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UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

GENERAL COMMITTEE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIFTH MEETING

Held at Lausanne on 24 May 1949 at 4 p.m.

Present: Mr. de la Tour du Pin (France) - Chairman
Mr. Yenisey (Turkey)
Mr. Wilkins (United States of America)
Mr. Azcarate - Principal Secretary
Mr. Milner - Secretary of the
Committee

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY said that Mr. Milner would serve as Secretary to the General Committee, but that he himself would nevertheless continue to keep in touch with the Committee's work.

The CHAIRMAN requested the Principal Secretary to clarify the suggestion he had made to the Commission concerning possible conversations between the General Committee and the Arab and Israeli delegations.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY stated that a certain number of problems might be the subject of negotiations and that the Committee might examine these problems with the interested parties and obtain concrete results on the basis of the notes and memoranda submitted by the delegations. It seemed preferable to discuss definite points with the various delegations rather than to adopt a passive attitude and wait for the latter to submit their proposals to the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN said he thought the two memoranda submitted by the Arabs might provide a working basis. With regard to the Israeli delegation, it would be necessary to go more fully with it into the Israeli Government's previous or future replies to the Commission's requests concerning refugees.

Mr. WILKINS proposed that a letter should be written to the Arab delegations, setting out the agenda for the next meeting as follows:

- (a) information concerning the number of refugees;
- (b) the Arab delegations' nine-point memorandum of 18 May 1949
(Document AR/8);
- (c) the Arab delegations' memorandum of 21 May 1949
(Document AR/11);
- (d) discussion of Israeli proposals concerning the State of Israel's frontiers with Egypt and Lebanon.

A further letter might be sent to Israel with a copy of the agenda. After some discussion as to whether a letter should be sent or not, the Committee decided that the letter should be merely a covering note and that it should be sent to each of the delegations concerned in order to safeguard the principle under which the Committee reserved the right to hold separate discussions with each of the delegations.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY asked the Committee whether it did not consider it more effective to prepare a fuller and more definite agenda so that discussion would not be side-tracked into questions of a general character. He proposed that the General Committee should draft its agenda on the basis of the memoranda received so that discussion might be clear-cut.

Mr. YENISEY said he thought that, in the case of the Arab memoranda, the questions were sufficiently clear-cut and that all that was necessary at that stage was to single out the points on which the Committee sought additional explanations. With regard to the agenda and the discussion to be held with the Israeli delegation, the Secretary of the Committee might summarize the Israeli delegation's position in order to bring out the essentials.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY observed that he had just received a letter from Mr. Eytan informing him that the Israeli delegation would not be able to give immediate replies to any questions which the General Committee might ask since the delegation had sent the Arab memoranda to Tel Aviv with a view to obtaining additional information on certain points.

Mr. MILNER suggested that, since the questions arising were too numerous to discuss at one meeting, it would be better to prepare a working programme which might be spread over a number of meetings. The General Committee could then fix the agenda for a given meeting.

The CHAIRMAN considered that it was preferable to send the delegations concerned a pre-arranged agenda in order to obviate discussions on the agenda between delegations and the Committee. Such procedure would ensure greater freedom of action for the Committee.

After a brief discussion it was decided to send all the delegations a note informing them that the General Committee had agreed to adopt the four items suggested by Mr. Wilkins as a working programme for subsequent meetings. The Committee would transmit the agenda to the delegations concerned in due course.

The following agenda was drawn up for the next meeting with the Arab delegations, which it was decided to hold on Wednesday, 25 May 1949 at 11 a.m.:

1. Memorandum addressed by the Arab delegations to the General Committee on 18 May 1949;
2. Statistical information on the population of Palestine.

The next meeting with the Israeli delegation was fixed for Thursday, 26 May 1949, the agenda to be finally decided by the General Committee after the meeting with the Arab delegations.