

Chron Ref: CF/NYH/OSEB/HST/1996-083
File Sub: CF/HST/INT/CAN-001/M

0519Q...4 June 1984

Interview with Gene Canade*

Conducted by Edward B. Marks in Paris

On 17 October 1983

(i)

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* Mr. Canade was on the UNICEF staff from March 1948 until his retirement in October 1975. He was an administrative officer at headquarters for the first several years and then was chief of Personnel & Administration in the Paris Office. Prior to joining UNICEF he worked with UNRRA (1945 - 1947) and was with the U.S. Army (1940 - 1945).



UNICEF Alternate Inventory Label



Rcf0006C1C

Item # **CF/RAD/USAA/DB01/1996-0016**

ExR/Code: **CF/HST/INT/CAN-001/M**

Interview Gene Canade by Edward B. Marks: HQ/Field/ Europe
Date Label Printed 4/23/2001

19pp + 1b

Headquarters/field relationship

Marks: In your day what was the relationship between UNICEF headquarters and the field?

Canade: Headquarters did not really understand really what was happening in the field. The field offices got very little assistance from HQ, at least when I was there. Maybe now it has all changed. The field offices would ask for things and no one would ever reply. Headquarters set up offices and then they acted out the old adage of hiring a dog and doing your own barking. New York was supreme and no one could have an idea better than theirs. I don't think that they really took into account what other people outside of New York thought and knew.

Marks: Do you think that when field people get to New York they take on the New York colouration?

Canade: They become Headquarters people and forget their experiences on the field.

Marks: You worked in New York for a while. Could that be said of you?

Canade: No. I don't think so. No, I always had, I think, a sympathy for the people in the field. I don't think that anybody from the field who had any contact with me could say I didn't try to help them. I may not always have been successful. I have my limits like anybody else but I think every time a field person came to me needing assistance, I gave it to him. I tried to help them. I was most sympathetic I think.

Headquarters/European Office relationship

Marks: Where do you think Geneva fitted into the UNICEF organization? Geneva is not a field office in my observation, but something in between the two.

Canade: It is a sort of semi-headquarters or demi-headquarters. I don't know. I had nothing to do with the Geneva operation. All I know is that the office in Paris was working more or less well, considering the fact that they got very little assistance or sympathy from Headquarters. Headquarters always resented the fact that there was an office in Paris, so they decided to put it in Geneva and it began to resent Geneva.

Marks: The Paris office was also a field office wasn't it? It was not actually where the action was, but it controlled programmes in the field.

Canade: We had programmes in France to begin with and we did have some field activities. At first we had all the missions in Europe and then we had the missions in the Middle East, something like fourteen or fifteen missions attached to the Paris Office. When the missions in

Europe disappeared, what remnants of programmes there were, were taken care of by people working out of Paris. North Africa and Africa were then added to the Paris responsibilities. So you had all of those theoretically, but in actual fact Paris was just a post office box, that's all. Decisions were taken in New York and there was no point in having a Paris Office for programme purposes since New York took all the decisions.

Marks: Did the North African Offices bypass the European Office?

Canade: In the beginning, the correspondence went to Paris. Paris did something and it was sent to New York and New York did something else or did the same thing, I don't know, it depended, but there was always second-guessing on the part of New York. That was at the best of the period. Later there was a sort of North African operation run out of Paris. Black Africa became a separate thing. The Middle East became a separate thing and North Africa was attached to Paris. Then that was taken away from Paris as well. Geneva became a separate operation which, in some ways, from a programme point of view, was better, since, if action taken by Paris or Geneva was going to be reversed by New York, it would be better to have the relevant correspondence sent directly to New York, instead of wasting all that time going through Paris, so that Paris could have its two cents' worth that had no worth. There was logic in taking it directly to New York.

Marks: What about the administrative side? You were responsible for administration, budget, all those things. Did you have a fair amount of autonomy in what you did?

Canade: From that point of view, I can't complain. I had a fair amount of autonomy, maybe because of my own personality. I may have taken on autonomy which no one intended that I should have. On the other hand, on some questions New York would second-guess me. On some questions I think New York was arbitrarily inconsistent, guided in some cases possibly by a spirit of economy for the organization and forsaking logic.

