

the reformer was raised in discussions with the Arab Governments, that it was a matter for the Conciliation Commission and not for the Relief and Works Agency.

(b) Recent Note from the Arab Governments

Mr. de SAINT-HARDOUIN (France) stated that the Arab Governments had addressed either directly to the Relief and Works Agency or to the legations of the countries represented on that body, a Note in which they defined their position on the question of relief to refugees. He said that the Agency had acknowledged receipt of the Note which had been addressed to it directly by the Government of Lebanon, and had observed that the Agency did not feel it necessary to take a stand as to the substance of these Notes but had left that to the Governments represented on the Agency.

Mr. PALMER (United States) agreed with that point of view.

Mr. de SAINT-HARDOUIN (France) remarked that the members of the Agency had on several occasions informed their respective governments that it was necessary to obtain funds for financing the projects. They had also drawn the attention of the Secretary-General to this matter when he visited Beirut.

Press communiqué

After an exchange of views, it was decided that a brief press communiqué should be published after the meeting, stating that the Relief and Works Agency and the Conciliation Commission had held a meeting during which they had exchanged views regarding their current work.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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SUMMARY RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE COMMISSION
AND THE RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY

held in Beirut on Friday, 4 May 1951,
at 10.30 a.m.

Present:

Conciliation Commission for Palestine:

Mr. Ely E. Palmer	(United States)	- Chairman
Mr. Claude de Boisanger	(France)	
Mr. T. Rüstu Aras	(Turkey)	
Mr. Pablo de Azcarate		- Principal Secretary

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for
Palestine Refugees in the Near East:

Mr. J. Tarbé de Saint-Hardouin	(France)	- Chairman
Mr. Howard Kennedy		- Director
Sir Henry Knight	(United Kingdom)	- Member of the Advisory Commission
Mr. Bergus	(United States)	- Member of the Advisory Commission
Mr. Fabre		- Personal Assistant to the Director.

Mr. de SAINT-HARDOUIN (France), taking the chair in place of General Bélé, who was unable to be present at the meeting owing to illness, welcomed the members of the Conciliation Commission to Beirut.

Mr. PALMER (United States) thanked the Chairman of the Advisory Commission for his welcome. He was glad to take advantage of the opportunity to introduce to the members of the Relief and Works Agency Mr. Berncastle, specialist in land questions in Palestine, who had just taken up his duties in Jerusalem and whose collaboration would be extremely valuable to the Conciliation Commission. Mr. Palmer also stated that Mr. Andersen, Head of the Refugee Office, would arrive shortly. After the preliminary work to be carried out by Mr. Berncastle and the discussions ~~which~~ the Commission would have with Mr. Andersen, it would be possible to decide on the most suitable method of assessing the property abandoned in Israel by the refugees.

1. Progress of the negotiations conducted by the Conciliation Commission and by the Relief and Works Agency

Mr. PALMER (United States) stated that since its last meeting with the Relief and Works Agency, the Commission had held no official negotiations with the Government of Israel or with the Governments of the Arab States. However, the members of the Commission individually had had informal conversations with representatives of those governments, in the course of which no new factors had come to light. However, it should be noted that the Government of Israel, while it had not given any positive or concrete undertaking regarding its obligations as to compensation, had nevertheless given certain assurances which amounted to a recognition in principle of its obligations in this matter. It would appear that the Government of Israel had decided not to commit itself further on account of the contribution which it had offered to the reintegration fund, regarding which the Commission had clearly stated - and moreover, recently confirmed - its attitude.

Mr. PALMER then referred to the letter which the Government of Israel had addressed to the Commission concerning the measures taken by the Government of Iraq with regard to Jews emigrating to Israel, and the attitude of Israel in that connection. The Commission had up to the present merely acknowledged receipt of the Israel Government's letter, which it had communicated to the Government of Iraq and, for information, to the other Arab countries,

together with a copy of the Commission's acknowledgment of the Israel letter. The Commission had informed the parties concerned that it had not taken up a position on the substance of the question and that it reserved its right to do so at a later date.

