

*Inquiries of the Ministry***EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**STATEMENT ON REQUEST FOR AID FOR DISPLACED
PERSONS IN EUROPEAN CAMPS

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Sidney E. Smith (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, January 7, the hon. member for Winnipeg North, as recorded at page 2937 of *Hansard*, addressed the following question to me:

In view of the Prime Minister's desire to give encouragement to those behind the iron curtain, can the minister tell the house what is being done, in a substantial way, by this government to help the tens of thousands of victims of communist persecution who are now in displaced persons' camps in Europe?

At that time the hon. member for Rose-town-Biggar amplified the question. My answer is that the office of the United Nations high commissioner for refugees is the international agency mainly responsible for the care and protection of refugees. This office took over the work of the international refugee organization when that agency was disbanded early in the 1950's. Canada has consistently supported the work of the high commissioner, and when his special refugee fund, known as UNREF, was established by the United Nations general assembly in 1954, Canada pledged support for it. It was planned that UNREF would operate for four years, that is 1955, 1956, 1957 and 1958, by which time it was hoped that permanent solutions would have been found for the refugee problem.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North asked what Canada has done "in a substantial way" to aid refugees in Europe. I can list the following. As far as money is concerned, Canada contributed \$125,000 in 1955 to UNREF; \$125,000 in 1956; \$200,000 in 1957, and has pledged \$200,000 in 1958. At the time of the crisis concerning Hungarian refugees, near the end of 1956, Canada contributed \$1 million for their relief; out of this, \$350,000 went to the Canadian Red Cross for its work in the refugee camps and \$650,000 to the United Nations high commissioner for refugees.

As far as the admission of refugees to this country is concerned, while that is a matter for another department yet I might say that, as reported by the high commissioner for refugees, Canada admitted 2,395 refugees in 1955 and 1,896 during 1956. I have not the comparable figures for the year 1957. However, I can say with regard to the admission of Hungarian refugees that since the Hungarian crisis began in October, 1956, Canada has admitted just over 36,000 of them.

[Mrs. Fairclough.]

CEYLON—FURTHER STATEMENT ON ASSISTANCE
GIVEN BY CANADA

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Sidney E. Smith (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet perhaps I could make a statement concerning flood relief for Ceylon, with your leave. In my statement to the house on January 3 I informed the house that the government was following closely the situation in Ceylon through our acting high commissioner in Colombo and through the representative of Ceylon in Ottawa. I said that when we had more information on the situation as it has developed since the recent serious floods the government would give sympathetic consideration to sending additional aid.

On January 8 my colleague the Minister of Trade and Commerce, when he reviewed the government's proposals to seek authority from parliament to extend relief in the form of wheat and flour to Ceylon, India and Pakistan, mentioned that a part of the proposed \$15 million grant would be used to meet an urgent request for assistance by the government of Ceylon. I am now in a position to inform the house that the Prime Minister has sent the following telegram to the Prime Minister of Ceylon, which I shall read:

My dear Prime Minister:

I should like to express to you and through you to the people of Ceylon the profound sympathy of the Canadian government and of Canadians in every walk of life in the suffering and the loss which the recent severe floods have brought to many in large areas of your country. We are deeply saddened that this disaster has caused so much distress and has created acute problems of reconstruction and rehabilitation for the people of Ceylon.

We, in Canada, are deeply impressed by the courage and determination which you, and the people of Ceylon, have shown in your readiness to take up this burden. In the sincere conviction that all Canadians want to give what help they can, we have decided to offer your country 38,000 tons of flour for delivery as soon as necessary.

And then the Prime Minister added his warm good wishes.

The government's decision, Mr. Speaker, to offer flour to assist the government and people of Ceylon in their task of rehabilitation is based on information received from our acting high commissioner in Ceylon who has reported, as a result of consultations with the authorities in Ceylon, that the provision of assistance in the form of flour would best meet Ceylon's requirements for rehabilitation.

To adopt a statistical note for the moment, Mr. Speaker, the figure of 38,000 tons of flour represents approximately 2 million bushels of