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Zambia halts mission by MPs

by our Political Correspondent

AT BARELY 24 hours' notice a British parliamentary mission to Zambia, due to have left London last night, has been indefinitely postponed.

The cancellation by the Zambian authorities was thought in Government circles to be connected with recent racial disturbances reported from the copperbelt, which led to the sudden expulsion of 25 Europeans, 12 of them British.

The Commonwealth Office complained that they should have been given longer warning, but the cause for the expulsions was not challenged. Private information reaching London suggested the people involved may have been concerned in racial provocation. President Kaunda has been actively campaigning against racism in Zambia, and it was believed in London that he may have been right in thinking it would be better for these troubles to simmer down before the arrival of the British delegation.

Main reason

The eight MPs in the intended mission, led by former Minister of Transport, Mr Tom Fraser, and including the former Conservative Attorney-General, Sir John Hobart QC, were told that because of the pressure of business it would be difficult to make appropriate arrangements for the distinguished visitors. There was no proposal for a later date.

The visit had been arranged several months ago by the Zambian branch of the Parliamentary Friends of Africa Association and by the Speaker's Office at Lusaka, but it is understood in London that these had inadvertently failed to inform their own Foreign Office until Thursday.

This may have been a contributory factor in deciding the Zambian authorities to call off the visit, though London believes the main reason was the recent disturbances.

Not compromised

British officials were at pains to deny that relations with Zambia are seriously compromised. They point out that Zambia is still considering the offer of £1 million intended to help them compensate for trade losses with Rhodesia and that the High Commissioner has been given full authority to make the payment as soon as President Kaunda decides to accept.

Nothing he has said so far indicates a rupture of relations and they believe he is insisting on a decision on the Rhodesian issue before accepting the offer. They claim that the social contacts between the two countries have remained good and point out that under the aid programme there are more professionals and technicians sent out from Britain to Zambia than to any other country.

'Enough of this sorrow'

BANGKOK, 29 October — President Johnson appealed to North Vietnam's leaders today: "Let us lay aside our arms and sit down at the table of reason."

He promised that as soon as the Vietnam war ended it would be possible to devote "substantially greater funds" to the relief of human need. South-East Asia would have its full share. The President was speaking at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok on the second day of his visit to Thailand.

He said: "I say to the leaders in Hanoi: 'Let us renounce the works of death and take up the tasks of the living. Enough of this sorrow.'

Americans in Thailand: Page 2

Human wave attack

SAIGON, 29 October — North Vietnamese troops came on in human waves in an onslaught against United States forces in the central highlands of South Vietnam near the Cambodian border last night. The battle was still going on.

In one of five big attacks screaming troops hurled themselves against an American company to the sound of bugles, advancing from all sides at once, a military spokesman said. Moderate US casualties are reported.



Listening to a first-hand account of the Aberfan disaster. GLYNN JONES

Queen visits the mourning valley

from ALAN ROAD: Aberfan, 29 October

THE MOURNING citizens of Aberfan gave the Queen a silent welcome when she visited their stricken village with the Duke of Edinburgh today.

There were no cheers. It was, after all, a royal occasion which only one concerned was wishing had not been necessary.

But it was a visit of a mother, a visit which, in the words of Councillor Jim Williams, who lost seven relatives in last week's disaster, was beneficial to the mothers who lost their children.

It was outside Aberydlyn (brow of the hill), the councillor's home, that three-year-old Karen Jones, presented the Queen with a small posy inscribed "From the remaining children of Aberfan."

Mr Williams introduced the Queen to half a dozen families who had been bereaved or had lost homes. "She was very sorry," he said, "there was nothing she could give them other than just sympathy."

For the Duke the two-and-a-half-hour visit was the second paid to the village in eight days, and he chatted with men of the King's Own Royal Borderers, who have been helping in the cleaning up since the week-end.

In Aberfan Road, the Queen paid a second visit to Mrs Margaret Harris of Cottrell Road and her two sons, Paul, aged six, and Robert, aged seven. She was told how Paul's life was saved by Mrs Nancy Williams, a dinner-money collector at Pantglas school, who covered Paul's body with her own and perished in its ruins.

Later, the royal couple paid an un-scheduled visit to the village cemetery on the hillside overlooking Aberfan and only a quarter of a mile from the path of the sliding tip.

There, watched by a handful of villagers, the Queen and Duke together placed a wreath of pink carnations on the mass grave of the 81 victims buried on Thursday. For the moment,

Wreath of pink carnations

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Jobs direction if prices and pay plan fails

by DAVID HAWORTH, our Industrial Reporter

A WARNING that the Government might consider directing labour if its present prices and incomes policy fails was given by Mr. Douglas Houghton, Minister without Portfolio, yesterday. He said in a speech at the Trades Hall, Doncaster: "The alternatives to present policies are either direction of labour in order to get our essential industries properly manned, or to let inflation take its course, leading eventually and painfully to national bankruptcy."

