

Ocean transportation arrangements will be made by the United Kingdom government, which will supply ships and pay ocean passage. Some days ago the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) mentioned in the house that there would likely be a movement from Britain to Canada of internees and prisoners of war, and it is expected that the British government may decide that these must move before the children.

The dominion government will use its medical examiners and its immigration officers overseas for examination of the children before sailing. It will be necessary to keep careful records so that identity may be preserved and the children thus enabled to be reunited with their parents, either here or at home, after the war is over.

The dominion government will look after the reception of the children at Canadian ocean ports, will provide rail transportation with proper meals en route and will carry them to the provincial distribution centres. Nurses will be placed on each train carrying children and an immigration conductor or conductress will be on each car.

Under arrangements worked out between the dominion government and the provinces, the latter will have the oversight of reception, placement and after-supervision. In doing this they will utilize the services of child welfare and other organizations in the various provinces who have the experience necessary to handle this part of the task. The provinces, and the organizations cooperating with them, are now engaged in receiving offers of homes and examining the suitability of these homes for the reception of the children after their arrival. Following the recognized practice in all the provinces, care will be taken to place children in homes of their own faith, by which I mean non-Roman Catholic children will be placed in non-Roman Catholic homes, Roman Catholic children in Roman Catholic homes and Jewish children in Jewish homes.

Many splendid offers of cooperation have been received from churches, from national and local organizations and from individuals willing and anxious to help in this great work of saving thousands of children from the mother country. There is room for all in this voluntary effort. I should like to emphasize here as strongly as I can the necessity for their being one recognized central authority in each province for placement and supervision, and that such central authority be the provincial department dealing with welfare matters. It would greatly facilitate the work of administration if those desiring to help in any way would first of all get in touch with the appropriate provincial department.

[Mr. Crerar.]

Foreseeing the necessity for close provincial-federal cooperation if this work were to be successfully handled, we invited the provinces to send their welfare experts to a conference which was held in Ottawa on the 3rd and 4th of June. The plan of operation being followed is largely that devised and recommended by this conference. I wish to place on record here our appreciation of the splendid cooperation we are receiving from the provinces.

Immediately following this conference we offered to take ten thousand as an initial movement, whom we felt certain could be placed in private homes; but that did not by any means limit the movement to that number. The task we have undertaken is to place many thousands in good private homes in Canada for the duration of the war. This is a form of war work which is well worth while. It is measured not by money but by service; and for this reason I have no doubt that the response of those who can offer homes will be widespread. But there are many in Canada who cannot offer a home, single persons and others who have not suitable accommodation. May I suggest to them the possibility of cooperating with some home which has taken a child, and sharing the expense of food and clothing. In this way the burden will be more equally shared and the circle of those who can help enlarged.

Up to the present the British government have not been able to give us any estimate of the number who are likely to come. My own impression is that it may well reach very large dimensions. With this possibility in view I have been conferring to-day with the provincial ministers in charge of welfare work in their provinces, to consider further plans for a greatly extended movement, should this become necessary.

I have not said anything about the expenses involved beyond what is paid by the United Kingdom government and the dominion government in transportation and services. There will necessarily arise expenses beyond this for such items as medical care, hospitalization, or other unforeseen contingencies. The matter of how these will be met has been under consideration, and a decision will likely be reached in a few days. If a private home could be found for every child, where lodging, food, clothing and education could continue to be provided free, the expense to the provinces and to the welfare societies would consist largely of increased staff to look after the welfare of the children. We must, however, expect and plan for difficulties which are bound to arise through the failure of some children to fit into the homes where they are placed, the need for hospitalization, and other costs that are inseparable from handling such a large number.