Mr. de SAINT-HARDOUIN (France) stated that since its last meeting with the Conciliation Commission, the Relief and Works Agency had had conversations with the Governments of Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon. He asked Mr. Kennedy to give an account of the results of those conversations.

Mr. KENNEDY (Director of the Relief and Works Agency) summarized the conversations he had had with the three governments mentioned by Mr. de Saint-Hardouin. With respect to Lebanon, the negotiations concerning reintegration had not led to any positive results, as Lebanon had refused to discuss the question of reintegration at the present time. The Agency had therefore no other course open to it than to wind up the works projects which were being carried out in that country and to continue relief to the refugees.

The negotiations with the Government of Egypt had given rise to hopes for more positive results. Following a visit to areas of the Sinai which might be suitable for the resettlement of a certain number of refugees, a verbal agreement was reached between the Agency and the Egyptian Government to set up a project for the resettlement of 10,000 families. The Director of the Relief and Works Agency had written a letter to the Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs confirming the verbal agreement and informing him of the Agency's participation in the execution of the project. No reply had yet been received, but confirmation of the agreement was only a matter of days.

The reconnaissance tours which he had made in the Sinai had shown that there were certain areas which could be developed, provided that sufficient water resources were available for irrigation purposes. Geologists and technicians were carrying out investigations with a view to solving the problem of water resources, and a pilot project was being worked out for the resettlement of from 500 to 1,000 families in the Sinai area. The results were very encouraging, and Mr. Blandford, who had just returned from a visit to Egypt during which he had visited those areas of the Sinai, had been very favourably impressed and hoped that the problem of water resources would soon be satisfactorily solved.

As regards Syria, Mr. Kennedy recalled that the Agency had made considerable progress in its discussions with the previous government, which had insisted on the submission of an overall plan before allowing a pilot project to be carried out. The Director of the Agency had had several conversations with the Prime Minister of the new government who, in contrast to his predecessor, had expressed a preference for considering immediately one or two pilot projects, which would be submitted to him together with a memorandum stating the area of land and the financial implications involved in carrying out the projects. The Relief and Works Agency was therefore now preparing one project for resettlement on irrigated land and a second project for settlement on partly irrigated land. Those plans would very soon be ready for submission to the Syrian Government, which would then have to allocate a certain area of land. There should be no illusions as to the numerous practical difficulties which would have to be solved, but the favourable attitude of the new government appeared to permit an optimistic view of the situation.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) stated that on 11 April he had had an informal conversation with the Prime Minister of Syria, during which the latter had assured him of his favourable attitude towards the settlement of refugees in Syria, on condition that such resettlement would not deprive the resettled refugees of their right to compensation. Mr. Aras had appreciated the favourable attitude of the Prime Minister and had informed him that the question of compensation should not cause him concern, as the General Assembly resolution formally recognized the right of the refugees to receive compensation for property lost or abandoned in Israel.

Mr. KENNEDY (Director of the Relief and Works Agency), continuing his statement, said that the Government of Jordan appeared to be prepared to assist the Relief and Works Agency in its task, but only as regards resettlement projects in the Jordan Valley. It was known that, owing to the lack of water, the resettlement of 150 to 175 families was the most that could be expected in that area, while the number of families to be resettled in Jordan was approximately 80,000. It would therefore be necessary to consider resettling refugees in the south of the country.

The Agency had also attempted to find employment for a certain number of refugees in Jordan, but the attempts made in that direction had only yielded limited results, as for example the experiment of employing refugees in a brick-making factory at Ramallah, as a result of which only 50 families were being supported. The Government of Jordan was not lacking in good will; however, so long as it restricted resettlement attempts to the Jordan Valley, it would be impossible for the Agency to achieve any really effective results.

