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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND THIRD MEETING

held at Government House, Jerusalem,
on Monday 5 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. Preparations for the meeting of the Conciliation Commission with the Relief and Works Agency to be held on Tuesday 6 February 1951.

After an exchange of views, it was decided to invite the Relief and Works Agency to hold the next day's meeting at Government House - Headquarters of the United Nations in Jerusalem - rather than at the Rockefeller Museum, as had been proposed by the Agency.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that Mr. Blandford, member of the Advisory Commission of the Relief and Works Agency, had transmitted to the Commission a memorandum dealing with certain questions which the Agency wished to examine with the Commission and on which, he thought, agreement could easily be reached.

Mr. PALMER (United States) and Mr. ARAS (Turkey) both stated that the views set forth in the memorandum seemed to them to be entirely acceptable and proposed that the document be taken as the basis of discussion at the next day's meeting.

This was agreed.

The CHAIRMAN recalled that the Political Committee of the Arab League was at present in session in Cairo and thought that it would be useful for the Commission and the Relief and Works Agency to study jointly the decisions adopted by the Arab League concerning

the problem of refugees.

The Principal Secretary was therefore requested to communicate the text of the decisions of the Arab League concerning the problem of refugees to the members of the Commission at the next day's meeting.

2. Elaboration of the directives to be given to the Refugee Office of the Commission.

Mr. PALMER (United States) was of the opinion that it would be of greater value to study this question after the meeting between the Commission and the Relief and Works Agency. Having studied a certain number of working papers prepared by the Secretariat and dealing with compensation, he believed that it would be necessary to bring together, in a single document, all the essential points mentioned in each one of those working papers and thus to set forth systematically the different aspects of the problem under study.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY pointed out that the Secretariat in its working papers had studied all the various aspects of compensation. He also believed that the Commission should not discuss the details of the problem but that these should be forwarded to the General Committee for preliminary examination and in order to point out the essential items that the Commission should study carefully.

The CHAIRMAN stated that, in his view, some directives should be given to the General Committee and that it should keep in mind certain essential principles which the Commission should uphold, particularly that principle which provided for payment of compensation to the refugees on an individual basis.

Mr. PALMER (United States) mentioned in this connection a conversation he had had with Mr. Sharett the previous day, in which he had not attempted to minimize the disappointment caused by the conditional offer made by the Government of Israel in connection with compensation. He had also indicated that it was to be regretted that Israel should insist on considering its contribution to the reintegration fund as liberating it of its obligations in that field. He had explained that, in his view, the problem should be dealt with on an individual basis and that compensation for individual loss or damage should be paid to the

refugees individually. Mr. Palmer had pointed out to Mr. Sharett that the Head of the new Office might be able to find a solution which would avoid direct payments to the individual refugees by the Government of Israel, so that the latter would not have to deal with the claims presented separately by the refugees. He had added that in any case the total amount of compensation could only be determined on the basis of individual rights.

Mr. Palmer drew the attention of the members of the Commission to the fact that, quite possibly, an important percentage of that total amount would represent the claims of a small number of refugees - who were large land-owners - and who, perhaps, could be urged to contribute to reintegration programs by means of the sums due to them.

He stated in conclusion that the activities of the Office would facilitate the efforts of the Relief and Works Agency in the field of reintegration. Indeed, if it were possible to determine the number of refugees who were not entitled to compensation, the number of those to be reintegrated would also be known.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) believed that it would be sufficient to recommend to the Head of the Refugee Office that the problem of compensation be studied in the light of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly with a view to presenting to the Commission the practical solutions which would make possible the implementation of those resolutions.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that those directives would be sufficient if the Head of the Office were to indicate a desire to study the question himself and to make suggestions to the Commission. However, it might be that the Head of the Office would like to be made aware of the viewpoint of the Commission and to receive instructions before beginning his work.

Mr. PALMER (United States) believed that the directives to be given to the Head of the Office should be brief but extremely precise. However, he believed that the General Committee would have to undertake considerable preliminary work before the Commission could elaborate those directives with full knowledge of all the facts.

Consequently, it was decided to request the General Committee to study thoroughly the problem of compensation on the basis

of the working papers prepared by the Secretariat and to present to the Commission a general study to be used in drawing up the instructions which the Commission would then give to the new Refugee Office.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.