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WAR CABINET.

MEASURES TAKEN BY THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH TO PROVIDE ASYLUM FOR REFUGEES.

MEMORANDUM BY THE MINISTER OF STATE.

MY colleagues will recall that in Conclusion (3) of the War Cabinet Meeting 104 (44) of the 9th August last the Foreign Secretary was invited to arrange for the preparation by the Departments concerned of a short statement, setting out what we had done to provide accommodation for refugees since the war, as a basis for a communication to the United States Government on this matter.

I have consulted my colleagues concerned and the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs has consulted the Dominion Governments, who have authorised the communication to the United States Government of the relevant figures in respect of their territories.

I accordingly circulate, for approval, the draft of a despatch to Lord Halifax covering, as Annex I a statement of the situation in respect of the United Kingdom, the Colonial Empire and United Kingdom Mandated Territories, India and Southern Rhodesia and, as Annex II, a tabular statement of the situation in the Dominions drawn up in a form to meet the wish of the Canadian Government that any overall totals of such figures presented on behalf of the British Commonwealth as a whole should be avoided.

I should, perhaps, add that the statements are not in all cases confined to the period of the war and that, in respect of the Dominions and of certain other territories, figures are also given of evacuees, internees and prisoners of war accommodated therein. I think that this is justifiable in that only thus is it possible to give a fair picture of the heavy burden which is at present being borne by these territories.

R. L.

Foreign Office, 30th October, 1944.

DRAFT DESPATCH TO HIS MAJESTY'S AMBASSADOR, WASHINGTON.

(Confidential.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, October 1944.

YOUR Lordship will recall that, in the course of discussion between His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Government of the United States in August last regarding the so-called "Horthy offer" for the release of Jews from Hungary, His Majesty's Government found it necessary to obtain privately from the United States Government an assurance regarding the extent of the commitment which would in fact fall upon them in the event of the Hungarian Government's proposals being, as they in fact were, accepted by the two Governments.

2. This assurance, which was given by the United States Ambassador in a letter dated the 16th August, prior to the issue of the joint declaration made by His Majesty's Government and the United States Government on the 17th August, was in the following terms:—

"In entering into the Joint Declaration attached, it is understood between the United States and British Governments that the British capacity to accommodate refugees is limited, so that, while the British Government

has accepted in principle an indefinite commitment, the British Government rely on the United States Government to assume its fair share of the burden and not to face the British Government with a practical impossibility."

*3. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have felt it desirable, in order, should the need arise, to substantiate the difficulties under which they would labour, as they informed the United States Government in the circumstances mentioned above, in receiving any further large influx of refugees in the territories in their possession or under their control, to compile on broad lines a statement of the commitments which they have undertaken on this score. I enclose, as Annex I to this despatch, a statement showing the position as it arises in respect of—

- (a) The United Kingdom;
- (b) Colonial and United Kingdom mandated territories;
- (c) India;
- (d) Southern Rhodesia.

This statement may be regarded as showing the situation existing at the end of September 1944.

4. I shall be glad if your Lordship will communicate a copy of this statement to the United States Government. In doing so, I do not consider that it will be either desirable or necessary to link your communication specially with the situation which arose in August last, as described in paragraphs 1 and 2 above. I should prefer that the statement should simply be communicated to the State Department on the basis that it may be of general interest to them to have for their information an outline of the commitments of the territories concerned on this particular score.

5. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have also thought it desirable to secure from His Majesty's Governments in Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa information on similar lines in respect of their territories.

6. I enclose, as Annex II to this despatch, a tabular statement containing this information. Your Lordship should also communicate a copy of this statement to the United States Government, prefacing it by saying that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are authorised to say that, in addition to what has been done in the way of accommodating refugees by the United Kingdom and the territories mentioned in Annex I, the following numbers have been admitted by Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa; and that this information is communicated to the United States Government with the same aim in view as that described in paragraph 4 above.

7. Your Lordship will observe that, as regards the information supplied by His Majesty's Governments in the Dominions, and also in respect of certain other territories, figures are included of the commitments assumed by the territories in question in respect of other classes of persons, such as evacuees, internees and prisoners of war. It is thought that by so doing a clearer picture can be presented of the overall burden, in many cases a very heavy one, assumed by these territories.

8. While it is not, of course, intended that the statements annexed should be communicated to the Press or otherwise published, your Lordship may find them useful as background material with which to rebut any serious or sustained campaign which may develop on the part of the United States Press or public opinion to the effect that a fair share of the burden of accommodating and otherwise promoting the welfare of refugees is not being assumed by the British Commonwealth. In this connection, and quite apart from the provision of accommodation for refugees in British territory, your Lordship is well aware, as doubtless are the United States Government, of the continuous interest and activity displayed by His Majesty's Governments in the task of grappling with the refugee problem, both through the medium of the Inter-governmental Committee on Refugees and by themselves providing transport (in spite of very heavy war-time pressure) and arranging other similar facilities, including the finding of temporary places of refuge.

ANNEX I.

STATEMENT OF ACCOMMODATION FOR REFUGEES PROVIDED BY THE UNITED KINGDOM, COLONIAL AND UNITED KINGDOM MANDATED TERRITORIES, INDIA AND SOUTHERN RHODESIA.

