CABINET

IMMIGRATION OF BRITISH SUBJECTS INTO THE UNITED KINGDOM

NOTE BY THE HOME SECRETARY

At their meeting on 19th June, 1950, the Cabinet invited the Prime Minister to arrange for a review to be made of the further means which might be adopted to check the immigration into this country of coloured people from the British Colonial territories (C.M. (50) 37th Conclusions, Minute 2).

2. The Prime Minister appointed a Committee of Ministers under my Chairmanship to carry out this review. The Committee's report is annexed.

J. C. E.

Home Office, S.W. 1,
12th February, 1951.

ANNEX

IMMIGRATION OF BRITISH SUBJECTS INTO THE UNITED KINGDOM

REPORT BY A COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

At their meeting on 19th June, 1950 (C.M. (50) 37th Conclusions, Minute 2), the Cabinet invited the Prime Minister to arrange for a review to be made of the further means which might be adopted to check the immigration into this country of coloured people from British Colonial territories, if legislation were passed limiting the right of British subjects, or of any class of British subjects, to enter and reside in the United Kingdom, and of the issues of policy involved in making such a change in the existing law. To carry out this review the Prime Minister appointed an ad hoc Committee composed of the following Ministers:

Home Secretary (in the Chair).
Minister of Labour.
Minister of Health.
Secretary of State for the Colonies.
Secretary of State for Scotland.
Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations.
Attorney-General.

Our report is as follows.

Extent

2. We first considered the extent of the problems presented by the immigration into this country of coloured people from British Colonial territories. For many years permanent communities of coloured persons of Colonial origin have
lived in various parts of the United Kingdom. Most of them are either of West African or West Indian extraction, or Moslem people, mainly from Aden or Somaliland. In general, they look to this country as their home and have no intention of returning to their countries of origin. They are thought to number some 30,000, the larger groups being found in Merseyside, London, Cardiff and Tyneside.

3. Since 1945, at least 5,000 coloured immigrants from the Colonies, almost all West Africans or West Indians, have arrived here. They have come as stowaways, seafarers or fare-paying immigrant workers. Over the past four years the stowaways have arrived—and continue to arrive—at the rate of about 400 a year. It is not known how many have come as seafarers, but at present about 500 coloured men who are unemployed call themselves “seamen”: there is no doubt that in the past many “one-trip seamen” have signed on in overseas ports for discharge in the United Kingdom in the vain hope of obtaining seafaring employment here. In the years following the war there were a number of notable shipments of fare-paying migrant workers. It is estimated that since 1945 about 2,000 migrant workers have arrived from the West Indies, many of them in large parties travelling in troopships at cheap rates. Since 1949 there have been no large parties, but there is reason to believe that the total number of workers arriving has not fallen off.

4. Unemployment and destitution among these coloured people of all types are not so widespread as to have any noticeable effect on our economy. On 24th July, 1950, the number of unemployed male Colonials (including the “seamen” mentioned above) in the main areas where coloured persons live was 1,102; the corresponding figure on 24th July, 1949, was 1,200. Many of these persons were only temporarily out of work. As regards reliance on national assistance, a sample check during one week in August 1950 showed that 572 coloured Colonials had applied for such assistance; 112 of them had come here as stowaways and 85 of these 112 had arrived during the last two years.

Possible Legislation

5. We examined three possible methods involving legislation by which the entry of British subjects into the United Kingdom, or their residence here might be controlled. These are described in the following paragraphs and are: the application to British subjects of the controls now applied only to aliens; the deportation of British subjects coming within certain categories; and the return of British stowaways to the territory from which they embarked or to which they belong.