His speech follows remarks made by the Paymaster-General during the time last Thursday that the Government was examining ways in which resources freed as a result of the Government's measures could be used to provide stimulants to investment.

Some officials believe that this was a reference to the Government's growing awareness that skilled labour may have to be directed towards export manufacturing industries.

The TUC economic committee will hold a special meeting today, which will give a decisive verdict on the views of the Government concerning the criteria for allowing wage claims during the "restraint" period, particularly those involving productivity bargains and the lowest-paid workers.

Timely hints

There are timely hints because the Government's prices and incomes policy will this week face its most serious challenge so far—a double crisis of confidence.

It could mean an almost total breakdown in Government relations with the Trades Union Congress and the Confederation of British Industry concerning industrial conduct during the freeze and next year's six-month period of severe restraint.

Members of the TUC economic committee will hold a special meeting today, which will give a decisive verdict on the views of the Government concerning the criteria for allowing wage claims during the "restraint" period, particularly those involving productivity bargains and the lowest-paid workers.

Inevitably, the TUC's definition of "restraint" will be different from that of the Paymaster-General. In the Government's view, the recommendations of the TUC's recommendations, the TUC leaders will seek a showdown with the Prime Minister.

Yard suspects Blake used two-way radio

by PETER DEELEY

SPECIAL BRANCH and Scotland Yard detectives carrying out investigations inside Wormwood Scrubs prison into the escape of master-spy George Blake believe that he may have been communicating with outside sources by a two-way, short-wave transmitter.

All work was stopped in the prison radio workshop last week after a search by the inquiry team. Prisoners working there were directed to other jobs, the section was sealed off and equipment was impounded.

The investigators believe that Blake was using the two-way radio to complete his escape arrangements during the 24 hours before he climbed to liberty.

A man with knowledge of the prison said yesterday: "It is not the first time that men inside have used radios to make contact with the outside world outside."

Scotland Yard officers were making inquiries in Dublin yesterday. They want to talk to an Irishman who completed a seven-year sentence in Wormwood Scrubs last April and is known to have been friendly with Blake.

Although the man is believed to be living in Britain, police think the key to where he is may be in Ireland.

The team are convinced that Blake had inside help as well as the co-operation of an outside gang.

They suspect that one or two men in "D" Block were the inside "couriers" for preliminary messages and materials; the view is that the outside escape gang may have been recruited from members of the organisation which freed train robber Charles Wilson from Winson Green prison, Birmingham, in 1964.

Former friends of Blake are convinced that he is still in this country and that his break-out was for one purpose only, to try to contact a public figure who would help in getting a review of his sentence.

Blake's mother now works as a housekeeper in Radlett, Hertfordshire, a sister, now married, lives in Kent. The whereabouts of his wife, Gillian, against whom he recently began divorce proceedings, are not being revealed by her solicitor.

The two-tone Humber Hawk car registration 117 GMX, which is believed to have carried Blake on the first section of his escape route, was seen near the prison about 6 p.m. last Saturday. Blake was last checked at 5.30 p.m. and missed at 7 p.m. His cell, D8, was subjected to a minute examination by the investigating team and a number of foreign language books were taken away.

The prison authorities have drawn up a list of 70 potential escapees, all housed within "D" Block, the wing from which Blake escaped through a second-floor window. The men, who include murderers, others guilty of crimes of violence, others guilty of crimes of lesser violence, and some sentenced for fraud, have been given a maximum sentence of 14 years. Inmate numbers, names, examination times, and names of investigating officers are likely to be made from D Block in the Scrubs in due course.

The Home Office prison department now seems to acknowledge that security at the 100-year-old Scrubs, just in West London, holding about 1,000 prisoners, is inadequate.

Work has been going on all week in the turrets of "D" Block to install floodlighting to cover the walls. The possibility of fixing "man traps" (barbed wire or spikes) to the top of the walls is also under consideration. Prisoners within "D" Block have now also been stopped from wandering into the upper floors of the four-storey building.

Meeting wall of silence

The police and security inquiry team have been quartered in an office in the main block of the prison. Every man in "D" Block was taken before them by a prison officer. They were asked personal details about their life and sentence. Then they were questioned about their relationship with Blake.

One man serving a long sentence for fraud declined to meet the investigators unless his solicitor was present.

It is understood that the inmates of "D" Block, almost to a man, declined to reveal any information if they had it about Blake. To them he was a popular figure. One man, describing the morning after the escape, said: "It was like Christmas Day after Father Christmas had been."

Despite the "wall of silence" put up by the prisoners, the investigating

team

team