

4/8/15

Mr. James expressed to the Committee the desirability of informing the members of the War Relief Commission in Europe more clearly, if possible, as to the policies and intentions of the Foundation, and both Mr. Rose and Mr. James set forth the desirability of somewhat enlarging the limitations of expenditure at the discretion of the War Relief Commission, so that emergencies could be more adequately dealt with. After full discussion, the President made a statement of his views, which was embodied in the following memorandum:

"The purpose which the Rockefeller Foundation had in mind in sending the war relief commission to Europe was primarily that of suggesting methods or assisting in efforts to rehabilitate one or more of the war-swept countries. It soon became obvious, as the war progressed, that rehabilitation could not be contemplated thus early, and that the great problem of the moment was the providing of relief for the starving nations. The Foundation, therefore, diverted its thought from its original purpose to the more immediate requirements which presented themselves, and entered at once both in this country and through its commission in Europe, into the work of helping to initiate and forward plans for saving the population of Belgium from starvation. With the assistance rendered by the Foundation, this work was largely supported by private contributions for some months, and is now being pressed upon the Governments of Europe, upon whose shoulders it rightly belongs.

Next the needs of Poland presented themselves. Here the war relief commission assured the Foundation that if it would organize and support a neutral agency for feeding the starving millions of Poland, funds would be forthcoming from private and public agencies. Although the method suggested in this case differed from that adopted in Belgium, the purpose was the same, and the Foundation agreed to cooperate along the lines suggested with certain modifications. Very likely this plan will yet be put through, when Germany has agreed to provide the necessary funds. Thus again, the Foundation will have been instrumental in helping to feed a starving nation.

The attention of the war relief commission was next directed to Serbia, in which country the problem was not one of relief, but of sanitation, but on an equally large scale. Through the American Red Cross, the Foundation is undertaking to assist in setting on foot machinery which it is hoped, with the aid of English and French re-

4/8/15

- 5 -

sources of men and money, will eventually control the situation.

Until the time for rehabilitation arrives, the Foundation can wisely direct its attention, under the guidance of its war relief commission, to such national enterprises for the relief of human suffering as the three above mentioned. While the commission in its journeyings is doubtless constantly coming in touch with many small and detached centers of need that are relatively as urgent, and while it is difficult to turn a deaf ear to such calls for help, if the Foundation, through its commission, should turn its attention to the relief of these smaller units of need, the result would be that its attention would not be centered on the great national needs, which in the long run present a field for the largest usefulness. It should be the policy of the Foundation and its war relief commission to consider these smaller appeals only when, - as in the case of Northern France, where immediate action led to permanent provision on the part of other agencies, or in Holland, where the establishment of shops for the manufacture of necessary clothing by refugees set up a model which, in addition to being of local value, gave promise of being followed throughout the whole of Belgium - it is clear that a great work for a large aggregation of people will be either the direct or indirect result.

Recognizing the difficulty of ready communication between the war relief commission and the Foundation, the Foundation is prepared to give the war relief commission authority to draw on it up to a total of \$50,000, for such enterprises, falling under the general policy above outlined, as need to be entered into quickly and where communication with the Foundation is not readily possible.

Contributions to small local organizations of relief of one kind or another, however valuable such organization may be and however attractive the appeals, should be resolutely declined by the Foundation and its commission, and its resources of time and money reserved for the great opportunities as they arise. The commission need not feel restrictive because it is in the field and is apparently doing no definite constructive work. Its creation has been more than justified by the work already accomplished. The Foundation is well satisfied with what has been done and cannot speak too highly of its appreciation of the able manner in which the commission has conducted itself, under circum-

4/8/15

- 6 -

stances made particularly trying because of the necessarily meagre instructions given the commission by the Foundation."

It was thereupon

RESOLVED that the foregoing statement be adopted as the expression of the policy of the Foundation in regard to measures for the relief of suffering in connection with the war in Europe, and that a copy be sent to the members of the War Relief Commission for their guidance. It was further

RESOLVED that the sum of Fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) be, and it is hereby, appropriated as a discretionary emergency fund, to be expended by the War Relief Commission in conformity with the general policy outlined above.

The Secretary made an informal statement of the activities of the War Relief Commission, and described the present relation of the Foundation to relief work in Serbia, Holland, Belgium and Poland.

3065
5/26/15