being made by this Office to solve the problem of illegal ent r a n t s in Germany through emigration or integration in co-operation with voluntary agencies, the USEP administration and the German authorities.

178. In Belgium also, the number of refugees entering the country illegally was relatively higher during 1955. About 120 refugees, most of whom came from Austria, entered Belgium illegally during the year.

4.2.3. Asylum and expulsion

179. The Federal Chancellor of Austria in his statement to the Austrian Parliament on 26th October 1955, in connection with the Neutrality Law, outlined the policies of the Austrian Government towards refugees. He emphasised that Austria would continue to give full effect to the right of asylum for refugees.

180. As a result of the new procedure for the recognition of refugees, the Ministry of t h e Interior has agreed to advise the UNHCR Branch Office in Vienna of all cases in which the expulsion of a refugee to his country of origin is intended, provided the person in question has been officially recognised as coming within the terms of the 1951 Convention or has himself claimed to be so. According to Austrian law, domiciliary bans may only be issued to persons who are not eligible to benefit from the 1951 Convention, with the exception of cases where articles 32 and 33 (2) concerning expulsion may be applicable.

181. Upon a decision of the Ministry of the Interior, domiciliary bans issued prior to the establishment of the new procedure for t h e recognition of refugee status may be reviewed.

182. In France, twenty-nine expulsion orders which were issued in 1954 have been commuted by the administrative authorities into orders for assigned residence. In four cases out of ten, the appeals board set up for the recognition of refugee status expressed the opinion t h a t the measure should be revoked and in a number of cases its advice was followed by the Ministry of the Interior.

183. In the Federal Republic of Germany, the practice continues of issuing expulsion orders to refugees who have entered the Federal Territory illegally and to refugees who have served prison sentences, although these expulsion orders are seldom carried out. The Office of the UNHCR is seeking to obtain from the German authorities that either this practice be discontinued altogether or t h a t this Office be advised of such expulsion orders so that it may exercise its supervisory functions. This question is, however, complicated by the fact t h a t expulsion orders are issued by local authorities without reference to the Federal Government.

184. In Italy, two cases of extradition were dealt with by the UNHCR Branch Office in 1955. Evidence of the eligibility of a refugee under the mandate of UNHCR proved to be sufficient to prevent extradition of the refugee from taking place.

4.3. C. Rights of refugees in their countries of residence

4.3.1. Right to work

185. In Austria, the decree of the Austrian Ministry of Social Administration, to exempt foreign refugees who entered Austria before 1st February 1952 from the restrictions concerning foreign labour, has been extended in accordance with Article 17 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees to cover all refugees who entered Austria before 1st January 1953.

186. It is hoped that exemption from all restrictions regarding wage-earning employment for which the UNHCR Branch Office in Vienna is at present negotiating with the Austrian authorities, will be granted to all refugees recognised as eligible pursuant to the terms of the 1951 Convention, irrespective of their length of residence in Austria.

187. Reference was made in t h e last Memorandum to the liberalisation of the access to employment arrangements for refugees in France. As a result of measures taken by t h e Minister of Labour in this connection, refugees have been able to change their employment and place of work, and consequently, the number of unemployed refugees has considerably decreased.

188. The Government of Italy, in ratifying the 1951 Convention, made certain reservations with regard to Articles 17 and 18. Negotiations have taken place between my Office and the Italian Government with a view to waiving the reservation concerning the issue of work permits in respect of refugees included in integration projects in the UNREF programme, and the Government has agreed, in principle, that work permits, including all the rights attached thereto, may be granted to such refugees. In view of the unemployment situation in Italy certain practical difficulties have arisen in implementing this decision. It is hoped, however, that a satisfactory arrangement will shortly be achieved, thus facilitating the integration of refugees into the local economy in Italy.

4.3.2. Education

189. In Belgium, the law of 13th May 1955 concerning the equivalence of university degrees, referred to in the last Memorandum, has since entered into force. The law provides that refugees at present studying medicine, pharmacy or dentistry at one of the universities in Belgium, as well as refugees who have already obtained a degree in one of those subjects at a Belgian university, shall receive a diploma having legal validity, which will enable them to practise their profession in Belgium in the same way as a Belgian national. About fifty refugees have applied to take the test imposed by the new law.

