

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

PERMANENT MANDATES COMMISSION

MINUTES
OF THE
TWENTY-SECOND
SESSION

Held at Geneva from November 3rd to
December 6th, 1932,

including the
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION
TO THE COUNCIL

TENTH MEETING

Held on Thursday, November 10th, 1932, at 10.30 a.m.

Palestine and Trans-Jordan: Examination of the Annual Report for 1931.

Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Wauchope, High Commissioner for Palestine and Trans-Jordan, Mr. H. F. Downie, Colonial Office, and Mr. S. Moody, Acting Chief Secretary of the Palestine Government, accredited representatives of the mandatory Power, came to the table of the Commission.

WELCOME TO THE ACCREDITED REPRESENTATIVES.

The CHAIRMAN welcomed Sir Arthur Wauchope and his collaborators.

The Commission would undoubtedly note with satisfaction that the report was very full and well arranged and that the various matters dealt with were grouped, in accordance with the Commission's suggestions, in the same order as the questionnaire employed by the Commission.

Before proceeding with the examination of this report, the Chairman would be glad to know whether the accredited representative desired to make a general statement on the position in the mandated territory.

The Commission would remember that, in the observations 1/ presented to the Council on the annual report for Palestine for 1930, it had pointed out that the year was marked by a series of enquiries, studies and pourparlers from which it was hoped it would be possible to draw useful lessons that would no doubt be translated into concrete measures. It would be interesting to judge of the effect of the measures taken in 1930.

GENERAL STATEMENT BY THE ACCREDITED REPRESENTATIVE.

Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE made the following statement:

I am grateful for the kind words of the Chairman, and gladly accept his invitation to make an opening statement as the accredited representative of His Majesty's Government.

I welcome the opportunity of attending the Permanent Mandates Commission in person for two reasons. First, I felt my presence here, after my first year of office as High Commissioner for Palestine and Trans-Jordan, was a fit and proper mark of respect to you, Sir, the Chairman, and to the members of the Permanent Mandates Commission. Secondly, I have made it my business during the past year to tour through every district of the

country, to meet members of every class in the towns and villages, in the Jewish colonies and in the country districts. Consequently, I thought it might be of some interest to you if I were to give you a few impressions which I have formed during my first year of office of the general conditions and major problems of Palestine and Trans-Jordan.

The report which the Commission is now considering covers a period which expired nearly a year ago, only a few months after I assumed the office of High Commissioner. In the circumstances, I propose to confine this statement to a brief survey of more recent developments, in the course of which I will endeavour to convey the general impressions to which I have referred. I suggest that Mr. Moody, my acting Chief Secretary, should reply to any questions raised afterwards on points arising out of the annual report. I trust that this procedure will commend itself to the Commission.

On my arrival in Palestine, I said in any opening address that I had much to learn of the problems of the people and the country. I have still much to learn. I said then, and, to my mind, it remains true, that the High Commissioner has three main tasks: (1) to maintain public security; (2) to encourage feelings of goodwill between all sections of the inhabitants and to help their economic development; (3) to increase the feeling of trust and confidence between the people and the Government.

As regards security, the Commission knows that the activities of the Government in its work of development are gravely handicapped, in that almost one-third of the revenue is spent on defence and police forces.

I consider maintenance of peace and confidence in the general security both of person and property to be of paramount importance in Palestine. The unhappy memories of 1929 are not yet effaced. A feeling of general goodwill between all sections of the community does not yet exist. Without a general feeling of security there would be little happiness and little progress or development.

I have no fear of external aggression, but the country has long frontiers, and even such a small affair as the

incursion of Ibn Rifada into the Hejaz this summer shows that the Government must have forces available to enable us to take immediate action to curb any such movements or check any signs of unrest among the Beduin tribes.

Our first line of defence in maintaining peace and security is our Intelligence Service. This service is being re-organised; it is more efficient than a year ago, and I am confident it will be still more efficient a year hence.

I am fully satisfied with the organisation of our Defence Forces under the command of the Air Officer Commanding.

Broadly speaking, it may be said that public security has not been endangered. The year 1931 was, however, marred by a regrettable number of murders and highway robberies, and by too many cases of undetected agrarian crime. In 1931 there were 119 murders, and in the current year the incidence of murders has remained almost stationary. The number of cases of highway robbery shows a satisfactory decrease. Agrarian crime, on the other hand, increased during the first nine months of this year. Special measures have recently been adopted to check this crime, and there are signs that these measures are proving effective.

The Palestine Police Force has this year been unified and, by certain changes now being made by the present Inspector-General in the organisation and dispositions of the Force, I am confident there will be a marked increase in the efficiency of the Force and in its ability to prevent and detect crime. But the situation does not allow of any reduction in numbers.

It is therefore with deep regret that I have come to the conclusion that I shall neither now nor in the near future be able to recommend a reduction of expenditure in our Defence or Police Forces.

Turning from questions of security, I should like to say a few words on the economic situation. Since the twentieth session of the Permanent Mandates Commission, the world-wide economic depression has dictated a cautious financial policy and has imposed a check on development involving capital expenditure. In Palestine, the Administration has cut down its expenditure by retrenching a number of officers and by restricting services. I am, however, glad

to be able to say that the economic condition of Palestine remains sound. Many local industries continue to enjoy a marked degree of prosperity. In particular, there is considerable activity in the building trade.

In spite of large remissions of taxation, revenue has been maintained at the previous level, owing chiefly to a considerable increase in the receipts from import duties. One of our most urgent requirements is the provision of an adequate water-supply for Jerusalem, and I hope that it will soon be possible to provide the necessary funds for this purpose. The hardships endured by the population of Jerusalem, especially the poorer classes, owing to the shortage of water, caused me the greatest anxiety in the spring of this year. Successful measures have been taken to increase the water-supply this year, and a comprehensive scheme is now being worked out for a radical solution of the problem.

We base the numbers in the labour immigration schedules on the absorptive capacity of the country. In view of the satisfactory economic situation in Palestine, I felt justified in October in approving a half-yearly schedule of 3,000 men and 1,500 women. For the previous half-year I had been able to approve a schedule of 1,200 men and 500 women.

