

Belgum Mission

2651
BUREAU OF AERIALS (DDA)
RECEIVED

This copy *Mission - Belgium*
r Mr. Menshikov
MM

APR 12 1945

12 April 1945

TO: The Director General
FROM: Richard E. Brown
SUBJECT: Appointment of a Chief of the UNRRA Mission to Belgium

My attention has been called to the fact that in the minutes of the ERO meeting of the Administrative Council for March 11, 1945, reference is made to the designation of a Chief of the UNRRA Mission to Belgium:

"In the meantime Mr. Wrathall, Chief designate of the UNRRA Mission to Belgium, would be available on the 25th March and should leave for Belgium about a fortnight later. On arrival he should consider the question, which had been raised by SHANF, of the provision of messing and accommodation in Brussels for members of UNRRA."

Mr. Myer Cohen was supposed to undertake to obtain the necessary clearances for Mr. Wrathall in due course. His appointment was confirmed in a letter sent by Mr. Rhatigan to Mr. Menshikov on 27 March.

I am really amazed that a Chief of the UNRRA Mission to Belgium has been designated in London and should even now be already in Belgium without any formal consultation with the Headquarters and without your approval. Whatever the delegation of authority from Headquarters to the ERO, I have always understood that the selection, clearance and final appointment of the Chief of an UNRRA European Mission had to be made or at least authorized by the Director General in Headquarters. We have not the slightest knowledge on the background and qualifications of Mr. Wrathall. We don't even know his nationality. I remind you that the Chief of the small UNRRA Mission to Luxembourg was also selected by London without any formal consultation with Headquarters, and we were given to understand at that time that this would not happen again.

Also, in the same minutes of this meeting (Item 9, page 4), I see that it has been agreed that a Finance Officer should be sent at once to Belgium; the candidate proposed, Mr. Hughes, was to be appointed and sent out as soon as possible. The last previous information we had regarding the appointment of this Finance Officer referred to a Mr. E. H. Hall, whose appointment was in process apparently at the end of 1944.

The Director General

- 2 -

11 April 1945

Within the past weeks, on several occasions we have asked the London Regional Office, through Mr. Lacy, if there was anything new to report regarding the appointment of the UNRRA Mission to Belgium; it is difficult to understand why the answer was always in the negative, and yet action was taken.

I am attaching a draft cable in which I hope you will concur.

CC: Mr. Menshikov
 Mr. Lacy

RLBrown;hc

EMBASSY

LONDON

UNHCR FROM LONDON

Have read on page 4 item 9 of 67th meeting Administrative Council 280 March 11 that Mr. Wrathell, Chief designate UNHCR Mission to Belgium, would be available 25 March and should leave for Belgium about fortnight later. Appointment confirmed by Whetstone's letter to Henschelov March 27.

We concerned that this appointment made without any prior consultation with Headquarters; ^{also} we know nothing about Wrathell nationality, background, qualifications. Remind you that appointment mission chiefs must be approved by Headquarters. Please advise exact circumstances recruitment was made with all information on incumbent.

11 Portland Place
W.1.
22nd March, 1945.

NO. Y4

TO: Secretary - Administrative Council
European Regional Office.

FROM: Sir Hubert Young, Special Commissioner.

I arrived in Brussels on Wednesday the 7th March, travelling in the same air-craft as the Chief of the S.H.A.E.F. Mission to the Netherlands (Netherlands Mission), who was kind enough to put me in touch at once with the Chief of the S.H.A.E.F. Mission to Belgium (Belgian Mission). I explained to both these officers that I had been placed in charge of the emergency relief programme authorised by the Central Committee in its resolution of the 26th February and that I was anxious to find out as soon as possible whether any assistance from U.N.R.R.A. in the form of emergency welfare supplies would be welcome to the governments of Belgium and the Netherlands in order that I might include them in my programme. I said that I fully realised that the liberated areas in Belgium and the Netherlands were at present military areas and that there was no question of U.N.R.R.A. undertaking any operations in respect of them, so long as this was the case, unless desired to do so by the military authorities. At the same time it seemed clear that the precedent set in France would at some time be followed, and primary responsibility for relief be entrusted to the government concerned. This being so, it seemed desirable for U.N.R.R.A. to become acquainted as soon as possible with local conditions. The Netherlands Government in London had furnished me with a letter of introduction to the Chief of Staff of the Netherlands Military Administration (N.M.A.) and with an official request to the Netherlands Authorities in general to give me every possible help in obtaining as complete a picture as possible of conditions in liberated territory. The Belgian Government had been informed by the Belgian Ambassador in London of my proposed visit, and I had understood from him that similar facilities would be given to me in liberated Belgium. In view, however, of the terms of the reply that had been received by the E.R.O. from the S.H.A.E.F. Mission to Belgium to their request for approval to my visit, I did not propose to call upon any civil authorities unless authorised to do so. As soon as I had made the position clear, immediate steps were taken to obtain from S.H.A.E.F. the necessary authority to facilitate my enquiries. It will appear from what follows that I have received all possible help not only from the Chiefs of the two Missions and their Staff Officers, with whom I have worked in the closest co-operation, but also from all other Allied Military Officers with whom I have been brought into contact, and I wish to record here my deep appreciation of their unfailing courtesy and hospitality.

2. I spent the 8th March in establishing contacts with the Chiefs of the G-5 branches of the two Missions and of the Civil Affairs Section of the 21st Army Group. On the following day I was taken by officers of the Belgian Mission to Louvain, Spa, Liege, Malmedy and Stavelot. The 10th was spent in visiting Walcheren Island with the Netherlands Mission, who kindly arranged for me to accompany the Deputy Prime Minister's party; this gave me an opportunity of passing through Antwerp and seeing Middelburg, Flushing and Serooskerke. On the 11th I worked with both Netherlands and Belgian Missions, and also with the N.M.A. and the Allied Military Staff responsible for certain future operations. On the 12th, after again seeing Civil Affairs Officers of 21st Army Group, I accompanied the Head of the G-5 Section of the Netherlands Mission to Maastricht, Roermond, and Eindhoven, where I saw officials of the Netherlands Government and the N.M.A. and spent the night. Next day we visited Weert and Venlo, passed through an area of occupied German territory, re-visited Roermond and Maastricht, where we had spent some time the previous day, and returned to Brussels by way of Namur. On the 14th I worked with the U.N.R.R.A. officers attached to the Belgian Mission till mid-day and then drove, accompanied by one of them, to an Army Headquarters in France where I saw the Chief of G-5 of the 12th Army Group and of the Communications Zone and spent the night. Next day I returned to Brussels via Luxembourg, where I saw the Chief of the S.H.A.E.F. Mission to

Luxembourg and the Repatriation Commissioner of the Luxembourg Government. In the afternoon, I had a final talk with the Chief of the Belgian Mission and visited the Belgian High Commissioners for Repatriation and Relief. On the 16th, I visited Antwerp to observe local conditions and to see the working of the U.N.R.R.A. Queen's Messenger Convoy. I returned to London in the evening after a final talk with the Chief of the Dutch Mission.