190. The special fund, established during the liquidation of the International Refugee Organisation and placed at the disposal of the Belgian Government to assist refugee students to continue their university studies, was exhausted during the academic year 1953-1954 and has since been supplemented by the Belgian Treasury. For the academic year 1954-1955, a sum of 1,800,000 Belgian francs was granted and for t h e academic year 1955-1956 an amount of 880,000 Belgian francs, the numbers of such refugee students tending to diminish each year.

4.3.3. Public assistance

191. In Austria, a decree has been issued by the Ministry of Social Administration which will enable refugees arriving, during the winter, when it is difficult to find employment, to receive public welfare under a simplified procedure which will obviate any delay .

192. In accordance with Article 23 of the 1951 Convention, refugees in France are now also benefiting from State assistance afforded to the aged and the sick.

4.3.4. Social security

193. In Belgium, the Minister of Labour and Social Assistance has issued instructions to the effect that family allowances granted to Belgian nationals under the Belgian Social Security system are, in accordance with article 24 of the 1951 Convention, to be granted to refugees covered by the Convention.

194. Pursuant to a decree of 25th March 1955, unemployed refugees in Luxembourg who have been issued by the Government with the travel document provided for in the 1951 Convention are entitled to the same unemployment benefits as nationals of Luxembourg. As these benefits are paid exclusively from public funds the Government of Luxembourg has thus undertaken obligations which exceed those contracted under the 1951 Convention.

195. As from 1st January 1956 Netherlands nationals residing in the Netherlands will receive a retirement pension from the age of sixty-five years. The Government has decided that refugees shall receive the same benefits as nationals although normally aliens are eligible for this pension only after fifteen years' residence in the country.

4.3.5. Naturalisation

196. In the course of 1955, 5,021 refugees obtained French nationality through naturalisation in France.

197. There are in Italy a large number of refugees of Italian ethnic origin whose citizenship status needs clarification. This Office is attempting to obtain t h a t the establishment of a procedure for the granting of Italian citizenship to such persons be expedited in order to eliminate the existence of a group of persons of Italian ethnic origin who, for technical reasons, do not have the same status as Italian nationals.

198. In the Federal Republic of Germany, applications for naturalisation are dealt with by the Lander authorities and are referred to t h e Federal Ministry of the Interior for approval only. During 1953 and 1954, 923 refugees coming within the mandate of the Office of the UNHCR were naturalised.

199. In Austria, the date set in the law of 2nd June 1954 providing for the acquisition by option of Austrian nationality by refugees of German ethnic origin has been extended until 30th June 1956. By 1st December 1955, a total of 22,051 refugees of German ethnic origin had acquired Austrian nationality under this law.

4.3.6. Legal assistance in individual cases

200. The number of refugees requiring legal assistance remains considerable, whilst activities of voluntary agencies in this field tend to decrease. In Austria it is hoped that the central organisation representing foreign refugees which has been recently established will concern themselves with this form of assistance. In Germany meetings are held between the UNHCR representatives and legal advisers of voluntary agencies to consider ways and means of giving legal assistance to refugees. In Belgium this kind of assistance is now being provided by the Centre d'initiative pour réfugiés et étrangers, established in 1953. In Greece i t is given by the Refugee Service Committee and the Greek Red Cross and in Italy by the Assistenza Guindicale agli Stranieri

4.4. D. Travel documents

201. In addition to the States mentioned in the last Memorandum, a general undertaking to recognise travel documents issued in accordance with the 1951 Convention has been given by the Argentine, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, the Holy See, Lebanon, Nicaragua, Pakistan and Venezuela.

202. It was mentioned in the last Memorandum t h a t the Benelux countries had decided to waive the visa requirements for refugees holding travel documents issued under the London Agreement of 1946 or the 1951 Convention by one of the Governments members of the Union for the purpose of temporary travel to other countries members of the Union. Bilateral agreements between the countries of the Benelux Union to this effect have since entered into force. With this precedent in mind, this Office approached the Council of Europe with a view to the adoption of measures for the facilitation of travel and the abolition of visas for refugees. The Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a recommendation on 25th October 1955 to the effect :

a. That Member States of the Council of Europe parties to the 1951 Convention should issue travel documents conforming to the specimen travel document prepared by UNHCR;

b. That Member States which are neither parties to the Convention of 1951 nor to the London Agreement of 1946 should accede to one of these agreements;

c. That Member States should forthwith take steps to extend the Benelux working arrangements and thereby abolish their visa requirements in respect of holders of these travel documents; and

d. That, in so far as visas are still required, their issuance should be facilitated and speeded up and no fee, or only a low fee, be charged.

