

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THIRTEENTH SESSION

Official Records

 Monday, 17 November 1958,
at 3.15 p.m.


NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	Page
Agenda item 26:	
Report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (<i>continued</i>)	81

Chairman: Mr. Mihai MAGHERU (Romania).

AGENDA ITEM 26

Report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/3931, A/3948, A/SPC/29) (*continued*)

1. Mr. GOHAR (United Arab Republic) said he had some comments to make concerning the report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (A/3931). He would like first of all to express his Government's admiration to Mr. Henry R. Labouisse, who had done splendid work as Director of the Agency and would long be remembered by his friends the refugees. The delegation of the United Arab Republic also paid a tribute to the Acting Director, Mr. Leslie J. Carver, and his staff for the way in which they were carrying out their task, and expressed confidence in their ability to overcome the crisis facing the Agency.

2. No other problem had been of such serious concern to world public opinion as the question of the Arab refugees from Palestine. It was not only a human problem which weighed heavily on the conscience of civilized peoples; it was also a political problem with repercussions which threatened peace in the Near East and jeopardized the future of the Arab peoples. The problem, in fact, affected not only the refugees, but the entire people of Palestine, who had been uprooted, plundered and expelled by a minority of Zionists, supported by influential political and social elements in certain great Powers. It was not a question of a social group persecuted by a hostile majority, of which there were many examples in history. The plot had been hatched as far back as 1917, when regional arrangements had been made which took no account of the rights of the Arab people in Palestine. Even before the expiry of the British Mandate, Zionist agitation in Palestine had tragically broken out in the form of repeated attacks and widespread massacres of innocent Arabs. The situation had led the British to place the Palestine question before the United Nations. In spite of all the arguments against such a step, the General Assembly, in its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, had recommended the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. As for the people known as the Palestine refugees, the Assembly had subsequently decided that those who wished should be allowed to return to their homes and that compensation should be paid for the property of those who decided not to

return. Having achieved that political victory, the Zionists did not even wait for the end of the British Mandate before trying to get rid of the Arab minority by terrorist means. The Palestine Arabs fled in panic, leaving their homes and property; thus the people of Israel had created the Palestine refugee problem.

3. From the report of the United Nations Mediator, the late Count Bernadotte, dated 16 September 1948 (A/648), ^{1/}it was apparent, first, that the refugee problem already existed before 15 May 1948, the date on which the Mandate expired as a result of Zionist atrocities; secondly, that the provisional Government of the Jewish State should pay the refugees compensation for the loss of their property and thirdly, that the United Nations should take responsibility for the refugees. He recalled resolution 212 (III) adopted on 19 November 1948 by the General Assembly, authorizing the Secretary-General to establish a special fund for the refugees, as well as resolution 194 (III), in which the General Assembly upheld the right of the refugees to repatriation or compensation, and resolution 302 (IV) in which the Assembly recognized the need for continued assistance to the Palestine refugees to prevent starvation and distress among them.

4. The Israel Government had very soon formally rejected the principle of repatriation and had stated that the solution to the problem of the refugees was resettlement in Arab countries. The refugees had never relinquished their right to return to their homes, however, and that right had been reaffirmed by the General Assembly in all its resolutions—a fact which Mr. Labouisse had emphasized in his reports to the eleventh and twelfth sessions of the General Assembly (A/3212 and A/3686 and Corr.1). In his report to the current session of the Assembly (A/3931), the Director of UNRWA stated that the attitude of the refugees had remained unchanged. Their collective hostility was, on the whole, as strong as ever towards the major development projects which they felt implied permanent resettlement away from their ancestral homes and the abandonment of their hopes of repatriation. The Director added that in the absence of a political solution to the problem, the Agency would be hampered in its attempts to carry out one of the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly, namely the reintegration of the refugees into the economic life of the Near East either by repatriation or by resettlement. Unfortunately, in some quarters the emphasis had been placed on the second alternative. According to the representative of the United States, the reason why UNRWA had not been successful in resettling the refugees was because of the attitude of the Governments concerned and of the refugees themselves. It should be reiterated

^{1/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Third Session, Supplement No. 11.