In my visits to the Jewish colonies, I have been greatly impressed by the good spirit of the colonists, whether organised on a communal or individual basis; also by their determination to overcome difficulties which beset agricultural settlements during the earlier years of their formation.

Agriculture has suffered, however, with the exception of the citrus industry, from a third year of drought, and in my tours through the country I have been deeply impressed by the impoverished condition of the fellah, due mainly to his burden of debt, to a succession of bad seasons, and to his inability at present to adopt improved methods of farming, a subject which I shall refer to later.

At the twentieth session of the Permanent Mandates Commission,²/ Dr. Drummond Shiels mentioned the intention of His Majesty's Government to inaugurate a development scheme. A Director of Development was appointed last autumn for the

purpose of advising regarding the settlement of landless Arabs and the possibilities of development generally.

The reports of this officer are now being considered by the Arab Executive and the Jewish Agency. Until their comments have been received and considered by His Majesty's Government, it would be entirely improper for me to make any statement on the subject. Meanwhile, the registration of landless Arabs is proceeding, and up to October 1st, 1932, 365 claims have been accepted, nearly 1,800 have been rejected and 1,026 remain to be considered.

I should like to show that Government has not been inactive in assisting the condition of the agricultural population. The first and immediate step taken was to remit taxation of both the Arab and Jewish cultivator. The yield of the crops this year was over 50 per cent below normal.

We have, therefore, remitted £P173,000, out of a total assessment of £P246,000, this year. Seed loans to an amount of £P35,000 are being advanced for the winter sowing. Also a proposal is under consideration for writing off arrears of taxation amounting to £P125,000, from which we are hopeful of good results.

Various measures are being taken with the object of improving stock, seed and fruit-trees throughout the country, and encouraging better methods of farming, especially among the fellaheen of the hill districts.

The net income of the poorer class of fellaheen is very small; it has been estimated at about £25, or possibly £20, a year. Our aim, therefore, is not only to increase the amount produced by the fellah from his land, but also to lessen the quantity of foodstuffs which at present he is obliged to purchase, and so make the fellah more nearly self-supporting.

With this object in view, we have this year increased the scope of the three existing Government Stud and Agricultural Stations, and have established two new stations, one at Gaza to serve the plains of the south, the other at Farradi to serve the Safad District in the hill country of the north, where fellaheen are in considerable difficulty.

As the agricultural population, both Arab and Jew, is of so great importance to Palestine, it may be of interest if, in a few words, I explain the work of these stations.

One simple cause of the farmer's poverty is the poor quality of seed he uses. In 1931, we distributed 20 tons of selected wheat and barley seed from the Government farm at Acre. In 1932, we hope to distribute 50 tons, 23 tons of which have already been applied for by the Jewish colonists of the Emek. It has been estimated that, for each kilogramme of ordinary wheat sown, 6 kilogrammes are reaped; experiments show that with good seed this yield may be increased to at least 10 kilogrammes. Work of this kind obviously produces good result.

In 1931, we distributed from the same farm 15,000 hatching eggs to Jewish colonists, and 10,000 to fellaheen. In 1932, this number will at least be doubled.

The demand for selected young fruit-trees is rapidly growing both from Jewish colonists and from Arab farmers. In 1933, we shall only be able to distribute two or three thousand, but we are now taking measures which will enable us to issue some 50,000 by 1934. Even then, I am confident the demand will exceed the supply, and, before 1938, the productivity of a large number of small farms will be considerably enhanced.

The third object the Government has in view is to establish agricultural co-operative societies. A Registrar of Co-operative Societies has been appointed for the purpose of encouraging the formation of co-operative societies amongst the cultivators of Palestine on the lines recommended in the report of Mr. Strickland.

The last step which I shall mention is the establishment and improvement of school gardens for giving practical instruction in agriculture and the growing of fruit-trees and vegetables to the schoolchildren. Nearly 100 of these gardens already exist, but I fear in many cases full advantage has not hitherto been taken of them. It has been most gratifying that another 100 villages have this year promised to give freely over an acre of land close to the village for this form of technical training. With the assistance of schoolmasters

now being trained at Tulkarm Agricultural College, we hope to give elementary but very practical teaching in the planting of fruit-trees and vegetables, poultry-breeding, etc.

If the revenue returns continue satisfactory, we hope to increase the amount devoted to both the education and health grants. As regards education, it is fully recognised that the accommodation provided in elementary schools is very insufficient, and I have now appointed a Committee to enquire into the need for additional accommodation, and to make recommendations as to the building programme.

During the past year, I have done my utmost to bring the two peoples of Palestine and the Administration into closer touch with each other.

At the twentieth session of the Mandates Commission, 1 questions were asked dealing with the establishment of an Agricultural Council in Palestine. This Council now consists of an official Chairman, the Director of Agriculture and twelve non-official members. The advice given by this Council and by its various sub-committees, such as the Citrus Committee and the Agricultural Economics Committee, has proved of great value to the Government. So much so, that we are now extending the principle and have added unofficial members to the Road Board, Railway Board, Labour Legislation Committee and Standing Committee for Commerce and Industry. The unofficial members are appointed by the High Commissioner with due regard to the qualifications of the members on the particular subject with which they have to deal, and their knowledge and experience of the country and industry will prove of great advantage to the community.

The experience of the last six months proves to me that, with goodwill, these Boards are of the greatest value to the country. The advice given by the non-official members is most helpful to the Government and to the interests which they represent. Further, the insight which the non-official members gain of the difficulties, financial and other, that have to be overcome in the administration of any country is of general advantage. Unfortunately, several Arab members have recently resigned from certain of these Administrative Boards, and I fear that the number of Arabs who refuse to co-operate is increasing, and will continue

to increase until the time arrives for the further association of the people in the Government of the country.

Lord LUGARD. -- Do you mean by that the establishment of a Legislative Council?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE. -- As regards the Legislative Council, the Government's intention remains unchanged, and I will answer this question before the end of my address.

