

1 July, 1947, and 31 December, 1948, 414,615 people were repatriated or resettled, over 1,000,000 applied for help, and more than 875,000 were classified as eligible for assistance. While refugees were leaving IRO camps at the rate of 20,000 per month at the beginning of 1949, the agency was still assisting 715,000 men, women, and children. Over 500,000 people were receiving care and maintenance, some 200,000 fewer than in July, 1947, but new admissions were being made at the rate of 8,000 per month. The Director-General estimated that a further 281,000 persons would come within IRO's jurisdiction between 1 January, 1944, and 30 June, 1950, and this would bring to 977,000 the approximate number of persons requiring assistance during that period. Of these, some 607,000 would be repatriated or resettled or would otherwise pass beyond the scope of IRO, and at 30 June, 1950, there would still be 370,000 persons to be re-established. Half of this total would comprise people who, for various reasons, could not be resettled under existing conditions.

The Director-General said that the rate of admissions was higher than had been foreseen and that applications were coming from two sources—new arrivals and people who, while they had been in the area of operations for some time, were only now seeking aid. Secondly, the rate at which refugees had been re-established was slower than had been planned. This had been due in part to shipping shortages and to the suspension by some countries of immigration programmes. The number of persons repatriated during the last twelve months had continued to decline, and for the present resettlement appeared to be the main hope for reducing the refugee problem in Europe to manageable proportions. The Organization had maintained the principle that no refugee who had valid reasons for not returning to his country of origin should be forced to do so.

On the basis of the estimates in his report the Director-General put forward proposals for the termination of the IRO programme and for future international action concerning refugees and displaced persons. When the Council discussed these proposals, suggestions were made that they could be amended to bring forward the date on which IRO should cease operations. The Council decided that, in the light of this discussion, the Director-General should submit to member Governments further recommendations on these two subjects and that they should be considered at a special session of the Council in June this year. It is possible that these discussions will result in a modification of the figures put forward in the Director-General's original estimates. The Council approved the issue of a press communique giving suggested time limits which should be observed for the liquidation of IRO and including 1 October, 1949,