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COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS

FIRST SESSION

MINUTES OF THE SIXTH MEETING

Held at Lake Success, New York, on Friday, 29 November 1946 at 2:30 p.m.

Present:

Chairman:	Col. C. H. L. SHARMAN	(Canada)
Vice-Chairman:	Dr. S. TUBIASZ	(Poland)
Rapporteur:	Dr. Szeching SZE	(China)
	Mr. M. A. ZAKI	(Egypt)
	Mr. G. BOURGOIS	(France)
	Mr. H. GREENFIELD	(India)
	Mr. N. ENTEZAM	(Iran)
	Mr. J. QUEVEDO BAZAN	(Mexico)
	Mr. J. H. DELGORGE	(Netherlands)
	Dr. J. A. LAZARTE	(Peru)
	Mr. F. BELBEZ	(Turkey)
	Major W. H. COLES	(United Kingdom)
	Mr. J. ANSLINGER	(United States of America)
	Mr. V. ZUEV	(Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
	Mr. S. KRASOVEC	(Yugoslavia)
	Mr. Herbert MAY	(President of the Permanent Central Opium Board)
Secretariat:	Mr. L. STEINIG	(Director of the Narcotics Division)
	Mr. V. PASTUHOV	(Secretary of the Commission)

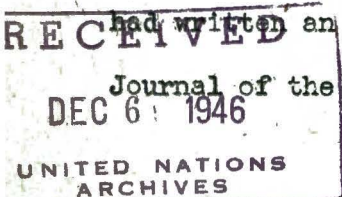
1. Review of the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs throughout the world during the years 1940 to 1945 inclusive and the first half of 1946 (document E/C.S.7/10), continuation of the discussion.

Tunisia

The CHAIRMAN mentioned briefly that Mr. Bouquet, of Tunis, the Cannabis Sub-Committee expert, had remained in Tunis throughout the occupation. He

had written an interesting article on marihuana, which had appeared in the Journal of the American Medical Association, and had also written several

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times both to himself and to Mr. Anslinger to ask for documents and material for his work as he was having serious difficulty in obtaining them. During the war, Mr. Anslinger had been glad to be able to provide him with the necessary material.

United States of America

Mr. ANSLINGER (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA) recalled that seizures in the United States had been discussed at the previous meeting. He wished, however, to stress the fact that the main source of opium introduced into the United States was Mexico. Opium was for bidden in that country and its production was clandestine, so that the Mexican Government had had to make great efforts to locate opium poppy crops. The Army and the Air Force had assisted, but despite these efforts, which the Government of the United States fully appreciated, the traffic had scarcely diminished. Opium continued to pass into American territory and part managed to infiltrate as far as Canada, after conversion into heroin. The Government of the United States hoped the Mexican Government would intensify its efforts to put an end to that illicit traffic.

The CHAIRMAN observed that Canada took a very special interest in that traffic. After corroborating the remarks of the United States representative on the conversion of raw opium into heroin, he noted that numerous arrests had taken place, as mentioned on page 23 of the Report of the Narcotics Bureau of the American Treasury Department, and emphasized that the Canadian Government was keeping in close touch with the United States Government with regard to measures for suppressing the traffic. He also expressed the hope that the Mexican Government would redouble its efforts in this direction.

Mr. QUEVEDO BAZAN (MEXICO) assured the representative of the United States and the Chairman that the Mexican Government would collaborate closely with the Governments of the United States and Canada in suppressing the traffic and would make every effort possible in the special economic and social conditions prevailing in his country to achieve speedy success.

/Mr. GREENFIELD

Mr. GREENFIELD (INDIA), referring to the last paragraph on page 6, uttered a warning against placing undue confidence in drug identity labels. He recalled that during a search carried out in Bombay, the Indian authorities had discovered a bronze plate bearing the mark of the Gwalior district. That plate had been intended for printing labels for affixing to packages of dubious origin in order to enhance the value of the drug they contained.

Mexico

Mr. QUEVEDO BAZAN (MEXICO) said he had no adequate statistics of opium production in Mexico. His Government was doing all in its power to abolish cultivation of the opium poppy, but hitherto economic and geographic conditions had prevented the campaign which was being conducted from being as effective as it could wish. Nevertheless, he thought it would be useful to give a summary of the Mexican Government's activity in that sphere.

In order to put an end to the production of opium and other narcotic drugs in the country, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare had, in the course of the past five years, conducted regular annual campaigns in the states of Sinaloa, Durango and Sonora, which were the main sources of supply for contraband for the United States.

Such action had not been easy but by perseverance and the combined efforts of the Ministry of Health, the Army and the Governments of the states concerned, an appreciable reduction the areas under poppy cultivation had been brought about in 1945-6.

In 1941 the Mexican Government had drawn up a plan for the complete abolition of poppy-growing, and the prosecution of growers and traffickers. That plan had been carried out in the following way:

The first year, many poppy fields had been destroyed and a warning had been issued to farmers that poppy-growing was forbidden. The second year, a more intensive campaign had been carried out and in the state of Sonora alone 336 hectares of poppy crops had been destroyed, as compared with 270 the previous year. In the third year, the campaign had been extended to the

/states

states of Durango and Sonora. The governors of those states and of Chihuahua and Sinaloa had been required to order the municipal authorities to take steps to prevent cultivation of the opium poppy in their territory.

