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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND SECOND MEETING

held at Government House, Jerusalem,
on Thursday, 1 February 1951, at 10.30 a.m.

Present:

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

1. Approval of the summary record of the meeting with UNRWA

After an exchange of views, during which the Principal Secretary stated that the members of the Relief and Works Agency had made some slight drafting changes in the summary record which did not in any way affect the substance of the document, it was decided to postpone approval of the summary record until the next meeting, in order that Mr. Palmer might have time to read the English translation.

2. The Commission's future work (document W/55/Rev.1)

The CHAIRMAN stated that it would be desirable to decide on the general lines to be followed in the conversations which the members of the Commission were to have individually with members of the Arab governments and of the Government of Israel.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY reported that the working paper requested by the Commission (W/55/Rev.1) had now been completed by the Secretariat on the basis of the document prepared for the first meeting of the Commission, amended in the light of the exchanges of views in Beirut.

The CHAIRMAN remarked that the document dealt exclusively with the refugee question; it was, however, possible that other questions might arise in the course of the conversations.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY pointed out that in the working paper it was stated that the Commission would "have to decide, at the appropriate time, when and how other specific questions at issue between the parties are to be introduced into the negotiations".

Mr. PALMER (United States) felt that the Commission's attitude concerning the questions to be discussed during the conversations should be determined by mutual agreement; the members of the Commission would, however, use their own judgment, according to the way in which the conversation developed, as to the desirability of discussing a certain question. Naturally, for the present the question of resettlement should not be touched upon, in order not to hinder the work of the Relief and Works Agency, and it should be indicated that the Commission's aim was still for the parties to negotiate on outstanding questions. The members of the Commission might point out to the Arab States that concrete results were hoped for as regards repatriation and compensation, and stress the fact that priority was being given to those questions in the hope that when the time came the Arab States would be favourably disposed to deal with the other outstanding problems.

Recalling the deliberations of the General Assembly's Ad hoc Political Committee, Mr. Palmer said that when the representative of Israel had asked his advice concerning the amendment submitted by the representative of China he had replied that in his opinion better results could be obtained with a less positive resolution and with the help of good will than could be achieved with a stronger resolution if good will were lacking.

It might also be stressed that the Commission did not intend to devote its efforts exclusively to solving the refugee problem but considered the solution of that problem as a necessary first step to the opening of general negotiations.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) agreed with Mr. Palmer that it should be made clear to Israel that the solution of the refugee problem was not only urgent from a humanitarian point of view but that it also represented the first step towards a peace settlement, and that negotiations on the refugee question would perhaps constitute an opportunity for the parties to meet together. The Arab States might also be requested to support the efforts made by the Relief and Works Agency and to begin resettlement operations without delay.

The CHAIRMAN concluded that the members of the Commission were in agreement on the questions to be discussed in conversations with the Arab States and with the Government of Israel. He felt, moreover, that the Commission should emphasize the fact that it had not ceased to concern itself with the question of resettlement and hoped that the states concerned would support the efforts of the Relief and Works Agency in that field.

He observed that the resolution of 14 December 1950, while acknowledging the urgency of the refugee question, had no limitative character. It would perhaps be necessary to agree on the attitude which the Commission should adopt in the event of the Arab States wishing to know its intentions with regard to the settlement of the other outstanding questions, and indicating that they were still prepared to study those questions with the Commission but not directly with the Government of Israel.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) thought that for certain political reasons the Government of Lebanon would perhaps raise the question of general negotiations with Israel. In that case, there would seem to be no objection to replying that progress was being made in the refugee question, and that the time had come for the parties either to agree to undertake direct negotiations or to have recourse to the good offices of the Commission for the preparation of future negotiations.

As regards the settlement of other questions, the CHAIRMAN wondered whether the procedure for mixed committees which had been suggested the

raised, the Commission might reply that it continued to think that indirect negotiations seemed to offer little hope of achieving positive results, and to recommend the method of mixed committees.

Mr. PALMER (United States) felt that if - as could be expected - certain Arab States raised the question and stated that they were ready to discuss the other problems with the Commission and not with the Government of Israel, the Commission might reply that it was ready to study those questions separately with the States concerned but that it still hoped that the parties could be persuaded to come together to consider the disputed problems.

If the question were raised by Israel, the Commission might reply to the same effect and say that, while it was concentrating first on finding a solution to the refugee question, its final aim was to settle all outstanding questions.

The CHAIRMAN, summing up the exchange of views, said that if the Arab States - and possibly Israel - were to enquire as to the Commission's intentions regarding the other outstanding questions, the Commission would reply that it was ready to make a thorough study of those questions with the parties but was not disposed to undertake indirect negotiations of the type which took place in Lausanne, as it had learned by experience that they did not yield positive results. It might also add that the time would inevitably come when the parties would have to agree to enter into direct contact.

3. Compensation: preparatory measures (dossier of Secretariat working papers)

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY stated that the dossier which had been handed to the members of the Commission consisted of a series of papers dealing with the question of compensation and containing various practical suggestions for solving the question. These working papers might perhaps be taken as the basis for discussion.

After an exchange of views, it was decided that the members of the Commission would study the documents and consider the question during a later meeting.