6. Application of Aliens Control to British Subjects.—Powers might be taken similar to those now applied to aliens. An account of the law and practice relating to aliens is given in Appendix I. Briefly, this method of control would mean that a British subject from a Colony or independent Commonwealth country would not be admitted to the United Kingdom unless the Immigration Officer were satisfied that he was a returning resident or genuine visitor, or was coming to take up employment authorised by the Ministry of Labour. The conditions for the grant of labour permits need not necessarily be identical with those applied to aliens but some check of the bona fides of the application would clearly be desirable. It would also be necessary to verify that wages and conditions of work were suitable even if there were no condition, such as that applied to aliens, that labour was not already available in this country. But in some industries and occupations the introduction of legislation to control the admission of citizens of the Commonwealth and Colonies might give rise to demands for safeguards of this type from competition by overseas labour.

7. There would be no insuperable administrative difficulty in exercising the necessary control at the ports, though it would mean subjecting British subjects to some delays. The main burden of administration would, however, fall on the Ministry of Labour. The conditions for the grant of labour permits need not necessarily be identical with those applied to aliens but some check of the bona fides of the application would clearly be desirable. It would also be necessary to verify that wages and conditions of work were suitable even if there were no condition, such as that applied to aliens, that labour was not already available in this country. But in some industries and occupations the introduction of legislation to control the admission of citizens of the Commonwealth and Colonies might give rise to demands for safeguards of this type from competition by overseas labour.

8. The additional staff requirements needed to operate such an extension of the permit procedure would, of course, depend on the number of applications received but might be substantial. If the control were applied to persons from the Colonies and the independent Commonwealth countries, it would be difficult to justify the exemption of persons from the Irish Republic. On the basis of the number of applications for insurance cards it appears that some thirty or forty
thousand persons come to Great Britain from the Irish Republic each year. The issuing of permits to all citizens of the Irish Republic who come for employment might, therefore, by itself, be almost as substantial a block of work as the present aliens permit administration, and it would be particularly unrewarding as there would be few, if any, Irish workers whom we should wish to exclude.

9. Such a system of control could not be effective without the interrogation of individuals and the imposition where necessary of landing conditions as in the case of aliens. A power to deport persons who broke their landing conditions would also probably be necessary.

10. Deportation of British Subjects.—The main problems in relation to the immigration of British subjects from Colonial territories arise because they are tempted to come to the United Kingdom by better prospects of employment and in the knowledge that if they fail to find work they will be supported by the social services at a higher standard of living than many of them had in the Colonies. A possible scheme would, therefore, be to leave the entry of British subjects into the United Kingdom unrestricted, but to empower the Home Secretary to deport any overseas British subject who had been resident in the United Kingdom for not more than two years (or perhaps a longer period) and who had (i) applied for national assistance, or (ii) been convicted of a serious offence; or (iii) attempted to create industrial unrest. This last condition, which would be difficult to define in legislation, might operate only if a state of emergency had been declared. The Cabinet considered at their meeting on 27th July, 1949 (C.M. 49th Conclusions, Minute 5) whether power should be taken to permit the deportation from the United Kingdom of British subjects who, not being United Kingdom citizens, engaged in subversive activities in this country, but no decision was reached.

11. A scheme on these lines would probably be administratively practicable, though we understand that it would involve certain difficulties for the National Assistance Board. There is also the point that in order to operate any system of deportation it is necessary to get some country overseas to receive the person deported. In the case of independent Commonwealth countries this should not give rise to serious difficulties since it could be established that the person was a citizen of the country concerned. But Colonials are citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies, and it would be necessary to devise some means of determining to which Colony a particular person belonged; this would probably not be beyond solution in the majority of cases.

