

public esteem . . . In one way or another, the work of UNRRA is being clouded with an atmosphere, a kind of fog of unreality." On the part of many of the European Governments there is a strong disposition to regard UNRRA exclusively as a supply agency, and to retain all administrative responsibility for relief in the hands of national officials, so that the original expectations, themselves based perhaps on an unrealistic view of the possibilities, of the range and scope of UNRRA's activities, seemed likely to be disappointed, especially as the interposition of a period, provisionally estimated at six months, of military responsibility, before UNRRA assumes any active functions in any liberated area, inevitably also means a significant contraction of its scale of operations.

A more modest view of what UNRRA could or would in fact do was, in effect, implicitly accepted at Montreal. In Western Europe it is unlikely to do much more than co-ordinate the procurement of supplies—obviously a highly important function—leaving the work of internal administration very largely to national authorities; its plans for early detailed work appear to be most advanced for Greece, Albania, and Yugoslavia, and it has been reported since the Conference that satisfactory relations between UNRRA and the Yugoslav Government have still to be worked out. The position of Poland and Czechoslovakia is at present obscure, and UNRRA appears to have no information about proposed arrangements for areas now or likely to come under the control of U.S.S.R. forces, though an UNRRA mission will shortly be despatched to Moscow.

In regard to the efficiency of the work of UNRRA, as contrasted with its scope, the Council session closed on a much more hopeful note. The point was repeatedly emphasized that the time for paper planning had passed, and that it was essential to allow the Administration a substantial degree of freedom to improvise in the light of changing conditions and new information which in the nature of things could not at present be available. Supply prospects were presented in comparatively optimistic terms, and arrangements for making supplies available to UNRRA were well advanced in relation to many important commodities. The importance of UNRRA as constituting a precedent for effective international collaboration in general was also repeatedly emphasized during the discussions, and it was generally appreciated that failure, or even an inadequate measure of success, on this occasion would mean a setback to international co-operation with repercussions extending far beyond the actual scope of UNRRA's own work.

The Montreal session concluded with renewed emphasis on the dependence of UNRRA upon the continued and active support of its member States. Mr. Dean Acheson laid down three obligations which Governments ought to meet. "The first step is to complete the contributions to UNRRA . . . Perhaps of equal and even more importance than contribution of goods and funds are contributions of men and women," and, thirdly, the consent must be forthcoming from military and administrative authorities, without which UNRRA cannot operate in the territories under their control. As the Director-General pointed out in his concluding remarks, "UNRRA is not a thing of power apart from Governments; it is an agency which Governments themselves have set up to represent them, to do a job which they felt it was necessary to do." And the Chairman of the Council, Mr. L. B. Pearson, insisted at the final meeting on the overwhelming necessity for both Governments and peoples to back UNRRA to the full, "not merely with supplies and facilities and personnel, but with the full moral and political support which it is entitled to receive." UNRRA has now generated a certain independent active power of its own, but it can never operate independently of its member Governments. The constant and active support of all its members is still an urgent necessity, without which full success cannot be achieved.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

C. A. BERENDSEN.

Washington, D.C.,  
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