

their differences. The demand of the Jews to emigrate in greatly increasing numbers into Palestine has become more pronounced of late owing to economic and social conditions in other countries, and the growth of Arab nationalization in neighbouring lands has strengthened Arab demands in Palestine itself. The hope of the British Government that, in time, Palestine would become a self-governing State, wherein the rival races could live together and at peace, seems far from realization. This is admirably brought out in the report of the Royal Commission, which is of opinion that the only way to settle the difficulty is by means of a partition amongst Jews and Arabs, reserving, however, the holy places to be administered in trust and under mandate by the United Kingdom. On the merits and demerits of partition, on the suggested frontiers of the new State, and on other points which would inevitably require settlement should partition be resorted to, there is no need to enter now. Mr. Eden himself stated that the proposal made by the Royal Commission was the only solution. What he asked for was a general authority to proceed to work out the details of a scheme of partition, which, in the opinion of the British Government, was the only solution, if possible in co-operation with Jews and Arabs, on the understanding that no scheme would be put into effect without the approval of the Council. Mr. Eden indicated that the method to be adopted would be by means of a special body visiting Palestine and negotiating with the Arabs and the Jews.

Mr. Eden was followed by the French Government representative, M. Delbos, who was sympathetic in tone, and by the representative of Poland, Colonel Beck, whose country has a large and, I believe, an increasing Jewish population. Colonel Beck said that the principal anxiety of his Government would be to try to ensure, whatever the future regime, that Palestine would have a maximum capacity of absorption. I spoke as follows:—

“The New Zealand Government is impressed by the extent to which this complex question has been examined. It is, we think, impossible to withhold admiration for the great care and fairness with which it has been dealt with by the Royal Commission of the United Kingdom Government and by the Mandates Commission from many other angles. The problem is difficult, because it is so clearly a case of a conflict between two races.

“Much could be said on this matter, but I will limit myself to a few words. In the first place, we hope that, while all local aspects are fairly taken into account, regard will be paid to the necessity for finding an adequate national home for the Jewish people in that part of the world to which they originally belonged. Secondly, while there has already been so much inquiry and consultation, we hope that emphasis will continue to be put on the desirability of bringing together in conference and in a spirit of reason the representatives of the Arabs and the Jews, who are so immediately and directly concerned. We support the proposal outlined by Mr. Eden.”

The small Committee of the Council to which I have referred above was constituted in the persons of the Rapporteur and the representatives of Latvia and Sweden, and at the conclusion of the debate the President asked this Committee to prepare a draft resolution for submission at the next meeting. This was done. At the meeting on the 16th September the Council passed the following resolution:—

“In view of the United Kingdom Government’s statement of July, 1937, concerning the conclusions of the Royal Commission on Palestine,

“In view of the preliminary opinion given to the Council by the Mandates Commission,

“In view of the statement made by the Representative of the United Kingdom at the Council meeting of 14th September, 1937, and the discussion on the status of Palestine which took place at the same meeting,

“Having regard to the intention expressed by the United Kingdom Government of pursuing the study of the problem of the status of Palestine while concentrating on a solution involving partition of the territory,

“Recalling the assurances given in that connection by the representative of the United Kingdom on the subject of immigration,

“The Council—

“Agrees to the United Kingdom Government’s carrying out the aforesaid study and taking such steps as it may entail,

“And, while pointing out that the mandate of 24th July, 1922, remains in force until such time as it may be otherwise decided, defers consideration of the substance of the question until the Council is in a position to deal with it as a whole, and in the meantime entirely reserves its opinion and its decision.”

At its meeting on the 16th September the Council had before it the agenda which included the appeals to the League of Spain and of China. As usual, the Council first met in private, and it was at the private meeting that the appeal of China was discussed. Mr. Wellington Koo represented China at the meeting. On the point of procedure he said that he did not underestimate its importance, and left to the Council full freedom to choose the most effective method of action. As Mr. Wellington Koo had already suggested reference of the matter to the Advisory Committee, the President of the Council proposed this course. I should mention that the Advisory Committee consists of the Committee of Nineteen appointed by the special Assembly of 1932-33, with additions, including the United States of America. Its terms of reference are derived from Article 3 of the Covenant, paragraph 3, which reads:—

“The Assembly may deal at its meeting with any matter within the sphere of action of the League or affecting the peace of the world.”

As the Committee of Nineteen included the members of the Council, it followed that New Zealand, in virtue of her membership of this body, was now a member of the Advisory Committee. Mr. Wellington Koo accepted the President’s suggestion, subject to the understanding that the Council