203. A certain number of Governments have in consequence taken measures for the facilitation of refugee travel. The Government of France has, as from 1st January 1956, exempted refugees within the meaning of the 1951 Convention from the requirement of exit and return visas while hitherto this exemption was only applied to statutory refugees. The French Government has also approached the Governments of the Benelux Union and of Switzerland with a view to the extension of the agreement relating to the abolition of visas to refugees in France.

204. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany has also proposed to the Governments of the Benelux Union to waive the visa requirement for refugees for travel between Germany and the countries members of the Union. Pending the abolition of visas the Government has decided to issue entry visas free of charge to refugees holding London or Convention travel documents.

205. In Belgium, the travel document provided for under the 1951 Convention, which previously could be issued for a period of validity of two years only, may now by successive extensions remain valid for four years.

206. In Austria, the delivery of travel documents provided for by the 1951 Convention has been accelerated. In January 1956 alone, nearly 400 such documents were issued. Possession of a Convention travel document is important in Austria not only for travel purposes, but also as a proof of refugee status. On the basis of an application for a travel document, refugees who were hitherto not recognised as such can have their refugee status examined. The UNHCR Branch Office in Austria advises all refugees eligible under the 1951 Convention to apply for the Convention travel document, the cost of which may, in the case of destitute refugees, be borne by the Austrian authorities.

207. With the increasing integration of refugees, the reasons restricting refugee travel are losing much of their force, since refugees normally possess long-term residence permits in their countries of residence. It is hoped t h a t , as a result of the efforts of this Office and the action taken by the Council of Europe, the possibilities of travelling for refugees will be further facilitated and that the requirement of visas, which has been largely abolished for nationals in Europe, will also be gradually abolished for the purpose of temporary travel of refugees.

4.5. F. Special problems of legal protection

4.5.1. Indemnification of victims of Nazi persecution

208. In Germany, the new draft of the revision of the German Federal Supplementary Law for Indemnification of Nazi Victims of 18th September 1953 was approved by the Federal Cabinet and submitted to the Federal Council and Parliament at the end of 1955. While this draft law, which constitutes an overall revision of the law of 18th September 1953, contains a number of improvements, the rates of coznpensation provided for refugees, in particular those persecuted for reasons of nationality, are still inadequate compared with those provided for other victims. The Office of UNHCR continues its efforts to obtain an improvement in certain provisions and the elimination of those which put refugees at a disadvantage.

209. A law was promulgated in Austria by the Austrian Houses of Parliament on 16th February 1956, under the terms of which a total amount of 550 million schillings will be made available for the purpose of granting assistance to former Austrian citizens who have been persecuted for political reasons between 1939 and 1945 and who are now residing outside Austria.

4.5.2. Refugee seamen

210. The precarious position in which many refugee seamen find themselves and the need for a general solution to their problem was indicated in the last Memorandum.

211. For the purpose of seeking a solution to this problem the Government of the Netherlands convened a meeting of European maritime States to agree on measures for the régularisation of t h e legal position of refugee seamen and the issuance of documents to them. At this conference, which was held in The Hague from 26th to 28th September 1955, the following Governments were represented : Belgium, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The International Labour Office and the Office of the UNHCR participated as observers.

212. The Conference adopted a tentative arrangement to be submitted to the participating Governments for their observations and decided to hold a second Conference to consider these observations and the final form of the arrangement.

213. The results of the Conference were brought to the notice of the Joint Maritime Commission of ILO. At the suggestion of that Commission the Governing Body of ILO endorsed a resolution in which the Director-General was authorised to co-operate with the Office of the UNHCR and other organisations in any efforts to improve the situation of refugee seamen, and the hope was expressed t h a t as many Governments as possible would accede to an agreement regularising the position of refugee seamen.

214. The second Conference, which was held in April 1956, decided that the instrument should take the form of a binding administrative agreement relating to the status of refugee seamen, and adopted the principles for such an agreement.

215. The Conference requested the Governments concerned to apply these principles in their administrative practice until such time as the agreement was formally concluded.

