

Willis, Raymond E. (How)

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JUL 6 1944

My dear Senator Willis:

The Secretary of State has recently forwarded to the War Refugee Board a copy of your letter of June 15, 1944, referring to the establishment of the Emergency Refugee Shelter in Fort Ontario at Oswego, New York, for the purpose of receiving 1,000 refugees from Italy. He has requested the Board to answer the following inquiries contained in your letter:

"Under what provision of our immigration laws are these refugees received into our country?

"How are they screened for selection from the countries from which they come?

"Are they transported and maintained at government expense and under what appropriation of Congress?

"Will they be permitted to go about our country under visitors' visas?"

I am pleased to submit the following information in response to your inquiries in the order in which they appear in your letter.

1.

I am advised that the Attorney General in reply to a similar inquiry set forth the legal basis for bringing these refugees to the United States, as follows:

"These refugees will not be permitted to enter the United States under the immigration laws and thereby to obtain any rights to be at liberty in the United States or to remain here. The proposal, therefore, does not involve setting aside the immigration statutes. The propriety of temporarily detaining aliens in this country outside of the requirements of the immigration laws has been recognized for many years. One of the earliest instances of this practice occurred in the Russo-Japanese war when the crews of Russian war vessels were interned in the United States

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outside of the regular procedure under the immigration statutes. A recent illustration of the practice is afforded by the case of the German, Italian and Japanese nationals who have been deported by Latin American countries to the United States under an arrangement whereby they are interned in this country and will ultimately be repatriated to their own countries. Similarly, prisoners of war brought here for custody do not enter under the immigration laws and they obtain no right to remain here or to be at liberty within the country. For obvious reasons, this is a practice that can be followed only in exceptional circumstances.

"For your convenience, I enclose a copy of the President's message to the Congress, dated June 12, 1944, which indicates that the present proposal relates to a particular group of persons who are now a burden to our military forces in an active theater of war operations and that military necessity requires some temporary disposition of them. It may be pointed out that as an emergency matter these persons might be permitted to enter the United States under the immigration laws by waivers of documents by the Secretary of State and, if necessary, by waiver of grounds of inadmissibility by the Attorney General. It was believed more desirable, however, not to apply the immigration laws, which create various rights and privileges, but to deal with this group as we have with the prisoners of war and other Axis nationals who are admitted to this country temporarily and detained here outside, but not in violation of, the immigration laws."

2.

The manner in which the refugees will be selected and screened is set forth in the following cabled instructions from the President to Ambassador Murphy in Algiers:

" In choosing the refugees to be brought to the United States, please bear in mind that to the extent possible those refugees should be selected for whom other havens of refuge are not immediately available. I should however like the group to include a reasonable proportion of various categories of persecuted peoples who have fled to Italy.

"You should bear in mind that since these refugees are to be placed in a camp in the United States under appropriate security restrictions, the procedure for the selection of the refugees and arrangements for bringing them here should be as simple and expeditious as possible, uncomplicated by any of the usual formalities involved in admitting people to the United States under the immigration laws.

"However, please be sure that the necessary health checks are made to avoid bringing here persons afflicted with any loathsome, dangerous or contagious disease."

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3.

With respect to your third inquiry, the President in a memorandum, dated June 8, 1944, to the Secretaries of War, Navy, Interior, the Director of the Budget, and the Executive Director of the War Refugee Board gave the following instructions:

" (4) Until UNRRA is in a position to assume the financial responsibilities involved, the Bureau of the Budget shall make arrangements for financing the project; using to the extent possible any available funds of the War Department, the War Relocation Authority, and the War Refugee Board, and from the Foreign War Relief appropriation, and if necessary drawing upon the President's Emergency Fund."

4.

The 1,000 refugees, as pointed out by the Attorney General, will not be brought here under the immigration laws. Therefore they will not be permitted to go about the country under visitors' visas. Their treatment while in this country will be as outlined in the President's message to Congress:

" Upon the termination of the war they will be sent back to their homelands. These refugees are predominantly women and children. They will be placed on their arrival in a vacated Army camp on the Atlantic Coast where they will remain under appropriate security restrictions."

