

Letter from Henry Monck-Mason Moore to George Henry Hall on the reaction of the people of Ceylon to the UK's policy in Indonesia (7 December 1945)

Caption: On 7 December 1945, the British Governor in Ceylon, Sir Henry Monck-Mason Moore, informs the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, George Henry Hall, of the discussions over the motion in the State Council concerning the admiration of the people of Ceylon for the bold fight that the people of Indonesia and Indochina are putting up against Dutch and French imperialism.

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Ceylon, 7th December, 1945.

Sir,

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I have the honour to refer to my open despatch No. 357 of today's date and to your secret and personal telegram of November 19th and previous correspondence on the subject of a motion in the State Council to convey to the people of Indonesia and Indo China the admiration of the people of Ceylon for the bold fight they are putting up against the Dutch and French Imperialisms. As stated in my open despatch above referred to, this motion was debated on November 21st. The debate was left unfinished that day as no quorum was available. It was concluded the next day, when it was passed without a division.

2. Mr. Nalliah opened the debate with a speech in which he attacked "British Imperialism". The Acting Chief Secretary, Mr. C.H. Collins intervened early in the debate and in his speech followed as far as possible the lines indicated in your secret telegram under reference and other information kindly supplied by the South East Asia Command. I enclose a press cutting which gives a brief account of the main points made in his speech. The Acting Chief Secretary has asked me to express his thanks for the

material

The Right Honourable
G.H. Hall,
Secretary of State for the Colonies.

material provided in your telegram.

3. The matter was brought before the Board of Ministers at its next meeting. The Board had already considered the possibility of labour troubles in the harbour if ships with personnel or munitions for the Dutch East Indies came to Ceylon Ports and the Commander-in-Chief at the War Council Meeting of November 12th, 1945, stated that he realized that it was not advisable to have calling at Colombo Dutch ships carrying fighting personnel and he had therefore arranged that they should not come to Colombo. In view of this the Board did not find any necessity to initiate any action in regard to the latter part of the motion and the papers were simply tabled.

4. The Board of Ministers have since agreed, with only one dissentient, that Dutch and Eurasian RAPWI personnel from the Dutch East Indies may be brought to Ceylon provided the numbers did not exceed 3,945 women and children above 5 years of age and 1,055 old men and provided these personnel do not stay longer than 6 months in Ceylon.

5. While I do not consider that any action is necessary upon my open despatch other than a bare acknowledgment at the present time, the fact remains that so much prominence is being given in the public press to the present unhappy situation in the Dutch East Indies that any steps taken by His Majesty's Government which might be regarded as forcing a settlement in favour of the Dutch to the detriment of Indonesian aspirations for a greater measure of self-government might easily have serious repercussions here, and prejudice our present

policy

policy of receiving a limited number of Dutch RAPWI on humanitarian grounds. Equally any attempt by the South East Asia Command to turn Ceylon into a dumping ground on a large scale might have similar results.

6. I fully appreciate the difficulties both of His Majesty's Government and the Supreme Commander in this matter, but I think you should be fully informed of the position.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient, humble servant,

Henry Home

G O V E R N O R.