

STEINB - STELL

**THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON**

April 12, 1945

For the President:

See memo. of this date  
from me, on Dr. I.N. Steinberg.

E. R.

STEINBERG

Commonwealth of Australia.

Prime Minister,

Canberra.

File No: D.349/3/5

15th July, 1944.

Dear Dr. Steinberg,

*Held let me  
get memo re Monday this last*

I refer to previous correspondence and to your personal representations in regard to the proposed Jewish settlement in the East Kimberleys, and particularly to the desire of your League -

- (a) to despatch to the Kimberleys an expert Commission for a more careful investigation of the area and for preparation of the plans and financial estimates; and
- (b) to obtain an assurance by the Commonwealth Government that - upon issuance of a satisfactory report by such a Commission - a Jewish settlement of refugees could be established.

As previously intimated, the Government sympathises with the serious plight of your people in Europe and fully appreciates the motives of your League in submitting proposals for the establishment of a Jewish settlement in the Kimberleys.

After mature consideration of all the circumstances which had to be taken into account, however, the Government is unable to see its way to depart from the long established policy in regard to alien settlements in Australia and therefore cannot entertain the proposal for a group settlement of the exclusive type contemplated by the Freeland League.

Yours sincerely,

Signed: John Curtin.

Dr. I. Steinberg,  
Freeland League of America for Jewish Colonization,  
1819 Broadway, Suite 701,  
NEW YORK, U.S.A.

Please reply to: 444, Central Park West,  
New York City, N.Y.  
October 7th, 1944.

The Rt. Hon. John Curtin,  
Prime Minister of Australia,  
Parliament House,  
Canberra, Australia.

Dear Mr. Curtin,

I have recently received your letter of July 15th, 1944, and wish to acknowledge its contents with reference to the proposed Jewish Settlement in the East Kimberleys. While appreciating the friendly tone of the letter in general, I cannot conceal from you the surprise and disappointment of the "Freeland League" at your statement that:-

"the Government is unable to see its way to depart from the long established policy in regard to alien settlements in Australia and therefore cannot entertain the proposal for a group settlement of the exclusive type contemplated by the Freeland League."

May I be permitted to point out that the Jewish Settlement we have in mind was never intended to change in principle the long established immigration policy of Australia as generally understood. The objection of the Australian people to "alien settlements" seems to have been based on two fundamental reasons: one external and the other internal.

Externally, a settlement of nationals of another State usually aroused the fear of some dual allegiance of the settlers, particularly if behind them stood a State with expansionist ambitions. Immigrants from such States might become "political" settlers who could create a minority problem within the Commonwealth.

Internally there was the apprehension lest an alien settlement separate itself from the body politic and economic of the country at large; such separation endangering the cohesion of the

THE GREAT  
IN FOUR OF THE  
THE GREAT  
THE GREAT

DEPT. OF  
CULTURE

CHIEF OF  
DEPARTMENT  
OF  
CULTURE

THE GREAT

Australian people.

It is the contention of the "Freeland League" that a Jewish Settlement anywhere in Australia should not be included in the category of alien settlements to which the above-listed objections can be applied. Externally it is a fundamental truth that the Jewish migrants will come from many countries in Europe and will have no one State behind them to which they would owe allegiance. When settling in Australia their only loyalty will belong to the country that has given them refuge - a fact that has been proven throughout the entire history of the Jewish people.

Internally the Jewish Settlement is not conceived as some enclave among the Australian people with separate interests of its own, but as a living space for Jewish colonization, economically and politically fitted into the general framework of the country as a whole. In peopling and developing one of Australia's empty spaces, in identifying themselves with the future of their adopted country, the Jewish settlers would add to the cohesion and strength of the people of Australia.

We are strengthened in this analysis of the situation by the knowledge that the greater part of public opinion in Australia, including the Australasian Council of Trade Unions, as well as two State Governments have indicated their willingness to see such a settlement built within their boundaries. The Government of Western Australia has several times during the past few years expressed their interest and the Premier of Tasmania has informed me of the same in a letter of April 5th, 1944.

Your Government has frequently stated during the past year that Australia must increase her population on a large scale in the shortest possible time. Apart from the traditional ways of increasing a population, one of the most effective methods to accomplish this aim is by a system of planned colonization. Scientific investigations, prompted by

the war, have shown that areas previously considered uninhabitable can be successfully colonized, but best by group settlement and on community lines. Greater productivity in all spheres can be achieved if the settlers - confronted with the hardship of pioneering in a virgin country - live in a community of people bound by their religious heritage and the memory of common suffering. This is the reason why the best results for the country and for themselves would arise if Jewish migrants were permitted to build a settlement in regions like the Kimberleys or elsewhere in Australia. It is taken for granted that, though the settlement would be built up by Jewish labour, capital and energy, it would by no means bear an exclusive character.

The Jewish people, after the agonies they have lived through during the years of the war in the service of the liberation of humanity, are entitled to consideration of their needs for rehabilitation. We appreciate your expression of the Government's sympathy with the serious plight of our people in Europe, and we believe that it is an additional argument for a sympathetic reconsideration of the "Freeland League" proposal.

Therefore, I respectfully renew the suggestion made to you in my letter of February 12th, 1944, that in the meantime an Expert Commission under the direction of Dr. Isaiah Bowman (President of John Hopkins University and member of President Roosevelt's Council for Post-war Problems) be dispatched to the areas in view for further investigation. It is to be clearly understood that the work of such a Commission would in no way commit the Commonwealth Government. It is intended thus to save precious time at this period of general postwar planning.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. I. N. Steinberg.