Pension differences

A case in point: the pension fund. The staff in Paris originally, the general service staff or what was equivalent to the general service, was insured under the Social Security Service in France. The staff in London was insured under the National Insurance when the National Insurance was created. In both cases, the organization contributed to Social Security or the National Insurance. At a certain point the staff were offered admission to the Pension Fund. There was a problem for a lot of the people in Paris in deciding whether to go with the Pension Fund or not, in view of the fact that when all this happened, the staff of UNICEF were given three-year leases on life as the organization was prolonged for three-year intervals by the Board. While extension was for these three-year intervals, a lot of the staff hesitated because they had children,

responsibilities, and couldn't take the decision to say they were dropping the Social Insurance for a pension fund for three years or two years, or whatever was left for them of the period.

Marks: It wouldn't have been retroactive to a certain point? Would they have to pay?

Canade: When they were finally admitted, and most of them accepted the Pension Fund when the Organization became permanent, they were not allowed to buy back service. In London the situation was treated quite differently; they were allowed to do so. They were not only allowed to buy back but the Administration continued to pay for National Insurance. They were insured under the National Insurance and the Pension Fund. Whereas in Paris they were not treated that way. All sorts of things happened. The staff that was moved to Geneva were all given home leave, and all sorts of privileges which they could not have had in Paris. Most of them were promoted to the professional category anyway, but those that weren't received all the other advantages.

Marks: Was that also true for people taken on after the move, general service people?

Inconsistent personnel policies

Canade: That I can't say. What I am pointing out is that we had no real personnel policy. It was fitted to the measure of the person who was before you or to the office, or I don't know what. There was no consistency in our treatment of personnel. Maybe there is now, but I doubt it. It was one measure for one and another measure for another. That I think is not good personnel policy.

Marks: What was the main thrust of your own responsibility? Was it the whole run of the administrative? I'm sure you got into many programme and external relations issues, but basically weren't you in charge of the administration?

Administration and personnel in European office

Canade: Administration and personnel. I dealt with that pretty near entirely except that obviously the Director had some things to say and Headquarters had an awful lot to say, because we didn't recruit anyone in the professional category. We might recommend someone or interview someone and we'd send the file on to Headquarters and they would decide whom they would take.

Marks: In general did that work harmoniously?

Canade: On the whole, yes. It also had a certain logic in that the professional category theoretically was not recruited for one post only and therefore had to be fitted into an overall organization.

The person might move one day to another place and so on. An overall view by Headquarters was probably well indicated so that if you hired a person for Paris he wasn't restricted just to the Paris assignment; he might be sent somewhere else. I think that that worked out all right.

What may not always have worked out well is a purely subjective thing, that is, the choice of people. As someone dealing with recruitment, you know that everyone, or almost everyone that interviews a candidate has a different view of the candidate; to one recruitment person the candidate seems wonderful; to another he is awful.

Marks: How did you manage that? If it seemed to be a fairly important interview for an important post did you arrange for several people to see them so that you could have your own judgement bolstered by other views?

Canade: What happened at least was that the director of the office interviewed the person. If the person was being recruited for let's say Supply, the Supply person would see him as well. Frequently the head of Finance, who was then also the Deputy, would see him and I would generally see him. So a consensus of all the views, or the views rather than the consensus would be sent to headquarters.

If it were for another post, like Public Relations, then they would see him. Even in the general service we didn't do the interview with one person. We didn't have a whole crew, but someone in the personnel office would interview the candidate and then the division for whom the person was intended would interview the person. They were after all, going to be stuck with the recruit for a certain time.

Budget: travel

Marks: Was budget a part of your responsibility too?

Canade: Oh yes. I did the budget for the office.

Marks: Yes, I thought I remembered that. And you feel that HQ was a little chintzy sometimes?

Canade: Oh, I think Headquarters was very chintzy. I think they were much more generous with Geneva than they ever were with Paris - much more. That's what the people in Geneva told me. I did speak to people. I used to go there.

Marks: Do you mean that they were more close-fisted then?

