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Chairman: Mr. G. de BEAUMONT France
Rapporteur: Mr. G. Perez CISNEROS Cuba

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REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS: (a) PART III OF THE PROGRESS REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS MEDIATOR FOR PALESTINE: ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES (DOCUMENTS A/648, A/689, A/689/Add.1, A/689/Corr.1, A/C.3/315, A/C.3/316) (continued):

The CHAIRMAN called for continuation of the debate on document A/C.3/315.

Mr. ANZE-MATIENZO (Bolivia) said that his resolution (document A/C.3/316) had been presented in the form of a suggestion and had been intended merely to supplement the joint draft resolution (document A/C.3/315). There was no basic difference in substance between the two documents, but his suggestion had introduced a new idea -- that of world solidarity to aid the Palestine refugees. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had supported that idea but had criticized the suggestion of a date. Mr. Anze-Matienzo had wished to dramatize the appeal by fixing some day as a symbol, but he would not insist on any particular date. Whereas the joint draft resolution wished to lay the responsibility on the Secretary-General, his suggested amendment favoured an ad hoc board. He believed that the Sub-Committee wished that such a board should be composed of experts in the field of emergency relief rather than of representatives of Governments. They should be selected somewhat as experts were chosen to serve on the International Court of Justice. The specialized agencies should undoubtedly lend their assistance, but the board should be chosen by the President of the General Assembly with the approval of that body. With regard to the necessary money recommended by the Mediator, it must be admitted that the idea that certain countries should contribute according to their capacity somewhat lessened the voluntary character of such aid. The Bolivian suggestion to organize a public collection had the advantage of associating the sympathies of the peoples of the world with a great humanitarian plan, but it would be complicated to work and it would be hard to assess the result in advance. He favoured the suggestion of the Venezuelan delegation that a certain amount of money should be set aside to amortize the advance from the Working Capital Fund. Certain specialized agencies such as the International Refugee Organization undoubtedly might gain prestige from their association with the relief plan, but it had expressed its inability at present to cope with the problem.

/Adly Bey ANDRAOS

Adly Bey ANDRAOS (Egypt) said that the functions of the ad hoc board would determine its character. The representative of the Secretary-General having said that he believed that there was no contradiction between the draft resolution and the proposal of the Secretary-General, all difficulties could be cleared up by modifying certain paragraphs of that resolution. He agreed with the representative of Bolivia that the ad hoc body should be composed of technical experts, who might be drawn from specialized agencies rather than from governments. That was not incompatible with the joint resolution. The Bolivian suggestion to associate the peoples of the world with the relief of the Palestinian refugees was excellent, but it could only be a secondary method of raising the necessary funds, because it would take a long time and its results could not be calculated in advance. The joint draft resolution should be examined before the Bolivian proposal. Such study would eliminate certain difficulties. When that had been done, the Sub-Committee would undoubtedly obtain a clearer view of the problem as a whole.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Bolivian proposal was not immediately before the Sub-Committee in the form of an amendment; but paragraph 3 was intimately linked with that of the basic resolution. That substance, therefore, could be taken into account in the discussion.

Mrs KLOMPE (Netherlands) asked whether the ad hoc board suggested by the representative of Bolivia would be set up at Beirut, Lake Success or Geneva. She also wished to know who would pay the expenses of the experts who would serve on it. She wondered, too, how the Bolivian suggestion fitted in with the instructions of the Secretary-General.

Mr. SUTCH (New Zealand) said that his delegation would like the paper being prepared by the Secretariat to contain a description of the disaster emergency operation being carried on in the Middle East, a statement on how the International Children's Emergency Fund was operating in that area at present and intended to operate in the near future, and an estimate of cash resources needed at once for unloading and local transport of supplies and payment of services, as well as a statement of what currencies would be required.