that resettlement was only one aspect of reintegration. Moreover, the Acting Director, in his statement to the Committee on 7 November (A/SPC/29), had reviewed the efforts made by the Agency to promote economic reintegration of the refugees. He had explained that the large-scale works projects had had to be abandoned because of their high cost and because they could not be integrated into the general economic development plans of the host countries. Besides, they would have provided only temporary employment. The United States representative had therefore no grounds for saying that the failure of UNRWA's programme was due to the Arab Governments and to the refugees. The representative of the United States had failed to mention a third group of programmes which had been perfectly successful—the projects of individual assistance, which had been accepted by the refugees and comprised the programme of vocational training for the younger generation and that of individual grants. The Acting Director had stated that it was thus not true that the refugees refused UNRWA's offers to help them to become self-supporting. The Agency should therefore be allowed to continue the execution of those important projects.

5. The Acting Director had indicated in his statement that one of the courses open to the Assembly was to make arrangements for a study of the problem as a whole, including the Agency's activities, so as to be in a position to take a decision at the next session. He had no doubt meant that if the Assembly decided to terminate the Agency's mandate, it should make arrangements for a technical study of the problem. The Assembly could surely not undertake any other type of study at the present stage. The delegation of the United Arab Republic felt that the Agency's term of office should be extended and the Acting Director's recommendations endorsed until such time as the inherent and inalienable rights of the refugees had been restored.

6. Mr. JANTUAH (Ghana) said that in his delegation's view the problem of the Palestine refugees, like any other refugee problem, was primarily a human problem. However, it had both a political and a humanitarian aspect. Several representatives had described the tragic plight of the Palestine refugees, compelled for ten years to live a life of suffering and humiliation. While the people of Israel were certainly entitled to live at peace in a land of their own, by the same token the Palestine Arab refugees also had an inalienable right to live in their homeland. In creating the State of Israel the United Nations had surely not intended to displace a single inhabitant of Palestine against his will. It had made every effort to solve the refugee problem. While the generosity of Member States had made assistance to the refugees possible, the present situation would not be prolonged indefinitely and a solution must be sought which would make UNRWA unnecessary. If such a solution was to be fair, it should be based on repatriation or resettlement of the refugees and the payment of compensation to those who chose not to return to their homes. In the meantime, Ghana would make its modest contribution to the Agency, for the United Nations had incurred a legal liability towards the Palestine refugees and must continue to assist them.

7. With respect to the political aspects of the problem, clearly the continued presence of Arab refugees

in the Near East was a threat to peace in that area. The representative of Saudi Arabia had said that his country was prepared to take the necessary measures, both inside and outside the United Nations, to ensure the return of the Arab refugees to their homes. Measures taken outside the United Nations to settle disputes such as the one between Israel and the Arab States were fraught with serious danger. Disputes of that kind needed an atmosphere of peace for their settlement. The Asian-African Conference, held at Bandung in 1955, which had supported the rights of the Palestine Arabs, had expressed the view that the Palestine problem should be settled by peaceful means in the spirit of the General Assembly's resolutions. The Conference of Independent African States, held at Accra in 1958, which had reaffirmed the principles enunciated at Bandung, had expressed concern over the question of Palestine, which it considered a disturbing factor of world peace and security. It had also expressed concern over the fact that General Assembly resolutions were not being complied with and had called upon all Member States to respect them.

8. As the Prime Minister of Ghana had stated on 15 July 1958, Ghana felt that the United Nations should be an effective instrument for world peace and for the safeguarding of the rights of all peoples. The Ghanaian delegation therefore regretted the lack of co-operation on the part of the Israel Government. The General Assembly had decided, in its resolution 194 (III), that refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date. His delegation submitted that the right of a refugee to return to his homeland was an inherent right. It therefore regretted the General Assembly's decision to make the exercise of that right contingent upon the refugee's willingness to live at peace with his neighbours, thus placing upon the refugee the burden of proof of his peaceful intentions. Surely to live at peace with one's neighbours required similar peaceful intentions on the part of those neighbours. His delegation hoped that that provision would not be invoked for the purpose of preventing the refugees from returning to their homes.

