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12 April 1948

UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Communication received from the Advance Party
concerning Notes on Conference held 27 March
with chief of fire brigade, Mr. Roy.

The attached memorandum by Colonel Roscher Lund was included
in Air Pouch No. 4 and 5 received 12 April 1948.

PALESTINE COMMISSION ADVANCE PARTY

Notes on conference held 27 March with
chief of fire brigade, Mr. Roy.

(Memorandum by Colonel Roscher Lund)

(29 March 1948)

The fire brigade consists of twenty men, of which ten are Arabs and ten Jews. This force has been split in two sections, the Arab group being stationed close to the railway station, and the Jewish at the Department of Health. The equipment has also been divided. It consists of two pumps for each section, one 30-foot ladder in the Arab section; the Jewish section has about 400 m. of hose, the Arab section about 600 m. Much fire hose has been destroyed by mobs during riots when houses have been set on fire which the fire brigade has tried to extinguish. The present quantity of hose is far from being sufficient.

The Jewish section of the fire brigade will probably continue after 15 May, paid by Jewish authorities, while the Arab section probably will dissolve because of lack of funds.

In the opinion of Mr. Roy there are three large slum areas in the Jewish part of the town where a large fire, if there were a lack of water, would spread and destroy a part of the town. This will probably occur in case of large-scale fighting.

Within the Arab part of the town and also in the Old City, the stone walls of houses are so solid that fire in one house probably will not spread to others.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre will probably collapse in case of explosion of mortar bombs close by, as necessary repairs have not been carried out for a long time.