

LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

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Geneva, December 2nd 1925.

PERMANENT MANDATES COMMISSION.

7th SESSION.

Report by M. UNDEN.

Following the practice adopted in 1924 as the result of the constant increase in its work, the Permanent Mandates Commission held a second session in Geneva in October, primarily for the purpose of examining the annual reports of the mandatory Powers which it had not been able to deal with at its regular session in June and July.

For exceptional reasons which it has fully set forth, the Commission, while examining five annual reports, decided to postpone consideration of those on Iraq and Syria. As regards Syria, the Council certainly shares the views expressed by the Commission when it assured the Representative of the mandatory Power that it was following events with the greatest interest and anxiety, and hoped that in the special report which it would examine at its extraordinary session in February 1926, it would find a full explanation of the causes of the present trouble and the remedies which the mandatory Power proposed to apply. The Commission expressed a strong desire for a satisfactory re-establishment of ^{order} ~~peace~~- views with which, I am convinced, the Council will desire to associate itself. I realise that the time is limited, but I would ask that the necessary reports be placed in our hands as many days as possible before the opening of our March session.

M. Briand, who was acting President of the Council last month has, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Mandates Commission, formally approved of its proposal to hold an extraordinary session for this purpose in February. Instead of meeting in Geneva as required by its Constitution, the Commission desires to hold this extraordinary session in Rome. In view of the exceptional circumstances of the present case I presume that the Council will approve the proposal on the understanding that it cannot be considered to constitute a precedent.

The reasons which led to the decision of the Commission to adjourn the examination of the report concerning Iraq are of a different character and I am sure that we appreciate its desire not even to appear to influence the decision of the Council in respect to the dispute concerning the frontiers of Iraq- a dispute which concerns about a quarter of the territory. As soon as these difficulties have been removed the Commission proposes to proceed without delay to the examination of the first report which has been submitted to it for that purpose, and it is a satisfaction to note that the British Government have announced their intention of facilitating the task of the Commission on that occasion by arranging for the presence of a high official intimately acquainted with the situation on the spot.

I do not think that the observations of the Commission with regard to the reports which they examined call for much comment on the part of the Council. Palestine and Transjordan have occupied a great deal of the attention of the Commission. It is obvious that the task of developing the country with due regard to the dual principles embodied in the Mandate, does not, at least for the moment, permit of rapid development in the

political field, but it is a satisfaction to note that peace and order reign in the territory, that political agitation has diminished, that an extension of local self-government is engaging the special attention of the Government at the present time, and that there seems to be every prospect of continued increase in mutual understanding and confidence among the various elements of the population due to the daily contact on many matters between individuals of the different religious groups.

The Commission devoted considerable time to a consideration of the Belgian Law of August 21st, 1925, concerning the administration of Ruanda-Urundi, which had given rise to adverse comments in certain quarters. Its observations on this matter are also referred to in a special report which I propose to present to the Council concerning certain communications which have been received from the German and the Belgian Governments.

On the general questions concerning which the Commission has made proposals, I would like to make one or two observations.

Certain specific information concerning the present status of so-called "ex-enemy" property in mandated territories is desired by the Commission in view of its importance from the standpoint of a full comprehension of economic conditions in the territories. It seems desirable that the Council should commend this request to the consideration of the mandatory Powers.

As regards comments by the mandatory Powers on petitions, I quite realise that it is desirable for the satisfactory working of the Commission that the Mandatory Power should indicate with reference to, any points of importance with which the Commission may have to deal, whether it agrees with the petitioners or takes some other view of the matter. Such an indication by avoiding ambiguity, would I believe at the same time be of advantage to the mandatory Power.

I found it necessary in the report which I presented to the Council on September 15th last, to point out the serious

handicap under which the Commission laboured at its sixth session owing to the delay in the presentation of most of the annual reports of the mandatory Powers, and I regret to note from the report on its seventh session that the situation has become worse rather than better. The Commission has now, however, taken into consideration the observations which were made by the Representatives of certain mandatory Powers at the Council meeting on September 15th last as regards reports not covering the calendar year or coming from a great distance. It has accordingly suggested dates which it believes to be strictly applicable in every instance, maintaining, except in three cases, the date of May 20th as the time for the receipt by the Secretariat of the annual reports. I trust that in the future the Council may confidently expect the reports to arrive at the times indicated, or that if, in any case, this should be impossible for some exceptional reason, the mandatory Power will inform the Secretary-General for the information of the Mandates Commission well in advance.

Most of the petitions examined by the Commission concern Palestine, and it is obvious that they have been given careful attention. In its observations on the communications from the Executive Committee of the Palestine Arab Congress, the Commission expresses doubt whether it can on the sole basis of written documents, even with the assistance of the accredited Representative of the mandatory Power, make any adequate recommendation on such complex and delicate subjects as are treated in that petition. In a matter of this kind, as in many others, the Commission is, of course, acting under certain limitations. This is recognised by the Council, which I feel convinced would under the circumstances described, only ask the Commission to give a statement of the best judgment it could form from the information placed at its disposal.

I beg to propose the following resolutions:-

"The Council of the League of Nations

"Takes note of annual reports on five mandated territories, of the Report of the Permanent Mandates Commission on the work of its seventh session, of the observations of the accredited Representative of one of the mandatory Powers, and of the report presented by the Swedish Representative.

A. General Questions.

"As regards the Commission's observations on

1. Ex-enemy property in mandated territories: the Council commends to the consideration of the mandatory Powers the request contained in the report of the Commission for information with regard to the present situation of the estates which were formerly the private property of ex-enemy nationals, and which have been liquidated under the Treaty of Versailles.

2. Petitions: the Council decides to call the attention of the mandatory Powers to the observations of the Commission and the Rapporteur on this subject.

3. Despatch of Reports: The Council approves the dates mentioned in the report of the Commission for the receipt by the Secretariat of the annual reports on the different territories, and would invite the attention of these Powers to the importance of despatching these documents at the time stated.

B. Observations on Separate Territories.

"As regards the observations of the Commission on separate territories, the Council

(1) desires to associate itself with the strong desire expressed by the Commission for a prompt and satisfactory re-establishment of peace in Syria, and approves the proposal of the Commission to hold an extraordinary session in Rome;

(2) notes the reasons which led the Commission to adjourn the examination of the report concerning Iraq and its intention to proceed to the examination of this report as soon as the existing difficulties have been removed;

(3) decides to forward the observations of the Commission on the five reports which were examined by it to the Government of the mandatory Power concerned in each case, and to request it to take the requisite action.

C. Petitions.

"As regards petitions, the Council approves the conclusions of the Commission, and instructs the Secretary-General to bring them to the knowledge of the petitioner and of the mandatory Power concerned in each case."