Canade: Jack can answer that better than I. I don't know what their motives were. But you've been to Geneva ...

Marks: I worked in both places.

Canade: ... and you know who among the staff travelled. They could never travel out of Paris. They travelled extensively out of Geneva. Even the persons in lesser positions.

Marks: What about the annual struggle over the budget?

Canade: In the Paris days it was tough. Always tough.

Marks: Do you feel it was tough to the point that in some cases the programme was hampered or the operation of the office was restricted unduly?

Canade: Yes, I think so. I mean if you look at certain things. Every effort was made to sacrifice what money there was for the Programme people when they had programmes. The same was true for public relations where it involved relations with governments and all that sort of thing. You know, you made an effort. If you had to, you sacrificed something else. The Supply people made pretty limited visits, they didn't have that much leeway. The budget didn't provide for it. The administration made very few. I used to go to Geneva occasionally, occasionally to London, but that was as far as I got.

Marks: You mentioned you wouldn't have gone to Africa if it hadn't been for the Congo trip.

Canade: The whole organization suffered the same way. If there was any money in the budget it had to go to those things that seemed most important, like programme and supply - they had important things to do. Finance did very little travelling. That was not true in Geneva, I know. Baumeister used to travel quite a bit out of Geneva. I know all of the Supply division people in Geneva travelled.

Marks: Of course a lot of that was procurement, spending the soft currency and all that stuff.

Canade: What were we doing in Paris? You had to do it by telephone and by cable and by letter.

Marks: You did.

Canade: Of course we did. All the finance problems with banks were handled by telephone. The people never got to travel. In Geneva that was not true.

Marks: Well, I wonder. Do you think in the last analysis it was done probably just as well from Paris or do you think the visits made a difference?

Canade: That is pretty difficult to say. Because I don't know what Geneva did. I never examined their reports and even their reports - what are they - gilded lilies?

Marks: Sometimes.

Canade: I distrust progress reports. They are mostly doctored up. So I can't say. New York can say, maybe Geneva can say, but I never delved into the details of their accounts - I talked to people, those directly involved. They were after all ex-colleagues from Paris, most of them, and even the new people talked to me. I never asked them questions by the way, I never solicited information. They liked to talk to me.

Marks: Paris after all is a big financial center and a big diplomatic center, and I suppose, in addition to the telephone, they were probably able to make quite a few contacts right within the country.

Canade: Well suppliers did come, on occasion, to Paris. They probably come to Geneva too.

Supply, Finance, PR functions in Europe

Marks: Supply was an important function in Paris, was it not?

Canade: Yes, and it continued to be in Geneva as well. For a time, programme functions were reasonably important because although proposals for the Board were reviewed by Headquarters and therefore perhaps changed, a lot of the guidance and encouragement and help on programme implementation came from the people working in the programme section of the Paris office. When that ceased, the big raison d'etre was Supply and Finance because we had lots of money in Europe which had to be spent in Europe and Supply had to do the spending. I'm not quoting the actual figures, but perhaps 50 per cent or a little less of the procurement was done in Europe. In finance, we had all the currencies of Europe to deal with. We dealt with it. Those are two important functions. Then, from a public relations point of view, I think the European countries felt happier having an office they could deal with in Europe for public relations purposes than dealing with something so remote as New York or elsewhere. Also, the fact that most of the time they could deal with people of some European origin. We had Willy Meyer and quite a number of people in public relations who were European-oriented and therefore theoretically more capable of understanding European mentality. I think the Europeans appreciated this as did later the national committees. They still have that responsibility in the Geneva office.

Marks: Now they have the complete responsibility for all the national committees, even those in Japan, Canada and the U.S.

Policies: Guidance and implementation

Canade: Some policy guidance from New York is normal and desirable. Policy guidance should always be from headquarters; they are the ones who must decide what the policy is. But the question of implementing the policy should be attributed to the people who are away from

Headquarters, so long as they perform properly and implement those policies with the proper discretion and in the line of thought of the Headquarters group. The moment they diverge from the basic policies you have a problem.

