

GENERAL
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UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIFTIETH MEETING

Lake Success, New York

Wednesday, 10 March 1948, at 3.00 p.m.

Present:

Chairman:	Mr. LISICKY	(Czechoslovakia)
Members:	Mr. Medina	(Bolivia)
	Mr. Federspiel	(Denmark)
	Mr. Morgan	(Panama)
	Mr. Francisco	(Philippines)
Secretariat:	Mr. Bunche	(Secretary)
	Mr. Reedman	(Senior Economic Adviser)

CONSIDERATION OF MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

The CHAIRMAN called the attention of the Commission to two cables received by the Commission from Jewish detainees held in Kenya. (Informal Paper M/14). He noted that a letter just received from Mr. Fletcher-Cooke (Informal Paper UK/59) settled the question definitely. It was agreed to reply to Mr. Fletcher-Cooke that the Commission had no objection to the acceptance of the Jewish prisoners and detainees in Palestine after 15 May. It was also decided to communicate the contents of Mr. Fletcher-Cooke's letter to the Jewish detainees in Kenya.

It was decided to transmit the communications to the Commission from the Local Council of Bat-Yam, Palestine (Informal Paper M/13) to the United Kingdom Delegation, and to acknowledge receipt of the communications.

A communication from the Jewish Agency regarding the status of Mr. Hoofien (Informal Paper JA/26) was noted.

A cable sent by Mr. Azcarate (Deputy Principal Secretary) from Jerusalem was read to the Commission by the Chairman.

The SECRETARY read the drafts of two letters to Mr. Fletcher-Cooke, one concerning the question of the militia and the other concerning the points raised by Sir Henry Gurney's cable to Mr. Fletcher-Cooke.

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The drafts of both letters were accepted by the Commission. It was noted that there was no mention of Aqir airfield in these communications, but it was decided to await Mr. Azcarate's report.

A communication by Mr. Fletcher-Cooke concerning postal services in Palestine was read (Informal Paper UK/62) and it was decided to inform Mr. Fletcher-Cooke that the Commission had not yet reached a decision on the matter, since it was still awaiting a response from the Postal Union.

CONSIDERATION OF THE FOOD SITUATION

Mr. Reedman (Senior Economic Adviser) gave a brief explanation of his memorandum to the Commission. He reminded the Commission that it had been decided to ask the United Kingdom to extend the use of the existing procurement machinery, including the trading account, for Palestinian purchases beyond 15 May. He pointed out that the subject had already been discussed with Mr. Fletcher-Cooke and it remained to make specific proposals in regard to the various commodities. He explained that the Working Paper on the Supply of Imported Foods to Palestine (Informal Paper W/9) contained the details received from Mr. Henson, who was in London and suggested that the specific suggestions to the United Kingdom should be based on them.

Mr. Reedman then proceeded to analyze Mr. Henson's advice by commodities. In regard to bread cereals, Mr. Henson advised that the Commission ask the Mandatory Power to complete allocations until 30 June. As regards the question of whether these allocations should be in form of wheat flour or grain, in which latter case a certain amount of barley would be included, Mr. Henson advised the importation of wheat flour. If this were not possible grain could be used. In Mr. Henson's opinion, it should be possible to supply wheat flour to Palestine. This was advisable because of the difficulties that would be encountered in milling grain in Palestine, especially since wheat flour had been shipped to the country in the last few months and the facilities might not be available for handling large quantities of grain.

In regard to five thousand tons of rice which had been allocated from Egypt and which constituted one-half of the total allocation, Mr. Reedman explained that this amount had not been received. He stated that if no alternative sources of supply were found, the rice allocation for Palestine would not be filled. He pointed out that the effect of the Egyptian boycott hit the Arabs much more severely than the Jews. In answer to a question as to whether wheat flour could act as substitute for rice, Mr. Reedman remarked that though he thought it improbable that

the Ministry of Food could supply rice from other sources, he did not consider the question as important as that of wheat. If something were to be done, it would have to be done through other arrangements.

In regard to sugar, Mr. Reedman pointed that an additional shipment of 2500 tons would carry the United Kingdom allocation programme to 30 June. It was suggested that the Commission ask the Ministry of Food to supply an additional 5000 tons through the existing procurement machinery by using the government trading account. He pointed out that Mr. Henson believed that the United Kingdom Government might be able to supply 5000 tons.

