

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Not all.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): —at a very early stage of the session. At that time, I believe, not one of these bills had been introduced. Of course the government must have or should have known that there was legislation on the way. I think this is a proper move. The expenditure which has been made should not be lost. Business would suffer—not to mention the bills for the relief of certain persons.

Motion agreed to.

BRITISH CHILDREN

ARRANGEMENTS AND FACILITIES FOR EXTENDING HOSPITALITY OF CANADA FOR DURATION OF WAR

Hon. T. A. CRERAR (Minister of Mines and Resources): Yesterday the hon. member for St. Paul's (Mr. Ross) addressed a question to me with regard to the movement of British children to Canada. I intimated to the house then that I would probably make a statement to-day and I wish to do so now.

In view of the widespread interest in this country in the matter of British and refugee children who may come to Canada, I wish to give to the house, and to the public generally, an outline of what has already been done and our plans for the future, so far as we have been able to formulate them.

At the outset I wish to distinguish between British children and refugee children, or refugees generally. The latter are those who came to Britain following the invasion by Germany of Holland, Belgium and, later, France. On the advice we have received, contrary to the general belief in Canada there are—or at any rate there were up until a week or ten days ago—only about 2,900 Belgians and 150 Dutch refugee children in Great Britain, and of these it was estimated 125 to 150 were unaccompanied by parents. This, of course, does not include those children and adults who had reached Britain prior to, and following, the attack on Poland, from Austria, Germany and Poland itself. It was reported to us last February by our immigration officials in London that at that time these totalled less than ten thousand, approximately ninety per cent born in Germany and Austria, about the same percentage being Jewish, most of whom had been absorbed into the normal life of Great Britain.

The movement which is by far of greatest interest to Canadians is the movement of British people, mainly children, to Canada. This movement is of two kinds.

The first is made up of all those coming on their own and paying their own way. These

include a few men, some women and many children who, if they can get a release of their funds in the United Kingdom, can come here and support themselves, and those coming to join relatives or friends in this country who have offered them homes. This movement also includes residential schools moving as a body to locate in Canada, at least for the duration of the war. Every encouragement is being given by the Canadian authorities to this movement, and delays are not allowed to occur through unnecessary investigations which might delay sailings.

We have been advised that, under the present British regulations, no person, male or female, between the ages of sixteen and sixty may leave Great Britain without a permit. In addition to this, some difficulties have arisen owing to the fact that the United Kingdom government restricts the free movement of sterling exchange. Within the last week or ten days we have had quite a number of requests from British-born people resident in Canada, and from others, asking if we cannot do something to help their relatives and friends in the United Kingdom secure permission to transfer sufficient of their own funds to enable them to come to Canada and maintain themselves in this country. While it is recognized that this is a matter wholly for the United Kingdom government to decide, we have urged on our high commissioner in London that he strongly support the effort to have sterling exchange released for the necessary monetary support of those who wish to come to Canada on their own resources.

The other, and larger, movement is the one which, as I have said, arouses the most interest in Canada, namely the movement of British children who can come only if transportation is provided and free homes are offered here. Several weeks ago, after the successful invasion of Belgium, Holland and France and when it appeared likely that Britain itself would shortly be subjected to severe attack, the government here, on its own initiative, offered to assist in bringing to Canada British and refugee children. That offer has been accepted by the British authorities. One of the features of this assisted movement provides for the nomination of children to designated homes in Canada. Under this arrangement parents in Britain who have relatives or friends in Canada may nominate their children to be brought out and placed in these homes.

There will be included in this movement children from five to fifteen years of age inclusive, with possibly a small number under five years, if available for adoption in Canada. In every case, we are advised, the consent of parents or guardians must first be obtained.