The nature of the terrain made regular supervision of the observance of those orders difficult, so the Ministry of Health had to have recourse to informers from the cultivation areas in order to learn the exact location of poppy fields. As soon as information was received, expeditions were organized, with Federal Army assistance, to destroy the fields. The Ministry of Defence had provided a light bomber which had been used for spotting fields and checking the reports of agents scattered over the mountainous provinces of the states of Sonora and Sinaloa and part of the state of Durango.

The Mexican Public Prosecutor had lent the Ministry of Public Health two members of his staff who had taken part in the campaign and had helped the Ministry's representatives in the prosecution of the growers. This co-operation of the Public Prosecutor showed the great importance attached by the Mexican Government to the campaign against narcotics.

The Public Prosecutor had also assigned several members of his staff to watching the United States frontier. They exchanged information from both sides of the frontier with the American authorities. The results of their collaboration had been quite striking. Numerous seizures of opium and heroin of Mexican origin had been effected and a great many notorious traffickers were now in Mexican prisons.

Local governments had also given effective help and last year three poppy fields had been discovered and destroyed by the police of Guadalajara, in the state of Jalisco. In the same town three laboratories for the conversion of opium into heroin had been discovered and important seizures (varying from 10 kilogrammes of opium to 180 packets of five each of smoking opium) had been made. The opium had been destroyed and the traffickers convicted.

/The situation

The situation in Mexico was not yet entirely satisfactory and the administration which was to assume office next December would increase its efforts in the new campaigns which would be necessary to suppress the illicit production of opium and other narcotic drugs. The war had prevented the Government from allocating large sums of money for those campaigns but a considerable effort had been made. Certain chapters of the budget of the Ministry of Health had been devoted to the campaign and the states had also granted certain credits.

Generally speaking Mexicans were not drug-takers and the number of addicts in the country was small. At the same time, production had been high, which proved that it was mainly for contraband to other countries. There were, however, reasons for believing that soon Mexico would produce no more opium, and, consequently, no more morphine or heroin. It was gratifying to know that opium production had already been reduced and serious steps taken to strengthen the Mexican narcotics laws.

Hong Kong

United Kingdom

Major COLES (UNITED KINGDOM), said he had nothing to add to his remarks at previous meetings with regard to the traffic in Hong Kong. He referred the Committee to the special document which he had submitted on the subject of the traffic in the United Kingdom. (Document E/C.S.7/15). He would supply details later about the traffic in Burma.

Iraq

(There were no observations on this paragraph).

Canada

The CHAIRMAN observed that the document mentioned seizures of raw opium without specifying whether it was pure opium or prepared opium. Perhaps the reason was that the distinction had not been made.

Australia

(There were no observations on this paragraph).

/Iran

Iran

Mr. ENTEZAM (IRAN) explained that the reasons why no report had been submitted by his government since 1940 was that Iran's administrative machinery had been dislocated by the presence of allied troops on its territory. Measures had been taken in 1946 as indicated in the footnote to page 8; in any case the figures for seizures in 1940 were very low.

Mr. DELGORGE (NETHERLANDS) asked whether the note in question meant that Iran would not produce any more opium at all, and that as a consequence it would be impossible for other governments to buy opium there for medical purposes.

Mr. ENTEZAM (IRAN) explained that that was not yet the case. The measures to which the note referred were related to the suppression of opium poppy cultivation for the current year, i.e. the Iranian year ending 21 March 1947.

As regards the future, should the question arise, he reserved the right to ask the Conference on Limitation for a production quota for his country.

Mr. ANSLINGER (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA) and Mr. DELGORGE (NETHERLANDS) observed they had understood, from the terms of the document, that the measure in question would mean complete prohibition for the future and not just for one year.

Mr. ENTEZAM (IRAN) replied that the measure in question was as yet only an administrative provision. It was a decree of the Iranian government promulgated while the Parliament was not in session, and could only apply to a limited period. Complete prohibition for the future required an act of Parliament. It would therefore be best to wait until the next session after which fuller details would be available.

He pointed out that the note submitted by the Delegation of the United States also only mentioned prohibition for one year.

The CHAIRMAN observed that the statement by the Embassy of the United States in Teheran, quoted on page 9 of document E/C.S.7/6, had also led him /to think

to think that the measure applied to the future.

Mr. ANSLINGER (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA) quoted extracts from a speech on 21 March last by the Prime Minister of Iran in which he announced that under the Opium Monopoly Law of 1928, it had been decided that the Ministry of Finance could no longer issue permits for cultivation of the opium poppy during, and as from the current year, and that, if fields were nevertheless cultivated in any part of the territory, they would be entirely destroyed.