The members of the Supreme Moslem Council have, since 1926, been nominated by the High Commissioner, the electoral machinery having been found to be unworkable on account of legal difficulties. I shall take steps that this important institution shall, as originally intended be made thoroughly representative of Moslem opinion. In the meantime, the Council has found itself in financial difficulties due partly to losses of revenue involved in recent remissions and reductions of tithes, and arrangements have now been made to re-establish the finances of the Council. In return for this assistance, the Council has undertaken to introduce certain financial reforms with Government guidance. I am hopeful that the goodwill that has been shown by the Government and the Council during these negotiations will promote relations of mutual confidence between the Government and the Moslem community in Palestine as a whole.

As regards the establishment of a Legislative Council, the intention of the Government remains unchanged, and we shall take steps towards the formation of a Legislative Council when the new Local Government Ordinance which is now in preparation has been brought into working order. The draft of the Local Government Ordinance has been communicated to representatives of various municipalities and we are awaiting their observations. I hope that it will be possible early in 1933 to enact this legislation, the object of which is to extend and facilitate the participation of local representatives in municipal government. I am hopeful that moderate opinion will prevail, and that, when proposals for a Legislative Council are put forward, they will be accepted by the leaders of both parties. These proposals will necessarily contain definite safeguards, so that under no circumstances could the peace and security of the country be endangered or the carrying out of the mandate hampered.

We would gladly govern Palestine in accordance with the wishes of the two races; and, when these wishes conflict, I use every means to reconcile them. If these efforts prove of no avail, then Government must, regardless of criticism, carry out whatever policy it considers best in the interests of the people as a whole and in accordance with the mandate.

The CHAIRMAN thanked the accredited representative for his very interesting statement. He invited the Commission to study the 1931 report in the light of the information Sir Arthur Wauchope had just given, information which completed the report.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE had no objection to this procedure, but pointed out that the report contained considered answers to the Commission's questions, whereas his statement had been prepared only during the past few days and would naturally not have the same exactitude and detail.

The CHAIRMAN noted that the discussion would proceed in the following order: (1) general questions, (2) points of detail, and (3) points connected with petitions.

EXTENSION OF CONTROL TO CERTAIN AREAS SOUTH OF BEERSHEBA.
DELIMITATION OF THE
FRONTIER BETWEEN SYRIA ON THE ONE HAND AND PALESTINE AND
TRANS-JORDAN ON THE OTHER.

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the statement (page 7 of the annual report, 1931) that the "Commutation of Tithes Ordinance, 1927", was not applied in two portions of the north and south of Palestine ceded by Syria and Trans-Jordan respectively in 1930. Could the accredited representative state in what circumstances these areas had been ceded to Palestine? The Commission should always be informed when changes were made in the frontier.

Mr. MOODY stated that the two Bedu areas in the extreme south of Beersheba had not been taken over until about 1927, when the Government put a post at Aujah al Hafir, some distance south of Beersheba in the desert, and took the opportunity of controlling the Bedu living in the neighbourhood who had previously been subject to no control.

With regard to the two villages in the north of Palestine, Mr. Moody explained that the frontier between Syria, on the one hand, and Palestine and Trans-Jordan, on the other, was defined in the Franco-British Convention of 1920, but had not been delimited until 1931.

The Commission took note of Mr. Moody's statement.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said he would be glad to give further information in the next report.

CO-OPERATION OF JEWS AND ARABS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE
TERRITORY:
PREPARATION OF A NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT ORDINANCE.

M. PALACIOS asked how the remarks made by Sir Arthur Wauchope in his general statement regarding the resignation of the Arabs and Jews from the various Councils and Committees should be interpreted. In recent years, the Commission had rather heard the hope expressed that collaboration between the various elements in the Administration was improving, if not in the political sphere, at least in that of general interests. That was his first observation of a general character.

Again, it seemed from the High Commissioner's declarations that the situation would become normal, especially from the point of view of the Arabs, as soon as the Legislative Council was constituted, its constitution necessarily being preceded by the reform of local representation, a matter which was already under consideration. M. Palacios asked how the silence of the Moslem Congress on this subject should be interpreted. In all the desires expressed by the Arab population and made known to the Mandates Commission, the former had always demanded self-governing institutions, in accordance with various articles of the mandate, in particular Article 2. In the reference to the Congress on page 11 of the report, however, nothing was said regarding this desire. There was, nevertheless, a point which called for an explanation. It was said that among the questions with which the Congress dealt was that of "the preparation of an Organic Law for the Moslem Congress as a permanent body". The silence to which he had referred, on the one hand, and the preparation of a law relating to this permanent body, on the other, appeared to indicate that the Arabs were more than ever determined to refuse a collaboration which did not include

the benefits to which they felt they were legally entitled, and that they desired to set up an organisation of their own, which would make the Moslem Congress a more or less seditious body.

Lord LUGARD said, *à propos* of M. Palacios' question, that there was a great variety of organisations, such as the Nablus Congress, and the Iktiklal (Arab independence), all apparently belonging either to the Pan-Islam or the Pan-Arab movements. What was the significance of these organisations? There had already been a conference of twenty mayors of towns, half of whom were Arabs and half Jews, which appeared to indicate some rapprochement between the two bodies. That did not altogether tally with the hostile attitude shown at Arab and Moslem Congresses. Lord Lugard added that, according to a statement in *The Times*, a further Moslem Congress had been fixed for December 7th next.

Count DE PENHA GARCIA drew attention to the statement that the Moslem Congress contemplated the establishment of a Moslem university in Jerusalem, to attract Moslem students from abroad, and so assure the place of Jerusalem as a principal centre of Moslem religious and intellectual development (page 11). Did the mandatory Power consider that project dangerous in relation to its obligations concerning the Jewish National Home, etc.?

M. SAKENOBE asked how the Jews and Arabs were co-operating in the municipal councils established in the large cities.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE thought the Commission would agree with him that it was always very difficult to analyse the motives of others. He did not desire his observations on the lack of co-operation to be exaggerated. It was true, however, that, in his efforts to encourage co-operation -- in which one of the most important steps was the formation of boards having unofficial members -- he had received five resignations. In one resignation, that of an Arab unofficial member, a definite reason was given: that the member could not associate himself in any way with the Government of the country. Sir Arthur Wauchope believed that, when the Arab were convinced that His Majesty's Government would fulfil its promise, at reasonably early date, to set up a

Legislative Council, they would be far more willing to co-operation with it.

