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BERNARD FRASER'S MEMOIRS

17 January 1983

Dictated at Headquarters

Second session



UNICEF Alternate Inventory Label



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Memoirs of Bernard H. Fraser: Background; Maurice Pate; H
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DRAFT - by ^{BERNARD}~~SEI~~ Fraser -- 17 January 1983
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Joan Dydo -- A few minor corrections will be needed on my first dictation;
so please hold the Master Draft.

Continuing with ^{MAURICE}~~Maurice~~ Pate, special note should be taken of a reference to him by Herbert Hoover in 1956, as cited by Waldok on page 22 when Hoover referred to him as "the most efficient of dedicated human angels that I have ever known".

If it should be desired to trace further Hoover's part in the creation of UNICEF, I would be willing to communicate with the Hoover Presidential Library Association in West Branch, Iowa, of which I am a member.

Meanwhile, it is interesting to note that Hoover made several references to the United Nations in articles which appeared in Collier's Magazine in May and June 1943, with an emphasis on "immediate undertaking of relief for famine and pestilence and aid in reconstruction during the first stage of a 'conditional peace'". (The mention of the "United Nations" as early as 1943 is interesting itself, at least to me as I had not been aware of the term until the end of my Navy service in the Pacific.)

It would be worthwhile to determine, if it is not already known, who introduced Resolution 57-I in the General Assembly? Was it a European country? Quite possibly it may have been Canada. No doubt there will be a paragraph on the legislative history.

In asking me a few days ago, to talk into a tape recorder, I was told that it would be nice to have a recording of my voice. However, having been told earlier that it costs five times as much to process a tape recording, I pointed out that I would prefer dictation to a stenographer in the interests of economy. Economy was certainly a keyword in the early operations of UNICEF. Maurice Pate, for one, set an example of frugality. For instance, his office on the 24th floor had no carpeting and was sparsely furnished; he moved into an office on the 18th floor with great reluctance because it had carpeting and wood paneling on the walls. There was an air of modesty

/...

throughout the office. When I had been to lunch with Pate, it was my practice to give him \$2.00 later which I considered the cost of the lunch that I would have had anyway; in other words, I did not want a "free lunch" at the expense of UNICEF. My concern with economy is stronger than ever.

It must have been in ¹⁹⁶² ~~the late 1950s~~ when Pate thought of seeking the financial support of some foundation to secure office space for UNICEF as the quarters in the U.N. had become overcrowded. He had his eye on the building across from the U.N. where Ferdi's Restaurant is located now. He asked me to go to David Rockefeller's office and find out about the name of the owner of the property; I told him to save the Rockefeller contact for something more lucrative as I could get the information in the Hall of Records near City Hall. At a meeting with the owner it was learned that all he would be willing to do was to give us a 99-year lease. Maurice Pate was constantly bent on saving money.

Saving money we did! The highlight of my work as the Shipping Officer from June 1947 until October 1949 was not really the factor that large quantities of dry skim milk and other foodstuffs were shipped but that this was accomplished by savings through considerable reductions in ocean freight rates, particularly for dry skim milk which normally costs more to ship because it is bulky. At the same time, our quantities for shipment were not large enough to warrant charters. So, we asked the shipping conferences for reductions which they generously granted, and I have had the figure of ^{SEVERAL MILLION DOLLARS} ~~\$6 million~~ in my mind as the saving which resulted in the first two years from the lower rates. In essence then, I began my work for UNICEF in a fund-raising capacity...

My next assignment, ^{AGAIN} ~~begun~~ in the nature of savings and economy, was to make certain that the International Tuberculosis Campaign was spending the money properly which the UNICEF Executive Board had allocated for BCG Vaccination campaigns under ITC auspices. Close to \$5million was involved on UNICEF's part, and the operation was run out of Copenhagen with the assistance of the Red Cross Societies in the Scandinavian countries. This was a sensitive assignment because to Dr. ^{JCHS} ~~Jess~~ Holm and his staff, I was one who ^{PEEKED} ~~was~~ ~~peeked~~ over their shoulder to see what they were doing. However, they began to have confidence soon, and at the end of my stay of 15 months, I was given an honorary degree of "Dr. ITC"; if nothing else, this reflected a cordial