9. A prerequisite to permanent settlement of the Palestine Arab refugee problem was a political solution of the situation in the Near East. Relief measures were merely a substitute. A political solution could only be achieved in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Most of the refugees were prepared to have faith in their Israel neighbours. He hoped that that faith would be reciprocated.

10. Mr. EBAN (Israel) recalled that as early as 1950 the General Assembly, in its resolution 393 (V), had envisaged "the reintegration of the refugees into the economic life of the Near East, either by repatriation or resettlement". The report of the Director of the Agency showed that the Assembly's hopes had been grievously disappointed. In spite of the fact that the United Nations had spent \$300 million on relief to the Arab refugees, their number had not decreased and the opposition of the Arab States had prevented the implementation of any of the economic development projects designed for the benefit of the refugees. However, the picture was not as dark as might appear at first glance. There was a growing appreciation among the refugees of the opportunities offered to them. The Director of the Agency had rightly pointed out that the change in

the attitude of the refugees was the brightest hope for their future. Several thousands of refugees had been integrated into the life of the region in which they lived, even though that was not reflected in the artificially inflated statistics. Moreover, world opinion, both inside and outside the United Nations, was increasingly emphatic in recommending broader regional economic integration programmes. However, those hopeful portents would only yield results if the Governments of the Arab States abandoned their opposition to the integration of the refugees into the life of the Near East.

11. As to the origin of the refugee problem, it had been caused by the war of aggression launched by the Arab States against Israel in 1947 and 1948, and to determine the responsibility for that war was to determine the responsibility for the refugee problem. There could be no doubt whatsoever as to the causes of the conflict. After the Secretary-General of the Arab League had proclaimed a war of extermination on 14 May 1948, the day of Israel's declaration of independence, the armed forces of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq, supported by contingents from Saudi Arabia and Yemen, had crossed Israel's frontiers. The subsequent events were still fresh in the memory of the inhabitants of the Near East. Fleeing the havoc of war, thousands of Palestine Arabs had sought refuge in neighbouring countries, urged on by the Arab League which had promised that they would soon return to their homes following the victory of the Arab armies. Those facts had been fully confirmed both by the Arab side and by United Nations organs. The significance of the Arab assault upon Israel was reflected in a letter addressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to representatives of the permanent members of the Security Council on 16 May 1948. The Secretary-General had emphasized the fact that, for the first time since the adoption of the Charter, Member States had openly declared that they had engaged in armed intervention outside their own territory.

12. The Arab States denied all responsibility for the war of which the refugees were the main victims, in spite of the fact that their responsibility had been fully established. Since the Governments of those States had, by acts of policy, created that problem, surely the world community had a right to claim their full assistance in its solution. Clearly the refugee problem had not been created by the General Assembly's recommendation for the establishment of Israel. It had been created by the attempts of the Arab Governments to destroy that recommendation by force.

13. Then there were the reasons why the problem had persisted. The situation was indeed abnormal in view of the fact that since the end of the Second World War 40 million refugees had been resettled in various parts of the world. In every case except that of the Arab refugees reintegration had been facilitated by the host countries. The paradox was the more astonishing in view of the kinship of language, religion and culture existing between the refugees and the Arab host countries. It was impossible to escape the conclusion that the integration of Arab refugees into the life of the Arab world was an objectively feasible process which had, however, been resisted for political reasons.

14. Mr. Elfan Rees, adviser on refugees to the World Council of Churches, had stated in a study on refugee

problems ^{2/}that no large-scale refugee problem had ever been solved by repatriation. In his view, repatriation could only be brought about by war, which in our time would leave nothing to go back to. Those remarks should be compared with the speech of the representative of Saudi Arabia, who seemed to look forward to a settlement of the problem by a war launched for the extinction of Israel's independence. Such a war would be much more likely to create new refugee problems than to solve the existing ones. Moreover, the Research Group for European Migration Problems observed, in a significant study on refugees, that the Arab States considered the refugees as a means of political pressure for wiping Israel off the map or getting the greatest possible number of concessions. It was painfully evident that the problem had been artificially maintained for political motives against all economic, social and cultural forces which, had they been allowed free play, would have brought about a solution.