Sir Arthur Wauchope had also received resignations from members of the Supreme Moslem Council. This was a nominated body, and he had stated quite frankly that, in this view, it would be far better for such a body, dealing with religious matters, to be an elected body and that he was prepared to make it so. It might be found impossible to set up a body without a special election, but, in any event, the Council's willingness to work with the Government had greatly increased during the past six months. Both sides had met one another in various ways, and Sir Arthur Wauchope had been thoroughly satisfied, when he left Palestine a month previously, with the relations between the Government and the Supreme Moslem Council.

The conference of twenty mayors had been convened by Sir Arthur Wauchope himself. He had invited the mayors of the principal towns and greater villages to discuss freely and openly with him any question on which they felt there were difficulties and possibly injustices. All had accepted his invitation, and, after conversations lasting some hours, a better understanding had prevailed than at the beginning of the assembly. There was no lack of co-operation. The grievance of the municipalities was that the Government could not supply them with more funds. The Government would like to do so, but this was impossible in the present circumstances.

As to co-operation between Jews and Arabs in the big towns, there was, in Jerusalem, a town council consisting of both Jewish and Arab members. For reasons into which Sir Arthur Wauchope would not enter, and on which he would express no opinion, the Jewish members had resigned, and since then the municipality had been governed by the mayor and the Arab members. He most sincerely hoped that under the new Ordinance, to which he had referred in his statement, these divergencies would be wiped out and a municipal council consisting -- and rightly consisting -- of both Arab and Jewish members would be set up. The question did not arise in most towns. In Tel Aviv, a Jewish city, there was a Jewish council, and in Jaffa, an Arab city, an Arab council. In Tiberias, there were very satisfactory relations between Jews and Arabs, and purely

Jewish and purely Arab councils.

Sir Arthur Wauchope was unable to give any information as to the date of the Moslem Congress to which Lord Lugard had referred. Many dates and places had been suggested.

He did not look upon the Moslem university to which Count de Penha Garcia had referred as being of the slightest danger to the mandate, and he had spoken with those interested in the establishment of this university. At first considerable fear -- even antagonism -- had been exhibited by certain Egyptian Moslems connected with Al Azhar University in Cairo. Sir Arthur Wauchope did not think, however, that the Moslem university would show any hostility towards the Palestine Government or the carrying out of the mandate.

As to the difference between the Pan-Islamic and Pan-Arab movements, while it would take too long to go into details, Sir Arthur Wauchope desired to emphasise the fact that the two movements were quite different. The Pan-Islamic movement was discussed at the Moslem Congress held in Jerusalem last winter, and one or two speakers were a little more violent than might have been desired, as often happened in an assembly of persons belonging to different parties. No very serious statements were made, however, except in the speech of one member, on which the Government took immediate action.

M. PALACIOS wished to insist both on the question of the Supreme Moslem Council as well as on that of the Moslem Congress. As regards the former, Sir Arthur Wauchope had just said that he had received the resignations of some of its members, and, in his statement, he had declared that the present members of the Council were still appointed by the High Commissioner because the electoral system could not function owing to legal difficulties. Were there no political difficulties? What, then, were these legal difficulties? As regards the Moslem Congress, M. Palacios would repeat the question he had just asked in connection with paragraph 39 of the report -- namely, whether the preparation of an Organic Law to make the Moslem Congress a permanent body did not imply that the Arabs had given up all idea of representation in collaboration with the Administration.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE replied that the constitution of the Supreme Moslem Council was governed by an Order of 1921. Elections had been held in 1925, but these had been upset by a ruling of the courts. When Sir Arthur Wauchope had first gone to Palestine to take up his office, the situation with regard to the Council had been somewhat indefinite, and he had therefore proposed that elections should be held. As he had said in his statement, the Administration was extremely anxious to govern in accordance with the wishes of the people, and it was generally felt that the Supreme Moslem Council should be made thoroughly representative of Moslem opinion. The Administration was quite prepared to agree to elections if the Moslems so wished, or to adopt some other procedure if the Moslems considered that elections were unnecessary. He wished to add that, so far, there were no signs in Palestine that the Jews were unfavourable to the reconstitution of the Supreme Moslem Council.

He would remind the Commission that the Moslem Congress was not confined to Palestine, but was a world-wide organisation. It had met in Jerusalem last spring, but there was no reason why it should meet there again. Its Organic Law had nothing to do with the Administration of Palestine.

M. PALACIOS expressed his appreciation of the explanation regarding the Congress and took note of the intentions of the mandatory Power as regards the constitution of the Supreme Moslem Council.

M. RAPPARD said that the High Commissioner had had experience of co-operation between Jews and Arabs on the technical boards. When the two races were relieved of their major political preoccupations, did they co-operate easily, or did racial differences and conditions of upbringing make them consider the same matters from hostile points of view? In fact, did the Arabs and Jews on the various councils and municipalities succeed in agreeing on technical issues?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE was glad M. Rappard had raised this question. His personal opinion was that there were no real obstacles to prevent the Jews and Arabs from co-operating on boards such as those dealing with agriculture, commerce and industry; but

there was disagreement as soon as political questions arose. On the Road Board, for instance, the Arabs had thought that too much money was being spent on building roads for Jewish communities. In spite of this, however, he was convinced that there were no fundamental psychological difficulties to prevent the successful co-operation of the Jews and Arabs.

Lord LUGARD said that the Arabs had their Supreme Moslem Council, and the Jews had a similar body dealing with religious questions. Was there any liaison between these two councils or were they hostile to each other?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE replied that there was no connection or collaboration between the two councils.

M. MERLIN had listened with much interest to the High Commissioner's reply to M. Rappard. The High Commissioner had said that, when the Jews and Arabs met on non-political grounds, they were prepared to co-operate with the Administration; but the exception he had given of the differences of opinion on the Road Board showed that economic questions tended to become political.