12. Return of British Stowaways.—A third possibility would be to confine any measures taken to British subjects who come to the United Kingdom as stowaways. This would deal with only part of the problem, but, nevertheless, a considerable improvement might be effected if power were taken to deal with this particularly difficult class of person. The existing practice in relation to alien stowaways is to refuse them leave to land. The master of the ship on which they came is under an obligation to take them back to the port from which they embarked and the owners or agents are under a contingent obligation to do so or to return them to the country of which they are nationals. In order to enable British stowaways to be dealt with similarly, it would be necessary to take power by legislation (i) to require the master, owners or agents of the ship to remove the stowaway to the territory from which he embarked for the United Kingdom or to the territory to which he belongs, (ii) to require the master to detain the stowaway on board until seen by the Immigration Officer, or, if the Immigration Officer so directs, to continue to detain him while the ship remains in port, and (iii) to place the stowaway temporarily on shore and to detain him there, either at the request of the master or on the instructions of the Immigration Officer. The powers relating to return of the stowaway and detention on shore would apply to stowaways found in the United Kingdom up to, say, two months from the date of arrival, and penalties would have to be prescribed not only for contraventions but for aiding and abetting contraventions. Corresponding powers would be necessary with regard to stowaways in aircraft. The new powers would be in addition to the existing powers in the Merchant Shipping Acts and the Air Navigation (Stowaways) Order; the existing powers would still be invoked in cases where it was thought necessary to prosecute a stowaway because his presence had endangered the craft. This general solution would not present administrative difficulties.
Issues of Policy

13. The three possible courses outlined in paragraphs 6 to 12 above, all raise to a greater or less degree the following issues of policy: —

(i) The United Kingdom has a special status as the mother country, and freedom to enter and remain in the United Kingdom at will is one of the main practical benefits enjoyed by British subjects, as such. All the Colonies and independent Commonwealth countries (except, at present, India and Pakistan) impose restrictions on the entry into their territory of British subjects, though the extent of the restrictions varies. An account of the law and practice on this matter in the Colonies, independent Commonwealth countries and the Irish Republic is given in Appendix II.

(ii) The present concept of British nationality, as embodied in the British Nationality Act, 1948, is that British nationality is derived through citizenship of any one of the self-governing countries within the Commonwealth. For citizenship purposes, the United Kingdom together with the Colonies forms one unit, and it would be contrary to the scheme to subdivide that unit. Furthermore, it would be difficult to justify restrictions on persons who are citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies, if no comparable restrictions were imposed on persons who are citizens of other Commonwealth countries, or even, as in the case of citizens of the Irish Republic, are citizens of a country outside the Commonwealth. Yet on general grounds it is undesirable particularly at the present stage of Commonwealth development, that such restrictions should be imposed on citizens of the independent Commonwealth countries and it is agreed policy that in these matters the Irish Republic shall be treated on a similar basis to Commonwealth countries.

(iii) Any solution depending on an apparent or concealed colour test would be so invidious as to make it impossible of adoption. Nevertheless, the use of any powers taken to restrict the free entry of British subjects to this country would, as a general rule, be more or less confined to coloured persons. We consider that this fact provides an argument in favour of limiting any powers taken to the exclusion of specific and well defined categories of persons, such as those who become a charge on public funds or stowaways, whose continued presence here is clearly open to objection. Even so, coloured persons would be mainly concerned, and this might possibly give rise to resentment in India, Pakistan and Ceylon and in the more advanced Colonial territories.

14. It has been suggested to us that, if the scope of a Bill on stowaways on the lines indicated in paragraph 12 above were widened to cover both alien and British stowaways and were presented as a measure dealing with stowaways in general, it might thereby be made less controversial. But the existing powers of the Aliens Order are quite adequate to deal with alien stowaways, and it would be difficult to argue that they need to be duplicated. Moreover, if powers to deal with alien stowaways were included in the Bill, there would be a risk that through amendments made during its passage the existing powers would be weakened.