15. Recent years had witnessed a great economic expansion in the Middle East. The revenues of oil-bearing countries had opened up new opportunities for employment, from which the refugees could have benefited if free movement had been granted to them. Thousands could have been absorbed into the economies of the Arab countries; but that was precisely what the Arab Governments had wished to prevent. In his report to the General Assembly at its eighth session (A/2470), the Director of the Agency had stated that if restrictions on the movement of refugees were withdrawn, the refugees would be able to take full advantage of opportunities for work arising in countries such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf sheikhdoms; he had noted however that little had been done to that end.

16. In short, all the Agency's efforts for the integration of the refugees had come up against the obstructionist policy of the Arab countries. The refusal of those Governments to integrate the refugees into the economy of their huge lands seemed all the more remarkable when contrasted with the achievements of other countries facing the same problems. Israel, with its small territory, its meagre water resources and its difficult financial situation, had in the previous ten years assimilated nearly a million newcomers arriving in a state of destitution no less acute than that of the Arab refugees. Half of those refugees—about 450,000—had come from Arab countries. Their assimilation had not been easy, since they had had to adapt themselves to an entirely unfamiliar linguistic, social and national environment. If Israel in those conditions could assimilate nearly one million refugees, how much more easily could the vast Arab world find a home for a similar number of Arab refugees, if only the same goodwill existed. Israel's case was not an isolated one. There were numerous precedents. Finland, for instance, had in 1944 received 440,000 displaced persons, all Finnish citizens, and had managed to integrate them at a time when there had been no international aid.

17. The Palestine refugee problem was one of the easiest to solve, since the refugees had the same language and social organization as the inhabitants of

^{2/} Elfan Rees, *Century of the Homeless Man* (International Conciliation, No. 515, November 1957; New York, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace).

the countries in which they were now living. Unfortunately, the Arab States, in their anxiety to ensure that the Agency did not achieve a permanent solution, had systematically rejected every economic development proposal which seemed to hold the promise of economic independence for the refugees. A typical instance was the project for the use of the Jordan and Yarmuk rivers, which had been worked out in the greatest detail but had been rejected in October 1955 for political reasons at a meeting of the Arab League. There was no question that the Arab Governments were determined to perpetuate the refugee problem.

18. As to the solution of the problem, any discussion revolved round two themes: resettlement and repatriation. There was a growing scepticism about the feasibility of repatriation. The refugees had for ten years been nourished solely on the sentiment of hatred for Israel, which had found expression in the address by the representative of Saudi Arabia. Repatriation would mean that hundreds of thousands of people would take up their abode in a State whose flag they despised and whose destruction they were resolved to seek. The refugees were all Arabs, and the countries in which they were now living were all Arab countries; yet the advocates of repatriation contended that the refugees should be settled in a non-Arab country, in a social and cultural environment which was utterly alien to their background and tradition. Israel, whose sovereignty and security were already assailed by the States surrounding it, was being asked to admit a great number of hostile refugees, when it had already contributed to the solution of the refugee problems of Asia and Africa by receiving 450,000 refugees from Arab lands.

19. It was not hard to understand why that solution found so little favour. Israel was a small sovereign State whose primary preoccupation was its safety. It could not entertain a proposal which would involve its own disruption and only bring new disillusionment to the refugees. No other State in the world was so acutely threatened as Israel, surrounded by hostile neighbours who openly vowed its destruction. To suggest that Israel should add to those perils that of importing a massive quantity of hatred and rancour was to demand something beyond the limit of prudence or reason.

20. Other considerations counted against repatriation. In the first place, the word repatriation could not be used for the act of transplanting Arab refugees from an Arab land to a non-Arab land. *Patria* was not a mere geographical concept. Resettlement of an Arab refugee in Israel would not be repatriation but alienation from Arab society. Moreover, an examination of the structure of the refugee population showed that the "repatriation" concept was not valid. More than 50 per cent of the refugees were under fifteen years of age, which meant that at the time of Israel's establishment many of them had been under five years of age and could thus have no conscious memory of Israel at all.