Mr. ENTEZAM (IRAN) explained that in the absence of Parliament the Prime Minister could only take that measure for the current year. He could not bind himself for a longer period without Parliament's ratification.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Delegation of Iran had mentioned its wish to obtain production quotas. That fact appeared to indicate some degree of uncertainty with regard to total prohibition of cultivation for the future. In any case he thought it essential to avoid any misunderstanding in the Commission's documents and suggested that the footnote to page 8 of document E/C.S.7/10 be amended.

Major COLES (UNITED KINGDOM) thought that the footnote in question should make it clear that the measure under discussion applied to the current year only. The note was not very clear, in any event, and he asked whether the second measure envisaged, which concerned the use of opium, was also for one year only.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the adverb "temporarily" be added after the word "prohibiting" in the first case, and before the word "unlawful" in the second.

Mr. ANSLINGER (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA) quoted other statements by the Prime Minister of Iran, according to which the use of opium was forbidden in public places, cafes and tea rooms; no opium addict could enter government employment while all officials indulging in the drug were obliged to produce within fifteen days a medical certificate showing that they had been completely cured.

/He concluded

He concluded by quoting a decree of 1936 of the National Government of Azerbaijan forbidding the use of smoking opium.

Dr. Szeming SZE (CHINA), rapporteur, felt that the note should be redrafted. It was difficult, however, to do that in a plenary meeting. The problem was clearly to bring out the essential point, that ratification by the Iranian Parliament was necessary convert a temporary measure into a permanent measure. That being so, it was fitting that the representative of Iran should help in the redrafting, and he suggested that the Secretariat and himself should also take part.

Personally, he would prefer that an entire sentence be added to the note, explaining the constitutional procedure which had to be followed.

Mr. ZAKI (EGYPT) considered that the problem was more apparent than real. The measure in question had been taken in the absence of the Iranian Parliament. It had been taken as a token of the good-will of the Iranian Government. The statements quoted by the representative of the United States were further proofs of that good-will. The measures adopted by the Prime Minister would be submitted to Parliament in the form of a bill as soon as it reassembled. He personally thought there would be no occasion for misunderstanding if the minutes of the meeting were to refer to the good-will of the Iranian Government which had taken a temporary measure, and was anxious that it should be adopted by Parliament and become permanent.

Major COLES (UNITED KINGDOM) did not question the good-will of the Government of Iran. He only wished to clarify the text and to know what exactly was the measure taken on 21 June 1946. The representative of Iran had stated that the measure of 10 April, which forbade cultivation of the opium poppy, covered a period of one year. Was that also the case with the measure of 21 June forbidding the use of opium?

The CHAIRMAN thought it necessary to make a distinction. If it was merely a question of a few months delay before the Iranian Parliament

ratified.

ratified the measure, there was no difficulty. But the representative of Iran had indicated that he would ask for a production quota for opium for medical purposes. That seemed a contradiction and he would like to have the position clarified.

Mr. ENTEZAM (IRAN) said that the intention underlying the measure of 21 June was to prohibit the use of opium forever. It was to be definitive.

In the case of the prohibition of cultivation, it was also the intention of the Iranian Government that this should apply permanently. Such a measure, however, was beyond its powers and required Parliamentary approval.

There were two solutions to the problem:

Either, the text of the note could be left as it was, and a passage included in the minutes of the meeting or their report to the Economic and Social Council explaining that ratification by the Parliament of Iran was still necessary to give permanent effect to the measure prohibiting the cultivation of the opium poppy. He himself favoured this solution;

Or, to gain time, the Secretariat, the rapporteur and the Delegation of Iran could together prepare a new text.

In reply to the CHAIRMAN's enquiry regarding his request for a quota, he explained that even if his government did not succeed in obtaining Parliamentary approval for complete abolition, it would still make every effort to reduce production and limit it to the quota it would then request. He had mentioned a quota merely as a precaution.

Mr. ANSLINGER (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA) thought that the question had been sufficiently clarified and was satisfied with the explanation.

In reply to a question by the CHAIRMAN, Mr. ENTEZAM (IRAN) explained that his mention of quotas had merely been a precautionary measure and that the Iranian Government was not at present pursuing any policy in that respect.

DECISION: No amendment would be made to the footnote to page 8 of document E/C.S.7/10.

/Netherlands

Netherlands East Indies

Mr. DELGOURGE (NETHERLANDS) stressed the fact that the Netherlands themselves had not been mentioned in the document owing to the complete absence of illicit traffic in the territory as a result of the German occupation. He recalled that the former Central Office for the Control of Narcotics, which used to be in Rotterdam and kept in touch with other governments, was now at The Hague where it had resumed operations.

The Netherlands had come up against the same problems of forged prescriptions by traffickers as those mentioned by the representative of France. They also had considered using special paper for prescriptions involving narcotics, but had rejected the idea because patients would then have known that a drug was being prescribed for them, and the doctors did not want that.

It had seemed wiser to confine themselves to stipulating that all prescriptions should be made up in the town where they were given. Towns in the Netherlands were small and since as a rule pharmacists knew the doctors and their signatures, that seemed a sufficient guarantee against fraud.

Lourenco-Marques

Belgium

(There were no observations on the above two paragraphs.)

Continuation of the discussion was postponed to the next meeting.

The meeting rose at 4:45 p.m.