4.5.3. International Tracing Service

216. The tracing of persons who disappeared during the Second World War was initiated' by the Allied Authorities in Germany upon the cessation of hostilities in 1945. The supervision of the International Tracing Bureau was entrusted to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA).

217. The International Tracing Bureau, subsequently known as the International Tracing Service, has been and still is of considerable value to organisations concerned with the refugee problem. Since the closure of the International Refugee Organisation, the International Tracing Service keeps on loan individual case files of refugees, which are the property of the Office of the UNHCR, as well as nominal rolls of refugees resettled by the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration.

218. Upon the assumption of the functions of UNRRA by IRO, the International Tracing Service was placed under the control of the latter organisation in January 1948. Upon the closure of IRO operations in Germany at the end of 1951 responsibility for tracing activities was transferred to the Allied High Commission. Finally, in May 1955, when the occupation stat u t e was relinquished, responsibility for the International Tracing Service was handed by the Allied High Commission to the Govern-ment of the Federal Republic of Germany. However, in view of the interest of a certain number of Governments in the activities of the International Tracing Service, the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, in agree.- ment with the Allied High Commissioners, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Governments concerned, entrusted the administration of the Service to the International Committee of the Red Cross, under the supervision of an international commission consisting of representatives of the Governments of Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Brit a in and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

219. Under this agreement certain rights have been granted to t h e Office of the UNHCR which will extend to any possible successor agency. This Office retains free access to archives and documents of the International Tracing Service and it has the right to be represented by a permanent observer on the international supervisory commission and to maintain a liaison officer with the Service. Furthermore, this Office retains the property right of the files which are on loan to the International Tracing Service, and the arrangement is being maintained whereby up to 25 per cent of the staff of the Service shall be refugees.

220. As a result of this close co-operation with the International Tracing Service, my Office is in a position to assist the authorities and the refugees themselves whenever evidence obtainable from the archives of the Service is relevant, as for instance for the settlement of claims for compensation and the recognition of refugee status.

5. CHAPTER IV - General activities

5.1. A. Relations with the Council of Europe

221. During the period under review, the co-ordination of activities of mutual interest to the Council of Europe and the Office of UNHCR has been further developed.

222. As in previous years, a Memorandum on the activities of the Office of UNHCR was presented to the Council of Europe for consideration by the Consultative Assembly and its Committee on Population and Refugees. Upon a recommendation adopted by this Committee, the Consultative Assembly, in its Resolution 82 (1955), expressed its appreciation of the programme that was being carried out to provide permanent solutions for refugees within the mandate of the Office of UNHCR; it further expressed the hope that adequate

funds be made available from governmental and nongovernmental sources to enable the Office of UNHCR to carry out the UNREF Programme, and that the co-ordination of activities on behalf of refugees in Europe be further developed between the Special Representatives of the Council of Europe and the Office of UNHCR.

223. Contact was maintained with the Special Representative for National Refugees and Over-population in Europe. Upon his invitation, the Office participated in the meetings of the Advisory Committee of governmental experts, set up under the terms of Resolution (56) 8 to assist the Special Representative to carry out his task.

224. Co-operation with the Council of Europe in respect of intergovernmental instruments affecting the status of refugees has been continued to the satisfaction of this Office. Upon the suggestions made by this Office, the Committee on Legal and Administrative Questions considered ways and means whereby travel by refugees between countries members of the Council of Europe could be facilitated.

225. Upon the proposal of the Committee, the Consultative Assembly recommended to the Committee of Ministers that Member Governments shouid adhere to the 1951 Convention relating to t h e Status of Refugees or to the 1946 London Agreement on the travel documents for refugees and that Member States of the Council of Europe should either abolish visa requirements in respect of refugees or speed up the procedure for the issue of such visas.

5.2. B. Relations with other organisations

5.2.1. International Labour Organisation (I.L.O.)

226. Close co-operation between the Office of UNHCR and the International Labour Office has been maintained on all matters of mutual concern.

227. A working paper on the activities of the Office of UNHCR in the field of resettlement was submitted to the eighth session of the Technical Working Group on Migration, which was attended by a representative from this Office.

228. The Office of UNHCR was also represented at the eighteenth session of the Joint Maritime Commission of ILO, held in Paris from 24th to 29th October 1955, which considered once more the problem of refugee seamen. A resolution was adopted authorising the Director-General of ILO to co-operate with the Office of UNHCR and the heads of other organisations concerned in studying ways and means of improving conditions for refugee seamen.