In reply to a question from Mr. Palmer, Mr. Kennedy stated that the Agency's liaison officer had had talks, at government level, with the Iraqi authorities who had confirmed their Government's desire to make an effort in the field of resettlement. He added that the Arab refugees in Iraq had been generously treated and that some of them had even been able to obtain employment. The question now was whether the Government of Iraq would be prepared to make an effort to accept a larger number of refugees.

2. Relationship between compensation and reintegration

Mr. de SAINT-HARDOUIN (France) said that the Relief and Works Agency would be very interested to hear the Commission's views on the question of the relationship between compensation and reintegration and would like to know, in particular, whether the Commission felt that compensation should be envisaged on a collective or an individual basis.

Mr. PALMER (United States) stated that the only document which expressed the Commission's views was that entitled "Future work plan of the Commission and its Refugee Office" (Note 1) which had been communicated to the Agency. He added that the Commission's secretariat had prepared a certain number of working papers on this subject, which were being studied by the members of the Commission. It could, however, already be stated with certainty that the Commission could not agree to the entire amount due as compensation being paid en bloc into the Reintegration Fund. The expression "compensation" should be interpreted in the precise sense in which it was understood at the time the General Assembly resolution was voted, that is to say, as an indemnification for loss. The concept of compensation should not

be confused with that of war damages, and it was for that reason that the Commission, which has an obligation which it could not evade to the General Assembly and the countries which voted the resolution and to the refugees who had been dispossessed, could not conceive of compensation as a lump sum to be paid en bloc to the Reintegration Fund. It was, however, possible that in certain cases a portion of the funds accruing from compensation might be paid into the Reintegration Fund, as there could be no doubt that Israel would only pay compensation once. The Commission's experts were therefore working out the plans referred to in paragraph 3 of Note 1 in order to make possible in certain cases the employment of compensation funds by the authorities responsible for reintegration. When the plans were ready, the Commission would be able to discuss them with the Relief and Works Agency. It was, of course, possible that those plans might not be acceptable to the Commission, which was obliged above all to comply with the very precise instructions concerning compensation which it had received from the General Assembly.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France), adding to Mr. Palmer's statement, stressed that the Conciliation Commission could not lose sight of the political and psychological aspects of the problem of compensation. It was obvious that any decision favouring the payment of compensation would be conducive to improving the relations between the parties and to creating a favourable atmosphere for a rapprochement between the Arab States and Israel, which was the Commission's principal aim. Therefore it was necessary to abide strictly by the letter and spirit of the General Assembly resolution, but also to give very careful consideration to the way in which the Commission should proceed. It was obvious that if compensation were contemplated on an individual basis the psychological effect on the refugees would be much better than if it were contemplated on a collective basis, and would thus help to ease the hostility which existed between the Arab States and Israel and which was maintained to a great extent by the refugees.

It was absolutely necessary for the Relief and Works Agency, when studying the possibility of linking the question of compensation with that of reintegration, to bear in mind the fact that the Commission had to take into account the political and psychological aspects of the problem.

Mr. de SAINT-HARDOUIN (France) thanked the members of the Commission for having explained their views and agreed with Mr. de Boisanger that in dealing with the question of the relationship between reintegration and compensation it was essential not to lose sight of the political aspect of the problem, but to attempt to create an atmosphere in which the animosity of the refugees would die down.

Sir Henry KNIGHT (United Kingdom) was glad to hear Mr. Palmer state that the Conciliation Commission recognized that a refugee who had received compensation would have to reimburse the Relief and Works Agency for the cost of his resettlement. It was becoming even more necessary for the two bodies to work side by side and for their respective experts to consult frequently together, either formally or informally, concerning the question referred to in paragraph 3 of Note 1. That question was of primary importance to the Relief and Works Agency, for when resettling a refugee it should be possible to tell him that when he received his compensation payment he would have to reimburse the Agency for the cost of his resettlement. The two bodies should therefore work in close liaison in order to act in harmony and to be able to clarify any questions which might delay the resettlement operations or give rise to discussion after the resettlement had taken place.

