

Private

Food Relief

JAC/LF
19.2.46.

C188697

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRIME MINISTER:

The attached memorandum is the report of the recommendations agreed to at the meeting of officials with Mr. Gardiner yesterday. I would like to add the following points:

1. The Cereals Committee of the Combined Food Board have met in Washington last week and their report is that, statistically, the picture is not one of general starvation but of low caloric intake; I say statistically because breakdown in distribution of indigenous supplies will leave some groups, particularly in cities, with a very low and sometimes a starvation diet.

The statistical picture is not flush, but will take care of the bare needs of the population until the new crop; it will remain tight for at least one year.

2. I cannot emphasize enough that the most important item in the statistical picture is the United States commitment to export 225 million bushels in the first six months of this year. If they fail in this, ~~then~~ starvation in Europe this year will result and be widespread. It is therefore essential that whatever action we take ~~do not~~ have the effect of impeding the United States in the realization of their program. While the alternative suggested under item (2) to increasing the extraction ratio in Canada, i.e. reducing the supply of wheat to mills for domestic milling may be simpler and more productive of results, as far as Canada is concerned, These results must be weighed as against the effect in the United States -- our program will release 2,500,000 bushels of wheat, the United States one 25,000,000. Although the United States have not consulted us before setting out their program, any more than they consulted their own millers, which would have been most sensible, I suggest that we take this matter up with them urgently, explain our position and see which effect they consider it will have on theirs before we reach a final decision. Their program goes into operation on March 1st and it might be possible for them to reconsider it.