3. The position in the liberated areas of the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg differs from that in Normandy in many respects. In the first place, these areas are all operational areas; no interior zone has been set up, and the Governments are not even secondarily responsible for planning and importing relief supplies. At the same time, it is the policy of the Supreme Commander to make as much use as possible of the local civil machinery for the purpose of civil administration. Imported supplies of food and such other commodities as it has been found possible to introduce are handed over to the civil authorities for distribution. Practically all imports for the civil population come through one port, which is entirely under military control. Even the shipping which is allocated to the two governments is handled by the military authorities, and the civil supply programme is called forward by the military supply authorities. There is thus no question of supplementary relief supplies of the nature contemplated in the U.N.R.R.A. Central Committee Resolution reaching the liberated areas of Belgium or the Netherlands in any other way than as part of the military supply programme. Another radical difference between conditions in Normandy and in the areas under review is that, in the latter, Civil Affairs detachments are in full operation, none having been withdrawn. There is therefore the closest liaison at every point between the military and the civil authorities. Four Party Conferences exist in the Netherlands and Belgium at which the import programme of civil supplies is considered by representatives of the S.H.A.E.F. Missions to the Governments concerned, representatives of the Governments themselves, and representatives of the United States and United Kingdom Supply Agencies. The programmes made out at these Conferences are, however, not immediate programmes; nor do they comprise anything like the full requirements of the Civil Governments. The policy of the military authorities has always been to bring in relief supplies only to the extent necessary to prevent disease and unrest from interfering with military operations and in this they have undoubtedly been successful, in spite of the enormous pressure upon shipping space involved in purely military demands and the adverse circumstances against which the military supply authorities have had to contend. This is not to say, however, that there is no room for the kind of supplementary help contemplated in the Central Committee Resolution of the 26th February. Not only has the effect of the military operations been to interfere very seriously with all means of internal communication and distribution, but the Governments of the liberated areas, composed as they are in many cases of officials with no great administrative experience, are not always capable of making the best use of bulk supplies placed at their disposal. Actual military demands may still at any time dislocate internal transport programmes by rail, road and water and the effect has occasionally been that in certain parts of the liberated areas even the minimum calculated by the military supply authorities as being necessary for the prevention of disease and unrest has not found its way to those for whom it is intended. It should be remembered that the Governments have no reserve upon which to draw to meet the needs of civilians in exceptionally devastated areas and that Displaced Persons may well be thrown on their hands in numbers greater than those for which their needs were originally calculated. Doubts may also arise, when armies move, as to the actual responsibility for providing supplies for a Displaced Persons Transit Centre. No pains are spared by the Officers of the S.H.A.E.F. Missions to straighten out any difficulties of this kind, but I received the impression from those with whom I discussed the matter that there was in their opinion ample scope for supplementary help of the nature outlined below.

4. I have already made it clear that the military authorities, in consultation with the Governments concerned, are importing relief supplies to an extent calculated by them to be sufficient to preclude disease and unrest among the civil population. The commodities included in the military civil supply programme are food, clothing and footwear, medical supplies, etc., for the majority of which the British armies are responsible in the areas under review though a considerable

quantity has also been imported by the American Armies. Disease and unrest have, as I have said above, undoubtedly been prevented, but only by a narrow margin in certain districts. When the estimates of civil requirements for the military period were originally presented to the military authorities, they were based not merely upon the prevention of disease and unrest, but also upon the maintenance of at least as high a standard in liberated territories as that prevailing under enemy occupation. The decision whether this standard should be aimed at or not is of course a matter for the military authorities, and in any case its attainment during the military period is not the function of U.N.R.R.A. What is, or might be the function of U.N.R.R.A. is to supplement the programme of the military supply authorities to a certain extent and within clearly defined limits. It would obviously be undesirable for U.N.R.R.A. to compete with the military supply authorities, either for supplies or for shipping or transport facilities, in order to supplement the military supply programme. The Special Emergency Programme in the case of Military areas must accordingly be worked out in consultation with the military authorities, and the consignments called forward either by them or by the governments concerned with their concurrence. It is equally undesirable that the Special Emergency Programme should deal with the type of relief supplies actually being dealt with either by the military authorities or by the governments concerned except in special cases where it might prove possible with the approval of the military authorities to provide small consignments of these commodities addressed to specific local authorities at specific places. It is important that U.N.R.R.A. Emergency Relief should not be confused with or engulfed into the main civil supply programme. There are three ways of preventing this. The first is by limiting the U.N.R.R.A. programme to items which are not included in the main programme; the second is by consigning U.N.R.R.A. supplies to specific consignees such as the H.A.R.K. in the Netherlands and Entr'Aide in France, or to specific destinations by such special means of transport as are discussed below; and the third is by ensuring, through the medium of U.N.R.R.A. personnel, that U.N.R.R.A. emergency relief reached only the persons for whom it is intended. It is essential that agreement should be reached on these three points with the authorities concerned as soon as possible.

5. I do not propose, in this report, to attempt to describe in detail the conditions in any part of the area traversed in the course of my brief tour, but only to give a general picture in order to assist the Council in laying down the general lines upon which the Special Emergency Programme is to be formulated.

The Resolution of the 26th February contemplates the Administration providing special and supplementary relief in districts in which immediate distress exists, and it was to these districts that I directed my attention during my tour. In the liberated areas of the Netherlands, these "sore spots" fall under two main categories; the areas which have been subjected to flooding, either by our own or enemy action, and those over which the fighting has passed, and in which there has been very heavy destruction in consequence of military operations. In the flooded areas, the normal military supply programme is being faithfully carried out, and the inhabitants are receiving the same rations as those in other parts of the liberated area. The Netherlands Military Administration is working efficiently, black market conditions hardly exist, and if it were not for the exceptional conditions in which the people are living, there would be no reason to take any special emergency measures. The conditions in which the people are living are, however, exceptionally miserable. Those of them who have not been evacuated are living on the tiny islands formed by the towns and villages, which are always built on rather higher ground, and are almost completely cut off from communication with the outside world. It is true that you can see a few horse-drawn carts splashing along the roads through two or three feet of water laden with the few chattels which some unfortunate person has been able to recover from his flooded dwelling, but apart from the military convoys which bring in ration supplies in bulk, there is practically no transport working along these flooded roads at all. In the areas over which fighting has passed, the inhabitants are also receiving the same rations as those in other parts of the liberated area, but here again the conditions in which they are living are exceptionally miserable. In Venlo and Roermond the percentage of houses rendered uninhabitable is something in the neighbourhood of 90%. Public utilities are not yet restored, shops are not open and the people are temporarily deprived of practically everything that makes life worth living. The eye rests

with relief on the very small number of undamaged houses in this scene of fantastic desolation, twisted girders, mountains of rubble, water-filled bomb craters, smashed windows, crumbled and stripped roofs with the tiles all swept down into a huddled heap above the parapets as if by a huge brush.

In Belgium the "sore spots" also fell under two main categories of which the first comprises Antwerp where V.l. bombs are still falling and parts of Brussels and Liege which are at present being spared. In Liege eighty thousand houses were damaged of which about twelve hundred a week are being repaired. The damage in Antwerp is considerably greater than that in Liege, and the conditions there are exactly those for which the canteens which form the Queen's Messenger Convoy were intended in the United Kingdom, an additional argument for using special equipment and supplies needed to stock them. The second category of "sore spots" in Belgium comprises such towns as Malmedy and Stavelot, which were subjected either to severe bombing or shellfire or both. Fifty per cent of the houses in Malmedy as well as the whole of the business section is completely destroyed and the population is actually more than the normal so that there is much overcrowding and distress. One hundred and forty-six persons were buried up to the beginning of this year and at that time it was estimated that there were one hundred more bodies still in the debris. At Stavelot there is practically not a single house undamaged and in spite of the efforts of the civil affairs detachment at Malmedy, whose commander is also responsible for Stavelot, there is undoubtedly a good deal of supplementary relief work that might be done.