Copenhagen

Marks: What made UNICEF decide to go to Copenhagen for the general supply base, and what did you think of that decision?

Canade: I don't know how they came to decide on Copenhagen, but at the time they were discussing it, we had looked into the matter in Europe and found that Copenhagen was in the lower half of the ten best ports of Europe. Today I think it is probably at the bottom of that ten, if it's in the ten at all. So we never knew why they decided to take Copenhagen. Obviously the best port, or the most important port, Rotterdam, was too crowded and nobody could get in. London was second or maybe third. Antwerp, offered very good possibilities, since the mayor of Antwerp was very favourable to UNICEF and I think was even a member of the National Committee. In Antwerp we would have had a much better port offering direct shipment.

Marks: Direct shipment? You mean that shipment via Copenhagen is indirect: Goods are transshipped?

Canade: Everything is transshipped. That means that 10 - or whatever it is - percent, is added on your cost of shipping.

Marks: I'm not quite sure I understand that.

Canade: Well, you land your cargo at another port and then it is shipped by land.

Marks: I see. Is that because there aren't enough vessels going into Copenhagen? -----

Canade: I don't know what Copenhagen's problems as a port are, but it certainly has problems.

UNICEF personalities

Charles Egger

Marks: Gene, would you say just a bit about some of the people you worked with? I know Jack is very interested in this. Did you work with Charles Egger when he first came in?

Canade: Yes.

Marks: Just generally, what were their strong points and how did they work out on the job.

Canade: I think Egger was basically a programme-oriented man. He started out, I believe, as head of a mission - Bulgaria or one of those countries and his strong points were his enthusiasm for programming and the amount of enthusiasm he imparted to all the people who were working in programme while he was here.

I don't think his performance on the administrative side was necessarily a strong point, but I don't think he interfered very much. He left that to the people responsible, even on the Supply side. He had ideas and would discuss things with us. We had meetings every week or so and these questions would be raised and he would offer opinions or ask for advice or information, but I don't think he interfered very much. He obviously had to get involved on occasions when something had to be referred to New York. Then he got involved, there was no way of escaping it.

Willy Meyer

Marks: How about Willy Meyer?

Canade: He was a unique character in many ways. I can't say Willy and I ever got along very well. Willy was head of the German Mission at one time and came to Paris after that.

Marks: He was Swiss, wasn't he?

Canade: Yes, he was Swiss. He was very energetic, full of ideas and he was the kind of person who, once he got moving on something was like a bulldog and he got it done. He was good. He was a good organizer for a lot of things, he did that Hungarian thing, he did that thing in Biafra.

Marks: Did he do that - was he still with UNICEF then?

Canade: He died around that time. But he was a very active person. I think he was responsible for the idea of National Committees in Europe.

Marks: Really.

Canade: He started the first National Committees, yes. He was a very active person, with lots of ideas, very practical. And he used whatever means he had at his disposal to get things done, which weren't always according to the rule.

Gertrude Lutz

Marks: We talked about Gertrude Lutz. Was she actually the head of the office at one time?

Canade: For a short period, yes.

Marks: You admired her?

Canade: Oh yes. Gertrude was, I think, one of the pillars of UNICEF and I think that as an international staff member she probably did as much good with countries, governments and so on as anybody. She was very well liked, she could influence them very much by her sincerity and her approach and what understanding she had of programmes, which may not always have been that of other people in the organization. But she was generally well liked and made a good atmosphere for UNICEF wherever she went.

Marks: I thought she was great in the very limited contacts that I had with her.

Canade: She was another person who was very enthusiastic. No matter how she felt. She could be desperately ill but that enthusiasm of hers always came through. She made other people feel the same kind of enthusiasm.

Ben Twigt

Were there others in your time that you think of? I came in when Mr. Twigt was the Regional Director.

Canade: Well, Mr. Twigt would be best served by not being mentioned.

Marks: I kind of agree with you on that.

Canade: He was the last thing UNICEF needed. Perhaps headquarters felt that they needed someone to close the office and couldn't trust the people that were there to do it. I feel sorry for them, because no matter what, we were employed to do a job and we would have done the job even if it was a job we didn't like to do. It would not have been the first job we didn't like doing, that we had to do. But Twigt did a great disservice to UNICEF - not a service. He left the worst impression in France that any director could have left.