The Commission had been informed that there had been certain resignations of Arabs from the technical boards and Jews from the Jerusalem Municipality. One of the Arabs gave as his reason the fact that he did not wish to collaborate with the Administration; the Jews had apparently felt that they were obliged to resign. He did not altogether understand this reasoning, and would be glad if the High Commissioner could furnish further information.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that the Jews in question had resigned from the Jerusalem Municipality in 1929 before his arrival in Palestine, the apparent reasons being that they were in a minority and that their wishes were not being carried out.

M. RAPPARD asked why, if the Jewish members of the Municipality had resigned in 1929, they had not yet come back. He thought that, in Jerusalem, the majority of the population was Jewish. Why, therefore, should the Jews be in the

minority in the Municipality?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that he had already conversed with the Jews and Arabs on this question, and that both sides were content to leave matters as they stood until the new Local Government Ordinance had been passed. As it was hoped that the Ordinance in question would become law next spring, he felt it would have been unwise for the Administration to intervene before then.

M. PALACIOS said that the High Commissioner had expressed a hope that co-operation between the two most important communities would improve when the Legislative Council was set up. Apparently, the constitution of the Legislative Council depended upon a certain measure of local autonomy. He asked if negotiations had been entered into in this respect.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that conversations would be held with the leaders of the parties concerned after the Local Government Ordinance had been passed.

The CHAIRMAN said that, although he had assisted in the supervision of the mandatory administration of Palestine for eleven years, he had always found it extremely difficult to ascertain whether, as was required by Article 2 of the mandate, the development of self-governing institutions was assured for all the inhabitants, seeing that, under the terms of the same article, the mandatory Power had long since set up the Jewish National Home. He had the feeling that there was something in the present situation in Palestine which escaped him, and wondered whether the Arabs were disposed to collaborate in the form of self-government as at present proposed.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that the Arabs and Jews had been associated on the newly-formed Boards; the Administration had given them a definite promise, in consequence of which the Local Government Ordinance had been framed, and the establishment of a Legislative Council had been definitely pledged. He pointed out that, in 1922, the Administration had put forward a scheme for a form of Legislative Council which had then been rejected by the Arabs.

The CHAIRMAN wished to know what were the reactions of the Arabs to the proposed reforms. Did the High Commissioner consider that the passing of the Local Government Ordinance and the institution of a Legislative Council would satisfy the aspirations of the Arabs for self-government?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that, although the extremists might not be influenced, he hoped that the moderate Arabs would be satisfied.

Count DE PENHA GARCIA said that the presence of the two races in Palestine had always added to the difficulty of interpreting the terms of the mandate where self-government was concerned. The mandatory Power was also trying to solve the problem of local autonomy. Until now its attempts had not been very successful, but the Commission had been informed that the local administration would be re-organised in the future. Could the High Commissioner give the main lines of this re-organisation? Until the present moment, representation had proportional to the population of the two races, but, if this state of affairs continued indefinitely, the Legislature would always be confronted by difficulties caused by the opposition of the two races. Did the High Commissioner think it possible that, in the future, the legislative body would be divided, not by racial, but by party considerations?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that he was confident that the new Local Government Ordinance would prove successful; but he could not discuss the details of the Bill since the comments of the municipalities had not yet been received, and some amendments might be necessary.

Personally, he thought that the situation was very hopeful, and that the collaboration of the Arabs and Jews on economic questions would tend to smooth away their differences.

M. VAN REES said that, in spite of the High Commissioner's optimism, the Commission had been informed that the relations between the Arabs and the Jews continued to be unfavourable. What might perhaps be said was that a certain measure of reconciliation had been achieved in economic

affairs, but M. Van Rees wondered whether even this improvement would last. It would be interesting to know the opinion of the High Commissioner on the question whether the hostile relations between Arabs and Jews were confined to the leading class or were common to all classes of the population.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that he was sure that the factors he had mentioned would play a larger part in the future. It was to be hoped that the successful collaboration evident in some of the older Jewish settlements would spread to the younger settlements, and he was convinced that, with the passage of time, the Arabs and Jews would see that it was to their mutual advantage to work together.

M. VAN REES said that the process of reconciliation between the two races could only be a slow one. He wondered whether the institution of the Legislative Council immediately after the application of the new Local Government Bill might not be a little premature. Would it not be wiser to wait and see how the new law worked before appointing the Legislative Council? On this point, he could not but recall what had been said in the previous year, during the examination of the report for 1930, and the reply to his observations given by Dr. Drummond Shiels, who had said that, in any event, the establishment of a Legislative Council would necessitate a new Order-in-Council to complete that of 1922.⁴ M. Van Rees added that, if a Legislative Council were set up at an inopportune moment, it was certain that, in spite of the efforts of the High Commissioner to create a more favourable atmosphere for the collaboration of the two races concerned, this measure would undoubtedly arouse all the political passions and all the ambitions which at present divided the population of the country.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that detailed proposals would not be made until the Local Government Bill was in working order. Proposals for the constitution of a Legislative Council would then be discussed with the leaders of the parties concerned.

Mlle. DANNEVIG had read in the newspapers that there was co-operation between the Arab and Jewish members of the Labour Party. She asked if this was so.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that there was a certain tendency,

especially among railway workers, to co-operate, and he hoped that this movement would continue.

ELEVENTH MEETING

Held on Thursday, November 10th, 1932, at 3.30 p.m.

Palestine and Trans-Jordan: Examination of the Annual Report for 1931 (continuation).

Sir Arthur Wauchope, Mr. H. F. Downie and Mr. S. Moody, accredited representatives of the mandatory Power, come to the table of the Commission.

PUBLIC SECURITY.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE, in reply to M. Van Rees, explained that the two commonest forms of "agrarian crimes" -- which were committed by Arab on Arab -- were the digging up of trees and the wounding of cattle.

M. VAN REES asked the High Commissioner whether he could explain the very large number of murders.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said this was mainly due to the Arab feeling that if the family honour were injured, in the person of their women, the injury must be expiated in blood.