(a) *United Kingdom.*

At the outbreak of war the number of adult refugees from Germany and Austria in this country was approximately 55,000. A large number of these had children and, further, there were more than 13,000 child refugees who had been admitted without their parents. In addition, nearly 10,000 Czechoslovak nationals had found a refuge in this country during the twelve months preceding the war. From 1940 to December 1942 approximately 63,000 aliens who came as refugees from enemy and enemy-occupied countries have been admitted into the United Kingdom. This total includes 20,000 seamen but is exclusive of the very large numbers who have come as members of Allied Forces. If all children who came with their parents are allowed for, the total of refugees who were here at the beginning of the war or who have come here since is approximately 150,000 and they are still being admitted.

(b) *Colonial and United Kingdom Mandated Territories.**Cyprus.*

Five thousand Greek refugees from Greece and 500 Greek refugees from the Dodecanese are at present being maintained in the Colony. Approximately 10,000 other refugees, some Greek refugees from the Dodecanese and some Jewish refugees from the Balkans have been temporarily accommodated in Cyprus before passing on to other destinations.

Mauritius.

Approximately 1,500 refugees are being maintained and it has been agreed in principle that a further number may be admitted.

Jamaica.

Approximately 500 refugees are being maintained. This is additional to 1,500 evacuees from Gibraltar.

East African Colonies.

Additional population, including Italian prisoners of war and Polish refugees, 90,964, nearly three times the normal white population. Some 17,000 Polish refugees have been moved from Persia to East Africa and are distributed between Uganda, Tanganyika, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Camps in Kenya and Tanganyika have accommodated 3,000 Greek refugees in transit from the Greek mainland via Turkey and Egypt to the Belgian Congo. In addition, Tanganyika has received 500 Greek refugees.

Palestine.

From the 1st April, 1939, to the 31st March, 1944, 51,186 Jewish immigrants have entered Palestine, the majority of whom were refugees who had been stranded in neutral countries. The number of Jewish immigrants who entered Palestine during the seven months ending the 31st July was 9,000 including some 2,000 Jewish refugees who reached Istanbul from Constanza in small ships and were sent to Palestine.

Refugees received in Palestine other than immigrants—

Poles (approximately)	12,000
Greeks	9,000
Refugees from neutral Europe received in 1940 (40 per cent. Jews)	4,000
Total	25,000

(c) *India.*

By the end of March 1944 India had provided accommodation and, where necessary, support for approximately 511,000 refugees. Of these, approximately 507,000 were British or British-protected persons. The balance covers many nationalities, the largest group of which is composed of Poles from the Soviet Union. Approximately 3,500 Poles are at present accommodated in India, and the Government of India have accepted liability for a total of 11,000. It is expected that the advance of the Allied Armies into Burma will result in a renewed flow of refugees from Burma to India.

India's refugee problem is probably greater than that of any other Allied or neutral country, and in the light of the present food and housing problems and the general economic situation the Government of India feel that despite the utmost goodwill they are not in a position to accept more refugees.

(d) *Southern Rhodesia.*

<i>Refugees</i> (11th September, 1944)	1,462 (Poles)
<i>Evacuees</i> —	
British (Far East)	87
Poles (Middle East)	905
	—
	992
<i>Internees</i> (11th September 1944)	5,369 (German and Italian)
<i>Prisoners of War</i> (enemy subjects on parole)—	
German	861
Italian	623
Bulgarian	2
Hungarian	7
Roumanian	24
Finn	1
	—
	1,518

ANNEX II.

	Number of Refugees since 1933.	Evacuees.	Internees.	Prisoners of War.	Notes.
Canada	(a) 1933-42 inclusive: "Several thousand" temporary entry (b) April 1933-March 1942 inclusive: 39,000 total immigration from Europe "mainly refugees" (Refugees since March 1943: 575 mostly from Spain, Portugal and Tangier)	7,961 British evacuees since Spring 1940	4,500* from United Kingdom	About 25,000	* 900 of these have been released in Canada and might be classed as refugees.
Australia	7,062	15,000 approx.	From United Kingdom ... 236 " Palestine ... 787 " Straits Settlements... 47 " Middle East " Iran 456 " New Caledonia† ... 1,002 " Solomon Islands ... 7 " N.E.I† 1,235 " New Hebrides ... 31 " (Indonesia) 17 Total 3,818	German ... 1,095 Italian ... 4,957 Total ... 6,052‡	† Japanese. ‡ Excludes Commonwealth Prisoners of War (Japanese).
New Zealand	Entry Permits 4,631§ Arrivals 1,786 (Figures correct to 31st August, 1944)	5/600	181	806	§ Includes permits for 840 Polish children and for 620 Chinese. Includes 492 Chinese.
Union of South Africa...	No exact statistics available before 1939, but "a steady stream" Since 1939 10,298 (approx.) (Figures to 25th September 1944)	Dependants of United Kingdom Servicemen 2,599 Child guests 319 Total... .. 2,918¶	3,046 2,159	69,699 41,400	¶ Corresponding figures in March 1943 were— Dependants ... 4,999 Child guests ... 341 Total ... 5,340



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