I was not able to visit the "sore spots" in Luxembourg, but I was told when I passed through the Duchy that in a number of towns and villages such as Diekirch, Echternach, Wiltz, Grevenmacher and Remich, ninety-five percent of the houses have been damaged, thirty percent being totally destroyed. Luxembourg has suffered exceptional distress, not only in consequence of the preliminary evacuation ordered by the Allied Command (seventy thousand out of a population of two hundred and fifty thousand had to move), but also by the irruption of Rundstedt's attack and the excesses of the German troops when they subsequently withdrew. The areas through which the Germans passed were not only systematically looted when they came in but finally stripped not only of food, but also of footwear, cooking utensils, etc. when they went out. There is no doubt that U.N.R.R.A. assistance will be welcome to the three Governments concerned in respect of the population of these "sore spots."

6. The Displaced Persons in the areas covered by this report are at present the responsibility of the Military authorities. I saw at Roermond and Venlo the arrangements made for their reception and it may be of interest to give the composition of the first eight hundred who passed through Venlo, which was as follows:-

Dutch	538
Russian	113
Belgian	61
Poles	37
French	21
Italian	10
Yugoslav	8
Luxembourgais	3
Czech, Albanian, Greek,	
Lett and American (1 each)	5
Other nationalities	4
Total	800

It was not possible to say what the other four nationalities were but the Lett was being asked to find out.

About seven per cent of these Displaced Persons were women and children. There had been only four hospital cases and one child had died. There is, I think, little doubt that when the time comes for the Governments concerned to be entrusted with responsibility for Displaced Persons, there will be scope for assistance from U.N.R.R.A. on the same lines as that recently accepted by the French Government.

7. There are two spheres in which U.N.R.R.A. assistance would undoubtedly be welcome to the local military supply authorities themselves, as distinct from the Missions and the local governments. The first is that of the Displaced Persons who will be uncovered and with whom it will be necessary to deal in occupied Germany. I was told by the officer responsible to one military formation for the supply programme for these persons that certain supplementary supplies which are not included in the military supply programme, would be of the greatest assistance. Arrangements could no doubt be made for any such supplementary supplies to be made available to Displaced Persons centres at which U.N.R.R.A. teams are operating. The proposal has gone forward to higher authority and it is possible that the Administration may be invited to assist in this way.

The second sphere in which U.N.R.R.A. assistance would be welcome to the military supply authorities is in the preparation of the necessary stockpile of civilian supplies for areas not yet liberated in which conditions are known to be bad. Here again, as in the case of supplementary requirements for "sore spots," the suggestion is that supplementary supplies should be confined to those which are not being stockpiled by the Army, but of which there will undoubtedly be great need. A certain proportion of the civil population in the areas yet to be liberated is known to be living in starvation conditions. Some of the items which go to make up the special diets already worked out by the Administration for the relief of persons in this condition do not form part of the military supply programme, and if the Administration can be of assistance in planning and providing the necessary additional stocks, it will undoubtedly fulfill one of the objects which the Resolution of the 26th February was intended to secure.

A list of the supplementary supplies suggested for these two purposes is given in the Appendix.

8. The Resolution of the 26th February referred not only to supplies but also to services. I had the opportunity of seeing the work of a Queen's Messenger Convoy in a specially devastated area which was still subject to enemy action, and have no doubt that the extension of this form of assistance would be most welcome. The particular Queen's Messenger Convoy which I had the privilege of seeing at work was one of which the equipment had been loaned by the Administration to the Government concerned, and the team, which was composed partly of British and partly of local personnel, had been recruited by that Government with the help of the Administration. An agreement governing the loan of the equipment had laid down that the Government accepted full responsibility for the supply and maintenance of the Convoy, but owing to the circumstances outlined in paragraph 3 above it, it had not always been possible for this undertaking to be fully implemented. The Convoy was actually reduced to a point where it was not possible for relief to be distributed on the scale which was considered necessary for more than a few more days, and some reduction would have been inevitable if prompt action had not been taken. This appeared to me so clearly to be one of the cases covered by the Resolution of 26th February that I made immediate arrangements on my return to London, in anticipation of the Council's approval, for the collection of 30 tons of miscellaneous supplies, and informed the military authority concerned that they would be ready to be called forward in a week's time. This was one of the cases where the supplementary assistance to be given by the Administration was not confined to items outside the ordinary military supply programme, though it did include a number of such items. The condition, which I have suggested in paragraph 4 above, that in no case should any supplementary supplies of the same nature as those included in the military supply programme be provided by the Administration except under guarantee that they will be applied solely to the special conditions for which they are intended was fulfilled in this case by addressing the consignment to the local authority concerned, and informing both the S.H.A.E.F. Mission and the leader of the Convoy that this was being done. The responsible Minister of the Government concerned had already given me a very definite undertaking that any consignments so addressed would not find their way into the main supply pipe-line, and I am confident that this undertaking will be scrupulously observed.

9. A suggestion was made to me that either the Netherlands Military Administration or the Military Authorities themselves might welcome special U.N.R.R.A. teams to deal with the exceptional conditions which it is anticipated will be found in that part of the Netherlands which has not yet been liberated. I discussed this question with the Dutch Authorities at Eindhoven, and understood from them that it was more likely that individuals rather than teams would be welcome, but that some help would certainly be needed. Combined teams are being organized by the British and Netherlands Red Cross Societies and it might be possible for any U.N.R.R.A. personnel who could be made available to be drafted into these teams. The U.N.R.R.A. Health Liaison Officer at Brussels anticipated that, over and above the forty doctors and forty nurses whom he is recruiting for Displaced Persons, he should be able to recruit ten doctors and ten nurses on the same terms if they were required for work in this area. This is a matter which might be discussed with the responsible authorities.

10. Reference has been made in paragraph 4 above to the possible employment of special means of transport as a way of ensuring that U.N.R.R.A. Emergency relief should reach the persons for whom it is intended. It is unnecessary to enlarge here upon the shipping and inland transport difficulties which beset any import or distribution programme in the areas covered by this report. For the purposes of the emergency relief programme it is enough to suggest two possible methods of overcoming them. The first is by the employment of some system of air transport to selected centres in the neighbourhood of "sore spots." This has much to recommend it, the chief advantages being the speed and directness with which consignments can be carried, the avoiding of double or treble handling and the possibility of using simple containers, such as palliasses cases for clothing, and even of loading without containers at all, as in the case of blankets, bivouac tents, outboard motors and the like. The only disadvantage is expense, and this would in many cases be outweighed by the advantages. Another possible method might be some system of transporting loaded lorries and returning empties in landing craft. This system would have the same advantages as the use of air transport. The main disadvantage would be the necessity for setting up a transport organization to work it.