M. RUPPEL, noting what was said in the report (page 1) on the establishment of sealed armouries in isolated Jewish colonies, asked whether the Jews in these colonies now felt secure.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE replied that it would at present be premature, he thought, to do away with these armouries, which gave a sense of security.

The weapons in question were short-range weapons which could only be used for defence.

M. RUPPEL asked whether these arms were sufficient in themselves to protect isolated Jewish colonies.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE replied in the negative. The main protection on which the Administration relied throughout the territory was the police force; the arms in question were merely intended to supplement the action of that force.

APPLICATION OF THE CENTRAL AGUDATH ISRAEL FOR RECOGNITION
UNDER THE RELIGIOUS
COMMUNITIES ORGANISATION ORDINANCE, 1926.

Mlle. DANNEVIG, with regard to the application of the Central Agudath Israel (paragraph 37 of the report) which the Government had not been able to grant, asked whether one difficulty was that the Agudath believed they ought not to pay school taxes for the maintenance of Zionist schools in which certain things were taught with which the Agudath did not agree.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE agreed that this was so.

M. RUPPEL pointed out that there was a petition 5/ on the subject for which he was Rapporteur. He had a number of questions to ask, but would do so later.

ELECTION OF THE NEW ORTHODOX PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM.

M. PALACIOS said that, in the report (pages 12 and 13), reference was made to certain difficulties which had occurred on the occasion of the election of the new Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem. It stated in particular that the dispute, which was caused by the controversial attitude of the Executive of the Arab Orthodox Congress, had not been settled at the end of the year. Had the case been settled since, and if so in what sense?

Mr. MOODY replied that the dispute had not yet been settled. His Britannic Majesty's Government was considering in what respects it would be

necessary to amend the fundamental law for the election of the Patriarch. The existing law was an Ottoman law which was largely out of date. The Government of Palestine had attempted to conduct an election under that law, but the result had been upset by the courts. In the light of that experience, the Government was considering how best the law could be amended.

REORGANISATION OF THE JEWISH AGENCY AND ITS RELATIONS WITH
THE ADMINISTRATION.

M. PALACIOS understood that the Jewish Agency, which had originally been purely Zionist had now become representative of all Jewry. Had this improved the situation as between the Zionists and the other communities in Palestine?

Mr. MOODY thought the answer was definitely "yes". The reorganisation of the Jewish Agency, however, was of even greater interest to Jewry outside Palestine than to the Jews in that country. Any action which tended to bring the various sections of Jews outside Palestine closer together was bound to affect advantageously the relations between Jews within the mandated territory.

Lord LUGARD referred to Press reports that there had been a revival of the activity of the revisionist section, which proposed to establish a council in Geneva and a political bureau in Palestine.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE had no information on the subject, either as regarded Geneva or Palestine.

Lord LUGARD asked whether the reorganisation of the Jewish Agency had had any effect on the relations of that Agency with the Government.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE replied in the affirmative. Although the Government did not see eye to eye with the Agency on certain particular points of policy, as a whole its relations with the Agency were excellent.

M. RUPPEL, referring to the renewed representations (page 18 of annual report, 1931) made by the Agency to the Government for a larger participation by the Government of

the expenditure on Jewish health services, said that the accredited representative's attention had been drawn to this point in the previous year.⁶ The accredited representative had said that he would consider the possibility of an increase. The Jewish Agency had spent last year some £170,000 on these purposes, whereas the whole expenditure of the Palestine Government on health services in 1931 amounted only to 110,000. He thought on the whole the claim seemed to be not unfounded, particularly in respect of certain special institutions -- such as the Tubercular Hospital at Safad, the Emak Hospital of the Kupat Holim -- and of the services for school hygiene and infant welfare. He would be very glad to receive an assurance that the Administration's policy in this respect would be reconsidered.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that he was personally in favour of an increase, but it should be remembered that the benefits received by the Jews from expenditure on public health were not confined to any subvention which was given to a Jewish hospital. They shared with the rest of the population in the principal benefits conferred on the country by the Department of Health -- that was to say, in sanitary measures, anti-malarial work, prevention of disease and the accommodation of infectious diseases' cases.

He would discuss the matter with the Jewish representative and with his own Treasury, and if in the future revenue allowed, certain subsidies might be increased. Even if such an increase were not possible, the Health Department might be able to take over some of the work hitherto carried out by the special institutions.

SUPPRESSION OF THE LOCAL COUNCIL AT TIREH.

M. RAPPARD asked whether the accredited representative could give further details concerning the abolition, on grounds of inefficiency, of the local council at Tireh (paragraph 5, page 17 of the report).

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE explained that Tireh was a very small and backward village. It had been the scene of a number of those agrarian crimes to which M. Van Rees had referred at the beginning of the meeting. There were two rival Arab

parties in this village. The disputes occurred entirely between the Arabs themselves and no racial differences were involved.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE ELECTIONS OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS.

M. SAKENOBE noted that, in 1927, the municipal councils were appointed for three years. When their terms of office had expired in 1930, having regard to the state of the country, it was thought inadvisable to provide a possible occasion for public excitement, so the new election had been postponed until the present time. He assumed that the state of the country had improved and would allow of elections taking place, but that the latter were held up because the new Local Government Bill would shortly come into force.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE replied that M. Sakenobe's diagnosis of the situation was correct.

IMMIGRATION AND EMIGRATION.

Count DE PENHA GARCIA noted that the mandate laid down that the two main duties of the mandatory Power were the development of self-governing institutions and the establishment of a Jewish national home. That part of the report relating to the Jewish Agency gave a general impression of satisfaction with the present situation, subject to an attitude of expectancy as regarded the future. It was difficult to say what the future had in store, because the mandate had not foreseen the world economic crisis. Was he right in understanding that the Government's immigration policy was governed entirely by the country's economic power of absorption?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE replied that Count de Penha Garcia was correct in his assumption.

M. RAPPARD pointed out that the figures given in paragraph 5 on page 22 of the report, if he understood them, would seem to imply an increase in the population of 33,000, due to migration in 1931.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that he could not explain these figures offhand. He was sure, however, that the bulk of the "returning residents" were persons who had left Palestine for a short period only. He would make investigations and

supply clearer figures on this subject.