relationship. Certainly, there was never any criticism of expenditures, and I had actually troubles only with UNICEF in New York. The ITC did not run its operations along strictly bureaucratic lines ^{THOUGH} ~~so~~ it was done altogether efficiently and at one point the Unicef Comptroller asked whether I did not realize that UNICEF was a part of the U.N. One phase which UNICEF HQs. had difficulty to understand is why some teams of Scandinavian doctors sent to other countries had to be accompanied by a "housemother"; HQs. eventually recognized that they served a needed ^{HOUSEHOLD} function under strenuous working conditions prevailing in the developing countries. One of the young doctors participating in the work of the ITC is now the head of WHO (Dr. Mahler). There is more to tell about the ITC and about my work as the Shipping Officer as well, but this is a start and more can be said if desired.

Having kept an eye on UNICEF money given to the ITC, UNICEF-Headquarters then thought that someone ought to see what was going to happen to UNICEF supplies sent to Korea at the time of the conflict there in 1951. Of necessity, supplies had to be ^{CONSIGNED} ~~concerned~~ to the military authorities, meaning, SCAP (Supreme Commander Allied Powers), i.e., General MacArthur. There was apparently some doubt here that the supplies would be handled properly as I was told during a brief stopover from Copenhagen en route to Tokyo, that Headquarters would understand it if I should become persona non-grata. During 5-months in Tokyo, several trips to Korea were made, always arranged with the Brigadier General in-charge of SCAP's public health services. There was absolutely no doubt in my mind that the distribution of UNICEF supplies in Korea was handled far more efficiently by the military authorities than it could ever have been done by UNICEF staff under the turbulent conditions prevalent at that time.

It was also my task, while in Tokyo, to arrange for the processing of \$500,000 of American cotton by Japanese mills as the first contribution to UNICEF by the Japanese Government; the amount was eventually established at \$221,000 as I recall. It was found that the Japanese Government officials were extremely meticulous in working out proper specifications for the cotton cloth, and agreement had to be reached on such factors as the loss of weight for the cotton during the ocean voyage, arrangements for the distribution of the finished product, etc.. Labourious as it was to come to an agreement, once the conditions had been established, I went home fully convinced that the Japanese would measure up to every expectation, and that

they did!

When I returned, Pate asked me to help in the establishment of the greeting card operations. A girl in Czechoslovakia had shown her appreciation of UNICEF help by a picture she painted of children dancing around a Maypole and, Gilbert Redfern, the first Public Information Officer, had made it into a greeting card during 1950, with the sales yielding an excess of income over expenditure in the amount of \$4,200. ^{PATE} People saw a great future in that, and indeed, greeting cards became a lucrative effort. But it certainly was not easy. While Nora Edmunds, who had been engaged as the Art Director, had some wonderful ideas ^{AND EXECUTED THEM PERFECTLY} it was most difficult at times to make UNICEF staff accept the idea that greeting card sales would be in the interest of the organisation. There were obstacles in many practical aspects such as obtaining suitable space in the third basement of the U.N. building, staff problems, etc., etc. Most issues were eventually solved, sometimes more by commonsense than by rules and regulations. When it was thought in 1952 that there ought to be a budget for the operations, and there had been none before, I sat down one afternoon and typed one up myself, but it did not become the prototype for later budgets.

.... The philosophy for the existence of greeting cards was set forth in a two-page sheet for the consideration of the regional directors at their conference held at Headquarters in April 1952. Attached is a faded copy. It is suggested that this be reproduced for the UNICEF history book as it is considered important to bear in mind all the time that the purpose of the cards was mainly to make UNICEF's name known, albeit, at a profit. (The return of this sheet to me will be very much appreciated.)

All this is a prelude to my work in fund-raising which began in February 1953 and which I then did for over 23 years. That will be a subject for a separate presentation.

If you wish to have me edit this text, kindly send it to :

2250 West Marion Avenue
Punta Gorda, Florida 33950, where I shall be (except for the first 10 days of February) until 20th February. Upon return here, I shall contact you for an appointment during the ensuing two weeks.

I should like to express my appreciation for the helpful cooperation which Ms. Gorgas is extending to me in an unusual assignment.

