

1945  
NEW ZEALAND

# UNITED NATIONS' RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION

REPORT BY THE NEW ZEALAND DELEGATION ON THE THIRD SESSION OF THE COUNCIL, LONDON,  
7TH TO 24TH AUGUST, 1945

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Leave*

The third\* session of the UNRRA Council, also meetings of its Committee for the Far East and of the Committee on Supplies (New Zealand is a member of both of these), were held in London during August, 1945. They were held under conditions that can be summarized in the following diary:—

| 1945.                   |   |
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| July 17 to August 2 . . | Potsdam Three-power Conference.                         |
| July 26 . . . . .       | Change in United Kingdom Government.                    |
| August 2 . . . . .      | UNRRA Committee for the Far East opened.                |
| August 6 . . . . .      | Atomic bomb.  |
| August 7 . . . . .      | UNRRA Council opened.                                   |
| August 15 . . . . .     | Japanese surrender.                                     |
| August 24 . . . . .     | Announcement of end of lend-lease.                      |
| August 24 . . . . .     | UNRRA Council, also Committee for the Far East, closed. |

To the forty-four signatories of the original agreement of 9th November, 1943, three new members were added at the 1945 session—Denmark, Byelorussia, and the Ukraine. (The Central Committee was also authorized to admit into membership Governments which are signatories of the Charter of United Nations and which are not now members of UNRRA.) Costa Rica, Iran, and Nicaragua were not represented at the session. Italy, Sweden, and the Vatican were non-member States represented by visitors; also present, as before, were official observers from the League of Nations' Economic, Financial and Transit Department, the International Labour Office, the Inter-governmental Committee for Refugees, and the Food and Agriculture Organization; represented for the first time were the Provisional Organization for European Inland Transport, the United Maritime Authority, the European Coal Organization, and the World Trade Union Organization.

New Zealand representatives were Mr. R. M. Campbell and Professor A. G. B. Fisher. (The High Commissioner, who had been nominated as New Zealand delegate, left for the Dominion on 2nd August.) The New Zealand Council of Overseas Relief Services Organizations nominated Mr. H. T. Silcock as their Observer at the Committee for the Far East and at the Council; he was given that status at the Committee, but the rules and practice of the Council required that he, with representatives of other like organizations, be a "visitor." Mr. Silcock, who has had long experience as a Society of Friends missionary in China and Japan, agreed, however, to take the status of adviser to our small New Zealand team. We thus had the advantage of constant association throughout the meetings with Mr. Silcock, who also acted as New Zealand representative on the Far East Committee's Displaced Persons sub-committee; and we are anxious to acknowledge the valuable help he gave.

The member of the Council representing India, Sir Gurja S. Bajpai, was elected Chairman of the Council for this third session. He was ably assisted by Mr. Jan Masaryk, Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs, as Chairman of the Committee on Policy, which is a "committee of the whole" Council.

Particularly before the dramatic events that coincided in point of time with the Council meetings, there was no denying the doubts and misgivings that many had as to UNRRA's fitness for its tasks and whether it deserved further support. Despite the high hopes with which it had been launched, and the substantial funds that had been voted for its work, the organization seemed to have hardly begun to function, even in south-eastern Europe, where the needs were great and the opportunities earliest open. In western Europe the returning Governments, not UNRRA, had the tasks of relief in hand. There, too, as well as in Germany and Italy, most of the millions of displaced persons had returned home, or were returning, through their own improvised devices, or under military plans, UNRRA doing little more than supply personnel for transit camps. Some critics, understandably enough, wondered moreover, whether it was after all the job of a United Nations' body to aid Italy or other ex-enemy countries. In respect to contributions, it was asked, were there not serious defaults by some who had joined in the high-sounding promises at Atlantic City, defaults which would make it inequitable to look for further help from—for example, the hard-pressed United Kingdom, or New Zealand, which had already contributed 1 per cent. of their estimated national incomes? Queries of this kind were effectively reinforced by the well-publicized criticism, at Lapstone and elsewhere, of the competence of administrative personnel in UNRRA.

The substance of some of these contentions is now of little more than historical interest, and we have no wish to deny that many of them have, or had, some basis in fact. It is, however, fair to say that, though most displaced people managed to get home somehow "under their own steam," this is no reflection on UNRRA; also that the administrative personnel available to UNRRA were only such as member Governments released, and, understandably, at the stage of the war when the administration began, Governments did not meet the Administration's pressing requests.

The non-availability of competent personnel was one important reason for the delays, to which the Committee on Financial Control had directed attention in getting the auditing arrangements of UNRRA into proper working-order. The comparative inactivity of UNRRA in Western Europe

\*The first session met in Atlantic City, November, 1943; the second in Montreal, September, 1944; both reports numbered A. 3A, 1944.