

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

RESTRICTED

SR/32

28 March 1949

Original: ENGLISH

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRTY SECOND MEETING

held in Beirut on 28 March 1949

Present: Mr. de Boisanger (France) - Chairman
Mr. Yalcin (Turkey)
Mr. Ethridge (U.S.A.)

Mr. Azcarate - Principal Secretary

Mr. Escher - Commissioner for Middle East,
International Committee of
the Red Cross

In reply to a question by the Chairman, Mr. ESCHER informed the Commission that since it left Jerusalem there had been few changes in the refugee situation in the areas administered by the Red Cross. There had been certain medical improvements and approval had been granted to recruit medical personnel in the field. Mr. Escher pointed to the difficulty of determining accurately the number of refugees but gave the approximate figure in the areas under Red Cross administration as 441,000.

In view of the fact that Mr. Escher would shortly be attending a meeting of the General Committee of the International Red Cross in Geneva, the CHAIRMAN outlined briefly for his information the work of the Commission with regard to the refugee question. In reply to a question by Mr. Escher as to the veracity of the press report that the Transjordanian Government was prepared to settle 400,000 refugees in Transjordan, the Chairman replied that Transjordan had seemed willing at first to take a considerable number but had since become much more reticent, possibly because of the attitude of the other Arab States.

With regard to measures to be taken to move the refugees in the Jericho area to a cooler climate for the summer months,

Mr. Escher said that plans were being made to set up camps near Jerusalem and Ramallah to which refugees could be transferred. Facilities would be limited, however, owing to the shortage of tents.

Mr. YALCIN observed that in Jericho there seemed to be a discrepancy between the refugee figures estimated according to supplies distributed and the actual number of refugees. He wondered how the Red Cross had decided on the figure of 441,000.

Mr. ESCHER said that there was undoubtedly duplication in the lists and agreed that a census would be desirable. He said that Transjordan might be willing to assist in taking a census if the Conciliation Commission could take the initiative and if the necessary funds could be provided.

The CHAIRMAN and Mr. ETHRIDGE pointed out that the Commission had no funds at its disposal but thought that the proposed Technical Committee might study the question of the Commission's interest in the matter.