4. Mixed Committee of Experts on Blocked Accounts (paragraph 2(c) of the resolution of 14 December 1950)

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY recalled that, following the resolution adopted at Lausanne, the question of blocked accounts was to be dealt with by a mixed committee working under the chairmanship of the Commission. However, in view of the manner in which the negotiations developed, the Commission had tried to split up the problem and to begin by a settlement between Israel and Jordan.

The question of blocked accounts had again become a topical one since by the provisions of the General Assembly resolution of 14 December 1950, the new Office, which would work under the direction of the Commission, would have to "continue consultations with the parties concerned regarding measures for the protection of the rights, property and interests of the refugees". That implied, in the opinion of the Principal Secretary, that the question of blocked accounts should be entrusted to the new Refugee Office. The Mixed Committee had therefore no further raison d'être, and since it had been created by an official decision of the Commission, it might perhaps be desirable for the Commission to take a further official decision to dissolve the Mixed Committee, when the new Office was in operation.

Mr. PALMER (United States) did not fully agree with the Principal Secretary's view in that connection. In effect, the Commission had passed the stage of theoretical study of the question and had reached that of negotiations which - at least as far as the Governments of Israel and Jordan were concerned - were going well. Although for the present the Mixed Committee had no cause to intervene, it might nevertheless have a rôle to fulfil at a later date, as it was composed of representatives of the parties and he felt that no opportunity for them to meet should be lost. Furthermore, the dissolution of the Committee might be interpreted by the countries concerned as a wish to prevent their participation. In addition, it might be useful for the Director of the new Office to

consult with the Mixed Committee and to examine certain questions with the representatives of the Arab interests and of Israel. Finally, the General Assembly resolution contained no provision which obliged the Commission to dissolve the Mixed Committee.

It would be useful for the Commission to continue the negotiations it had already begun, while the new Office started work on the repatriation and compensation questions, which would require all its efforts for some time, for if the Government of Israel agreed to release unconditionally to the Arab refugees in Jordan even a small sum, the refugees would feel that the Commission had accomplished something positive in their favour.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) felt that the point of view of the Principal Secretary and that of Mr. Palmer were quite reconcilable, in the sense that the Mixed Committee, on which the parties were represented, could continue to exist and be put in touch with the Director of the new Office.

The CHAIRMAN felt that it was not indispensable to decide the question immediately and asked whether the negotiations with Jordan concerning the unfreezing of a sum of £100. on each account might not be started again.

Mr. PALMER (United States), referring to a conversation he had had with the British Minister in Amman, explained the technical difficulties in the way of this release: on the one hand, the Government of Israel insisted that the advances to be made by the Arab States or banks should not be repaid until a general peace settlement had been concluded; on the other hand, Jordan was unwilling to advance the sums necessary to cover the payments to Arab refugees holding accounts blocked in Israel without knowing when reimbursement would be made. It would be necessary to persuade the Government of Israel to authorize the release of part of the blocked assets - for example, £300,000 out of a total of £2,000,000 - and to point out that such an action would constitute a good will gesture which would doubtless have favourable results for the opening of general negotiations.

The CHAIRMAN was in complete agreement with Mr. Palmer and felt that it would be very helpful if the Government of Israel were to realize the

necessity for making such a gesture. Unfortunately, the Government of Israel was usually reluctant to make gestures which involved making a sacrifice.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY stated that an agreement had recently been concluded between Israel and the United Kingdom for the release of the remainder of Israel's sterling balances held in London. It might be possible to request that out of that sum an amount corresponding to the blocked Arab accounts be reserved and used for unfreezing those accounts. He mentioned the fact that Mr. Furlong, of the Middle East Affairs Division of the Foreign Office, was passing through Jerusalem and suggested that perhaps the Commission might wish to draw his attention to this question.

Mr. PALMER (United States) thought that the United Kingdom, which might for certain reasons be opposed to releasing sterling in favour of other countries, would have no objection to releasing sterling to Jordan. It would perhaps be advisable to draw Mr. Furlong's attention to that point, as questions of that nature had a political rather than a financial aspect.

The Commission's Economic Adviser, at the request of the PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, gave a brief account of the problem of blocked accounts. The latter then added that following the monetary reform undertaken by Israel in 1948, the Arab accounts in Israel, which had been expressed in Palestine pounds, were converted to Israel pounds; the holders of those accounts should not lose their right to reimbursement in sterling pounds, which right might be used by Israel for her own advantage.

After an exchange of views it was decided that the Secretariat should be requested to prepare a short note on the question to be handed, on behalf of the Conciliation Commission, to the representative of the British Government who was visiting Jerusalem.

5. Proposal for the improvement of the secondary road to Government House

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY informed the Commission that General Riley had approved a project for improving the secondary road leading directly from Government House to Jordan.

The Commission noted this information with satisfaction.

6. Negotiations for the nomination of the Director of the Refugee Office.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY handed to the members of the Commission a telegram from Mr. Cordier stating that the Danish delegation had advised that, owing to the postponement of the meeting of the observation commission for French possessions in India, Mr. Andersen would not be able to inform the Commission before 15 February whether he could accept the post of Director of its new Office.

After discussion, it was decided to request the Principal Secretary to send a telegram to Mr. Cordier, informing him that, in view of the exceptional qualifications of Mr. Andersen, the Commission agreed to await his reply until 15 February, and expressing the hope that nothing would prevent Mr. Andersen from accepting the post, as the Commission did not wish to delay further the execution of the General Assembly resolution of 14 December 1950.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.