5.2.2. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

229. The Office of UNHCR has maintained liaison with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation and has continued to exchange information and documentation on assistance to refugee scholars and students.

5.2.3. World Health Organisation (W.H.O.)

230. Reference was made in the Memorandum on the activities of the Office of UNHCR transmitted to the Council of Europe in June 1955 to the survey of the mental health of refugees in camps in Austria which had been arranged by the World Health Organisation and which was then nearing completion. The survey team, which consisted of a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a sociologist and two social workers, undertook a wide survey in which they concentrated on interviewing refugees and persons who had to deal with refugees in many kinds of relationships.

231. The report of the survey team emphasises the detrimental effects of camp life on the mental health of refugees, particularly of young people. The evidence of progressive deterioration over a number of years suggests that community life will continue to deteriorate and t h a t more severe forms of mental illness will occur among refugees. The report envisages a project to be undertaken by W. H. 0 . designed to improve the mental health of refugees and so facilitate their integration into the community after leaving camps.

5.2.4. Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (I.C.E.M.)

232. The Office of UNHCR and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration have continued the joint operation for refugees in China described in Chapter I of the present report, and have worked in close collaboration on other questions relating to the resettlement of refugees within the mandate of the Office of UNHCR.

233. Special resettlement schemes have been negotiated by this Office with the Governments of Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, under which movement of selected candidates is undertaken by I. C. E. M. In addition, I.C.E.M. has organised the movement of individual refugees in the Middle East, financed from the IRO Trust Fund. The total number of refugees presumed to be within the mandate of this Office transported with the assistance of I.C.E.M. in 1955 was 19,919. There are prospects of a small increase in the number of refugees who may be resettled in 1956, as a result of the increased rate at which visas are being issued under the United States Refugee Relief Act, 1953, and of the further expansion of intra-European resettlement schemes.

234. In previous reports emphasis was placed on the importance of close consultation not only in the implementation but also in the formulation of plans affecting refugees within the mandate of the Office of UNHCR if the best use is to be made of the resources provided by Governments to I. C. E. M. and to this Office. The growing complexity of t h e UNREF programme makes the co-ordination of the policies of the two organisations all the more desirable, in view of the effect which they may have on the responsibilities that have been assumed by the countries of residence under General Assembly Resolution 832 (IX).

5.2.5. Organisation fcr European Economic Co-operation (O.E.E.C.)

235. Co-operation between the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation and this Office has been particularly fruitful in connec-tion with the action promoted by 0. E. E. C. to liberalise the movement of man-power between its Member States. As stated in previous reports, a provision extending this action to refugees under certain conditions was already embodied in a decision taken by 0. E. E. C. on the matter. Upon the proposal of the Government of France, the Man-power Committee of 0. E. E. C. at its thirtieth session, recommended to the Member Governments of the Organisation that the period of validity of the return clause contained in travel documents issued to refugees in accordance with t h e 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees be extended to a period of three years wherever this was not already the case. This Office has requested the Governments Members of 0. E. E. C. to give favourable consideration to this particular recommendation.

5.2.6. United States Escapee Program (U.S.E.P.)

236. The United States Escapee Program has continued to do most valuable work on behalf of refugees, particularly in the promotion and financing of the overseas resettlement of a considerable number who are eligible for its assistance — and in this respect is making an important contribution towards the reduction of the number of refugees within the mandate of this Office who require assistance in finding permanent solutions for their problems.

237. There has been a continuous exchange of information between the USEP administration and this Office relating to the refugees who are the concern of both organisations. Regular planning meetings between U. S. E. P., the Migration Committee and this Office, have taken place during the year.

238. The overall agreement between U. S. E. P. and the Office of UNHCR concerning the payment of grants for difficult cases has had to be revised in the light of the indications which have been received from the United States Government concerning the desirability of the same refugees not receiving financial assistance from both organisations.