Conclusions

15. In view of the comparatively small scale of immigration into this country of coloured people from British Colonial territories (see paragraph 2 above) and the important and controversial issues of policy involved in legislation to control it, we consider that no such legislation should at present be introduced. Even the legislation on stowaways outlined in paragraph 12—the least far-reaching of the methods of control we have considered—would mean a break in the traditional policy of giving all British subjects the right to enter the United Kingdom and to enjoy the same rights and privileges as are given to United Kingdom citizens. We are aware, however, that in the long-term social standards in the Colonies lower than those in the United Kingdom, may well result in considerable migration to this country and that the social services in the United Kingdom, particularly the rights of which any destitute person can avail himself under the National Assistance Act, must inevitably act as a considerable attraction. We recognise that a very large increase in such migration in the future might produce a situation in the United Kingdom rendering legislation for its control essential, despite the very strong opposing considerations which we have mentioned; but, for the present, we regard these opposing
considerations as conclusive. The Secretary of State for the Colonies has undertaken to advise his colleagues if, at any time, there are indications of any large increase above the present scale of immigration from the Colonies, so that the question of introducing legislation may then again be considered.

Administrative Measures to Control Stowaways

16. In view of our conclusion that legislation would not, under present circumstances, be justified, we thought it proper to review in some detail administrative measures for the control of stowaways and "one-trip seamen" from Colonial territories, not involving legislation. The Minister of Transport took part with us in this review. An account of these administrative controls is given in Appendix III. Their effect is limited, but we consider that if applied vigorously they should, under present conditions, prevent serious difficulty. We therefore recommend that these measures should continue and should be made as effective as possible.

Summary

In brief, our conclusions and recommendations are as follows:

(i) At least 5,000 coloured immigrants from the Colonies have arrived in the United Kingdom since 1945. They have come as stowaways, "one-trip seamen" and fare-paying immigrant workers. Unemployment and destitution among coloured Colonials in this country is not so widespread as to have any noticeable effect on our economy (paragraphs 2 to 4).

(ii) Three possible methods of control would be: to apply to British subjects the controls now applied to aliens (paragraphs 6 to 9); to deport British subjects coming within certain categories (paragraphs 10 and 11); to return British stowaways to the territory from which they embarked or to which they belong (paragraph 12).

(iii) Each of these methods of control would be controversial and at variance with our traditional policy of giving all British subjects the right to enter and reside in the United Kingdom (paragraphs 13 and 14).

(iv) We consider that the introduction of legislation to control immigration from the Colonies would not at present be justified (paragraph 15).

(v) We recommend that the Departments concerned should continue to render as effective as possible administrative measures for the control of stowaways and "one-trip seamen," from Colonial territories (paragraph 16).

(Initialled on behalf of the Committee)

J. C. E.

Home Office, S.W. 1,
6th February, 1951.

APPENDIX I

THE LAW AND PRACTICE GOVERNING THE ENTRY OF ALIENS TO THE UNITED KINGDOM

Powers of the Home Secretary.—Extensive powers to control the entry of aliens to the United Kingdom have been conferred on the Home Secretary, and on immigration officers acting under his orders. The chief are:

(i) An Immigration Officer may refuse to allow any alien to land. In the absence of a special dispensation from the Secretary of State, he must refuse leave to land to an alien who is unable to support himself or his dependants, or who has come to take employment without a permit from the Ministry of Labour and National Service (whose practice is explained in paragraph 2 below), or who is of unsound mind, sick or a convicted
criminal. If he does allow an alien to land, the Immigration Officer may, and frequently does, impose such conditions as he may judge fit, the most usual being limitations as to length of stay and as to taking employment.

(ii) An Immigration Officer may direct the detention pending departure of any alien to whom he refuses leave to land, and may require the master or owner of the ship which brought him to remove him. In particular, the Immigration Officer may take such action in regard to alien stowaways.

(iii) The Home Secretary may deport any alien if the court recommends this, or if he considers that the alien's deportation would be conducive to the public good. The Home Secretary may order the detention, pending deportation, of any alien in respect of whom he has signed a deportation order. All deportation cases are submitted to the Home Secretary himself.

(iv) An alien admitted to the United Kingdom must register with the police, and notify them of any change of circumstances, including change of address.

2. The Ministry of Labour permit system for the employment of aliens in the United Kingdom.—An alien coming to this country to take employment with a particular employer must have a permit in writing issued to that employer by the Minister of Labour and National Service. Thus, the employer must apply for the permit in advance, and while the alien is still abroad. The general conditions governing the grant of permits are that:

(i) The proposed employment of an alien is reasonable and necessary in the circumstances.

