

RESTRICTED  
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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWENTY-FIRST MEETING

held at the King David Hotel, Jerusalem,  
on Friday, 4 March 1949, at 10 a.m.

<u>Present:</u>	Mr. Ethridge	(U.S.A.)	-	Chairman
	Mr. de Boisanger	(France)		
	*Mr. Eralp	(Turkey)		
	Mr. Azcarate		-	Principal Secretary
	Mr. de Rouge		-	Secretary-General, League of Red Cross Societies.
	Mr. van Ketwich Verschuur		-	Commissioner for Middle East, League of Red Cross Societies.
	Mr. Escher		-	Commissioner for Middle East, International Committee of the Red Cross.
	Mr. Dunning		-	Executive Secretary, League of Red Cross Societies.

\*Alternate

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In reply to a question from Mr. van Ketwich Verschuur, who asked in what way the Commission's plans would be likely to affect the future operations of the League, the CHAIRMAN replied that the question was a difficult one since the refugee problem was both a humanitarian and a political matter. The Commission was endeavouring to persuade the Government of Israel to accept the principle laid down by the General Assembly, that refugees should be allowed to return to their homes, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those not choosing to return. He hoped that an affirmative answer would be forthcoming before the Beirut conference, and that with such an answer the Arab States attending the conference might then be convinced of the necessity of accepting a certain number of the refugees.

/The Chairman

The Chairman gave it as his personal opinion that the relief problem was one which would extend several months beyond the period envisaged by the General Assembly, and that the League should give consideration to the probable necessity of a second appeal for funds.

Mr. de BOISANGER added that the situation would be much clearer after the Beirut meetings, and that the Commission would keep the League in touch with the progress of its discussions.

Mr. van KETWICH VERSCHUUR expressed satisfaction at the Chairman's mention of a second phase of relief operations. He explained, however, that owing to the limited funds available, his position was a difficult one; the League could not possibly continue operations after 31 August with the means at its disposal. He would prefer a fairly adequate relief programme extending over a short period, rather than a meager one of longer duration. Even at present difficulty was being experienced in the proper equipment of the camps.

In reply to a question from Mr. de Boisanger regarding the morale in the camps, he said that the morale of the refugees deteriorated, and discontent and agitation increased, when the refugees had no occupation; there was great need for a recreation programme and some teaching for the children. Morale was generally higher in the camps in Transjordan, where the refugees were allowed to work.

Mr. de BOISANGER pointed out that many of the refugees had left their homes, not because Israeli forces had occupied the territory, but because they had feared such occupation. When the boundaries were eventually defined, many of these would return to their homes; it would therefore not be necessary to resettle the entire number of 800,000 mentioned by Mr. van Ketwich Verschuur.

The CHAIRMAN mentioned the fact that the Commission hoped to avail itself of the services of a refugee expert who would be able to advise on problems connected with permanent resettlement.

/Mr. van KETWICH

Mr. van KETWICH VERSCHUUR hoped that the importance of the immediate relief problem would not be lost sight of by those who were planning the long-term resettlement programme. He mentioned the fact that 500 refugees were at present on their way from Faluja to Transjordan, in spite of the fact that 2,500 others were being cared for by the Quakers in Gaza; such an outward movement constituted a further complication at the present stage of relief operations, and he wondered whether the Commission could be of any assistance in halting the movement.

In the circumstances, the CHAIRMAN did not see how any guarantees of safety of life and property could be given to the Faluja refugees.

In reply to a question from Mr. de Boisanger concerning the part being played by the World Health Organization in the relief work, Mr. van KETWICH VERSCHUUR pointed out that under the terms of the agreements between the United Nations and the specialized agencies, the latter worked only at the request of an operating agency. The World Health Organization had been asked to co-operate in the present programme on an emergency basis and in an advisory capacity, and was assisting in the planning of an anti-malaria campaign, wider organization and better control of smallpox vaccination programmes etc.

The CHAIRMAN asked whether there were any committees in existence representing the Palestine Arab refugees, and what was the extent of political agitation in the camps.

Mr. van KETWICH VERSCHUUR explained that while there were usually such committees in the camps, they were largely unreliable and difficult to deal with. There was little political agitation, although it was sometimes evidenced when there was a lack of food.

In reply to a question from the Chairman concerning the preparation of public opinion for a second appeal for relief funds, Mr. van KETWICH

/VERSCHUUR

VERSCHUUR held the view that that activity was chiefly the responsibility of Mr. Griffis and the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees; it was the policy of the League, however, to participate in that work to the greatest extent possible, through its 66 Member Governments.

The CHAIRMAN expressed the hope that the League's representatives would keep in touch with the Commission during and after the Beirut meetings, since the progress of the discussions there should do much to clarify the situation and orient the Commission's future plans.

Mr. van KETWICH VERSCHUUR expressed the appreciation of his organization and of the International Committee of the Red Cross for the opportunity afforded its representatives to consult with the Commission.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.

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