Gordon Carter

Marks: Was Gordon Carter ever in your orbit?

Canade: Oh yes, Gordon Carter was in my orbit from somewhere around 1948 or 1949.

Marks: What would you say about him? When I met Gordon Carter - I never worked under him but I had some contacts with him - I always found him a very interesting, stimulating fellow to deal with. I'd be interested in your characterization of him.

Canade: Gordon was one of those pillars of UNICEF. He started with us very young and grew up and was an extremely competent person, very efficient, very organized.

Marks: How was it working with him?

Canade: Easy enough, I think. In between the time he left Paris to go to Guatemala, and the time he came back from India he became probably a little more remote - not so easy to make contact with, and it was almost as though he were not friendly, which was not true.

Marks: He was shy in a certain way. Maybe shy is not the right word.

Canade: I don't know. Somehow I found, toward the end of his stay in Geneva that there was a little more warmth. A little more letting down of the barrier. He could speak a little more freely. I had several occasions to speak with him, particularly one after Dr. Maas died. We both attended the funeral and he and I had a chat, and I found him much more human than he had been before. None of that has anything to do with his general efficiency and the general organization of things. He was very organized, maybe in a way too organized. I'm a sort of Latin so that a little disorganization goes very well in the cooking.

Marks: A Latin from Manhattan - or from Brooklyn?

Canade: So that for me Gordon was, in a sense, a little strange but it had nothing to do with whether Gordon was an efficient person or not. He was very good.

Marks: Intrinsically, certainly. I talked with him just at the point when he'd offered his resignation and I felt a real regret, although I never was as deeply immersed in UNICEF as some of the rest of you. I felt that it would be a loss when he left the organization and I think it was in some ways.

Canade: Yes, I think so too. I was rather surprised that he left so early. Gordon gave the impression of someone who devoted himself almost entirely to UNICEF.

Problems of move to Geneva

Marks: What did you think about the move, apart from Twigt, the closing of the office? What did you think about the move from Paris to Geneva? Do you have any views about that?

Canade: Well, it's hard for me in some ways to separate my personal feelings from those of practicality. Obviously I got to know all the people I had been working with for a long time and obviously I felt very badly about a lot of them losing their jobs and not having anything to do or go to afterwards, losing all the years of service they had, with maybe a lesser pension and so on which most of them needed, particularly the French who could not buy back their service with the

pension fund. But I don't think of my own personal feelings in this regard. I knew I was at the end of my rope anyway, I had to be retired and I had been speaking of this to Gendron for a long time - that he had to start thinking of replacing me. So it didn't hurt me that the office moved to Geneva, I wasn't worried about my own position. I was worried about the others far more than myself. I never exactly understood the logic of it.

Marks: Well, they said they had to wait until Debré either died or was no longer active.

Canade: Possibly.

Marks: Were there advantages? Were you in Geneva long enough to appreciate some of the advantages there might have been in being there with the other international organizations?

Canade: Frankly, I don't think so. When we had to deal with the other organizations - and the amount we could contribute or they could contribute to us could be important - this could be dealt with on the basis of the visits we made or could have made if we had been allowed to. You must not forget that the Paris office travel budget was cut to a minimum.

Marks: Right.

Canade: It never was generous. A person like myself did very little travelling even though in some cases it might have been useful. I never went to any of the offices in the Middle East. The only offices I visited were some in Africa and some in North Africa; those in Africa I visited only by accident because they sent me off to the Congo. If I hadn't been in the Congo and come back via some of these offices I probably never would have seen them. So you administered offices you never saw - you never saw the people, you had to judge the people from files, that is all you knew about them.

So, if the Paris office had been given, let's say, sufficient travel funds, more frequent visits to Geneva might have been justified. Even then, I'm not sure, because we didn't have - most offices didn't have - that much need for Geneva. Certainly the programme people did. The public relations people might have had more need than other people, but the programme people certainly did with WHO and other UN agencies.

Marks: And you had UNESCO in Paris, of course.

