

It was agreed by all delegates at Atlantic City that the Conference made a useful beginning, but only a beginning of what will prove a very big job. It laid down the main lines of organization and policy, appointed the Director-General, and then adjourned to enable problems to be dealt with as they arose. One of the first problems which arises, of course, is that of securing an over-all statement of the likely relief needs of the peoples of Europe and Asia. Only when such a statement is in existence, however rough and ready it may be, can the work of allocating supplies for relief be carried out with any consistency or realism. This task, the Director-General, it is understood, is putting under way at once. The report of the Inter-Allied Committee on Post-War Requirements will prove of considerable assistance.* The signatories of the report have not claimed complete accuracy for it, but it at least provides a valuable foundation for further work. There still remain, however, two great gaps, due to the lack of information as to the requirements of Russia and of the Far East.

The second problem to come up for early consideration is the relation of UNRRA with the military. A clear understanding as to the point at which the military wish UNRRA to take over responsibility for the distribution of relief supplies will obviously be essential. This will also have a bearing on the question of supplies, for, unless respective responsibilities are clearly defined, there is a danger that both UNRRA and the military authorities may duplicate stocks to cover the same period.

CONCLUSION

One fact which was apparent at the Conference was that, despite the concerted international action which was taken, national feeling is still a potent and vigorous factor in the world, and it is important to note that all the decisions taken were specifically stated to be subject to the official consent of the Governments concerned. The national feelings of countries to-day under the enemy heel and in the territories in which UNRRA would operate found clear expression in the determination of the Governments to see that relief work is carried out through them or through their agents rather than through UNRRA machinery.

The attitude of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, was, of course, of interest following, as this Conference did, on the discussions between Mr. Molotov, Mr. Hull, and Mr. Eden at Moscow, and coinciding as it did with the meeting of Mr. Churchill, President Roosevelt, and Marshal Stalin at Teheran. The Russian delegation showed clear evidence of a desire to co-operate fully in the work of the Conference. They displayed at the same time a persistence in standing up for the points they thought essential, an attitude which could be regarded as a reflection of their realization of the new strength and international importance of their land.

The United States, also a newcomer to this "League of Nations" atmosphere, proved excellent hosts and organizers, as well as very energetic members of the Conference. The chairmanship of Mr. Dean Acheson was a model of efficiency and tact.

If one thing emerged very clearly from the discussions at Atlantic City, as well as from those which preceded it, it was that the post-war tasks of relief and rehabilitation, to say nothing of the longer term problems of reconstruction facing the world will be of such magnitude that no nation is strong enough or rich enough to tackle them alone. Atlantic City served also to bring out still more forcefully the hard fact, already heavily underscored at the Hot Springs Conference, that the world after this war will be, for a number of years at least, a world of scarcity. In it the most careful husbanding of resources and allocation of surpluses will need to be continued if the peoples of devastated countries are to be lifted quickly to anything even approximating peacetime standards of food, clothing, shelter, and basic needs inadequate as these were in many cases.

Most delegates felt that the necessary foodstuffs and other supplies for UNRRA will be forthcoming only if there is greater production in the free countries, speedier and increased production in devastated countries once they are liberated, and almost certainly some degree of continuance and even intensification of controls and rationing in the present supplying countries.

At Atlantic City attention was naturally focused on the sufferings and needs of the peoples of the occupied countries. No delegate from New Zealand could fail, however, to feel that the main responsibility for making the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration work rests on the shoulders of the supplying countries. For on the quantity of supplies which we can make available depends, more than any other factor, the health and indeed survival of millions of people, and the speed with which prosperity and peace can be established in the world.

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*The Inter-Allied Committee on Post-war Requirements was constituted under a resolution adopted by the Allied Governments at an Inter-Allied Meeting held in London in September, 1941, with a view to implementing a "common aim to secure that supplies of food, raw materials, and articles of prime necessity should be made available for the post-war needs of the countries liberated from Nazi oppression." It is now replaced by the Committee of the UNRRA Council for Europe. (Paragraph 5 of Article III of the UNRRA Agreement.)