The New Zealand delegation had been greatly impressed by the Secretary-General's statement that it would not be fair to him to let him operate the relief scheme alone, and was consequently in favour of some sort of board to assist him in that enterprise. The Secretary General should carry as much responsibility as he felt he was able to, but should, whenever he wished, consult the board on questions of policy. It would be necessary for the Sub-Committee to make quite clear, however, whether or not the Secretary-General was obliged to follow the board's advice. The idea advanced by the Bolivian representative that the members of the board should be chosen on the basis of their qualifications as experts in the field of emergency relief appeared most attractive. Nevertheless, the principle of geographical distribution should not be forgotten. It would be of the greatest importance if the Sub-Committee faced squarely -- as it should -- the fact that political interests were involved and that consequently different shadings of political opinion must be represented. Any shirking of the political responsibility would merely prevent the work of relief from being done properly. In the interests of geographical distribution it might be necessary to increase the number of the board's members from the seven suggested by the Bolivian representative to eleven or thirteen, if the five great Powers were represented, as they generally were, and if other countries especially concerned were included. It might be advisable to have the board, if it were constituted, submit a report, for its comments, to the Economic and Social Council, which considered general refugee matters, and which would meet in February and in July 1949, as well as to the General Assembly.

The New Zealand delegation had not yet formed an opinion on whether a director-general should be selected by the Secretary-General or by the President of the General Assembly. It felt that discussion of other matters relating to the problem of Palestine refugees should be postponed until the question of a board had been fully considered.

Mr. DEHOUSSE (Belgium) warmly supported the Bolivian proposal in principle, for the following two reasons: the existence of a board
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would immeasurably strengthen the political and moral authority of the director of relief operations; and a board composed of experts chosen on the basis of their personal qualifications could be named while taking geographical considerations into account. The board would have before it a technical task; the fact that its members were experts would protect it against accusations of political bias.

He felt, however, that certain points in the Bolivian proposal required clarification, particularly in view of the most pertinent questions asked by the Netherlands and New Zealand representatives. Whether the proposed board was to be an executive or an advisory body was of particular importance. He was in favour of making it an executive body, as otherwise it would not have the necessary prestige, and of delineating as precisely as possible the division of responsibility between it and the Secretary-General.

The Economic and Social Council was already over-burdened with reports from numerous subsidiary bodies, and would be unable to devote to a report from the proposed board the attention it required. Such a step seemed consequently unnecessary. The important thing was to set up an efficient organ able to alleviate the acute distress of hundreds of thousands of human beings; the board suggested by the Bolivian representative would be such an organ.

Accepting a suggestion by the CHAIRMAN, Mr. ANZE MATIENZO (Bolivia) said that he would submit his proposal with respect to a board in the form of an amendment to the joint draft resolution, in order to enable the Sub-Committee to discuss that proposal fully and to take a vote on it.

Mr. RUNDALL (United Kingdom) said that, while his delegation was not yet certain what sort of board should be set up, it had formed an opinion as regarded the sort that should not be set up. It should not be an executive board, and it should not be formed on a political basis. There was urgent need of relief; to meet that need, to keep human beings alive, the simplest sort of organization should be set up as quickly as possible. The introduction of the political element would merely complicate and delay the emergency relief operations. Moreover, there would then be two bodies dealing with the political situation in Palestine. The board should take political developments into account only in so far as they affected the actual operation of the relief programme.

He agreed that the board should be composed of experts, and should be an advisory body which both the Secretary-General and the director-general

/of relief operations

relief operations, if one should be appointed, should be able to consult. The final decisions, however, should not be taken by the board.

Mr. GRUMBACH (France) reserved the right to speak more fully on the questions before the Sub-Committee after the Secretariat paper had been circulated.

The French delegation was prepared to state already, however, that it was in favour of the appointment of a director-general of the relief programme. That director-general should be appointed by, and responsible to, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who would in turn be responsible to the General Assembly and who should be **assisted by an** advisory board. As the United Kingdom representative had remarked, an executive board might delay the relief operations. Both the Secretary-General and the director-general should take into account the recommendations of that board, but should not be bound by them, as the recommendations of an advisory body could not be considered binding. Moreover, the final decision should rest with the Secretary-General and the director-general in order to enable them to act with the requisite speed. While the French delegation would prefer the proposed board not to be formed of Government representatives, it would have more to say with respect to the composition and terms of reference of that body after it had seen the Secretariat paper.

It supported the principle of voluntary contribution of funds mentioned in the joint draft resolution, and such supplementary measures as might be found necessary.