11. I have said in paragraph 3 that the Joint Supply problem is being dealt with by the Military Authorities in consultation with the National Government by means of the Four Party Conferences, and I do not suggest that there is any executive function that the Administration could usefully fulfill in this respect, since it is clearly desirable that there should be no over-lapping or confusion of function. It is, however, very desirable, in order to secure this, that the Administration should be taken fully into the confidence of both the Military Authorities and of the Government concerned. There cannot fail to be a very close relation between the problems which are being dealt with on the one hand by the Military Authorities in consultation with the Governments, namely, the joint supply arrangements, and those with which the Administration will be charged in carrying out the Special Emergency Programme. If it is accepted that this Programme should be limited in the manner which I have suggested in paragraph 3 it is of vital importance that the Council should know exactly what is being done and contemplated by the Military Authorities. This end could well be achieved by the addition of the necessary U.N.R.R.A. representation to the Four Party Conferences, and I strongly recommend, as I have already done in the case of France, that any invitation to participate should be accepted. I am told that one of these Conferences is already beginning to form Sub-Committees to deal with the various relief commodities, and it appears to me that investigations and estimates which have already been made by U.N.R.R.A. should be of great assistance to these bodies in arriving at their own results.

12. I have had some difficulty in drafting this report in time for its consideration by the Council at its meeting of the 22nd March since there has been some delay in the arrival of my notes and papers. I shall, however, be glad to answer any questions and to submit any further report that may be desired.

APPENDIX

SUPPLEMENTARY SUPPLIES WHICH MAY BE REQUIRED BY
MILITARY SUPPLY AUTHORITIES

- (a) clothing and footwear items not included in normal demands;
- (b) blankets and paper sleeping bags;
- (c) any other clothing items such as used garments contributed for relief in the U.K. which are now, or will shortly be, found to be surplus;
- (d) tents and bivouacs;
- (e) sewing and mending material;
- (f) food items not included in normal demands;
- (g) items of medical supplies and comforts not included in normal demands;
- (h) miscellaneous items of a type required for camps containing large numbers of DPs of both sexes, and all ages and nationalities.

Belgian Mission

9 January 1945

TO: B. Eckhaus

FROM: Louis R. Franck *LR 7*

SUBJECT: Appointment of an Industrial Rehabilitation Officer
on the UNRRA Mission to Belgium.

I sent you yesterday a short memorandum covering the question of the appointment by the Washington Headquarters of the Industrial Rehabilitation Officer on the UNRRA Mission to Belgium.

I said at the end of this memorandum that Mr. McMillen was to take the question with Mr. Day and the people of the Bureau of Supply, and that it had been understood we would be informed yesterday evening.

I have called several times on Mr. McMillen today, but without any results and no decision has been taken as yet by the Bureau of Supply.

I was told that Mr. Day wanted to reconsider the question and that we would be notified as soon as a decision would have been reached.

Let me remind you that the London cable, which asked us for a final decision on this Industrial Rehabilitation Officer, was dated January 4, and that I got it on January 6.

ALLRFranck/cl

Japan Mission
BUREAU OF AREAS (D.D.G.)
RECEIVED

8 January 1945

JAN 9 1945

TIME _____

TO: B. Eckhaus
FROM: Louis R. Franck
SUBJECT: Appointment of an Industrial Rehabilitation
Officer to Belgium

You have probably seen Cable 34, dated January 4, 1945, from London, referring to the post of Industrial Rehabilitation Officer on the Mission to Belgium, and asking to cable the approximate date by which the selected officer would be available for London.

The story is as follows:

On November 18, 1944, we sent to London a cable 936 suggesting the appointment of Oscar Wells, United States citizen, of Hungarian extraction, for Industrial Rehabilitation Officer to Belgium.

Later on, by a cable 992, of November 25 1944, we recommended the appointment of Mr. William Straube as Director of Industrial Rehabilitation in Norway.

Later on, we sent on December 13 an Airgram to London giving the complete background of Mr. Oscar Wells and of Mr. Straube.

Of course, the suggestions concerning these Industrial Rehabilitation Officers were made by the Bureau of Supply (Mr. McMillen).

On December 18, 1944, Mr. ~~Corner~~ sent to Mr. Corson a memorandum regarding the Washington recommendations on the country Mission budgets. This memorandum came from London.

It said that it was felt in London that Mr. Wells, who is 64 years old, was probably too old and too specialized in experience in transport to handle the Industrial job in Belgium, and they suggested that Washington should consider Straube or someone else for this position.

Straube himself would be free to go to Norway because London preferred to recruit Boweter as Industrial Rehabilitation Officer for Norway.

To sum up, we had suggested Wells for Belgium, and Straube for Norway. London refused Straube for Norway and suggested him instead of Wells for Belgium.

This morning, I called on Mr. McMillen, who was not free last Saturday; Mr. McMillen told me he was working on the case and intended to discuss once more the question with Mr. Day today.

But his own feeling was that we should insist on Wells; although 64 years old, he is far from too old.

Anyway, Mr. McMillen must let me know sometime this afternoon.

A:LRFranck/cl
8 January 1945

E.R.O. 14

REPORT TO E.R.O. FROM THE BELGIAN MISSION

FOR THE MONTH OF JULY 1945
=====

Belgian mission - 271

I. MISSION

a) Movements

Mr. Hughes (Finance Officer) returned to Brussels from E.R.O. on the 9th July.
Mr. Wrathall left for E.R.O. on the 20th July and returned on the 28th.

b) Visits

Sir Fredrick Leith Ross arrived in Brussels on the 16th inst. from the Hague and left for Luxembourg on the 19th July. During his visit he stayed at the British Embassy and I attended several conferences with him with various Belgian Ministers. Prof. Struthers arrived in Brussels on the 27th July on his way through from Germany. He visited Luxembourg and returned to Brussels on the 30th, whence he left for London on the 31st July.
Dr. Sawyer, Director of UNRRA Medical Services, called in Brussels on 31st July on his way back to London from Germany.

c) Staff

The following additional staff were engaged:

- a) Mission: one chief Messenger (British)
- b) for Displaced Persons work at the Mission: two bookkeepers (Belgian)

2. COMMUNICATIONS

a) Telephone

The arrangements which I reported in my report of June 1945 are still operating and are working satisfactorily. During this month however SHANF has been liquidated and the telephone service has been maintained by CALA.

b) Cables

Since SHANF was liquidated, all our cables are now sent through HQ Brussels Garrison. Up to now, we have had no complaints or difficulties.

c) Letters

Official mail still is sent through the Foreign Office channels and is received regularly on this side. We are also acting as forwarding office for all official correspondence from E.R.O. for Luxembourg and occasionally Holland. The courier arrangements which SHANF had installed are now being carried on by the new military organisation.

d) We are however being inundated with a lot of personnel correspondence and parcels for members of UNRRA teams now in Germany. Those for teams with the 21 Army Group are being sent to Mr. O'Driscoll who is UNRRA Liaison with HQ L of C in Brussels. Those for personnel in the American zone are being sent through the military channels and it is hoped that they are reaching their destination.

3. RELATIONS WITH BELGIAN GOVERNMENT AND
MILITARY AUTHORITIES

a) Belgian Government

Our relations with the Belgian Government continue to be satisfactory. When Sir Fredrick Leith Ross was here, I had occasion to meet a number of Ministers whom I previously contacted and the general atmosphere was that they would be only too pleased to do anything they can to help UNRRA. I am however still waiting for two decisions from the Belgian Government:

1) the publication in the Moniteur, regularizing this Mission's status in Belgium in accordance with para 32 and 34 of the Resolutions of Policy. Although this has not yet been completed, I am informed on the telephone that it is their intention to do so. As soon as this is completed, our status in Belgium is definitely fixed.

