

RESTRICTED
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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWENTIETH MEETING

Held at the King David Hotel, Jerusalem,
on Tuesday, 21 March 1949, at 9 p.m.

Present: Mr. Ethridge (U.S.A.) - Chairman
Mr. de Boisanger (France)
Mr. Yalchin (Turkey)
Mr. Azcarate - Principal Secretary
Mr. W. H. Tuck - Director-General, International
Refugee Organization
Mr. W. Cox - General Counsel, International Refugee
Organization

Consideration of reply to International Refugee Organization concerning movement of refugees

Explaining his views on the question before the Commission,

Mr. de BOISANGER said he considered that the Commission had been placed in an embarrassing position. Although the projected movement of refugees would be in itself only a minor complication, he felt strongly that the Commission should not be asked to give an opinion on so delicate a question, since any reply it might make, whether affirmative, negative or **an abstention**, would be open to misunderstanding and might compromise the Commission's position of impartiality. In the circumstances, however, a decision must be taken, and two alternative replies presented themselves: the Commission could state that it had taken the question under consideration and would reply at a later date; or it could draft a letter along the lines of Mr. Wilkin's suggestion, to the effect that it preferred not to give any opinion on the matter.

Mr. YALCHIN was convinced that any reply from the Commission would have an adverse effect upon the proposed discussions in Beirut. For that reason he thought the Commission should state simply that it had taken note of the matter and would study the question further. If, however, an immediate reply was necessary, the Commission could only say that it was not in a position to give

The CHAIRMAN agreed that either a negative or an affirmative reply would be likely to prejudice the Commission's position. He felt, however, that prompt action of some sort should be taken; a delay might be detrimental to the work of the International Refugee Organization, and might produce undesirable comment in the press.

Mr. TUCK was of the opinion that the Commission's reply would have a definite effect upon his agency's programme, which had already been delayed since the preceding May. He would prefer some sort of reply at once; in the event of a delay, he would be forced to request an eventual answer.

The CHAIRMAN then read a draft letter of reply prepared by his delegation.

In view of the opinion of Mr. YALCHIN that the letter was too vague, Mr. de BOISANGER proposed a text stating that the question was not within the competence of the Commission, and that the Commission did not feel that it could properly express an opinion on a problem affecting not only the situation in Palestine but also the situation of the displaced persons in Europe and the entire task of the International Refugee Organization.

Mr. de BOISANGER requested that publication of the letter should be delayed until after the opening of the Beirut meetings, and that in any case as little publicity as possible should be given to the whole question.

The Commission approved the text proposed by the French representative.

Mr. TUCK promised the Commission that he would delay publication of the letter until 25 March. He expressed his regret that the Commission had been placed in an embarrassing position and his appreciation of the terms in which the reply was couched.

The meeting rose at 10 p.m.