

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRTY-FIRST MEETING

Held at Church House on Thursday, 16 May 1946, at 2.30 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. McNEIL (United Kingdom)

Continuation of the discussion on the report of the Fact-Finding
Sub-Committee (E/REF/68).

Mrs. VERWEY (Netherlands) drew the attention of the Committee to the end of paragraph 1, Appendix V, in which was given the figure of 107,000 Dutch displaced persons in the Far East. She had as yet received no instructions from her Government but was of the opinion that these persons should be classified as Dutch nationals from Indonesia awaiting transport to the Netherlands. Because of the uncertain conditions in Java and Sumatra, many would not be in a position to return there but for the purposes of accuracy a certain portion of the 107,000 could not rightly be classified as refugees or displaced persons.

Decision: In the event of the Netherlands Delegate not receiving precise figures as to the number of Dutch displaced persons in the Far East before the end of the session of the Committee, it was agreed to have included at the end of the report a Netherlands reservation on this subject.

Mrs. Verwey also indicated an omission on page 3 of document E/REF/FACT-FINDING/29, in which no mention was made of Chinese persons displaced from Indonesia. Mr. TSIEN (China) announced that he had asked his Government for information on this subject which, when it arrived, he would communicate to the Committee.

Mr. SMOLIAR (Byelorussia) emphasized the importance of the provisions contained in the Yugoslav proposed addition to paragraph 14 and formally moved that it be discussed by the Committee and voted upon.

This proposal was strongly opposed by Mr. RADOV (U.S.S.R.). To the countries of origin of the refugees and displaced persons, lists of names and particulars were of primary importance. Countless letters had been received by his Government from the families of soldiers and displaced persons about whom they had absolutely no information and yet the lists which had already been compiled by U.N.R.R.A., the I.G.C. and the military authorities must contain much that would be of immense value in such cases. It would not be necessary to know whether the persons intended to return to their countries of origin or not; nor would the completion of the registration of refugees and displaced persons raise any diplomatic issues.

Mr. MCKILLOP (United Kingdom) considered that the undertaking of a census of refugees and displaced persons would not lead to speedy repatriation and therefore he was opposed not only to the Yugoslav proposed addition but to paragraph 14 as well.

Mr. MATTES (Yugoslavia) made clear that the registration of refugees and displaced persons was not a parallel to a national census. Such a registration was undeniably necessary, and it was obvious that information would have to be verified by the governments of the countries of origin. The Fact-Finding Sub-Committee had been obliged to come to the conclusion that all the facts and figures at

its disposal were of a doubtful accuracy, and in Resolution 92 UNRRA had foreseen the necessity of a registration of the persons under its care. Even the most ingenious of officials would be unable to decide whether a person was really a bona fide refugee without the co-operation of the government of the country of origin therefore lists must be forwarded to the interested governments.

A registration would help with regard to speedy repatriation in the screening of undesirables and would form the basis for estimating accurately the numbers of refugees who would become the responsibility of the new organization.

Sir George RENDEL (United Kingdom) observed that the functions of the future refugee organization, would, if the draft Constitution prepared by the Working Group of Sub-Committee 2 were accepted, include the identification, registration and classification of persons who are to be the concern of the organization. Since all the members of the organization would be receiving reports on this work, it would be unnecessary duplication for the organization to submit them separately to individual governments.

In his view, the text proposed by the Yugoslav delegate went considerably further than the wording in the UNRRA Resolution (92) which had been quoted in its support, for it would permit countries of origin a measure of control over the decision as to who should receive assistance from the organization.

In reply, Mr. MATTES said that he fully realized that his proposed text was different from the wording of the UNRRA Resolution. At the same time, he wished to make clear that it was designed to ensure only that the results of the registration of persons receiving assistance and protection should be available to the governments of which the persons in question were nationals or habitual residents in no way did it constitute a request for control or judiciary powers over these persons.

Mr. RATOV (U.S.S.R.) stated that the discussion of the Yugoslav text had been incomplete and insufficient for a proper understanding of the issue involved which, in his view, was an extremely important one. He was therefore opposed to a vote being taken at this stage.

Decision: The CHAIRMAN, however, ruled that the Committee must, since it had little time left, come to a final decision. The Byelorussian motion was accordingly put to the vote and rejected by twelve votes to six.

Those who voted for the motion were: Byelorussia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Ukraine, U.S.S.R. and Yugoslavia.

Those who voted against the motion were: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, France, Lebanon, Netherlands, New Zealand, United Kingdom and United States.

Absent: Dominican Republic and Peru.

M. BOUSQUET (France) then proposed an amendment to paragraph 14 which would draw the attention of the Economic and Social Council to the help which the liaison officers who might become members of the mixed commissions under Appendix III, paragraph 2, could provide.

Mr. RATOV (U.S.S.R.) suggested that this amendment should include some provision requiring the Council to proceed to an immediate registration of all refugees and displaced persons, and the communication of the information obtained to the countries of origin concerned. In the debate which ensued, the Chairman ruled that the addition suggested by Mr. RATOV was out of order since it was substantially the same as the Byelorussian motion which had just been rejected. Since the French motion had met with little support, the Committee accepted its withdrawal. A further motion by Mr. LISICKY (Czechoslovakia) regarding the communication of registration data to countries of origin having been declared out of order for the same reasons as the previous U.S.S.R. amendment, it was finally agreed that the Yugoslav text should

be appended to the Rapporteur's report together with an explanation to be provided by the Yugoslav Delegation.

Ukrainian motion regarding quisling military formations in Displaced Persons camps.

Mr. BRAGIN (Ukraine) stated that the report of Sub-Committee 1 contained no reference to the existence in certain displaced persons camps in Austria and Italy of quisling military formations. Since this was, in his view, an important omission, he moved the following text for inclusion in Appendix III.

"Taking into account that a considerable number of quislings and traitors were formed into military formations by the German military command and fought during the war on the side of Germany against the Members of the United Nations, and that, up to the present moment, in many cases these formations continue to exist, the Committee considers that this is incompatible with the principles of the United Nations and asks the Economic and Social Council to request the governments concerned to disband these formations and return the quislings and traitors to their countries of origin."

In the course of discussion, it was pointed out that these military formations were more likely to be composed of prisoners of war, than refugees or displaced persons, in which case they were scarcely the concern of the Committee. A suggestion that the formal vote on this motion might be postponed so that a Working Group of Sub-Committee 1 could examine the text in detail met with little support.

Decision: A motion of closure put by the Delegate for Australia having been carried by nine votes to six, the Ukrainian motion was put to the vote and rejected by eight to six, with two abstentions. It was agreed however that the Rapporteur's report should contain an appropriate reference to the motion.

Polish proposal to append UNRRA reports C.C.S.S. 76 and
76(12) to Appendix I

In accordance with a request from Mr. Szturm de Sztiem (Poland) the Committee agreed that UNRRA reports C.C.S.S. 76 and 76 (12) (Atlantic City, March 1946) should be appended to the report of the Rapporteur.

Adoption of the report of Sub-Committee I

Subject to the above amendments, additions and reservations, the report of Sub-Committee I, E/REF/68, was adopted.

The meeting rose at 7.30 p.m.
