



UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Communication from the United Kingdom
Communication from the United Kingdom's Delegation
Submitting Answers to questions B (10) and (11)

The following communication and enclosure was received on 4 February 1948
from the Delegation of the United Kingdom:

"3rd. February, 1948

"Dear Bunche,

"You will remember that Questions B (10) and (11) were not answered when we met the Commission on [Friday, 30th January](#), as the relevant information was not then available. We are now in a position to answer those two questions and on Sir Alexander Cadogan's instructions, I am sending you for the Commission a Note setting out the answers.

"As regards the detailed information referred to in the first sentence of the answer to Question (10), I will let you have this as soon as I receive it from Jerusalem. If there is anything that is not clear in these answers or if I can help in any other way you will no doubt let me know."

"Yours sincerely
(signed) J. Fletcher-Cooke

"Dr. Ralph J. Bunche, Principal Secretary to the United Nations
Commission on Palestine, United Nations, Lake Success, New York."

NOTE
FOOD SUPPLIES

It will be remembered that when the United Kingdom Delegation met the Palestine Commission on [Friday, 30th January](#), answers to questions B (10) and (11) were not yet available. The answers to these questions are now set out below: -

QUESTION (10)

Is the Delegation of the United Kingdom in a position to give the Commission an account of the present food situation in Palestine and particularly of any arrangements for the importation of essential food during the next few months?

QUESTION (11)

Has the Mandatory Power prepared any plans which would ensure that in the transfer of responsibility to the United Nations Commission, the essential measures of the Palestine Administration for securing sufficient food supplies for all the population of Palestine can continue in operation?

ANSWER TO QUESTION (10)

Full details of stocks in hand and shipments expected are enroute by air mail from Jerusalem and will be furnished to the Commission as soon as they are received.

2. Food stuffs for Palestine may be divided into two categories

- (a) those which are procured under the directions of the International Emergency Food Council in Washington and other controlled commodities,
- (b) and those which are supplied and distributed through normal trade channels.

3. The present position as regards food stocks is reported to be satisfactory but security considerations are increasing the difficulties of distribution. In particular, great difficulty is being experienced in the local production and distribution of flour as a result of train robberies, attacks on road transport, and for other reasons. The flour mills at Haifa were recently closed for three days as the streets were unsafe for traffic. In these circumstances, the Government of Palestine have come to the conclusion that so far as may be possible, local production of adulterated standard flour should be temporarily suspended and replaced by deliveries of imported wheat flour direct from ship to distribution centres. This would obviate present dependence on local milling facilities and would result in economies in handling and transport.

4. It should also be pointed out that as Palestine flour mills are mostly Jewish-owned, the Arab population is dependent on Jewish mills for at least 50% of its flour requirements and that as withdrawal approaches it will be increasingly difficult to ensure distribution to Arab consumers of flour produced in Jewish mills.

5. The Government of Palestine have, therefore, asked that the Ministry of Food in the United Kingdom should try to ensure that all cereal shipments effected prior to the date of the termination of the Mandate should be in the form of wheat flour, at the rate of 13,000 tons per month. The possibility of complying with this request is being considered in the United Kingdom but it must be pointed out that if it is found possible to do this, it will add considerably to the cost of such imports.

6. The following provisional figures are submitted for the Commission's information:

(a) Shipments made and already received	
Flour	6,500 tons
Barley	24,711 tons
(b) Shipments en route to Palestine	

Flour	17,660 tons
Barley	8,500 tons
Sugar	1,500 tons
Following further shipments are being arranged	
Flour	8,500 tons
Wheat	18,000 tons
Rice	833 tons
Sugar	10,500 tons

7. It will be appreciated that if it is found possible to comply with the Government of Palestine's request for shipments of wheat flour rather than wheat, the amounts shown under (c) above may have to be modified.

8. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom also sponsor Palestine requirements of nitrogen fertiliser allocated by the International The Emergency Food Council. The amount of nitrogen fertiliser allocated to Palestine for the fertiliser season ended 30th June 1948 is 2,667 metric tons. Of this total, the United Kingdom is to supply 1,267 tons, Belgium 1,100 tons and Norway 300 tons. The United Kingdom deliveries are made through Imperial Chemical Industries (Levant), but the procurement of supplies within Belgian and Norwegian allocations is made by the Government of Palestine with such assistance as may be required from His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom.

ANSWER TO QUESTION (11)

(a) His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will maintain existing sponsorship, procurement and shipping of food and fertiliser supplies for Palestine which will be required up to the date of the termination of the Mandate.

(b) His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will accept no direct responsibility for sponsorship, procurement and shipment of supplies which may be required subsequent to that date.

(c) Within the limitations of these decisions, His Majesty's Government are anxious to give all possible assistance to ensure that the continuity of food supplies for Palestine is maintained and it is suggested that it might be of assistance to the Commission in assessing the present supply position and in making their arrangements to take over the responsibility for food supplies for Palestine if they were to send a representative to the United Kingdom so that he could consult with the Ministry of Food and obtain all the necessary information from the Ministry's various Commodity Divisions.

(signed) J. Fletcher-Cooke
3rd February, 1948.

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