(ii) Adequate efforts have been made by the employer to find suitable labour within the country.

(iii) The wages and other conditions of employment proposed are not less favourable than those commonly accorded to British employees for similar work in the district concerned.

These matters are, where necessary, tested in detail by the Ministry of Labour before a permit is issued; in some cases consultations with industrial organisations are also undertaken. The permit, if issued, is sent to the employer who sends it to the alien for production to the Immigration Officer at the port of arrival.

3. If aliens attempt, as they often do, to evade the employment control by pretending to come for some other purpose, e.g., on a visit, they have to sustain interrogation by the Immigration Officer, who will, if his suspicions are aroused, either refuse to admit the alien or impose landing conditions prohibiting or restricting employment. For those who slip through there is the remedy of deportation.

APPENDIX II

IMMIGRATION LAW AND PRACTICE IN THE COLONIES, THE SELF-GOVERNING COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES AND THE IRISH REPUBLIC

Colonies.—Most Colonies impose restrictions on the entry of all persons (including British subjects) who cannot be said to belong to their territories. For this purpose they consider that the following categories belong to the territory and may not be excluded:

(i) A person born or naturalised in the Colony, or born outside the Colony of parents who at the time of his birth were ordinarily resident there;

(ii) A person who has been ordinarily resident in the Colony at least seven years, and has not since then lived elsewhere in the Commonwealth for more than seven years.

2. British subjects not in either of the above categories are excluded if they are convicted criminals, sick, of unsound mind, without sufficient means to support themselves or their dependants, or are deemed for other special reasons, e.g., security, to be undesirable. Some Colonies also exclude all stowaways.
3. Many Colonies require all persons entering their territories to have entry permits obtained in advance, and give their Immigration Officers a discretion to require deposits sufficient to cover the return fare.

4. In 1933 the Colonial Office recommended that deportation powers over all persons (including British subjects) not belonging to the territory concerned should apply to the following persons, within the time limits indicated:
   (i) To persons contravening the immigration law, within three months of arrival.
   (ii) To criminals, within two years of arrival.
   (iii) To persons whose continued presence in the territory is a menace to peace, order, good government or public morals, within two years of arrival.
   (iv) To persons likely for health or other reasons to become a charge on public funds, within twelve months of arrival.

In general, Colonies have followed these recommendations.

5. **Self-governing Commonwealth countries.** —The powers of self-governing Commonwealth countries to exclude or deport British subjects may be summarised as follows:
   (i) Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa prohibit the immigration of certain categories of persons without distinction between British subjects and aliens. The prohibited classes include those mentally or physically diseased, criminals, vagrants, and advocates of subversion. The operation of New Zealand law bites lessstringently upon British subjects than upon aliens. The law of the Union of South Africa also excludes persons deemed by the Minister on economic grounds or on account of habits of life to be unsuitable.
   (ii) The countries whose powers to control immigration are summarised in (i) above, have similar powers to deport prohibited immigrants and certain other categories without distinction between British subjects and aliens. The qualification about New Zealand applies in this case also.
   (iii) It is difficult to state with any certainty the present position in India and Pakistan, especially the latter. There is no power under the law in force in India or Pakistan to prohibit the entry into those countries of British subjects, neither is there power to prevent them settling there except the Public Safety Act in India. A valid rule could be made under the Public Safety Act for the deportation or expulsion from India of any person, not excluding a British subject. Until a rule is made, however, it is believed to be true to say that, apart from the European Vagrancy Act, there is no law in force in India under which a British subject could be deported or expelled. The position in these countries is a survival from the period of British rule, and the Governments of India and Pakistan may before very long take powers similar to those possessed by the older Commonwealth countries.
   (iv) All persons who are not citizens of Ceylon require a valid passport, visa or residence permit for entry to the Island. Permission to enter would normally be refused to persons in categories similar to the "prohibited" immigrants of the older Commonwealth countries. Powers of deportation apply to all persons except Ceylonese citizens.