2) the question of the liability to Belgian taxation and social insurances contribution of members of UNRRA teams recruited in Belgium. Although I have not had a definite reply to my official application, dated 2nd June 1945, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on this matter, I have seen a copy of a letter which the Minister of Finance has written to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. This lays down that as far as taxation is concerned, Belgian recruits are liable for taxation but we are under no obligation to collect these at source. As soon as official confirmation of this is received, it will be notified.

b) Military authorities

The Mission's relations with the Military are reasonably good but whatever facilities we get, are not considered as being due to UNRRA but are only obtained by personal contact with the various officers. We are receiving considerable help from a great number of the military departments, but unfortunately it is all on the basis of personal favours and not on the fact that we are entitled to anything. Although we have not received any official written intimation to this effect, we have been told by a number of officers in departments that with the liquidation of SHANF, the Army were absolved from any undertaking with regard to UNRRA, as the agreement between SHANF and UNRRA was not recognized by the military authorities now in power. This was reported to Mr. Levison by me when in London and I was assured by him that this was not the case and that the American and British Armies had asked for UNRRA to continue on the same conditions as with SHANF.

It would appear therefore that the present situation on the Continent is the same as existed before, i.e. that while at the top there is a complete understanding between UNRRA and the Military, the information has not reached the military personnel in the field and I confirm my request that this matter be dealt with immediately as otherwise the situation of UNRRA personnel in the field will be an exceedingly difficult one. I am pleased to report however that these instructions are slowly filtering through, but whereas they have reached one or two military units, the others are still without any information on the subject.

4. RECRUITING

As I informed you in my June report, recruiting in Belgium for Granville stopped in June. We have however still 120 people who have been recruited and who have been paid by UNRRA since the 1st July, but who are still here in Belgium. I have tried on many occasions to obtain movement order for these recruits to enable them to leave for Granville, but without result. Full details as to the numbers and classes of these recruits have been sent to Paris and also to Mr. Mac Gill at SHANF Main. I hope that I shall be able to send them all to Granville in the near future and thus close down the recruiting branch of the Mission. Many of the recruits are very dissatisfied at the delay in sending them to Granville, as they are beginning to wonder whether they are really going to be taken on at all, although they are being paid at the moment.

5. TRANSIT CAMPS AT LOUVAIN AND HATTERT

Since my last report, a new transit camp for teams from Granville has been formed at Hattert in Holland and is now in full operation. Teams from Granville go first to the transit camp at Louvain and eventually are sent on to Hattert. Very few teams indeed leave the Louvain camp for Germany direct.

I understand that the camp at Hattert is a good one and that it is being well run under Mr. Vandeveld of UNRRA. However as this is under the 21st Army Group, no doubt E.R.O. will know the exact position. In order to make the camp more comfortable, I made the same arrangements for Hattert as I did for Louvain, i.e. supply them with wicker arm chairs and other small amenities which were much appreciated, the cost of which was debited to our Brussels DP account.

6. REASONS FOR DISSATISFACTION OF TEAMS FROM GRANVILLE

a) During the month, before the Hattert camp was fully operating, the camp at Louvain was very congested. Further, there was a considerable amount of dissatisfaction among the teams there, owing to the complete failure of Granville to provide them with the necessary military identity papers, pay-books etc. before they left. I received a delegation from a number of directors who represented the whole of the teams at Louvain, who informed me that until they got the necessary identity papers to enable them to go into Germany without being arrested or stopped on the way, they did not intend to leave Louvain. I also was contacted by the Officer in charge at Louvain and I eventually saw SHAEF and on my own personal responsibility and signature I was able to obtain AEF passes for the whole of the teams. I had to vouch for the integrity of every member, which I did, knowing that each recruit before being enrolled, should normally have been approved by the security branch of his own Government. Between 400 and 500 of such passes were issued and in this way the teams were able to proceed.

This however is only a stop-gap and is not a definite solution to the lamentable conditions under which teams are being sent forward by Granville. I contend that whatever it was possible for me to do with the military authorities here, could easily have been done by Granville with the military authorities in France and save all the trouble and discontent.

It was also reported that the teams, before leaving Granville, in reply to a request for these papers, were told that they would receive them in Brussels, together with canteen facilities, pay-books etc. etc. This of course was absolutely wrong as there have never been any arrangements in Brussels for this and it is not this Mission's work to do it.

With regard to canteen facilities, it was eventually arranged with the military here that NAAFI supplies could be purchased for the two camps for the use of the members of the teams. To this end, I advanced money to enable the initial purchases to be made. This was a loan and has since been repaid.

b) Discipline

Owing to their dissatisfaction, the teams got a bit out of hand and definitely disobeyed the camp commandant at Louvain's orders. This was reported to me and I reported it to Mr. Rhatigan at E.R.O. who instructed me to do what I could to put it right. I then saw the Officer in Charge at HQ L of C, which is the 21st Army Group contact in Belgium, and with his approval I proceeded to Louvain and addressed the whole of the teams. I told them they were under the Army and that any disobedience of orders forthwith would be severely dealt with in the following manner:

- 1) The camp Commandant would suspend any delinquent and report to the O/C HQ L of C.
- 2) If the latter considered the charge a serious one, he would order the delinquent to be returned to Granville and issue the necessary movement order.
- 3) In the event of the preceding paragraph being applied, I should be informed immediately of the decision, upon which I would instruct Granville that unless the delinquent reached Granville within 4 days of receiving his movement order from HQ L of C, his pay was to be stopped forthwith.

Since the talk I had with the teams and these new regulations were put into force, there has been no trouble whatsoever. My only fear however is that, unless instructions backing up this decision were given to Granville and that drastic action was to be taken against a delinquent, the above attempt to instill discipline would be useless. I hope that such instructions were given.

c) Cash advances

For the whole of the month of July, this office has been inundated with members of UNIRA teams who are without funds and who have been unable to obtain any since leaving Granville. On instructions from E.R.O. therefore, advances have been made. Some days as much as 50,000 to 60,000 fr have been paid out in items of 25. This again should not have been necessary, had there been an efficient organisation at Granville. I have been informed on many occasions that arrangements were being made

to deal with the question of payment in the field, but unfortunately there is no evidence whatsoever yet of this having been done.

d) Mechanical transport

The condition of the motor vehicles which are sent up with the teams from Granville is deplorable. Many of them break down long before they reach even Brussels and those that do arrive have nearly all to be put into a R.E.M.E. workshop for repairs. The bulk of them arrive here without any tools whatsoever. Surely, with the staff now at Granville, this could be avoided.

e) In my opinion, the bulk of the responsibility for the dissatisfaction among the teams sent up from Granville, is due entirely to the lamentable manner in which the teams were sent out by Granville. There is excellent material in all the teams, the bulk of which are imbued with the UNRRA spirit and it is such shortcomings as detailed above that do more to kill the UNRRA spirit than anything else.

7. COLLECTION AND STORAGE OF FIRST PROCUREMENT SUPPLIES IN ANTWERP

I have reported both in writing and verbally as to my reactions to the new organisation which has been set up in Antwerp for the collection and distribution of First Procurement supplies for the UNRRA depots in Germany. This organisation has commenced to function but I do not think that the importance and the size of the job have been appreciated and further, I am of the opinion that it is impossible for this to be a success, unless the staff is considerably increased. To handle this satisfactorily needs experts in storage and collection and knowledge of local conditions. I mention this simply as a confirmation of my previous reports on the matter and further, as I understand that supplies are wanted in Germany as quickly as possible.