For your complete information, copies of the following are enclosed herewith:

1. The President's message to Congress dated June 12, 1944;
2. The text of a cablegram dated June 9, 1944, from the President to Ambassador Robert Murphy in Algiers and a memorandum sent by the President on June 8, 1944, to the Secretaries of War, Navy, Interior, the Director of the Budget, and the Executive Director of the War Refugee Board.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J.W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Honorable Raymond E. Willis,
United States Senate,
Washington, D. C.

Enclosures.

*Original app. by
Sen. Pehle*

Copy to: Sen. Marks

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20535

JUL 6 1944

Dear Mr. Ennis:

For your information I am enclosing a copy of a letter to Senator Raymond E. Willis of Indiana containing information requested by him in his letter of June 15, to Secretary Hull.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Edward J. Ennis, Director
Alien Enemy Control Unit,
Department of Justice,
Washington, D. C.

Enclosure.

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Original signed by
Mr. Pehle
Copy to: Largay

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JUL 6 1944

My dear Mr. Secretary:

I have received your communication of June 27, 1944, (840.48 Refugees/6311) enclosing a copy of a letter of June 15, from Senator Willis in which he requests certain information concerning the Emergency Refugee Shelter at Oswego, New York.

For your information I am enclosing a copy of my letter to Senator Willis.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

The Honorable Cordell Hull
Secretary of State
Washington, D. C.

Enclosure.

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Mr. Pehle

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

June 27, 1944

In reply refer to 840.48
Refugees/6311

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to the Executive Director of the War Refugee Board and refers for his attention and action the attached copy of a letter from Senator Raymond E. Willis of June 15, 1944, and a copy of the Department's reply thereto.

It will be noted that the following paragraphs of the letter from Senator Willis are referred for reply to the War Refugee Board:

"Under what provision of our immigration laws are these refugees received into our country?"

"How are they screened for selection from the countries from which they come?"

"Are they transported and maintained at government expense and under what appropriation of Congress?"

"Will they be permitted to go about our country under visitors' visas?"

Enclosures:

From Senator Willis,
June 15, 1944.
To Senator Willis.



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UNITED STATES SENATE
Committee on Naval Affairs

June 15, 1944

Honorable Cordell Hull
Secretary of State
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I have observed an announcement of proposal to receive one thousand refugees from the war-stricken areas of Europe and have them quartered at Ontario, New York. Will you please have the following information supplied to me?

Under what provision of our immigration laws are these refugees received into our country?

How are they screened for selection from the countries from which they come?

Are they transported and maintained at government expense and under what appropriation of Congress?

Will they be permitted to go about our country under visitors' visas?

How many people are in the United States from European countries under visitor's visas and are these visas renewed at statutory periods?

Are visitors' visas granted on application in neutral or allied countries to refugees from axis countries?

Are they issued on instructions of the State Department or some other authority of the government?

Respectfully yours,

RAYMOND E. WILLIS, Indiana
Raymond E. Willis

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In reply refer to
840.48 Refugees/6311

My dear Senator Willis:

I have received your letter of June 15, 1944, requesting information concerning the reception of 1000 refugees to be quartered at Ontario, New York, and the issuance of visas.

The following paragraphs of your letter have been referred to the War Refugee Board for reply:

"Under what provision of our immigration laws are these refugees received into our country?"

"How are they screened for selection from the countries from which they come?"

"Are they transported and maintained at government expense and under what appropriation of Congress?"

"Will they be permitted to go about our country under visitors' visas?"

The following paragraph has been referred to the Department of Justice for reply:

"How many people are in the United States from European countries under visitors' visas and are these visas renewed at statutory periods?"

In respect to the last two paragraphs of your letter concerning visitors' visas for refugees, you are advised that

The Honorable

Raymond E. Willis
United States Senate

applicants

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applicants for visitors' visas are obliged under the law to submit proof that they have an unrelinquished domicile abroad to which they intend to return after the proposed visit to the United States. It is obviously difficult, if not impossible, for refugees from Axis countries applying for visitors' visas in neutral or allied countries to submit such proof. However, such refugees from Axis countries can apply for visas for permanent residence under the quotas which are open at present with respect to most countries of origin. Neither an immigration visa nor a visitors' visas may be issued to a native of the continent of Europe until our Consuls have received an advisory approval from this Department which carefully considers the public safety of our country prior to authorizing a visa.

Sincerely yours,

CORDELL HULL

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