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UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINTH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 24 February 1950, at 10.30 a.m.

Present:

Mr. PALMER (United States of America)

Chairman

Mr. de Boisanger (France)

Mr. YALCIN (Turkey)

Mr. de AZCARATE

Principal Secretary

Recent visit of the members of the Commission to Paris

The CHAIRMAN said he wished to take advantage of the last meeting of which he would be Chairman to express the thanks of the members of the Commission to the acting French Minister for Foreign Affairs and to the senior officials of the Quai d'Orsay who had recently been their hosts. He had personally been deeply touched by the kindness shown to the Commission, and had been particularly pleased at having been able to make the acquaintance of Mr. Schneider at a very pleasant luncheon party. He had been particularly gratified to discover, in his conversations with officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who were concerned with the same questions as the Commission, that they shared the views of the Commission on questions outstanding.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) was in a position to state that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been very pleased with the opportunity of meeting the Commission, and, while regretting that its visit to Paris had been so brief, fully understood that its activities did not allow it to stay any longer.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, who resumed work after illness the very day the Commission was in Paris, had expressed his regret at having been unable himself to act the host at the luncheon given in its honour.

Report by the General Committee on the question of the establishment of a Joint Committee on the Egyptian proposals concerning the Gaza refugees and on other related questions (Document COM.GEN/14).

The CHAIRMAN reminded the Commission that the report had already been adopted in principle and that certain steps had already been taken on the assumption of its eventual adoption but that it would be necessary for the report to be officially adopted. He found the report in question highly satisfactory. On the whole, it should be sure of a favourable reception by the Egyptian delegation, and was at the same time drafted with sufficient flexibility to prove acceptable to the Israeli delegation also. It constituted, in any case, an excellent basis for work.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) declared that approval of the report did not imply, ipso facto, agreement on the actual terms of certain provisions that the Commission would endeavour to get the interested parties to accept. It should be clearly understood that the existing wording of the report would probably not be the one finally accepted by the two delegations.

In response to a request by the Chairman, he gave an account of the interviews he had had with Mr. Mostapha, Head of the Egyptian delegation, and subsequently with Mr. Eban, Head of the Israeli delegation.

He had reminded the Egyptian representative of the statements the latter had made to the Conciliation Commission in New York, when he had repeated the terms of the proposals made by Egypt to the Economic Mission relating to various questions affecting the refugees of the Gaza area. He (Mr. de Boisanger) had added that the Commission saw no better way of approaching those problems than to set up a Joint Committee. He had read out to Mr. Mostapha the terms of reference as set out in paragraph 3(a) of the Report, stopping short, however, of sub-paragraph (b), since he was convinced that the

Committee would of its own accord be quite naturally led to study related questions.

Mr. Mostapha had replied that the text in question gave a good summary of the problems Egypt wished to see handled and that he accepted the idea of setting up a Joint Committee. He would, however, have liked the Committee's terms of reference to provide for "ensuring the implementation" of the measures proposed by Egypt. Nonetheless, the Egyptian representative had not rejected the principle of setting up a Joint Committee, and had said he might have something further to add on the terms of reference to be given to that body.

During his interview with Mr. Eban, he (Mr. de Boisanger) had acquainted him with the proposal and read out the same passage of the Report. On the Israeli representative's making the remark that the terms of reference of the Joint Committee were too restricted, he had pointed out that the Commission thought that the Joint Committee would be led, in course of time, to extend its competence to related questions, and had then asked the Israeli representative if he could accept the terms of reference as formulated. Mr. Eban had replied that he would refer the matter to his Government, and had subsequently stated that he would send a note outlining the questions that his delegation would like to have seen referred to the future Joint Committee.

It appeared that the delegation of Israel wished the proposed Committee to embrace within its terms of reference all questions outstanding between Israel and Egypt, and to become in fact a veritable Egyptian-Israeli committee.

The conclusions to be drawn from the interviews he had just described were that there was need for further negotiations before the Joint Committee could be set up, and that, while there were grounds for hoping that the plan would succeed, the fact was not absolutely certain.

Replying to a question from the Chairman, he said he thought that, should the Commission accept the note which the Israeli representative had promised to send, the Israeli Government would probably agree to the proposal to set up a Joint Committee.

The CHAIRMAN thought that the Israeli authorities would probably place great insistence on giving the Joint Committee terms of reference more general in scope. It seemed, however, that paragraph 3(b) should give satisfaction to Egypt, since it gave each of the members of the Joint Committee only the right to "request" that any related question be placed on the agenda, and left the final decision to the Joint Committee itself.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) was also of the opinion that the Egyptian delegation would accept the provisions of sub-paragraph (b). He had, nonetheless, preferred not to raise the question at that stage and to make sure beforehand of the agreement of the Egyptian delegation to the terms of reference proper.

Petition from the "Committee for the Arab Property Owners of Jerusalem"
(Communication by the Principal Secretary)

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY suggested that the Commission should defer the study of that question. As he himself had had some doubt on the manner in which the petition in question should be transmitted to the Trusteeship Council, he had sought the advice of Mr. Quimper who had replied that he preferred to await the outcome of fresh conversations with the members of the Committee of Arab Property Owners.

In the absence of any comment on the Principal Secretary's suggestion it was taken as agreed.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, replying to Mr. de BOISANGER (France), said that the petition in point requested that a statement in favour of the internationalization of Jerusalem be communicated to the Conciliation Commission for transmission to the Trusteeship Council. The petition was accompanied by the minutes of a meeting in which were reproduced the remarks of some very prominent Jerusalem personalities.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) thought that it might be advisable to ascertain whether the personalities in question were willing for their remarks

to be communicated to the Trusteeship Council, but considered that the Commission could, in any case, not keep to itself the information received.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, replying to the CHAIRMAN, said he thought that the required information would be furnished quickly enough for the Commission to be able to examine the question at its next meeting.

Question of Compensation for loss of or Damage to Arab Property

Mr. YALCIN (Turkey) reminded the Commission that the question of compensation for loss of or damage to Arab property was still outstanding.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) said that there were two questions for the Commission to decide: the moment at which it would be advisable to raise the matter, and its official point of view for submission to the parties concerned.

The Israeli view was that the question of compensation for loss or damage should be linked up with the peace settlement or with the question of reparations. The French Government, for its part, considered that those different questions should not be linked together. The Commission would have to come to a decision on that point. It might later be necessary to envisage the setting up of a committee and to request the Israeli authorities to make a preliminary payment as a gesture of goodwill.

The CHAIRMAN thought that the question would require lengthy examination and that the Commission might devote a whole meeting to it. It might perhaps be somewhat awkward to make a request for a further "goodwill gesture" from the Israeli delegation at a time when that delegation might well consider that on the question of blocked accounts, on that of separated families and on the Egyptian proposals relating to the Gaza area, it had made a whole series of such gestures which the Arabs, on the other hand, might not perhaps regard as concessions of any great importance.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) thought it wise not to raise the problem

of compensation immediately with the parties concerned. However, the Jordan delegation, for example, was anxious that the Commission should broach the question.

In view of the fact that it had not yet taken up any position on the Clapp Report in respect of the question of compensation, the Commission should, even if it did not discuss the matter with the parties concerned, determine its own policy without waiting for the setting up of the proposed Joint Committee to study the Egyptian proposals.

This was agreed.

Date of the Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Commission was fixed for Tuesday, 28 February, at 11 a.m.

The meeting rose at noon.