6. **The Irish Republic.** —The Irish Republic and the United Kingdom do not regard each other's citizens as foreigners and no control appears to be exercised by the Government of the Irish Republic over British subjects.

7. United Kingdom citizens may enter the Irish Republic at will on production of a valid British passport or travel identity card. A visa is not required. The present arrangements are a legacy of war-time conditions and are presumably kept in force by the authorities of the Irish Republic as a counterpart of the United Kingdom's present requirements that British subjects and citizens of the Irish Republic arriving from the Republic must produce a valid passport or travel identity card.

8. Though it cannot be stated with certainty that the Irish Republic have no powers to deport United Kingdom citizens, it seems that they never do so. The Irish Republic's Statutory Instrument No. 1 of 1949 provides that "Citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies shall, subject to law, enjoy in Ireland similar rights and
privileges to those enjoyed by Irish citizens in the United Kingdom and Colonies by virtue of the British Nationality Act, 1948." Considerations which influence the Irish Republic authorities no doubt include the following:

(i) The corresponding restraint of the United Kingdom authorities. (Apart from the Prevention of Violence (Temporary Provisions) Act, 1939, the United Kingdom authorities have no power to deport citizens of the Irish Republic.)

(ii) There would be little point in deporting United Kingdom citizens from a country which has an open frontier. It would be necessary to institute corresponding control over entry into the country.

APPENDIX III

ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES TO CONTROL STOWAWAYS, NOT INVOLVING LEGISLATION

The controls at present exercised over stowaways are as follows:

(i) At the port of arrival, by Immigration Officers acting under the Aliens Order to ensure that the stowaways are not aliens; and by the shipping companies themselves who may prosecute stowaways on British ships under the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894. The penalty is a fine not exceeding £20, or imprisonment not exceeding four weeks.

(ii) The ship's master may try to disembark stowaways at intermediate ports en route or even at sea.

(iii) In the Colonial territories, the Governor, port authorities, trading companies and shipping companies can exercise checks on stowing away at the source.

The operation of these controls is described in the following paragraphs:

2. At the port of arrival. — Immigration officers in the United Kingdom have no authority to control the entry of a person who can produce satisfactory evidence that he is a British subject or British protected person. They do, however, provisionally treat as an alien a person who cannot produce such evidence. Of the Colonial stowaways who arrived during January to September 1950, ninety-nine were refused admission. As regards prosecutions for stowing away, the normal practice is to prosecute stowaways who arrive in British ships, whether they are British subjects or aliens. But the penalties in the Merchant Shipping Act have little deterrent effect, and it is doubtful whether any heavier penalties which could reasonably be prescribed would be more effective.

3. Transfer at intermediate ports. — Shipping companies, in their own interests, to lessen the cost of maintenance, take every chance to return stowaways to their point of embarkation by transfer at intermediate ports or at sea. Throughout the Commonwealth countries they are usually successful, but there is more difficulty at foreign ports. To be effective, a transfer must include detention of the stowaway while he is ashore awaiting a return vessel. In foreign ports, especially where prison standards are poor, it is often found that the authorities have no power or are unwilling to take the stowaway (who is an alien in their law) into preventive detention, and that they prefer to refuse permission for the stowaway to be landed at all. To some extent the success of the shipping companies in transferring stowaways depends on the speed with which the stowaway can be removed from the territory; and at ports on routes where traffic is infrequent the authorities are very unwilling to accept stowaways for transfer. It has been found that, in general, at ports in Spanish possessions, the immigration regulations prohibit the landing of stowaways, and transfers can only be made when an outward bound vessel happens to be in port at the same time. The attitude of the stowaways themselves causes difficulty because masters are not empowered to use force, and where this is necessary they have to seek help from the local police. There have been many cases, in Spanish possessions and other foreign ports, where the police have refused a request from the master to assist in the transfer of troublesome stowaways. The extent of the Commonwealth and the world-wide traffic of the United Kingdom are a large factor in the size of the stowaway problem, and most other countries have no preoccupations of this kind on the same scale. In those foreign countries
where our shipping companies have encountered particular difficulties, representa-
tions have been made through the Foreign Office, but efforts to persuade the foreign
authorities to take powers to deal with stowaways whom we land for transfer have
been ineffective, since they are not usually interested in our offers of reciprocal treat-
ment, which would be of little benefit to them. In the Commonwealth countries,
particularly in areas homogeneous with the port of embarkation (such as the West
African Colonies), facilities are generally satisfactory. It is doubtful whether very
much more can be done to obtain further facilities for transfer at foreign inter-
mediate ports, although the shipping companies are continuing their efforts.