Canade: But we didn't do that much with UNESCO; I mean UNESCO came very late into the cooperation with UNICEF and then they set up a special office, partly financed by UNICEF and within UNESCO, so I don't know. The argument was given that one would be closer to the missions to the UN - some are secondary missions anyway, and probably

would not take major decisions and wouldn't be consulted on major decisions which were the prerogative of Headquarters in any case. That one would have greater facility in going to meetings is true, but then how much time is wasted going to meetings that one doesn't have to go to.

Marks: Yes, that is all true.

Canade: I don't see the advantage.

Marks: In Geneva, we were closer to many of the NGOs and some of the other cooperating groups.

Canade: Yes, but at the time when the office moved to Geneva the accent wasn't that much on NGOs. Jack sort of pushed that forward somewhat later and even then - I don't know that sitting on their doorstep did a great deal. Perhaps occasional visits would have been just as profitable - not having people getting in your hair all the time.

Marks: There were of course a lot of NGO's in Paris too, as far as that goes.

Canade: I didn't see that advantage. The silly thing is that they spoke of it at the Board meeting in '71, when we were in Geneva, and those responsible were pointing out to me how desirable it was in Geneva, which I couldn't see. It was at the time that the dollar fell; in fact you couldn't change dollars during the Board Meeting; you had to give the staff Swiss Francs. All the dollars they brought with them were useless. And it was after that that they decided to go to Geneva, when the dollar went down to something under two or just about two francs to the dollar, which meant our costs went up terrifically. We were paying a rent of something like 7,000 dollars a year in Paris. I don't know what they were paying in Geneva, somewhere in the 300,000 area if I remember correctly, plus the increase in salaries, which was appreciable both in the general service and professional categories because of the differential.

Marks: What about the relations with the French Government? Was it valuable, do you think, having UNICEF in France all those years from that standpoint, and were our relations jeopardized in any way by the move to Geneva?

Canade: Well, I have no special knowledge of the inner workings between Headquarters and the French Government. I thought our relationships were always very good. They gave us, I think, a lot of consideration which they didn't have to give us, since we were not a Headquarters group, but that is only from the Paris office point of view. If Headquarters suffered any great problems with the Government I don't know. I do not think that the people I talked to in the French government were very happy about the fact that we moved. I don't think they were very happy about the way it was done, with short notice, the way Twigt dealt with it - very discourteous on his part to do things offhand - to leave without even saying goodbye to them.

Marks: Did he do that really? Oh my.

Canade: To such an extent that it hampered our negotiations. We were at that time negotiating for a sort of Greeting Card warehouse near Mulhouse and we were having difficulty with them on that. Because of Twigt's behaviour and our moving out, we might not have gotten this through, had it not been for our personal relations with those people. There were questions on customs and taxes and so on, that had to be dealt with. And I think on the whole, in spite of whatever bitterness that they might have felt, the French were very nice about it.

Marks: I believe the move was planned some distance ahead. But I'm not sure everybody was informed.

Canade: We weren't informed. I was informed by accident. I'd gone to Geneva with Jack Charnow. I can't remember what it was for, whether it was before the Board Meeting or some other occasion - anyway, Jack and I went to see some fellow in Geneva about space. I had known this fellow a long time. I'd been dealing with him since 1949. He came in while we were talking to the person in charge of conferences; he was head of Conference Services, and he said to me, 'Look at this, do you think this is enough space for you for the move?' I said, 'I don't really know, because I don't how many people are moving and what they are going to do, so I can't tell you whether the space is adequate or not'.

Marks: This was space in the Palais?

Canade: Yes, office space. So that's how I came to know.

Marks: Interesting.

Canade: And other people, I understand, even at Headquarters, people of a certain position who had a certain interest in the office in Paris, even they didn't know. I was told by them that they hadn't heard either. They were advised after the decision was made.

Marks: I see.

Canade: Why it had to be a great secret, I don't know. And if it were not a great secret, why weren't the interested governments involved at an early stage?

