

INTERNED REFUGEES

THE QUAKER VIEW

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—The large number of letters to the papers and the debate and questions in the House of Commons have shown the great concern felt all over the country as to the treatment of refugees from Nazi persecution.

The Friends' Committee, which has had the responsibility for sponsoring a large number of Christian and other "Non-Aryans" allowed by the Home Office to enter this country, could give many additional cases similar to those already published and must regretfully confirm both that acute suffering, physical and mental, has been inflicted on large numbers of people, regardless of what they had already undergone at the hands of the Gestapo in Germany, and that work invaluable to the country has been lost. We can also fully confirm the impression that the Home Office and War Office officials have done and are doing their best to carry out the Government policy with humanity and are themselves greatly distressed at the impossibility of doing so. The debate in the House on July 10 had little apparent result in removing even the worst hardships (outrages is scarcely too strong a word) arising from the emergency policy of rapid general internment. This delay is no doubt due to the lack of sufficient staff in the Government Departments concerned and in the camps, and we would urge the vital importance of securing at once the necessary increase.

The proposals made by Sir John Anderson on July 23 may be expected to produce a considerable improvement in course of time, but it is essential that certain urgent matters should be dealt with more rapidly. We would refer especially to the need for rapid release of the older men in poor health, and for the postponement of further shipment of men to the Dominions until there is opportunity to make sure that those sent do not come under one of the categories eligible for release to work in this country, or if they do, that they are willing to go. The selection of families suitable for transfer oversea needs individual care in the interests of the Dominion concerned as well as in those of the refugees. It must be realized that tragedies have occurred which can never be set right and this should make us all the more determined, to remedy the conditions which caused them, to prevent repetition of them and to restore the lost confidence in the humanity and freedom expected of our country.

We earnestly hope that the proposal to release from internment those whose work for this country is considered of national importance will be interpreted to include all who can be usefully employed, and also those who can contribute to our cultural life and to our intelligent opposition to the evils in the Nazi doctrines.

Yours faithfully,

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HILDA CLARK, Honorary Secretary.

Society of Friends' German Emergency Committee, Bloomsbury House, Bloomsbury Street, W.C.1, Aug. 1.