4. Issue of passports.—Since stowaways can be refused admission if they
cannot produce satisfactory evidence of their British nationality, the Colonial Office
on 26th January, 1950, asked Colonial Governments to consider whether it would
be possible to control the issue of passports to persons who were known not to
follow regular employment and whose financial position was not sound and who
were thought likely to stow away. The response to this has been varied; in some
territories passports are not issued unless the applicant can satisfy the Passport
Officer that he will be able to maintain himself in the United Kingdom; in others
no such test is thought to be feasible. The Government of Jamaica do not favour
legislation to deny passports to persons without means or likely to stow away. Such
action would be in marked contrast to the United Kingdom practice of refusing
passports only to fugitives from justice and lunatics. It would be difficult for the
issuing authority in Jamaica to identify potential stowaways. There are, moreover,
emigrants able to pay their fares but lacking means to support themselves in the
United Kingdom on arrival, and the Government of Jamaica would not be prepared
to refuse passports on that ground. The Government of Trinidad have been able
to delay the issue of passports to persons who are unable to produce satisfactory
evidence that they have booked a passage, but this action may be challenged now
that the new constitution has come into operation. In general, the Colonial Office
have gone some way to pressing Colonial Governments to restrict the issue of
passports, but with the present tendency to give more power to unofficial majorities
in Colonial Governments it may be difficult to maintain even the present restrictions.

5. Issue of other travel documents.—Most West African stowaways arrive
with British Travel Certificates. These are issued in West African territories primarily
for local travel between British and French possessions, and, though they purport
to certify the holder's national status, they are issued without much enquiry, and
it is known that they have been used irregularly. Nevertheless, holders of these
certificates cannot be refused leave to land in the United Kingdom. The West
African Council have accepted certain proposals made by the Secretary of State
for the Colonies on 11th July, 1950, including a proposal that in future these
certificates should not contain a statement of the nationality of the holder. This
would deprive the certificates of their value to potential stowaways. The Foreign
Office have asked the British Consul-General at Dakar to open negotiations with
the French Colonial territories regarding the proposed change. Further, the
Governments of British West African Colonies will seek to deny British Travel
Certificates to persons considered likely to use them for the purpose of stowing
away. Nigeria is keeping records of persons from Nigeria refused leave to enter
the United Kingdom, and travel documents will not be issued to such persons in
future. Other West African Governments have been asked to consider similar
action.

