

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND NINTH MEETING

held at Government House, Jerusalem, on Tuesday,
13 March 1951, at 11 a.m.

Present: Mr. de Boisanger (France) - Chairman
Mr. Aras (Turkey)
Mr. Palmer (United States)
Mr. de Azcarate - Principal Secretary.

1. Implementation of the measures proposed in document COM.GEN/17 and approved by the Commission

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY recalled that the Commission had approved four of the five points of the plan of work proposed by the General Committee in Part Two of its Report concerning the Future Activities of the Commission and its Refugee Office, and stated that those points could now be studied and carried out immediately. The Principal Secretary therefore felt that the best procedure would be to request the General Committee to put the programme into operation. The Commission might give the Committee appropriate instructions in that connection and request it to make a report for the Commission's next plenary meeting.

The members of the Commission were in unanimous agreement with the Principal Secretary's suggestions and invited the General Committee to meet the following day to make the necessary arrangements for putting its plan of work into operation.

2. Study of the replies to the questionnaire circulated by the Relief and Works Agency to refugees living in camps

Mr. FISHER (Political Adviser) informed the Commission of the results of the first statistical samplings carried out on two groups of 250 replies submitted by refugees to the Relief and Works Agency's questionnaire.

From the first results it appeared that approximately forty per cent of the refugees were claiming compensation for property abandoned in Israel. Mr. Fisher added that no title deeds had been submitted in support of those claims.

Mr. PALMER (United States) stressed that the questionnaire had been drawn up by the Relief and Works Agency with the object of estimating the approximate number of refugees who would need assistance at the time of their resettlement, and not in order to obtain information permitting the evaluation of the total sum which would eventually have to be paid as compensation.

The CHAIRMAN observed that the study of the replies to the questionnaire would nevertheless produce interesting data which might show the Commission some of the difficulties which would arise in the execution of its task, and enable it to work out the most suitable methods of estimating the total amount to be paid by Israel as compensation. It could already be foreseen that the estimate should not be based on the refugees' claims, but on information obtained from the cadastral registers, which would make it possible to evaluate the Arab property and the Jewish property in Palestine before the events of 1948. The claims of the refugees would then be examined and it could be ascertained to what extent they corresponded to the results of the earlier study.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) remarked that such a procedure would be suitable for evaluating the property of refugees who were unable to produce documents proving their property rights, but it seemed to him to be difficult to contest rights which refugees could support by producing bona fide title deeds.

Mr. PALMER (United States) agreed with the Chairman that the preliminary studies should be based on the official cadastral records. When the time came to examine the individual claims of the refugees a distinction could be made between those who were in a position to submit title deeds in

support of their claims and those who, for one reason or another, were unable to do so.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY pointed out that these ideas had already been put forward in the second part of the General Committee's Report.

The CHAIRMAN thought that before leaving, the members of the Commission might fix the date of the next plenary meeting. After discussion, it was decided that, barring an unexpected change in arrangements, the Commission's next plenary meeting would take place in Jerusalem on 23 April 1951.

The Chairman then handed over the chairmanship to Mr. Palmer (United States).

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.