21. Those who spoke of repatriation were not always aware of the measure of integration of refugees into the countries of their present residence. In the Kingdom of Jordan, for example, refugees had full citizenship and participated fully in the government of the country; thousands of them were enrolled in the Jordanian Army. In the Syrian region of the United Arab Republic refugees had not been granted citizen-

ship, but their status was to a large degree assimilated to that of citizens; they were subject to compulsory military service in the Syrian army. It was paradoxical to suggest that citizens of a State foreign and hostile to Israel should simultaneously be entitled to Israel citizenship.

22. On the other hand, the advantages of resettlement in Arab countries were obvious. With its expanse of territory, its great rivers, its mineral wealth and the availability of international aid, the Arab world could easily absorb additional population, not only without danger, but with profit.

23. Representatives of the Arab countries claimed that repatriation was the only solution supported by world opinion and by the resolutions of the United Nations. Nothing could be further from the truth. International opinion for the most part overwhelmingly rejected repatriation and supported resettlement, and that attitude was fully compatible with the jurisprudence of the United Nations as expressed in successive recommendations of the General Assembly. Israel was not the only State advocating resettlement: many Governments, especially those with a record of contributions to refugee relief, had been doing so for years. In that connexion he quoted statements made by the representatives of Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, the United States of America, the Philippines, Colombia, Denmark and Belgium, and the observations of various competent international bodies such as the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine and the Research Group for European Migration Problems. It had been apparent for many years that the solution of that problem, like that of all other contemporary refugee problems, lay in integration within kindred societies. The Lebanese representative had stated that, on the eve of its admission to the United Nations, Israel had accepted repatriation as the solution to the refugee problem. That was the exact opposite of the truth. In his address to the Committee on 5 May 1949,^{3/} he (Mr. Eban) had said that the underpopulated and under-developed areas of the Arab States offered greater possibilities for a stable solution than resettlement in Israel, and that for that reason the Government of Israel contended that resettlement in neighbouring areas should be considered as the main principle of solution. Those views were equally valid today.

24. Representatives of the Arab countries had claimed that repatriation was the only solution supported by the policies and jurisprudence of the United Nations. That was not true. Resettlement as a practical and legitimate solution was fully supported in the resolutions of the General Assembly. It was contemplated in resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, the first resolution which the Assembly had adopted on the problem, and it was referred to in all the resolutions adopted since. The Assembly had never been content merely to solve the refugee problem by declarations of principle. It had worked out constructive programmes of integration and had contemplated the transfer of administrative responsibility to the host Governments. In his report to the eighth session of the Assembly (A/2470), the Director of the Agency had shown that the only Government which had accepted such responsibility was that of Israel, which had assumed responsibil-

^{3/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Third Session, Part II, Ad Hoc Political Committee, 45th meeting.

ity for some 19,000 Arab refugees. To date, Israel had integrated a total of 48,500 Arab refugees into its economy. If the Arab countries had adopted a similar attitude towards the refugees on their own soil and had assimilated a proportionate number of refugees, the whole problem would have ceased to exist. The United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine had paid a warm tribute to Israel's action in releasing bank accounts to the value of \$8 million in favour of Arab refugees, and authorizing the transfer of hard currency from Israel to hostile countries, even though those countries maintained their ruthless economic boycott of Israel.

25. The Agency's mandate would soon expire, and the United Nations was concerned over the future fate of the refugees. In those circumstances, he was authorized to redefine his Government's attitude on compensation.

26. The basic solution of the refugee problem lay in the integration of the refugees into the countries in which they had dwelt for ten years and in which they lived among their kinsmen. If that solution were carried out, and if the international assistance offered in 1955 were still available, Israel would be prepared to pay compensation, even before the achievement of a final peace settlement or the solution of other outstanding problems, for there would be independent advantage, both moral and political, in a settlement of the refugee problem. In fixing the level of compensation owed by Israel it would be necessary to take into account the claims of Israel citizens who had a right to compensation for property left behind in Arab lands. In the context of such a solution by integration in Arab lands and the fulfilment of Israel's compensation undertaking, Israel did not exclude an extension of the family reunification scheme under which many former Arab residents had already come back to Israel territory.

