

CONFIDENTIAL.

I enclose herewith a copy of a paper and of a letter about the Karens of Burma which was sent to members of the previous House of Commons and to others. From all the hundreds who have received it, no replies have challenged the accuracy of the statements of fact in them. I trust, therefore, that you will find the time to read them.

How that pledge was evaded and disregarded is well known in Burma though not in Britain. The Karens were placed under the Burmese, and when the Burmese misgoverned the country, and the Karens rose and established their position a British Government has supplied an overwhelming superiority of modern weapons against them.

* This was me, R.K.

/continued.

"What good did your fighting for the British do you? At the bidding of the Burmese they would not even give you a hearing in Parliament or press. Where did the artillery, and the gunboats and the equipment, that turned your success into failure, come from? The British, made by British workmen, paid for and supplied by a British Government. The British even organised the Commonwealth against you, for Ceylon, Pakistan and India were brought into the case after the supply of arms had been negotiated in May 1949. Did you hear the B.B.C. broadcast account of the Colombo Conference? When further aid for Burma was asked for, it was the other members, not the British, who reminded the Conference that the Burmese should make terms with the Karens before getting help. And now you are asked to pull the British chestnuts out of the fire again!"

All the Karens know of our pledges, so do the Burmese: they are only not known to the British people. Every Karen, and not only the militants, must be filled by these taunts with distrust of, and bitterness against, British interests. The effect may not be limited to Burma. Every Communist agitator will be primed with the story of our treatment of the Karens. In Malaya and elsewhere will that story tend to make the peoples believe in us and rely on us?

The policy that has been followed is British, not Commonwealth. Even the financial aid, small as it is from others, is coming in at least one case from sterling balances.

It is more than thirty years since I was on active service with Burma units, but I am very glad indeed that I shall not have to meet again the Karens I knew in them. The service in that war was nominal and nothing compared with the obligations incurred in the Second War. As for the British who served in the Chindits and Force 136, I do not know what they feel about the prospect of meeting again the Karens they knew. The hardest thing to hear of in the infrequent news that comes from Rangoon is the change in the Karens' feelings towards us and to know that it is deserved.

Yours sincerely,

C.F. GRANT.

March 7th, 1950.