

## IMMIGRATION AND CARE OF REFUGEES

### INQUIRY

On the Orders of the Day:

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Honourable senators, I should like to refer to a subject I have mentioned before, the care of those whom, for want of a better term, we describe as refugees from the two great formerly allied countries. I presume that because of the disastrous turn of events in France there are unfortunately not many persons, if any at all, who are able to leave that country now. Such, however, is not true of Britain.

I cannot find any systematization of the work of taking care of these people. That a great many Canadians are interested in it, I am aware. And I know it is a fact that most, though I feel sure not all, of the refugees who have arrived have obtained some place at which to stay in the meantime. But certainly there is no scheme, even under advisement, for looking after the educational interests of children who come. Undoubtedly the difficulties are pretty serious. The British Government will not permit the parents of these children, even where the parents are financially able, to send out money for educational purposes. A limit of ten pounds has, I think, been set by the British Government in this connection. With that no one can find fault, for every pound sent out of Britain for such purposes subtracts from the country's financial ability to purchase materials essential for winning the war.

Then, I presume, the British Government is anxious that the whole plan of removal of children and, where necessary, of women, should work out with the greatest possible degree of equity and fairness as between persons who are capable of paying and those who are not. However, the fact with which I am now concerned is that a considerable number of children are coming over, and what I should like to see is some central organization charged with the placing and supervising of these children in Canada. The United States is organizing to render material assistance, which will be very welcome, but it does seem to me that the Dominions are the natural homes for these children. Canada is the closest Dominion and therefore the one to which they look first. It would be a tragedy, for which we should never forgive ourselves, that we should fail to provide adequate care for the people who arrive under the distressful circumstances of these times.

Little can be said by those in authority on the other side of the ocean. Naturally they would not wish to complain, no matter what were done. And they will praise; no

matter what is done. It is for us to see that an organization to look after the children is established, and that the whole problem is adequately dealt with. I am not going to say that the cost of a proper scheme should be wholly borne by the Dominion treasury. The work is something in the nature of that taken care of by the old Patriotic Fund in the last war. It might be necessary to have financial assistance given by the treasury, but the work is not an inappropriate one for support by interested people in this country. And I do not think a call for assistance would go long unanswered by our citizens.

When I am asked where these children may be looked after, I do not know what to say. There is no central place. This church here, another church there, and a ladies' college somewhere else are doing what they can, and some people are trying to arrange for the use of a large building, and so on, but there is no one organization in charge of the work as a whole. That is the report brought to me by those who have come out with these people. Sometimes refugees arrive without anyone at all being present to meet them.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: And without any notification being sent here from the other side.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Without notification, perhaps; I do not know. But they all could be taken care of if there were a proper system. That seems to me something which falls peculiarly within the new Department of National War Services. One gets that impression upon reading the Bill creating the new ministry. Some organization should be set up which has the department's blessing and to which those who are eager to assist as best they can might apply. I do not think the work should be done directly under the department, though if it were I should not find fault, but at least the department could give a lead to the setting up of a central organization and see to the establishment of subsidiaries throughout the country, so that this great service in which we are now privileged to take part may be done properly. Besides, it will ultimately redound to the advantage of Canada. Of course, not all the people who come here will remain here as citizens, but some will, and we ought to see that they all get a good impression of the country.

There should be no further delay in looking after this matter, and I suggest that it be drawn to the attention of the Minister of National War Services. Perhaps he already has it in hand. I hope he has, for nothing