

INTERNED REFUGEES

Sir,—The recent internments of enemy aliens have caused special hardship in those cases where refugees were interned solely on the ground that they were residents of a specified zone stretching from the South along the entire East Coast. This zone comprises a number of districts which were before the war known as "special" or "distressed" areas. Refugees from Germany and Austria were strongly encouraged to start new industries in these areas and nowhere else. Two resolutions of the House of Commons, dated March 12 and November 18, 1936, urged the settlement of new industries in these areas. Refugees desirous of utilizing their specialized knowledge of manufacture by setting up factories in this country were therefore granted permission to do so only conditionally upon choosing these special areas as their place of business. It is very unfortunate that just this same choice of residence, in some cases the result of considerable pressure on the part of the Home Office, should now work out so much to the disadvantage of these people.

Ways and means should be found speedily to relieve those—probably the overwhelming majority—who can be thoroughly relied on in every respect. Already the internment has in several cases greatly impeded the work of a number of reasonably prosperous firms with important export connexion. Some of these firms were supported by public funds—one more reason to make sure that innocent persons, often with valuable qualifications, should not be kept interned longer than is necessary for the purpose of careful investigations.

Yours faithfully,

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