I also would put on record that whereas my responsibility in this matter ends after I have given full instructions to Major Brokenshire for the collection of the procurement supplies which I purchase for E.R.O. in Belgium, I am being asked continually for assistance in matters which have nothing whatever to do with me and which should be dealt with by those responsible for the new organisation.

Everything that I can possibly do for them has been done in the way of billeting, rations etc. etc. but once they are definitely established, this organisation should stand on its own feet.

8. EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

On the 30th July, I was informed by the Belgian Economic Mission here of the arrival of 2502 bales of second hand clothing on the s/s WILLIAM PIPPERELL from America. I had no previous intimation as to the shipment of these goods, nor had E.R.O. This clothing has however been handed over to the Belgian Government by me on instructions from E.R.O., but I again would point out that misunderstandings and delays could be avoided if the ordinary practice of advising the consignee in advance of any material that may be shipped, could be followed.

Apart from the above, to my knowledge, there have been no other emergency supplies sent to Belgium since the inception of the Mission, either free gift or chargeable, with the exception of three small lots of emergency food supplies, totalling 8 tons 13 cwt which were consigned to the Belgian Ministry of Public Health, 2 Place Royale. I have never been informed whether these are a free gift or not and up to date, these goods have not yet been received by the Ministry in question.

Is it not possible for this Mission to be notified in plenty of time as to the despatch of any emergency supplies to this country, giving full details as to whether they are chargeable or not and if the former, the Price at which they are sold in Sterling, so that the equivalent Belgian francs can be collected for the Mission's finances.

The three lots referred to above are alleged to have been shipped in June, but the advice-notes were only sent to this office by Mr. Hughes on his return from England on July 8th.

13394

9. MOTOR TRANSPORT

The whole of the work of this Mission is being considerably restricted owing to the lack of transport. We have one station waggon at the moment and this is fully occupied locally in attending the Mission's requirements, meeting people at the airport, collecting rations etc. Mr. Hughes, Finance Officer to this Mission, has recently been instructed to install and supervise an accounting procedure in the Holland and Luxembourg Missions. It is impossible for him to do this without a car. Dr. Vine, medical officer, also supervises the medical side of Luxembourg and Holland and he too has no means of transport. Application has been made for two additional vehicles for this Mission weeks ago and both were promised. Further, Major Brokenshire, who has now taken over the storage and reforwarding of 1st Procurement supplies from Antwerp to Germany, is also without motor transport and consequently makes considerable calls on the Mission car.

On the 6th July, we were informed that sufficient vehicles to meet our requirements were ready in London for shipment, but unfortunately on the 30th of this month, the cars were still where they were on the 6th July in London. When I was over in London last week, I went to the War Office myself and arranged very quickly for one car to be shipped to Belgium and I understand that it left yesterday, July 31st.

Another point which has held up the work is that all the stationery required for the setting up of the financial procedure for Luxembourg and Holland was ready in London and was promised to be shipped in the car for the Brussels Mission on July 6th. This stationery is still in London, although I have been informed on the phone today that it was shipped last night.

Surely some better arrangements can be made for shipment than these and if it can be of any assistance to our shipping department, I would suggest that they get in touch with Mr. Grout, Port and Transit Control, Ministry of War transport, Barclay Square, London.

I understand also that the E.R.O. forward office at Frankfurt has also been expecting cars on the same consignment since July 6th and they too are without any means of transport.

10. DP TEAM FOR ALLEGED BRITISH COLONIAL AND AMERICAN DP's WHICH ARE BEING DETAINED IN BRUSSELS PENDING INVESTIGATION

The Camp at Chateau Lambert was installed on the 9th July and is working very satisfactorily. Brussels Military Garrison are very satisfied indeed with the UNRRA team under Mr. Walls. Some slight changes are necessary in the team and are being dealt with, but on the whole it is doing a good job.

I had asked originally for a special hand-picked team from London but owing to the fact that the Military wished us to take over before I had any news of the team from London, I selected one with the permission of the 21st Army Group from Louvain.

Since then, I have had telegrams from E.R.O. that Granville was instructed to send up a team for this camp, but up to now this team has not yet materialized and is not wanted.

11. PROCUREMENT IN BELGIUM

The only purchases made on behalf of E.R.O. in Belgium since those detailed in my June report, are 10,000 packs of playing cards.

I have however received a further request for the purchase of additional articles and am hopeful in being able to purchase in the near future the following:

- 40 tons of steel screws
- 40 tons of chequered head wire nails
- 75,000 yards of cotton tape
- 10,000 pairs of scissors

These are not yet confirmed but I have received authority from the Minister of Economic Affairs that they will authorize the purchase.

1335

12. CORRESPONDENCE FROM E.R.O. TO LUXEMBOURG
AND DUTCH MISSIONS

We are still continuing to act as letter-box between E.R.O. and the above two Missions and I understand from both that this method of reforwarding E.R.O. correspondence from here is more satisfactory than before. I note however that in the near future the correspondence for the Dutch Mission will be forwarded through the F.O. bag to Holland.

13. FINANCE

I attach herewith Mr. Hughes, Finance Officer to the Mission's report on the financial position and suggested improvements.

14. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ELIMINATION OF THE MANY
DIFFICULTIES WITH WHICH THIS MISSION HAS BEEN
FACED OWING TO THE LACK OF A CENTRAL ORGANISATION
TO DEAL WITH ALL PERSONNEL QUESTIONS. PAYMENT IN
THE FIELD. DISMISSAL ETC.

Attached herewith is a copy of a report that was submitted to E.R.O. some time ago and which, if adopted, in our opinion would solve a lot of existing difficulties and irregularities and would save considerable amount of unnecessary trouble and considerable expense to UNRRA.

(sgnd.) W.P. WRATHALL

Chief of Mission

1st August 1945.

COPY.

Grand'Place 18

12th July 1945.

To: D.D.G. Operations, E.R.O. London

From: W.P. Wrathall, Belgian Mission.

For the attention of Col. KATZIN, Administration.

In the light of our recent experiences in Belgium and as the result of some consideration of the problems that have confronted us already in this Mission in dealing with the persons recruited under the D.P. operations, we think some of our conclusions may prove of use to you at the present stage of reorganisation.

In recent days, the flood of D.P. personnel that call at the Mission with all sorts of problems and, in particular for advances of pay, have reached fantastic proportions, so much so that we have become all hopelessly inundated and the normal work of the Mission has practically come to a standstill.

Not the least of these problems have been those arising out of terms of service, all of which need considerable consideration at the present stage; problems that will increase in complexity in the course of time as well as in number.

For instances, we are already having cases of resignation notified at present by Granville with a simple request that we reclaim from the person in question his equipment and uniform. But we have no knowledge here of the details of the articles we should reclaim. We are also unaware of what other claims may outstanding against this person, and, thereby, how long we should retain his Provident Fund contributions against eventual liabilities. There arise all the problems connected with conditions of service and release which only an official with experience in the Establishment Division can solve.

Our impressions lead us to expect that there will be a considerable increase of such cases in the very near future and we are very concerned that steps should be taken immediately to meet the problem in good time.

At present, the dossiers of Belgian and Dutch recruits are being held temporarily at the respective Missions to facilitate the compiling of financial records and Personal Earnings Cards. We suggest that it would be an opportune time to create a new Personnel Section for D.P. Operations immediately at the rear of the new organisation for the control of teams in Germany in a town strategically situated both for lines of communications, recruitment of local labour and offering good chances of finding accommodation.