Headquarters visits to French Governments

But you know, over the years, and I don't know how Headquarters dealt with these problems over the years in other countries, but as far as France is concerned, we didn't behave like a well disciplined diplomatic service. I mean we'd announce a visit to the Government just a few days ahead, whereas normal courtesy would require a week or ten days' notice. You can't expect Prime Ministers and so on to be sitting around waiting for UNICEF to drop in on their doorstep.

Marks: Are you speaking about the notice that Headquarters offices gave when they were coming over to the European office?

Canade: All occasions. When they were making a visit to France and so on. And then to be surprised that there was no one to receive them. Even if they were there, the Government people would say, 'We are not there'. If I were a member of the government since normal diplomatic practice is to give a week or so of notice, I would say, 'No, I am not here' or just, 'tell them I am not available'.

National Committees

Marks: This has been a sore point also with committees. You probably know that some of the committees were very, very unhappy that people came without calling on the committee or that the information people would mount some big public relations scheme within a country without involving the committee. Did you encounter much of that sort of thing?

Canade: Oh yes, the committees always complained about that. Any number of people went without notice or without sufficient notice to countries where the committees were extra sensitive.

Marks: Apart from their role in selling cards, do you feel the Committees were on the whole constructive and helpful?

Canade: Oh yes.

Marks: Were some better than others?

Canade: Oh yes, some committees were much better. I'm not going to name names but some committees were extremely helpful and others were, if not negative at least neutral. We could criticize them for certain things, for example, I said that some were extra sensitive. Some people went into the country probably figuring, 'Oh, I don't really want to bother the Committee because I don't have any direct relations with them'. But that may not have been the Committee's idea. The Committee may have thought well, if the guy from supply is coming, we'd like to know because maybe we could arrange a meeting with so and so or have him speak to so and so. The visit might have served their purpose for something or other, helped them and we didn't think of it. I mean if I went to a country, what would be the point? Administrative - what could I do for them? I might not notify them. I would, I think. But if I didn't I would think, well I have no direct relationship with them, what could I do to help them? But they might think otherwise - well, this guy is coming, I can use him. We're having a meeting, he can come and say a couple of words.

We may have been very remiss in not notifying them in all cases. In some cases there would be no excuse, for example if the visitor was the Director or the Deputy or the head of Finance, or the head of

Public Relations or the head of Supply. Those people had direct interest in the country - they were buying, they were dealing with the public. For them, a Committee might have had a lot of use. For a person like myself, probably very little, but who knows, I shouldn't judge that.

International Children's Centre

Marks: Gene, what about the International Children's Center? I visited it once, but I don't know much about it. What was the working relationship with them and what can you say about it?

Canade: We always had very good relations with them. Their whole objective was different from ours, though to some extent they supplemented what we were doing. You know in the early days what came to be called the Children's Center worked out of the Paris office, UNICEF Paris.

Marks: I didn't know that.

Canade: And we handled all their training programmes. They used to have doctors, paediatricians, nurses and so on come from different countries for a course of study to revive - update their information. They were handled out of the Paris office. That was when we were in the other building, not where you knew us. We were at Marichal Fayolle at the time. So it grew as a kind of family affair. When they set up in a separate building and went on their own we didn't have daily contact with them but there was quite a lot of contact with them. They would call us, we used to call them. We'd give each other different services. It was a close relationship and then some of the people were very close to us. Dr. Debrè, Dr. Maas was a wonderful person, really extraordinary. Dr. Debrè, the whole bunch of them, were very close to us and we dealt with them a great deal. We visited them, they visited us, they needed our help, we sometimes needed their assistance for something and we always got it despite the fact that we were working in different fields. I mean they were doing things in research, training, fellowships, etc.

Our fellowships were on an individual, not group basis, depending on the category of person. Sometimes we had a small group, two or three people in one country or another whom we sent to a university or a given place.

Marks: That was a function of the European Office?

Canade: Well we had certain fellowships we administered. Not a great many, but some.

Eastern Europe

Marks: Gene, is there anything special that you can say about relations with the Eastern European countries, in contrast to the Western countries? Despite their special character, were you able to maintain a liaison relationship with them on procurement and such things?

