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UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION
Communication from the United Kingdom Delegation
Concerning Repair Work of Holy Places in Palestine

The following communications, concerning the question of the maintenance of and repairs to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem and the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem has been received from Mr. J. Fletcher-Cooke of the United Kingdom Delegation.

UNITED KINGDOM DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS
Empire State Building
New York, 1, N.Y.

CONFIDENTIAL

12th April, 1948

My dear Bunche,

I have been asked to bring to the notice of the Commission the question of the maintenance of and repairs to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem and the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem. At the same time I have been asked to emphasize the importance of early attention being given to this question by a successor administration as soon as circumstances permit.

2. Up to the 15th May are responsibility for this work will remain with the Government of Palestine. After that date it will presumably pass to the Commission. It is not, however, practicable to cease work on a given date and resume it later; the repairs and maintenance required in respect of the fabric of these two churches are a continuing demand varying in nature from day to day but ever present and of such a kind that they will be necessary at any rate until such time as permanent reconstruction is effected.

3. Owing to conditions arising from the circumstances of withdrawal of the administration, the Public Works Department, which has hitherto been responsible for the services in question, it will shortly become able to discharge it. The Government of Palestine feel that everything possible should be done to ensure that this work continues. The only body which appears to be capable of understanding the work during the forthcoming and possibly difficult period after the termination of the Mandate, is the Jerusalem Municipal Commission. This body which will, it is hoped, continue to function under the termination of the Mandate, has a competent engineering department and it is therefore proposed to hand over forthwith to the Municipal Commission responsibility for repairs and maintenance of the two churches in question.

4. At the present time the funds of the Municipal Commission are low as a result of the almost complete cessation of the maintenance of revenue during the recent weeks and the Municipal Commission itself has no funds therefore to cover this work, which is estimated to cost about £1100 during the next eight months or so. The Government of Palestine has therefore proposed, and His Majesty's Government have approved, that a sum not exceeding £1500 should be advised to the Municipal Commission for the purpose, to be accounted for in due course.

Yours sincerely,
(signed) JOHN FLETCHER-COOKE
(J. Fletcher-Cooke)

Dr. Ralph J. Bunche
Secretary to the United Nations
Commission on Palestine,
United Nations
Lake Success, L. I.

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