Liege suggests itself as the most appropriate place fulfilling all these requirements. To Liege could be advised all the changes effected by the forward executives in status of personnel. Here could be recorded all the details necessary concerning leave, sickness, resignations and issues of kit, etc. and from there the directives could be easily issued to the Finance Sections established at The Hague, Brussels and Paris, responsible for the payments of allotments to dependents. From Liege the Pay books could be issued and carried to the forward teams and all the arrangements made for the payments due in the field.

We are convinced that this step should be taken without delay. The files held in The Hague, Paris and Brussels, could be systematically moved forward to create the new department in an orderly manner and the new organisation could be inaugurated and brought into efficient operations well within the next two months with the least amount of friction.

In the meantime, we think that it should be more than politic to attach to the Mission in The Hague and Brussels, to handle and coordinate all the present problems arising daily in connection with conditions of service referred to above, someone from Establishments Division who is well versed in procedure and policy in relation to staff problems. Such officials properly authorised, could not only give the necessary guidance to Finance Sections concerned but could also prepare the records in readiness to moving forward with them to the new DP Staff Records Section to be created.

13354

The foregoing has been discussed by all the Officers of this Mission in the light of their separate experiences and they are all unanimous that this is the only practical solution to overcome the existing chaotic conditions now ruling and to avoid a complete breakdown in the future.

It is generally felt that unless something along these lines is immediately introduced, UNRRA will be unable to cope with its increased responsibilities when taking over from the Military. It would also facilitate the saving of large sums of UNRRA's resources and remove the danger of financial chaos during eventual liquidation and demobilisation.

WF WRATHALL

Chief of Mission.

13394

CONFIDENTIAL

Belgian Mission 27

REPORT TO E.R.O. FROM THE BELGIAN MISSION
FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 1946

1. RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT.

It has not been necessary for us to contact the Belgian Government Departments during the month of February on any important matter. We do, however, continue to receive every assistance and our relations with them are entirely satisfactory.

2. RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE MILITARY.

Everything is working smoothly with the military authorities. There have been several changes here in that:

- (a) the American Chan Base HQ has closed down and a considerable number of American troops have left the country. There are, however, still isolated American Army Units, especially those relating to supplies of rations and POL supplies. As, however, we are in the British Zone, we have had very little call on the American Army recently, with the exception of rations and petrol supplies for the new Surprop set-up in Liege and Antwerp.
- (b) With regard to the British Army Units, the HQ L of C is still in Brussels, although the Civil Affairs branch closed down on the 28th February. We are, however, working in complete harmony with the remaining military authorities and are receiving every assistance and co-operation. At the moment, it is not foreseen that there will be any change in the British military set-up in Brussels for some time.

3. SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION.

We have not had any further supplies to Belgium since the last report, although I am informed that a further 250 tons of gift clothing is allocated to Belgium in the near future. This will be distributed through the usual Committee set up for the purpose and a report will be sent in due course as to how the goods have been allocated by this Committee. We have recently reported to E.R.O. and Washington as to how all the previous shipments were distributed in Belgium and a further detailed breakdown of the recipients will be sent in the near future.

We have had a small consignment of milk which was on a selling basis for the Ministry of Public Health. This consisted of 4 tons and was greatly needed by them.

4. SERVICES PROVIDED WITH UNRRA RESOURCES.

- (a) Welfare: There have been no further supplies of clothing or any other welfare supplies to Belgium during the month.
- (b) Displaced Persons:
 - (1) There is no exact figure available at the moment of the number of displaced persons in Belgium, but we understand that the figure is very little over 1000 of all nationalities at the moment. The repatriation of these persons is in the hands of the Belgian Repatriation Committee.

- (b) (2) The number of visits to this office have declined somewhat during the month, but still total 716 during the month of February. As explained previously, each visit requires investigation on some point or other and all were dealt with.
- (3) Recruiting has virtually stopped in this Mission owing to the fact that it would appear that we have almost exhausted every type of personnel required. This we find is principally due to the fact that a number of foreign firms are returning to Belgium to recommence their business and many people now prefer to take on a permanent job rather than a temporary one with UNRRA, although probably from a financial angle the UNRRA proposition might be the most attractive. We have advised E.R.O. and Arolsen of this as it is only right that they should know the position and if they are able to recruit elsewhere, they should do so. We do, however, occasionally have applications and if the applicant appears to us of the type required by UNRRA, we then submit them to E.R.O. and Arolsen.
- (c) Health: Attached herewith is Dr. Torgo's report for the month of Febr, which is self explanatory. Dr. Torgo still continues to do good work in collaborating with the Ministry of Public Health here.
- (d) Terminations of DP personnel: We are still receiving regularly a number of terminations from DP personnel in the field. The number terminated during the month of February is 31. We do our best to terminate these people financially as quickly as possible, but we are still awaiting in many cases final figures from Haaren and, in every case, a decision as to the question of the £50 clothing allotment. Until we have a ruling on the latter point and we receive the definite accounts from Haaren, the actual final payment to the terminated personnel must be delayed, which is regrettable.

5. GENERAL SITUATION IN BELGIUM.

- (a) Food: While the question of the official rationing of food in Belgium is quite good, there has been a slight set back recently in regard to the quality and the quantity of the bread. The question of quality however is understandable in view of the world shortage of wheat and even at the reduced bread ration there is ample for all. There has been little change in the question of the other rationed foods and the principal shortages still continue to be milk, meat and fats in that order. In the black market, however, there is no shortage of anything whatsoever, provided one can pay the price.
- (b) Industry: Belgium continues to make good strides in industry generally, although there has been a set back in the coal production which, if maintained, will affect the whole of the national industry. The daily output of coal has dropped considerably and although I have not got it officially, I understand it is now down to 70,000 to 75,000 tons a day. I understand also that there is a possibility of the 40,000 German prisoners of war now working in the Belgian mines being withdrawn in a few months. If this is so and the Belgians do not obtain other miners to replace them, the situation in the coal industry may become acute. As soon as final figures are available and the policy is known, you will be informed.
- (c) Enclosed herewith are two copies (one of which is sent to ERO. and the other to Washington) of the Bulletin d'Information et de Documentation published by the National Bank of Belgium in November which is considered one of the most reliable of its kind. It gives an excellent picture of the general trend of business and finance in Belgium, although unfortunately it is always two or three months behind.

6. ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE MISSION.

- (a) Since the last report, there has been no change actually in the Mission with the exception that towards the end of the month the UNRRA Liaison and Communication units in Belgium, which were separate and distinct from the Mission in the past, came under the Mission. This coincides with the closing down of the HQ I of C Civil Affairs Unit here. I also submitted to ERO that two grade 11 Officers were not necessary for the Communications and Liaison work and I proposed to substitute the two existing officers by one Junior Officer Grade 10. This has been approved, but not yet put into operation, although the Communications Officer in question has already returned to ERO for reassignment or termination.
- (b) The staff carry out their duties well and loyally.
- (c) Certain important changes are due to take place in this Mission in the near future in that both the Chief of Mission, Mr. Wrathall, the Finance Officer, Mr. Hughes, and the Executive Officer, Mr. Fishbourne, are due to leave the Administration's service in the near future. The date fixed for the two former is March 15th and for the latter April 15th. Although application was made for Mr. Fishbourne to succeed Mr. Wrathall as Chief of Mission, which was agreed by Washington and ERO, circumstances beyond his control have since arisen which make it impossible for him to take it on. I notice that communications are still being sent in from Washington addressed to W.J.C. Fishbourne as Chief of Mission, which of course should be remedied. At the time of writing, nothing has yet been decided with regard to the successor as Chief of Mission, nor has any Finance Officer been appointed to succeed Mr. Hughes. Consequently, neither will be able to get away on the 15th March as arranged.

