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NOTE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTER FOR DEFENCE ON
THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROVIDING FOR THE
ACCOMMODATION AND CARE OF REFUGEES FROM NORTHERN
IRELAND

1. A Memorandum from the Office of An Taoiseach (Reference S.18717 C dated 14th October 1974) which is at present before the Government, relating to Northern Ireland Diocesan Relief Advisory Services, refers in paragraphs 4, 7 and 12 to the possibility that it might, in certain circumstances, be necessary to provide for the reception of fairly large numbers of refugees to the Republic from Northern Ireland.
2. While it is not possible to make any firm estimate of the numbers of persons who might be involved in such a movement, the problem is being considered on the basis that up to 100,000 people might flee to the Republic and the availability of accommodation and other facilities to cater for such numbers has been the subject of detailed research.
3. Advance expenditure on the procurement of accommodation is not necessary but it is considered essential that, as a first step, stocks of blankets and mattresses should be purchased and held in readiness to meet requirements. The question of buying some quantities of tinned or packaged foodstuffs, cooking and eating utensils and bottled gas is also under consideration.
4. Certain small reserve stocks of blankets and mattresses for use by refugees are already held by local authorities (through whom the Civil Defence measures for the reception of refugees are operated) and it is now proposed that these stocks should be brought up to an overall total of 100,000 blankets and 25,000 to 50,000 mattresses. This would suffice to provide for an initial influx of up

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to 50,000 refugees and it would be necessary to supplement these stocks as the demands of the situation required. The purchases would be made by local authorities on the basis of 100% recoupment by the Department of Defence and any items not required for the use of refugees would be available for the normal requirements of local authorities and health boards, subject to appropriate financial re-adjustment. It is estimated that the expenditure involved in the purchase of these and other items (of food, utensils etc) would be not less than £1,000,000.

5. The sanction of the Minister for Finance for these proposals has not yet been sought but this will be done as soon as possible. Meanwhile it is considered that the Government should be aware of the financial implications of providing for a refugee situation such as that envisaged.
6. It is not possible to quantify the total cost involved in meeting these and the other expenses which would be incurred in the accommodation and care of refugees (e.g. the cost of transport, repairs to premises, lighting and heating, loss of wages of Civil Defence personnel and the many other items of expenditure involved) but on the basis of experience in dealing with refugees in 1972 and 1973, it is calculated that the overall outlay would be not less than £4 per person for every day during which refugees would be maintained in the Republic.