Mr. PALMER (United States) stated that the Commission was very much in favour of collaboration between the two bodies at the expert level. He felt, moreover, that the reports which the Commission and the Agency sent to the General Assembly should refer to plans on which the two bodies had reached agreement.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) wished, in connection with the remarks made by Sir Henry Knight, to draw the attention of the members of the Agency to the need for avoiding at the present time any statement which might cause a reaction from the Arab States or which might create unnecessary excitement among the refugees. It would be time enough to speak of linking resettlement and compensation when concrete examples of resettlement could be shown.

Mr. de SAINT-HARDOUIN (France), summarizing the exchange of views, stated that it was becoming very clear that close collaboration between the two bodies was necessary, not only at Commission level but also between the respective experts. He

agreed with Mr. Palmer and Mr. Aras that it was desirable for the two bodies to consult together when writing their respective reports, in order to avoid the possibility of the Assembly's passing resolutions which, even though not contradictory, might nevertheless give rise to varying interpretations. He also felt that false hopes should not be given to the refugees and that discretion should be exercised towards them concerning the manner in which compensation would be linked with resettlement. It seemed to him, however, that it would be difficult not to inform them, at the time of resettlement, that they would have to use their compensation payment to reimburse the Relief and Works Agency for the expenses incurred in resettling them.

3. Special items

(a) Proposal by the Egyptian Government for a census of refugees

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) referred to a conversation he had had in February with the Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs, in the presence of Mr. de Azcarate and Mr. de Nicolay, and stated that during that conversation the Minister for Foreign Affairs had mentioned the need for consulting the refugees before resettling them. Mr. de Boisanger, feeling that such a consultation would complicate the resettlement operations, had replied that the General Assembly resolution provided for a consultation of the refugees, not at the time of resettlement, but at the time of the payment of compensation. He stated that at the end of the conversation the Minister for Foreign Affairs had appeared to agree with that view. However, in the letter addressed to Mr. Kennedy (Director of the Relief and Works Agency), by the Chief of Protocol of the Egyptian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, it was stated that agreement had been reached between the Minister for Foreign Affairs and himself that the Relief and Works Agency should co-operate with the Commission with a view to carrying out a consultation of the refugees on the subject of resettlement. That was quite inaccurate. It would therefore be advisable, in the first place, for the matter to be cleared up with the Egyptian Government, and also for the two bodies to clarify their views on the subject.

Mr. de SAINT-HARDOUIN (France) stressed that, for the reasons which he had just indicated, it would perhaps be premature to contemplate a general consultation of the refugees at the present time. It was only when the refugees were ready to be resettled that the question could be put to them and that they could be informed that when they received their compensation payment they would have to reimburse the Relief and Works Agency for the cost of their settlement.

Mr. KENNEDY (Director of the Relief and Works Agency) stated that he had understood from the letter that it was the Commission which had proposed the consultations and which was wondering whether the Relief and Works Agency would be prepared to collaborate. He had indicated that it did not appear to him to be timely to carry out a general consultation at the present time, in order not to give the refugees new hopes of returning to Israel, which would be followed by a further disappointment. He did not think, however, that the Egyptian Government would insist on this point.

Mr. BERGUS (United States) explained that when visiting Cairo Mr. Blandford had had the opportunity of holding informal conversations during which the question of consulting the refugees had also arisen. He had said, as had Mr. de Boisanger, that for the present he did not feel it would be a good policy to carry out a consultation of that nature, in order not to cause unnecessary excitement among the refugees, since in any case Egypt was not in a position to resettle immediately those refugees who might choose reintegration. At the end of the conversation the Minister for Foreign Affairs had appeared to agree with Mr. Blandford's view.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) thought that it was not necessary to linger on the question any further, as either the Egyptian Government had a sincere desire to settle the refugees, in which case it would not insist on the consultation, or it did not desire to do so, in which case the plan would have to be abandoned. During the conversations which he had had in the other Arab countries, Mr. de Boisanger had received the impression that the governments concerned contemplated consulting the refugees only as regards compensation. In any case, the two bodies might agree to state, in the event that the question of a consultation of