

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

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M A N D A T E S

PERMANENT MANDATES COMMISSION:- REPORT ON THE
WORK OF ITS THIRTY-SECOND (EXTRAORDINARY) SESSION.

Report by the Representative of Roumania.

The Report of the Permanent Mandates Commission on the work of its Extraordinary Session contains, firstly, the "Preliminary Opinion formulated at the request of the Council on the Report and Recommendations of the Royal Commission, and on the United Kingdom Government's Statement of Policy" and, secondly, its observations on the administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan. The document is completed by the Commission's conclusions on the petitions submitted to it.

I shall not go into the "Preliminary Opinion" the object of which lies outside the Mandates Commission's usual province. The Council will no doubt wish to make a separate examination of the problem of the Status of Palestine.

On the other hand, there seems to be no reason why the part of the Commission's report which deals with the administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan in 1935 and 1936 should not be examined immediately with a view to the requisite action.

In its "General Observations", which will no doubt have already engaged the attention of the Members of the Council, the Mandates Commission deals with the disturbances which occurred in Palestine in 1936, their causes, and their repression by the authorities of the mandatory Power.

This text briefly outlines the facts as elicited through the careful examination carried out by the Mandates Commission, with the loyal and patient assistance of the accredited representatives of the mandatory Power.

I am sure I shall be interpreting the views of my colleagues in expressing the sincere hope that disturbances such as those which ended a year ago will not recur in Palestine.

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As regards the "Special Observations" of the Commission dealing with the administration proper, the circumstances give them special importance. The Commission begins by asking to be informed in due course of the measures taken to give effect to the conclusions and recommendations of the Royal Commission as regards reforms, some of which are of an urgent character. It then recommends that the completion of the land survey should be hastened. Turning to the economic sphere, the Commission concludes from the documents examined by it that the application of the rule of economic equality constitutes a heavy burden on Palestine's industry and commerce, owing to the absence of reciprocity. Recalling the appeal made in 1930 to all the States Members of the League to accord to products of territories under A and B mandates advantages corresponding to those enjoyed by their own products in those territories, the Commission notes that in some cases the mandatory Power has already obtained certain advantages for Palestine, and hopes that the present situation will be further improved by the obtaining of concessions from a larger number of States. I am sure that the Council will fully endorse the hope expressed by the Mandates Commission.

After noting the mandatory Power's intentions in connection with the development of educational facilities, the Commission observes that the mandatory Power has decided to reduce Jewish immigration temporarily as from August 1st, 1937, to 8,000 persons for the ensuing eight months. The Commission does not question that the mandatory Power, responsible as it is for the maintenance of order in the territory, may on occasion find it advisable to take such a step and is competent to do so, as an exceptional and provisional measure; it draws attention, however, to this departure from the principle sanctioned by the League Council that immigration is to be proportionate to the country's economic absorptive capacity.

As regards Trans-Jordan, the Commission noted that order had been maintained in 1936 without undue difficulty. It also noted that if disorders of the kind experienced in Palestine should occur in Trans-Jordan, the mandatory Power would probably have to secure reinforcements for the police force from outside.

Lastly, after expressing the hope that it may be possible to develop further the public health services, the Commission noted that, despite the fact that the administrative structure of the territory is still undeveloped, it has never been possible to balance the budget without large yearly subsidies from the mandatory Power.

In accordance with paragraph (e) of the Constitution of the Permanent Mandates Commission, the observations I have just analysed were communicated to the accredited representative, who stated that he had no comments to make on them.

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As was to be expected, the Commission received a large number of petitions regarding the disturbances in 1936, the mandatory Power's policy and the scheme, abandoned about two years ago, for a Legislative Council. All these petitions were examined by a sub-Committee, whose conclusions were adopted by the Commission. As regards the petitions concerning the disturbances, the Council's attention is drawn to the Commission's general observations formulated on the occasion of the examination of the annual report on Palestine for 1936. The Commission also puts forward no special conclusions on the group of petitions referring to Article 22 of the Covenant, the terms of the mandate, and the mandatory Power's policy, since they fall within the general scope of the main question on which the Commission has sent to the Council a "preliminary opinion". As regards the petitions referring to the scheme for a Legislative Council, the Commission considered that no useful purpose would be served by their study until a decision had been taken concerning the future status of Palestine.

Apart from the communications falling into these three main groups, the Commission also examined five petitions referring to particular points, one of which would seem to deserve mention here. The authors of the petition complain of the difficulties caused by the absence of reciprocity with regard to the rule of economic equality imposed on the mandated territory, a circumstance which has already been dealt with in a separate observation by the Commission to the Council, as I recalled just now.

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I think that the Commission's observations should be communicated to the mandatory Power with a request to take such action as the Commission has asked for. I also think that the Council might approve the Commission's conclusions regarding the petitions it examined during this extraordinary session. The grounds for the conclusions are to be found in the Rapporteurs' reports annexed to the Minutes of the Commission.

I therefore have the honour to propose that the Council adopt the following resolution:

"1. The Council notes the annual report on the administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan in 1936 and the report and Minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission, and adopts the present report submitted by the representative of Roumania.

"2. The Council, having examined the observations on the administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan contained in the Permanent Mandates Commission's report on the work of the thirty-second (extraordinary) session, instructs the Secretary-General to communicate the said observations to the Government of the United Kingdom, the mandatory Power for Palestine and Trans-Jordan, and to request it to take the action asked for by the Commission.

"3. The Council approves the Commission's conclusions concerning the petitions it has examined, and instructs the Secretary-General to bring them to the knowledge of the mandatory Power and of the petitioners concerned.

"4. The Secretary-General is requested to attach the text of the report by the Representative of Roumania to the Council and the Minutes of the present meeting to the text of the observations and conclusions of the Permanent Mandates Commission, which he is to communicate to the mandatory Power".