

CONFIDENTIAL  
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UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Communication Received from United Kingdom  
Delegation Concerning Food Supplies for  
Palestine after 15 May

The following communication, concerning food supplies for Palestine after 15 May, has been received from Mr. Fletcher-Cooke of the United Kingdom Delegation.

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

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17th April, 1948.

My dear Bunche,

May I refer you to your letter of the 13th April on the subject of Food Supplies for Palestine.

2. The Commission's views as set out in that letter have been communicated to His Majesty's Government but in the meanwhile I have received certain information from Jerusalem relating to the measures which have been taken locally as regards the issue of import licences to private importers. This information is as follows:-

(1) On the 10th April, import licences were issued by the Food Controller in Palestine for food requirements for two months after the 15th May, as follows:-

(a) To Steel Brothers for the Arab sector :

14,300 tons Australian wheat flour  
2,400 tons British refined sugar  
125 tons Australian canned meat.

(b) To the Jewish Agency for the Jewish sector :

11,700 tons Australian wheat flour  
1,800 tons British refined sugar  
125 tons canned Kosher meat  
400 tons frozen meat

(2) The licences to Steel Brothers were issued on behalf of the Arab Chambers of Commerce.

(3) As regards the Jewish Agency, it is understood that it is their intention to entrust the purchase and importation of these food supplies to Steel Brothers.

(4) It is also understood that Steel Brothers are advancing 80% of the cost of these imports and that the Arabs and the Jews are providing the balance of 20%.

Dr. Ralph J. Bunche,  
Principi Secretary to the United Nations  
Palestine Commission,  
United Nations, Lake Success.

3. Subsequent information which has been received from His Majesty's Government is as follows:-

- (1) As regards wheat flour, the Ministry of Food will supply against a confirmed irrevocable credit to be provided by Steel Brothers in London.
- (2) As regards canned and frozen meat, it is not possible for procurement from Australia to be authorised but the Ministry of Food will advise Steel Brothers' representative in London of an alternative source of supply on the assumption that Steel Brothers will be responsible for settling the cost direct. As it is probable that this source will be a hard currency country, it will be made clear to Steel Brothers that hard currency requirements in respect of imports for the Jewish sector will have to be provided in toto from Jewish dollar resources. Hard currency in respect of essential imports for the Arab sector will be made available by the Controller of Foreign Exchange in Palestine.
- (3) As regards sugar, the Ministry of Food have enquired of the Government of Palestine why these additional amounts are required and have pointed out that any such amounts as may be agreed to will have to be paid for in dollars, though in accordance with the normal arrangements, dollars will be made available by the Controller of Foreign Exchange in Palestine in respect of any amount required by the Arab sector.
- (4) As regards oils and oil seeds, certain proposals have been made by the Government of Palestine but no final decision has been reached and discussions are still proceeding with the Ministry of Food.
- (5) His Majesty's Government have also agreed that additional sterling releases will, if necessary be approved in respect of any sterling expenditure incurred in respect of imports agreed to above, if the releases already approved should prove insufficient.

Yours sincerely

(signed) J. FLETCHER-COOKE  
(J. Fletcher-Cooke)