Concerning the meat supply of Palestine, Mr. Reedman explained that the usual procedure was that the supply of meat was undertaken by private importers operating through import licenses. No special government agent existed. He remarked that the shortage already existed as compared to the allocation. Mr. Henson's advice on the matter was that the Palestine Administration should issue licenses to the meat importers to cover the period until 30 June. In answer to a question concerning the overland supply of meat, Mr. Reedman stated that though there was not much information on the subject, the chief supply of meat in Palestine came in the form of live cattle from the neighbouring Middle Eastern countries. These sources of supply had dried up recently as far as the Jews were concerned, and there was no hope of substituting frozen or canned meat to cover this loss entirely. He pointed out that the supplies of frozen meat in question chiefly concerned the urban areas. Mr. Reedman concluded that there was not much that the Commission could do at present except ration frozen meat to the towns and leave the rural areas to fend for themselves. He added that there was no alternative for the Commission but to ask the United Kingdom to extend the facilities for allocation of meat to cover the period until 30 June immediately, and then consider subsequent steps to be taken by the Commission to ascertain what financial sources it can command in order to cover the deficit from outside sources. It was pointed out that since cold storage facilities might not be adequate to deal with an increased quantity of meat, an investigation should be undertaken to ascertain their exact capacity. It was agreed to consult with Mr. Fletcher-Cooke and the representatives of the Jewish Agency on the matter.

In regard to the situation of dairy products in Palestine, Mr. Reedman pointed out that it was satisfactory.

The fats and oils situation would be difficult, in any case. Mr. Reedman submitted that the only thing that the Commission could do at present was to ask for import facilities for these commodities to be granted by means of licenses. The Commission would have to consider what other steps it could take to procure oils and fats. He pointed out that only a small proportion, even of the allocation for the first half of the year, had been delivered, and consequently a shortage was expected to develop as early as March. Mr. Reedman told the Commission that if dollars were made available, Unilever would be willing to act as the Commission's agents and to procure supplies from all sources available to them. He stressed that there was no other way for the Commission to guarantee adequate supplies of fats and oils for Palestine owing to the technical trading difficulties which arose at present in the procurement of fats and oils all over the world. He concluded that by granting licenses a certain proportion of the required amount could be covered by private traders and the rest was largely a matter of dollar credits.

As regards oils and fats, Mr. Reedman said that the situation would have been difficult in any case, and allocations for even the first part of the year had not yet been received. The only alternative was to ask for import facilities by way of the granting of licenses for the amounts shown in Mr. Henson's communication. He added that if dollars were available, Unilever would be prepared to put its world-wide procurement machinery at the services of the Commission.

As regards fertilizers, no immediate problem existed, since further supplies of fertilizers would not be required before September and October, the sowing season. With reference to the procedure to be followed, he thought that specific proposals should be made immediately to the United Kingdom delegation. Then if agreement in principle was reached to extend the use of the machinery for procurement, the negotiation of the actual details could be handled by Mr. Henson in London.

He stated, in reply to a question, that the amount required for the trading account for the six-week period would be somewhat less than one million pounds.

It was agreed that a letter should be drafted to the United Kingdom making specific proposals.

Mr. Reedman drew attention to the necessity of considering soon the Commission's representation before the International Emergency Food Council. He said that the Secretariat would prepare a working paper on the various possibilities in this connection, covering also specific

commodities and dates of International Emergency Food Council meetings.
PROPOSAL BY MR. MORGAN (PANAMA) WITH REGARD TO PROVISIONAL COUNCILS OF
GOVERNMENT

It was noted that a despatch had appeared in the news alleging that the Commission had been supplied with a memorandum from Jewish sources in Palestine regarding the establishment in Tel Aviv of a Provisional Council of Government.

It was decided that no action should be taken on this false report pending receipt by the Commission of any information regarding the Provisional Council of Government from the Jewish Agency.

It was suggested that consideration of the proposal of Mr. Morgan (Panama) should be postponed for the following reasons. Firstly, the Commission was saying in its next Report to the Security Council that even if the Provisional Councils of Government were set up before 1 April, they could not function, and was asking the Council, as it was required to do, for instructions in that connection. The reply from the Council might possibly be received early. Secondly, a communication regarding the Provisional Council of Government was being expected from the Jewish Agency. Thirdly, negotiations with the Jewish Agency could not be carried on until the Jewish Agency's arrangements were completed. For the above reasons all that could take place now on the subject of setting up the Provisional Councils of Government was an academic discussion.

Another view advanced, however, was that the setting up of the Provisional Councils of Government, constituted the most important duty of the Commission, and it was pointed out that Mr. Creech-Jones had made it clear to the Commission in answers he had made to questions put to him that there was no difficulty as far as the Mandatory Powers were concerned in the way of setting up the Provisional Councils of Government, provided they did not begin functioning before 15 May.

It was generally agreed that it was highly desirable that the Provisional Councils of Government should be ready to function on 15 May.

After further discussion, it was agreed to postpone discussion of the proposal of Mr. Morgan (Panama) until the following day when that portion of the Commission's Report to the Security Council which dealt with the subject of the Provisional Councils of Government would be ready, and could be discussed in conjunction with Mr. Morgan's proposal.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.