

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIRST MEETING

held at Government House, Jerusalem, on Saturday,
26 May 1951, at 10.30 a.m.

Present:

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

The CHAIRMAN welcomed Mr. Andersen, Head of the Refugee Office, and expressed his satisfaction that the Commission could rely on the collaboration of someone whose competence and past experience qualified him so well to carry the task of the Office to a successful conclusion. He recalled the circumstances in which he had already collaborated with Mr. Andersen and said that the exchange of population between Greece and Turkey had been an equally difficult problem which had been successfully solved owing to the competence of the experts, but also to the good will of the two parties. The circumstances in the present case were less favourable.

The CHAIRMAN was also gratified to see that the Committee of Experts assisting the Head of the Office was now complete except for the financial expert, whose services would be requested at the appropriate time.

Mr. PALMER (United States) associated himself completely with the Chairman's welcome. He was sure that Mr. Andersen would approach his task with full understanding of the humanitarian and political aspects of a problem the importance of which he had realized. It was, he felt, not necessary to know more of

Mr. Andersen to realize that he possessed to a high degree the patience and perseverance without which such delicate problems could not be solved.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) also associated himself very warmly with the remarks of the Chairman and Mr. Palmer and stressed, as they had done, the extreme importance of the problem of compensation from the political point of view. Mr. Andersen should be conscious of the fact that if it were possible, thanks to his experience and competence, to settle the problem of compensation, then numerous political problems would thereby also be solved.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY expressed a very cordial welcome to the Head of the Office on his own behalf and in the name of the Secretariat.

Mr. ANDERSEN (Head of the Refugee Office) thanked the Chairman for his welcome and expressed to the members of the Commission and to the Principal Secretary his gratitude for the warm welcome which he had received.

Recalling the time when he had collaborated with the Mixed Commission on the exchange of population between Greece and Turkey, he admitted that at that time the task of the experts had been greatly facilitated by the parties' strong desire to reach a satisfactory solution. As the Chairman had observed, the atmosphere in which the Office would work was less favourable, but if patience and perseverance were the main factors which would enable a reasonable solution to be arrived at, the Commission could rest assured that the Head of the Office would make every effort to reach the desired solution. He was gratified that the Committee of Experts which was to assist him in the task was composed of such competent members, and expressed a sincere desire that the collaboration between the Committee and the Head of the Office should be fruitful and achieve some positive result which would help the Conciliation Commission to solve satisfactorily the difficult problems which existed in Palestine, on which depended the peace and stability of the Near East.

1. Note to be addressed by the members of the Commission to their respective governments concerning the Israel-Syrian dispute^x (continuation)

The CHAIRMAN submitted for the approval of the members of the Commission a

^x The text of the Note is annexed hereto.

draft of the joint Note which they had decided to address to their respective governments concerning the incidents in the demilitarized zone between Syria and Israel, and stated that the draft had been adjusted by the Secretariat in the light of the discussion which had taken place at the previous meeting.

The draft Note was approved.

2. Terms of Reference of the Office (W/68)

The CHAIRMAN recalled that the Commission had approved the terms of reference of the Office (W/68) subject to the agreement of the Head of the Office to the date by which it was proposed that his Report should be submitted to the Commission.

Mr. ANDERSEN (Head of the Refugee Office), having studied Working Paper W/68 and discussed with his collaborators the question of the date by which the Office would be in a position to submit its report to the Commission, stated that the date could be fixed at 1 September 1951.

This was agreed.

The CHAIRMAN then stated that the Commission should also take a decision concerning the appointment of an expert, or of a committee of experts, to study the financial aspect of the problem of compensation.

Mr. PALMER (United States) felt that before approaching the Secretary-General it would be advisable to know at approximately what date Mr. Andersen thought he would require the collaboration of such a financial expert. It appeared that the date would depend to a great extent on when Mr. Berncastle finished his work.

As regards the advisability of requesting the services of an expert or of a committee of experts, it would be necessary to hear Mr. Andersen's opinion on that point. He felt that the collaboration of one expert of undisputed authority in financial matters would be preferable to a committee of experts, as it was obvious that it would be easier to find one person of exceptional competence than several experts.

Mr. ANDERSEN (Head of the Refugee Office) remarked that the first question

which arose was to find out whether it was felt that the assessment of Arab property abandoned in Israel should be finished before the study of practical means of financing compensation was begun. After discussing the question with Mr. Berncastle and Mr. Servoise, he felt that it would not only be useful but also very desirable to carry out a study of the financial aspect simultaneously with the work of assessment.

As regards the date at which the Principal Secretary might approach the Secretary-General with a view to obtaining the services of a financial expert, it was difficult for him at the moment to fix an exact date.

There remained, finally, the question of whether it was preferable to obtain the services of one financial expert or to set up a committee of financial experts. He personally agreed with Mr. Palmer who, for very good reasons, thought that the collaboration of one highly competent person would be preferable.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) also shared that opinion. However, it would be necessary to define the task to be entrusted to the financial expert in order to be in a position to choose one or other of the alternatives. As the work of the Office progressed, Mr. Andersen would be able to judge the advantages and disadvantages of the two alternatives and inform the Commission of his conclusions.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY also felt that before deciding in favour of either a financial expert or a committee of experts, it was essential to know exactly what work the Office would have to undertake in the financial field. Some time ago, following an exchange of views in the Commission, the Principal Secretary had written to the Headquarters of the United Nations to inform them in advance that the Refugee Office would shortly require the services of a financial expert, but he had not pursued the matter as he realized that before going any further it was necessary to wait until the work of assessment was sufficiently advanced.

The CHAIRMAN suggested waiting until the Head of the Office and the Committee of Experts were in a position to indicate the task which would be entrusted to the financial expert or committee of experts before putting this question back on the Commission's agenda. At that time the Commission would be

able to take the appropriate decision and ask the Principal Secretary to make the necessary request to the Secretary-General.

This was agreed.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.