6. Control at Colonial Ports.—On 26th January, 1950, the Colonial Office
suggested in a despatch to Colonial Governments various possible means of pre-
venting stowing away at ports, namely, by controlling the dock areas, registration
of dock workers, policing harbours, licensing small craft in harbours and gangway
checks. In some Colonies controls of this kind have been put in operation, or are
being considered. In Jamaica, where conditions make control particularly difficult
and the incidence of stowing away is highest, the Government have undertaken
to discuss possible measures with the shipping companies; but the Colonial Office
think it doubtful whether the Government will be able to make any appreciable
improvement. The difficulty is that the wharves are privately owned and it is thought
that neither the Government of Jamaica nor the owners will be prepared to incur
expenditure on enclosing and controlling the wharves—an expenditure which would
be heavy for them in relation to the problem. A further difficulty in Jamaica is
that bananas, the principal cargo, are loaded by hand over several gangways, often
by night, and it has proved practically impossible to prevent a determined person
from stowing away. Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast propose to introduce further police and labour controls, but in Gambia and Nigeria the expense and inadequacy of local recruits make further measures impracticable at present. The Governor of Nigeria, where the port-loading arrangements and the number of labourers employed make control difficult, considers that any improvement will turn largely on what the shipping companies can do. He is being kept informed of the number of Nigerian stowaways arriving, and if it does not decrease he will consider the matter further. The Departments concerned will continue to bring cases to the notice of the Colonial Governments concerned, but, although some improvements may be secured, the physical arrangements for loading at Colonial ports will always afford opportunities for determined stowaways.

7. Action by shipping companies.—Since 1948 the Ministry of Transport, in consultation with the other Departments concerned, have been pursuing possible remedies with the shipping industry. They have investigated reports that shore workers at ports abroad assist persons to stow away; but, although suspicion is strong, there is no evidence of a regular or organised practice. The Shipping Federation and individual companies have followed up reports of connivance by members of crews, and unofficial watch has been kept by masters on suspected persons; although insufficient evidence to prosecute has been found, it is thought that these enquiries have had a deterrent effect. Names and addresses of persons in the United Kingdom are often found in the possession of stowaways, but, although it is suspected that these are contact men who aid the stowaways on arrival, they are committing no offence and little effective action can be taken. The Ministry have had discussions with those shipping companies who are particularly burdened by stowaways, to devise special measures for preventing embarkation. One company recently tried posting members of the ship's crew in each hold during loading operations. So far this has not prevented entirely the embarkation of stowaways, but the scheme appears to be sound and other companies are being urged to take similar action, although the companies point out that at ports where access to the ships is practically unhindered at loading or at other times, it is impossible for the ship's guard to be fully effective if dislocation to the ship's working is to be avoided.

8. The Shipping Federation in their own interests and at the request of the Ministry have been keeping ship owners mindful of their responsibility; in 1948 they issued a strongly worded circular to owners to remind their masters of the seriousness of the problem and the need to take all possible steps to mitigate it; in 1949 the Shipping Federation, at the request of the Ministry, asked ship owners to prosecute all stowaways arriving in the United Kingdom on the ground that, although the prison sentence seemed to have little deterrent effect, arrest and detention on arrival in this country helped to gain some measure of control over stowaways. The Ministry have now, at the request of the Ministry, agreed to issue a further circular reminding ship owners in even stronger terms than those used in 1948 and 1949 that the ultimate responsibility for preventing unauthorised embarkation lies with the ship's master. The Shipping Federation have from time to time been asked to issue special warnings to ship owners about particular ports where special watch needs to be kept. These have generally related to ports in foreign countries and in some cases the Foreign Office have also made representations to the appropriate authorities. Since the carriage of stowaways involves the ship owners in trouble, expense and inconvenience, the Minister of Transport considers that the ship owners have been doing all they reasonably can to keep down the traffic. In the Minister's view, the only final solution by administrative action lies in reducing the evil at the ports of embarkation and he considers that for this purpose all Departments concerned should encourage the fullest assistance and administrative action from overseas authorities.

9. One-trip seamen.—The Ministries of Labour and Transport have examined in conjunction with the Shipping Federation and the National Union of Seamen, the question whether any further action can be taken to reduce the influx of "one-trip seamen." In the light of this examination the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Transport are satisfied that the British owners and the National Union of Seamen are doing as much as can reasonably be expected of them in this matter. As regards foreign ships, however, they propose to arrange for an approach to the International Shipping Federation, through the United Kingdom Shipping Federation, asking that members of the International Federation should refuse to accept the engagement of British Colonial seamen without repatriation rights.