7. ATTACHMENTS.

- (a) Distribution of supplies: nil
- (b) Use of proceeds from UNRRA supplies: nil
- (c) Registration, repatriation and care of Displaced Persons: no statistics have been received since the liquidation of the Military DP Branch.
- (d) Personnel of Mission: See para 6.
- (e) Additional: a) Health report made out by Dr. Torgo
b) Statistical report issued by the National Bank of Belgium.
- (f) The Mission's Financial Officer's monthly report.

W.P. Wrathall

W.P. WRATHALL

Chief of Mission.

12th March, 1946.

copy

REPORT TO H.R.O. FROM THE BELGIAN MISSION
FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY 1946

1. RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT

We continue to get every assistance from the different departments of the Belgian Government which from time to time we have to contact. The only matter of import which concerns the Government during this month has been the question of the concessions which under Resolutions Nr 32, 34 and 36 they were to grant to UNRRA in Belgium. The full report of this has been sent on to H.R.O. and speaking generally, Belgium have complied with their undertaking in respect of the three resolutions.

2. RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE MILITARY

We continue to receive every assistance from the Military on the conditions laid down in the new agreement between the Administration and the British military authorities. Certain changes have taken place with regard to some of the military offices in Brussels, especially the HQ L of C Civil Affairs department. This is closing down on the 17th of this month. We are however in contact with the remaining military units with whom we shall have to negotiate on UNRRA matters.

With regard however to the liaison between this Mission and the Military, a proposition was put forward from this office, suggesting that instead of having a Liaison Officer attached to the Military and working inwards with the Administration, he should be a member of this Mission and under this Mission's orders. Up to now, the Liaison Officer has always been directly under Frankfurt. Further, there is not a full time job for a Military Liaison Officer and we have further suggested that the same officer would undertake to run the Communications under this Mission. I have been informed that the proposition has been agreed by the Deputy Director of Operations in Germany and I am now waiting for London to confirm this. This change however will mean that the Administration can dispense with two grade 11 Officers to be replaced by one of grade 10.

3. SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION

No further supplies have been delivered to Belgium by UNRRA during the month of January. We were however informed that a consignment of secondhand clothing was shipped by s/s SAMUEL BAKER of between 1000 and 1100 tons from America. This however was claimed by DP Operations Germany who are in the process now of taking delivery.

A further shipment consigned to UNRRA Belgium arrived in Antwerp by the s/s ORANGE NINE from Australia, consisting of secondhand clothing and shoes. No details of this consignment have been received by this office and we are now waiting for instructions from H.R.O. on this matter.

4. SERVICES PROVIDED WITH UNRRA RESOURCES

a) Welfare: As no additional supplies have been received in Belgium from UNRRA, there has been nothing for the Comité de Repartition de Secours to distribute. We have however received during this month from the above Committee a breakdown as to how all the various consignments of secondhand clothing received during 1945 were distributed in Belgium. Several Welfare Organizations were used, namely: "Fonds National de Secours aux Sinistres"

" Ministry of Public Health", " Oeuvre Nationale de l' Enfance". The Belgian Government at the same time expressed their gratitude for the gifts in question and would like the donors to know how very much they were appreciated by the nationals of this country.

b) Displaced Persons

1) The number of Displaced Persons in Belgium today is exceedingly small, but as the DP branch of the Military Mission in Brussels closed down at the end of last year, the exact figures are not available. We are given however to understand that they were under 1500 of all nationalities.

2) The number of visits of UNHRA personnel to this office during the month of January are approximately the same as those of December, i.e. 749.

3) On instructions from Frankfurt as well as from E.R.O., recruiting of Belgian personnel for certain categories has been continued and the figures today are as follows:

	<u>allocated</u>	<u>recruited</u>
Directors	1	1
Deputy Directors	11	11
Supply Officers	9	8
Messing Officers	9	4
Assist. Welfare Officers	13	7
Administrative Assistants	11	7
Warehouse Officers	11	9
Office Clerks	24	17
Medical officers	5	1

We have however found that as far as doctors and nurses are concerned, it is almost impossible to recruit additional numbers. Especially with regard to nurses, the situation is such that they are actually short in Belgium now for their own nursing services. Both E.R.O. and Frankfurt have been informed of this in order that they may request other countries to recruit any doctors and nurses that may be required. Further, we find also that we are experiencing great difficulty in obtaining supply and messing officers. We are however given to understand that Messing officers especially are available in Holland and have advised Frankfurt accordingly.

c) Health : Dr. Torgo who replaced Dr. Vine early in December, is maintaining close contact with the Ministry of Public Health and also supervising all UNHRA sick in this district, in addition to the medical examination of new candidates and UNHRA personnel who have been terminated. Dr. Torgo's report is attached.

d) Terminations of DP personnel: The number of terminations of DP personnel recruited in Belgium is being maintained. During the month of January, 38 were terminated for various reasons. Also, we are still being faced with the same difficulties as those reported in our December report with regard to the final paying off of such personnel. Full and final accounts have not yet been received from Haaren and consequently, it is not always easy to arrive at a final balance. It is hoped however that within the next few weeks, the situation will have improved, in which case the work here will be considerably eased and further a lot of unpleasant discussions will be avoided.

5. GENERAL SITUATION IN BELGIUM

a) Food: While there has been no increase in the official rations in Belgium, the food situation is good. Further, if the food which is still plentiful in the black market could be distributed and controlled as are the official rations, then Belgium would be one of the best fed countries in Western Europe. The main shortages still continue to be: milk, meat and fats, in that order.

b) Industry: The output of the Belgian industry is slowly but steadily increasing and further as a result of price control on the part of the Government, the prices of textiles and other commodities have been considerably reduced. Textile piece goods have dropped in the last two months something like 25 to 30 % and are still on the decline.

The Belgian coal output is up to some 85,000 tons per day and as a result, the industries are able to work longer hours and increase their output. The household distribution of coal continues to be in the region of 200 to 250 kilo per month, per household of six people. For an additional number of people in each household, there is a slight additional issue. However, as the winter in Belgium has not yet been too severe, this problem is not presenting the same difficulties as would have been the case had conditions been otherwise.

c) Enclosed herewith are two copies (one of which is sent to E.R.C. and the other to Washington) of the Bulletin d' Information et de Documentation published by the National Bank of Belgium in October 1945, which is considered one of the most reliable publications of its kind.

6. ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE MISSION

Since the December report, the only change that has taken place is that we have engaged one bookkeeping clerk assistant. All the staff is still fully occupied.

7. ATTACHMENTS

- a) Distribution of supplies: nil.
- b) Use of proceeds from UNRRA supplies: nil.
- c) Registration, repatriation and care of Displaced Persons: no statistics have been received owing to the liquidation of the Military DP branch.
- d) Personnel of Mission: see para 6
- e) Addition: Health report made out by Dr. Torgo.
- f) The Mission's financial Officer's monthly report.
- g) Statistical report for October, issued by the National Bank of Belgium.

W.P. Wrathall
W.P. WRATHALL
Chief of Mission

11th February 1946.

46509