M. RAPPARD observed that, in the previous year, a certain matter had been discussed and had not been cleared up. The Commission had been rather bewildered by the statement that, over and above the normal quota calculated on the country's power of absorption, persons were allowed to enter Palestine for purposes of settlement if they possessed £1,000 -- which £1,000 might be borrowed.⁷ Under these circumstances, what was there to prevent people from borrowing £1,000 in order to enter Palestine and paying back the loan to the lender as soon as the formalities of entry had been completed? Surely it must be very easy for the unscrupulous to circumvent regulations in this manner.

Sir Arthur AUCHOPE said he could recollect no case in which persons who had entered under the £1,000 rule had failed to make good. Far more anxiety was caused by persons who entered the country in the guise of visitors and then failed to leave it.

The CHAIRMAN regretted that he was not altogether satisfied with the High Commissioner's reply. The point was, how could the Administration, in view of the 1,000 rule which tolerated the borrowing of this sum, be sure that a number of people, possessing only fictitious fortunes, would not enter and settle in the country to an extent beyond the country's power of absorption?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE replied that, in actual practice, the regulations had scarcely ever been thus evaded. The total number of persons admitted under the rule in question was 233, very few of whom had benefited by loans. In practically every case, the loan was made by a highly reliable association.

M. RAPPARD asked whether the mandatory Power found that it was able to cope with unauthorised immigration by persons who entered the country as tourists.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE replied that all countries found this problem a difficult one to deal with. It was his belief that there was less clandestine immigration now than formerly.

M. RAPPARD observed that the Commission, of course, heartily welcomed all immigration within the terms of the mandate. He realised, however, how very difficult it must be for the Administration to estimate the country's power of absorption. Immigration naturally led to a certain temporary stimulation of industry (building in particular), which could not continue beyond a certain period. That was a point which was doubtless borne in mind in making the estimates.

He noted that the great majority of immigrants still came from Poland and Russia. What impression did the accredited representative have of these people, particularly of the Russians, from the point of view of their adaptability to the task of permanent colonisation? He noted, furthermore, that out of 2,000 such immigrants, only 289 were agriculturists.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that the immigration to which M. Rappard had referred in the first part of his comment was indeed considerable. In regard to his second question, he had, on arriving in Palestine, felt certain misgivings concerning this class of immigrant, though his fears were not shared by officials who had already been for some time in the country. Subsequently, he had personally inspected a number of small townships and talked with these Poles and Russians. He had been agreeably surprised by their industry and adaptability. He had seen with his own eyes that they were of respectable class and were making good.

It should be added that the large number of applications received from Polish and Russian Jews made it possible for the Administration to select only the very best types for admission to the country. This power of selection was a very great safeguard.

M. RAPPARD hoped that the policy outlined would be crowned with success. He trusted, however, that the authorities would bear in mind the danger of an artificial and temporary increase in work due to the rapid filling up of the country. It was reassuring to note that emigration was very slight, though here again it was difficult to say how far this was due to improved conditions in Palestine or to deteriorated conditions in the rest of the world.

M. SAKENOBE, referring to the steps taken to regularise the position of persons who entered Palestine as travellers or without permission, asked how many of those who were finally deported were Jews, and how the selection was made between those who were to be deported and those who were allowed to remain.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that the selection was based on considerations of good character and the possibility of making good as colonists without becoming a charge on the country. The 450 individuals who had been expelled were those who could not fulfil these conditions (page 55 of the report). Some of the deported persons were Jews; some were persons of other nationalities.

M. RAPPARD, referring to paragraph 14 on page 16, asked whether there was not some sort of contradiction in admitting new immigrants when steps had to be taken to relieve unemployment.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that the matter referred to in paragraph 14 was purely local. After careful calculation, it was estimated that Palestine's capacity of absorption this year would be 6,000 instead of the 2,600 in the previous year.

LAND REGIME.

M. VAN REES noted that "the total area of agricultural land sold to Jews in 1931 was 41,226 dunums; of this area 26,641 dunums were purchased from Jewish vendors" (paragraph 1 on page 30 of the report). He asked from what element of the Arab population the remaining 18,000 odd dunums had been bought.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that it would be impossible to say who were the other vendors without investigating all the transactions. He would note this question and endeavour to supply an answer in the next report.

M. VAN REES had noted a statement in The Times to the effect that the Arab Executive had submitted a request to the Government that any further purchase of land by Jews should be forbidden. Had the Arab Executive in fact submitted such

a request to the High
Commissioner?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that no such request had reached him officially. He was aware, however, that the Arabs would like to see such sales stopped.

M. RAPPARD was delighted to see the real progress which was at last being made in the disposal of State lands. Previously, the Commission had always been told that the matter was a delicate one and was still under consideration.

In a petition -- for which he was Rapporteur -- from the Palestine Arab Women's Congress dated January 28th, 1932 (document C.P.M. 1290), it was submitted "that unless a definite land policy were adopted which would aim at safeguarding the rights of the Arab population to their lands . . . and unless some legislative measures were passed with a view to restricting the transfer of Arab land to non-Arabs, the Arab cultivators . . . would be doomed to misery, eviction and hardships . . .". This statement was curious, because the Commission was informed that the petition emanated from wealthy Arabs and from the very circles which had themselves gained considerable financial advantage from the sale of and in the past. They now seemed to be desirous of prohibiting such sales.

Lord LUGARD said he understood that a considerable area of the land acquired by Jews was not yet cultivated.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE replied that it was not yet cultivated by the Jews themselves, but was not lying idle. The purchase by the Jews only involved a change of ownership, the Jews becoming the owners and the Arabs remaining on as farmers.

M. RAPPARD supposed that these lands constituted a future reserve for the Jews.

Lord LUGARD asked what was the position with regard to the lands around Lake Huleh and Beisan.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE replied that the lands around Lake

Huleh were fertile, but their occupation was rendered difficult owing to certain privileges granted to a concessionaire before the war. It had been estimated that, before the Huleh district could be developed properly, about one million pounds would have to be spent on drainage.

