

Ref: FCO 3/134

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SECRET

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IMMEDIATE SEYCHELLES TO COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

No BIOT 61 11 October, 1968

SECRET

RECEIVED IN
ARCHIVES No. 61
14 OCT 1968
PSIONO



Your BIOT 64⁴³ and references: Labour Force Chagos.

Your communications under reference were received and decoded only after the deadline. Am nevertheless replying immediately.

2. Background information is available in my BIOT 18 of 11 July 1967 (repeat 1967) and in my BIOT 24 of 4 June 1968 (repeat 1968). Finding it difficult to assist on policy as no reply has been received to my telegram BIOT 16 of 1 March 1968 or my Saving Despatch BIOT 18 of 19 June 1968 other than paragraph 3 of your telegram BIOT 60 of 28 September [3 grps omitted] implied; we full realise difficulty of situation, but I think that we could assist United Nations easily if you furnished us with up to date information on independent Mauritius citizenship legislation and practice.

3. Facts, however, are as follows. From May 1967 to March 1968 labour force in Chagos as a whole fell from 924 (repeat 924) to 807 (repeat 807) but reduction was entirely in respect of Diego Garcia, labour force in other islands actually increasing slightly.

Diego Garcia figures at May 1967 were Seychellois 327 [sic] Mauritians 10, Ilois 161 total 503. At March 1968 figures were Seychellois 230, Mauritian 22, Ilois 128. You will observe that both proportionately and specifically reduction in Seychellois was greatest. Definition of Ilois used is that set out in paragraph 4 of my BIOT/SD/24 of 4 June 1968, and the figures in preceding paragraph will also be helpful.

4. While management arrangements with Moulinie has been under consideration the Islands have been managed under informal agreement by Moulinie, and reduction in labour force on Diego Garcia undoubtedly results from uncertainty of the position. As regards paragraph 2 of your telegram under reference no question arises of BIOT being "not in favour of further labour intakes," but regular change-overs can only be at reduced rate dictated by present position. You will understand even Ilois return regularly to Mauritius. Reference to negotiations between the company and Ministry of Defence not understood but presumably refers to our lengthy correspondence with you on management agreement.

5. You are aware of our resettlement proposals. Once the future of the Islands is decided on other than complete [grp undec]ing basis we can absorb all those with prescriptive rights to work in Chagos for whom the Administrator and I have considered [grp omitted ? sympathy].

Sir H. Norman-Walker

FILES
E.A.D.
P.I.O.D.

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