Responsibility for the emergency relief programme should be concentrated, rather than diffused. There was threefold responsibility: for delegating authority, for collecting funds, and for distributing supplies. That question could not, however, be fully discussed until the Fifth Committee had taken action in the matter.

Mr. WARREN (United States of America) said that his delegation was still questioning the necessity of having an ad hoc board, for the reasons that had been advanced for the setting up of such a board were not convincing.

It had been assumed as normal that an operation involving \$30,000,000 should be directed by a special board set up for that purpose. The present situation was not, however, a normal one. The urgency of providing food, shelter and supplies for 500,000 people within the following few months made one ask whether it was not more important actually to accomplish that task than to let women and children die while elaborate plans for
/following

following what would be a normal procedure were being made. Remembering how long it had taken to establish the International Refugee Organization, the United States delegation hesitated to support a proposal for a board in the present case, as it might mean prolonged discussions regarding composition, terms of reference, place of meeting and related questions. His delegation would not wish to support such a proposal if it meant a delay by even one day of the delivery of urgently-needed supplies.

The present situation was abnormal also in that whereas a board such as was being suggested would usually take into consideration all the circumstances related to its work, that could not be done in the case under discussion. Other organs of the United Nations were dealing with the Palestine question: the First Committee, for example, was considering the political aspects of the problem and was responsible for matters of repatriation and resettlement. The Third Committee was seized of the sole problem of providing relief and supplies for those in need. Broad questions of policy in connexion with the relief programme would not therefore be settled by a board if one were set up, for that body's competence would necessarily be limited to the direct administration of relief. If, however, the Secretary-General should appoint as a director of relief a competent administrator who knew and understood the area in which he was to work and in whom the people had confidence, the director would himself be able to decide administrative questions.

The United States delegation agreed with the French delegation that a director should be appointed by the Secretary-General and be responsible to the latter, who would, in turn, be responsible to the General Assembly. Mr. Warren hoped that the Secretary-General would not wish the General Assembly to make the appointment.

A second argument in favour of an ad hoc board had been that, without it, the Secretary-General's responsibility would be too heavy. It seemed that although the Secretary-General had ascertained that he would not be able to entrust the task to the specialized agencies, as he thought would be normal in work of the nature contemplated, tentative arrangements for the administration and distribution of supplies by expert agencies under the authority of a director of relief had been made. Mr. Warren ~~therefore~~ wondered whether the Secretary-General would still feel that an ad hoc board was necessary.

The responsibilities of the Secretary-General were not in fact as heavy as had at first appeared. According to paragraph 3 of the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/315), Governments would be requested to make voluntary contributions in kind or in funds. It was certainly natural that the

Secretariat should receive funds provided by Governments. As regards contributions in kind, they could be sent direct to the area where they were needed. The director of relief could then make the necessary arrangements with the various expert agencies that would assist in the distribution of supplies. The agencies would be strictly accountable to the director, and the director would be accountable to the Secretary-General who would, in consultation with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, as provided for in paragraph (6) of the joint draft resolution, have the final responsibility for the administration and supervision of the contributions received. Since all political aspects of the problem would be dealt with by the organs of the United Nations competent in political matters, the purely administrative responsibilities would not seem to be too heavy for the Secretary-General.

If the Sub-Committee should decide that an ad hoc board was needed, Mr. Warren strongly urged that such a board should act in a consultative capacity only. It might be possible to set up a board composed of the Directors-General of the specialized agencies concerned - FAO, WHO, IRO, ICEF -- and in a non-voting capacity, representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of Red Cross Societies, and other participating non-governmental organizations, thus avoiding long discussions on political questions that would arise inevitably if political and geographical factors were taken into consideration in selecting members of the board.

Referring to the suggestion that the Economic and Social Council should be asked to review the report of the work planned, Mr. Warren stressed the already heavy agenda of that body. A report direct from the Secretary-General to the General Assembly would be sufficient.

Mr. Warren hoped that action would be taken quickly as the urgent need was the most important of all considerations.

Mr. KOULAGENKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) moved the adjournment of the meeting.

As there was no objection, the CHAIRMAN declared the meeting adjourned.
The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.