Canade: Well, that I don't know. I think that there was a good deal of difficulty - other people can tell you more - Wittrin is the person to talk to - or Norberg. They would know more. Even John Grun, who worked in Supply Division would know something about that, but maybe not so much of the later years. I think that the difficulty was in dealing with supplies - what did they have available? We did apparently quite a lot in Romania and a fair amount in Hungary, some in Czechoslovakia, not a great deal in Poland. But their production of the kind of thing we needed was rather limited. Yugoslavia we used mostly for shipping facilities. Their contribution went to paying for shipping. But I think in most respects, our relationships were good.

Greeting Cards

Now before we get off to another subject, there's one thing I'd like to set straight. The Greeting Cards.

Marks: Right, we haven't talked about that.

Canade: I was deeply involved in the Greeting Cards from the very beginning. And I think, unless Jack has the record, when I speak to people they seem to forget how the Greeting Cards started. And you know who the original Greeting Card man was? He was the head of Information, and his name was Gilbert Redfern. I was working in New York then, and Redfern came one day to tell me that he'd like to have a Greeting Card for the office and what could we do about it. I had a young fellow working for me who had been studying at Cooper Union, John Windrom. I asked him if he would make the card, and he made ...

Marks: Could you date this?

Canade: It was 1948 or 49, I'm not sure. John Windrom made a copy of what I think was either a Czech or Polish poster.

Marks: It was from a 7-year-old Czech girl.

Canade: The Czech girl was invited some years later to come to Paris. So that was the first UNICEF Greeting Card, and it was not done for profit, it was done just as an organization card.

Marks: Well, Pate put some money into it.

Canade: And Pate, following that, wanted to have a card which would not be necessarily for profit but for public information, for public relations, to spread the name of UNICEF, and that is how the cards started.

Marks: Not as a money-maker.

Canade: No, no. It never was intended as a money-maker. It was intended as a non-profit thing for information.

Marks: That's interesting, because it did make a little money, I think about \$4,000. They sold 80,000 of the first card.

Canade: Well, you know, when I came to France in 1949 - so that must have been in 1948 - I sold the first cards in Paris and I don't suppose we sold 100 boxes.

Marks: Just with the one drawing at that time?

Canade: I don't recall what it was - it was another card. But we didn't sell 100 boxes, because at that time in France they didn't have the habit of sending cards. They used to send their personal calling cards, and when you stop to think, from about 100 boxes to whatever they are selling now, it is a tremendous increase. France buys a lot of cards now.

Marks: Well, altogether it is something like \$170 million dollars, cumulatively, from the beginning.

Canade: For all the cards?

Marks: Well, regarding France I don't know specifically.

Canade: France's total tremendously increased compared to what it was the first year.

Marks: The GCO operation in France and in Geneva, was always an important part of the office.

Canade: Oh yes. I think we gave it a lot of attention. I certainly was interested in it and tried to help in one way or another.

History of UNICEF

Marks: Well, we've covered a lot of ground. Is there anything else that you'd like to mention? You'll have a chance to look over this anyway, but...

Canade: Now, about this history. The curious thing is that in 1948 I approached Mr. Pate because I'd just come from UNRRA which was beginning to do its history. I said, 'You know, Mr. Pate, someday somebody is going to want to do a history of UNICEF like they are doing for UNRRA. Don't you think someone ought to be appointed to collect the material to make up the history?'. And he said 'No'.

Marks: Oh, what a loss, because while Jack and Sherry and the others I'm sure, are retrieving a lot through this kind of interview, some of it will never come back.

Canade: Well, they have a lot from the archives if they kept them. I know the Paris archives were sent to New York and we trimmed out of those

as much of the junk material we could, so that in some ways the job there is reduced. As for the other places. We had all the mission files sent to New York at one time, because there were 14 or 15 missions in Europe - not in Europe only but in the Middle East, and...

Marks: Were these sent to New York?

Canade: Yes, all were sent to New York. So we have all the mission history - or we had it.

Marks: Well I suppose we have it still. Well Gene, thank you very much. This has been most helpful and informative and maybe we'll think of a few things on the ride back.

Canade: OK.

10/10/10


