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SUMMARY RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE CONCILIATION
COMMISSION AND HIS EXCELLENCY RIAD EL SOHL,
PRIME MINISTER OF LEBANON,

held at Beirut on 23 February 1949.

<u>Present:</u>	H.E. Riad El Sohl	-	Prime Minister of Lebanon
	Mr. Ethridge (U.S.A.)	-	Chairman
	Mr. de Boisanger (France)		
	Mr. Yalchin (Turkey)		
	Mr. Azcarate	-	Principal Secretary

The CHAIRMAN explained the Commission's mission and asked the Prime Minister for his Government's point of view.

The PRIME MINISTER replied that the Foreign Minister had no doubt explained the Lebanese Government's position and he saw no point in repeating it. He was glad that the Commission had come to Beirut after it had visited the other Arab capitals. He informed the Commission that as a member of the Lebanese Delegation he had participated not only in the deliberations that resulted in the resolution of 11 December 1948, but had also been present when the three members of the Conciliation Commission were elected. It had seemed to him then and seemed to him now that the composition of the Conciliation Commission was more important than the solution of the refugee problem or the internationalization of Jerusalem. The fate of the Middle East was at stake, and it was up to the Commission, not the Arabs, to find the solution.

The CHAIRMAN replied that he and his colleagues, both as members of
/the Commission

the Commission and as representatives of their respective Governments, were aware of the fact that peace was the crucial point. The Commission was not tired of hearing the same things repeated by all the Arab States, but was disturbed at hearing the solution of the refugee problem made a condition for the discussion of peace. The Commission agreed that the refugee question was of primary importance and would urge Israel to accept that part of the General Assembly's resolution as proof of its good intentions. The Commission, however, was alarmed at the prospect of the Arabs refusing to discuss other problems before a solution of the refugee question had been reached. Such a stand would be sure to exacerbate the situation.

The PRIME MINISTER remarked that he had spoken at the General Assembly in Paris and could not contradict himself at present. He advised the Commission to study all the problems and submit its report to the United Nations and see to it that its recommendations were adopted and executed.

Mr. de BOISANGER agreed that the method suggested by the Prime Minister might be the solution, but felt that in order for it to be put into effect, the Commission needed to know the points of view of the various interested parties on all matters. The preliminary contact that the Commission had just completed had not been sufficient.

The PRIME MINISTER reiterated that peace, which was the most important aspect of the matter, did not depend on the refugees or on Jerusalem. It depended on the United Nations and on the psychological condition of Israel. The Commission should study this psychological state and find the necessary solution. There had been attempts to impede the establishment of the Jewish National Home but they had failed. There had been attempts to prevent the creation of the Jewish State and they also had failed. Now the question was to arrest the fulfillment of a Jewish empire, not in terms of territory but in terms of ambition. For the Arabs it was no longer a question of the present, but a long-term question of adjustment. For the United Nations, however, it was an immediate problem, involving the peace of the world.

/The CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN explained that the Commission was required to report to the session of the General Assembly to be held in September 1949. But would it be necessary to wait until September? The Commission might report to the April session of the General Assembly. In the interim period the situation could not be allowed to deteriorate. The Commission would have to do everything within its power to bring the parties together and hoped that they, in turn, would follow the instruction contained in paragraph 14 of the General Assembly's resolution.

Mr. de BOISANGER pointed out that the Commission was also required to make periodic reports. It would have to communicate to the Secretary-General the indications that it had received on all aspects of the problem with regard to the possibility of achieving a peace settlement. The Commission would have to be able to say who it was who obstructed peace. In order to do that, it would have to know, clearly and fully, the points of view of all the interested parties on all aspects of the problem.
