

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE
GENERAL COMMITTEE

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SUMMARY RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN
THE GENERAL COMMITTEE AND THE
DELEGATIONS OF THE ARAB STATES

held in Lausanne on Tuesday,
6 September 1949, at 12 noon

Present:	Mr. de la Tour du Pin (France)	- Chairman
	Mr. Yenisey (Turkey)	
	Mr. Rockwell (U.S.A.)	
	Dr. Azcárate	- Principal Secretary
	Mr. Abdel Chafi El Labbane	- Representative of Egypt
	Mr. Edmond Roch	- Representative of the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom
	Mr. Mohamed Ali Hamade	- Representative of Lebanon
	Mr. Ahmed Choukairi	- Representative of Syria

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Consideration of draft Terms of Reference for a Mixed Working Group on Arab orange groves.

The CHAIRMAN invited the comments of the Arab delegations on the draft terms of reference which had been circulated at the preceding meeting.

Mr. CHOUKAIRI (Syria) recalled that the problem of the citrus groves, which represented the greater part of the wealth of Palestine, had been discussed in detail several times by the Arab delegations with the Commission and the General Committee. It had always been the conviction of the Arab delegations that the Jews were carrying out a definite policy and a carefully planned programme to eliminate that source of wealth and thereby impoverish the Arabs of Palestine. In the belief that the only defense against this policy lay in the repatriation of the owners and labourers of the citrus groves, the Arab delegations had furnished the General Committee with figures concerning the numbers of those owners and workers. The Jews, however, had refused to allow the repatriation of even this small percentage of the refugees, thereby once more denying the principles set forth in the General Assembly's resolution of 11 December 1948. The Arab delegations still firmly maintained that the only

concerning Jerusalem, and it was obviously their general policy to eliminate all foreign control over any property within Israel, a policy which manifested itself in particular with regard to the orange groves.

The Egyptian delegation had already indicated its acceptance in principle of the General Committee's proposal, and hoped that emergency procedures would be set up, as a matter of urgency, to stop the present systematic destruction of the groves. The General Committee should do its utmost to prevent the Jews from benefitting by any further de facto situations.

Mr. HAMADE (Lebanon) recalled that during its stay in Beirut the Commission had received representatives of the owners of the groves, and had heard from them the story of the destruction of the groves. Since that time the Commission had not lessened its efforts to persuade the Jews to change their attitude on the whole question, but had met only a negative response. The Arab delegations, wishing to maintain their positive attitude toward the efforts made by the Commission toward a solution of the Palestine question, now made a positive reply to the present proposal. Responsibility for the damage to the groves was already fixed and clear; it was recognized that the Commission could do little to remedy the situation, but he thought it necessary to call attention to it once again.

Mr. ROCH (Hashemite Jordan Kingdom) had a practical suggestion to make regarding implementation of the terms of reference. He proposed that the Arab member of the mixed working group should have the services of two or three advisers, and of about 20 experts, to determine without delay the number of dunums of plantations that could be saved and to establish responsibility for the damage. The territory to be covered could be divided into ten regions, each region to be investigated by a team of two experts. Since the total territory to be covered amounted to about 120,000 dunums, the total damage could not be evaluated by less than the number of personnel he had mentioned, if quick results were to be obtained.

The CHAIRMAN thanked the Arab delegations for their acceptance of the terms of reference and of the principle involved, while stressing once more the fact that the plan could only be implemented if the full agreement of the other party were also

obtained. The Committee was in agreement with the observations made concerning the urgency of the problem. As regards the suggestion concerning a staff of Arab experts, he pointed out that the appointment of such experts was provided for in the terms of reference, but that it would necessarily come after the constitution of the basic group.