27. The international community longed to see the problem solved, not perpetuated. Generous assistance was available to the Arab Governments if they would open their homes, lands and hearts to their kinsmen. Israel would make its contribution to an international enterprise designed to integrate the refugees into the life of the region. The advantages which Arab Governments appeared to find in the artificial maintenance of the problem were deceptive if indeed they existed at all any longer. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that 1960 would mark a turning point towards a solution in which realism, honour and compassion joined hands for the sake of regional welfare and international peace.

28. Mr. HUOT SAMBATH (Cambodia) said that the problem of the Palestine refugees was not an isolated one. Cambodia, for example, had proved an asylum for countless refugees. It had attempted to assist them with its own resources and until now had not asked for assistance from the United Nations, knowing the extent of the responsibilities already assumed by the Organization.

29. In the current year, for the first time, Cambodia, in its desire to show its interest in all humanitarian questions, had decided to make a small contribution to the Agency's budget, in spite of its own commitments in the same field. In conclusion he emphasized that the problem of the Palestine refugees was essentially political and expressed the hope that an appropriate solution would be quickly found.

30. Mr. ARNOTT (Australia) said that the plight of refugees who had been forced to leave their countries by wars or political changes had been a matter of international concern for many years. The United Nations, its specialized agencies and individual Member States had done much to relieve the distress of the refugees and assist their resettlement. But no organization had done more in that field than the Agency, whose activities in the service of more than a million refugees had been directed for four years by Mr. Labouisse. His delegation wished to pay a special tribute to the former Director.

31. The Agency's report served as a reminder of the deep conflicts dividing the Middle East, which were all the more regrettable since the need to raise living standards in the area was abundantly clear and a peaceful settlement would release energies for economic and social development. From a humanitarian point of view the most distressing factor in the situation was the problem of the Palestine refugees who had for ten years lived in camps. It was true that their material lot had been somewhat improved as a result of the Agency's increased efficiency, but that was not enough. Their condition should never be lost sight of by the Committee.

32. Turning to the report, he pointed out, in connexion with annex H, that the Agency had experienced difficulties in exercising its functions in the host countries. The Agency was the creation of the United Nations as a whole and as such its personnel should be able to move freely in the host countries. It was to be hoped that the situation would improve.

33. With regard to the financial position of UNRWA, he noted that the difficulties faced by the Agency in 1957 had been to some extent overcome, so that it had become possible to resume the programmes of individual assistance and particularly of vocational training. Those programmes were essential, for they gave the refugees hope of leading a useful existence by learning a trade and obtaining employment. Nevertheless the total of contributions pledged for the coming year fell below the Agency's 1959 budget for relief, education and rehabilitation work. The financial burden should be spread among the greatest possible number of States. He emphasized the need to make as much money as possible available to the Agency so that it could function effectively.

34. In his report, the Director had noted that the Agency's mandate would expire in 1960 and that the General Assembly would be required to take a decision on the subject at its next session. The question of the Agency's future was of the greatest importance. There was little hope that the problem of the Palestine refugees would be solved in the near future. It was therefore unlikely that international assistance could be terminated soon. That was not an encouraging prospect for States which, like Australia, considered the tension in the Middle East to be a constant threat to the maintenance of international peace and security in the area. Moreover, no State could regard with equanimity the prospect of having to contribute to the Agency indefinitely.

35. It was against that background that the General Assembly, which by its resolution 818 (IX) had extended the Agency's mandate to 1960, would have to re-examine the question at its fourteenth session. Its

decision should be made only after careful preparation. The Australian delegation therefore believed that the Assembly should take steps towards that preparation immediately; it should undertake a study with a view to a concise and objective analysis of all the factors in the problem, including those which might not hitherto have been taken sufficiently into account.

36. In conclusion, he emphasized that it was incumbent upon the parties to recognize that the primary responsibility for seeking a peaceful reconciliation rested with them. Progress would not be possible unless they abandoned the inflexible positions they now maintained.

37. The CHAIRMAN said that if there was no objection the list of speakers would be closed at noon on Tuesday, 18 November.

38. Mr. MAURTUA (Peru) proposed that, in view of the importance of the statement just made by the Israel representative, the closing of the list of speakers should be postponed.

The proposal that the closing of the list of speakers should be postponed was adopted by 5 votes to none, with 55 abstentions.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.