5.3. C. Camp Adoption Scheme

239. The Camp Adoption Scheme, under which local initiatives are encouraged on behalf of refugees in specific camps, has continued in effective operation and, as contemplated in the last Memorandum, has now been extended to Denmark. The scheme has taken root quite strongly in that country, particularly among certain women's organisations, and several refugee camps on the Greek islands have been adopted by these Danish groups. Difficulties similar to those at first encountered by adopting groups in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are now being experienced by t h e Danish communities, particularly in

connection with the high transport costs and the payment of customs duty on their consignments for the various camps. However, with the generous assistance of the Save the Children Fund, of the Red Cross, and of thé authorities in the countries concerned, ways are being found to overcome these setbacks.

240. A total of fifty-three camps have been adopted to date, including sixteen in Austria, thirty-one in Germany and six in Greece. The staff of the European Office of the United Nations has adopted one Greek camp, to which they devote the proceeds of various collections.

241. Experience has shown the need for a realistic appraisal from the outset of the volume of help likely to be provided for a camp by an adopting group. In order to make the efforts of adopting groups with understandably modest resources most effective, particular emphasis during the period under review has been laid on strengthening existing adoption arrangements—by grouping together two or more small adopting communities where necessary— rather than on promoting the adoption of more camps by small groups whose possibilities for providing assistance would, in spite of their great good will, inevitably by very limited.

242. Adopting communities have in many cases responded resourcefully to the need for more constructive help than the periodic despatch of parcels of food and clothing. Apart from the provision of tools, machines and materials for workshops and camp community centres, money has been or is being raised by a few adopting groups to help pay the salaries of trained social workers for certain camps, for instructors in the workshops and to enable individual refugees to finish their training and obtain the necessary diplomas.

243. Through the camp adoption scheme a number of refugee children suffering from tuberculosis have been placed in sanatoria and their healthier companions sent for holidays to Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden, as well as to homes in the United Kingdom.

244. Considerable effort has been made to interest the adopting communities in the programme for permanent solutions. Communities have been encouraged to raise funds for specific projects whereby an individual refugee or a family would be enabled to establish themselves outside the camp and to take up life again as ordinary citizens. These projects are on a modest scale, costing approximately S 150 each, and are drawn up by the Branch Offices of UNHCR in consultation with trained social workers in the camps concerned. In addition, several communities in the United Kingdom have announced their plans for establishing small loan funds to help towards the rehabilitation of individual refugees and refugee families.

245. It is hoped that the generous and resourceful assistance given to many of the neediest camps and to individual refugee families by the adopting communities will continue to make a valuable contribution to the success of the UNREF programme and t h a t the camp adoption scheme will arouse interest in other countries.

5.4. D. Award of the Nansen Medal

246. The Nansen Medal Award Committee, the establishment of which was mentioned in the last Memorandum, met for the first time in Geneva on 17th March 1955 to designate a candidate to be awarded the medal for work on behalf of refugees during 1954 and another candidate for 1955. The Committee decided that the medal for 1954 should be awarded to Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt as a tribute to the great services she had rendered to the cause of refugees, and also to honour the decisive initiatives taken by the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The award for 1955 was made to Her Majesty Queen Juliana of the Netherlands, in recognition of the stimulating initiatives taken by Her Majesty since the Second World War to further the solution of the problems of refugees.

247. On 15th September 1955, at a ceremony held in the Council Chamber of the Palais des Nations, the Nansen Medal Award Committee presented the Nansen Medal for 1954 to Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and the Nansen Medal for 1955 to Her Majesty Queen Juliana of the Netherlands, who was represented by Baron Bentinck, Ambassador of the Netherlands to the Swiss Government.

5.5. E. Award to the Office of the High Commissioner of the Nobel Prize for Peace for 1954

248. The Nobel Peace Prize Award Committee of the Norwegian Storting decided, on 3rd November 1955, to award the Nobel Peace Prize for the year 1954 to the Office of UNHCR. The prize for peace had on two previous occasions been awarded for work on behalf of refugees, in 1922 to Fridtjof Nansen and in 1938 to the Nansen Office for Refugees. In consultation with the Chiefs of Branch Offices of UNHCR assembled in Geneva for their yearly meeting and with the other members of the staff, it was decided to allocate the sum received, approximately §35,000, to a special project designed to close the refugee camp on the Greek island of Tinos and to provide permanent solutions for its inmates. The Swiss Aid to Europe and the Norwegian

Refugee Council, which have both performed the most valuable work on behalf of refugees within the mandate of the UNHCR during the past years, have been invited to participate in the implementation of this special project, for which the Greek Government has also promised its full co-operation.