Lord LUGARD said that, on March 14th, a question in the following terms had been asked in Parliament: "Whether any steps have now been taken to give effect to the statement in the Prime Minister's letter to Dr. Weizmann on February 13th, 1931, that it is the intention of His Majesty's Government to institute an enquiry as soon as possible to ascertain what State or other lands in Palestine are, or can properly be made, available for close settlement by Jews." The then Under-Secretary had replied that he hoped such an enquiry would be instituted at an early date. Had an enquiry in fact been instituted?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE replied that there were no State lands available which were suitable for land settlement on a large scale.

Lord LUGARD said that in a debate in the British Parliament in April last a member had said that, on land purchased by the Jewish National Fund, colonists had been driven out by Bedouin. Could the accredited representative explain this assertion?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said he could hardly venture an explanation in respect of so vague a statement. It should be remembered, however, that some lands were subject to pasturage rights. These rights had to be taken into account.

M. RAPPARD asked what was the present situation in the Wady Hawareth.

Mr. MOODY replied that the dispossessed Arabs were now on land leased by the Government from the Jewish National Fund. That lease would come to an end in September 1933. The Government was trying to find other land on which to settle the Arabs permanently. A Committee on this subject was sitting, but had not yet made its recommendations.

JUDICIAL SYSTEM.

M. RUPPEL drew attention to the amendment of the Ottoman law on the Imprisonment for Debt Ordinance (page 43). Would it not have been preferable to abolish the institution of Imprisonment for Private Debt, which was the remnant of a very old legal system?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that it was felt better to proceed step by step. The amendment had already reduced the prison population considerably.

M. RUPPEL drew attention to the large number of advocates licensed to practise in 1931, bringing the total to 230 (page 44), and to the number of advocates reported to the Chief Justice for disgraceful, fraudulent or unprofessional conduct (page 43). There appeared to be too many advocates in Palestine, and their moral standing was not always as high as might be expected.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE was sure there was too much litigation and was inclined to agree that there were too many lawyers.

In reply to a further question by M. Ruppel, Sir Arthur Wauchope said that a good many of these advocates did not make a living out of advocacy.

M. RUPPEL asked what was the competence of the Special Tribunal mentioned on page 47, paragraph 18.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that this information would be supplied in the next report.

M. RUPPEL noted from the "Statement of Total Revenue and Expenditure of All Courts in Palestine other than Religious Courts, and Number of Cases decided in each Year" (page 51) that each year revenue exceeded by far expenditure. The courts seemed to be a profitable source of revenue. Were the fees too high?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE had no comments to make on this matter.

Lord LUGARD asked whether the new Press Law had come into force.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that he hoped it would be in force in a month or two.

Lord LUGARD asked what was the difference between the functions of the Supreme Court and the High Court. Was one a court of appeal?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that as far as he was aware the Supreme Court was exclusively a court of appeal. Information would be furnished in the next report.

PRISONS AND PRISON LABOUR.

M. RAPPARD, drawing attention to the figures for what had been called the "jail population" (page 53), said this very term seemed to imply that there were always a very large number of people in jail.....

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE explained that the "lock-ups" were reserved for persons undergoing short sentences. The actual prisons were used for longer sentences. The number of persons imprisoned pending a trial was high, but was being gradually reduced.

M. SAKENOBE drew attention to the following passage:

"There were 6,987 prisoners released under the Penal Labour Ordinances and employed on various services of public utility. No wages are paid to the prisoners for this work" (page 53, paragraph 6).

What was the object of these Penal Labour Ordinances?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE replied that they worked very well and had already reduced the prison population considerably. Not a single case of abuse had occurred, as far as he was aware. The prisoners seemed to be doing good work and relieving the administration of the cost of their upkeep.

M. SAKENOBE had been struck by the great number of these so-called prisoners, who were apparently released prisoners.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that they could be divided into two classes: first, those who slept in the prisons, working

outside during the day; and second, those who slept in their own homes and reported to the prison officers from time to time.

IMPROVEMENT IN THE SITUATION OF THE AGRICULTURAL POPULATION.

M. MERLIN congratulated the mandatory Power on the measures taken to improve the position of the agricultural population. These measures had no doubt done much to calm the population. Agriculturists had apparently welcomed the benefits offered and were applying to an increasing extent for seed, and so on. The situation seemed to be improving.

The provisions of the new Imprisonment for Debt Ordinance were most valuable.

EXPORTS AND IMPORTS.

M. MERLIN was gratified to note that the territory had been very little affected by the world crisis, no doubt on account of the special character of Palestinian exports.

The difficulty of obtaining capital from outside had very considerably decreased the purchasing power of the population, There was some inconsistency -- more apparent than real -- between the two following passages:

"The Palestine currency, based on sterling, has been subject on foreign exchanges to the fluctuations of the pound; but there has been no untoward sign of inflation of prices locally" (page 8, paragraph 23).

"With the departure of the pound sterling, to which the Palestine currency is tied, from the gold standard, prices of all commodities, including cereals, increased towards the end of the year; local industries were given an impetus, and trade between Palestine and countries on the gold standard is developing" (page 146, paragraph 12).

The fall in the value of the pound sterling had undoubtedly reduced the purchasing power of the Palestinian population.

This was to some extent counterbalanced by exports to countries which had not gone off the gold standard.

In spite of high tariffs, there was still some export trade with Egypt. Could not an agreement be concluded with that country with a view to the reduction of the tariffs? They were prohibitive for a number of Palestinian products: the soap industry, for example, had been obliged to cease exporting to Egypt.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that the soap trade and the export trade in melons and oranges had been very hard hit by the high Egyptian protective tariff. Tentative efforts had been made to conclude an agreement, but, up to the present, they had not been successful.

M. SAKENOBE noted that sugar for the manufacture of fruit juices and syrup was exempt from import duty. How was sugar for general consumption distinguished from the sugar used for the above purposes?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE had not been informed of any difficulty in distinguishing between the sugar used for these two purposes. The amount of juice made at present was very small, but he hoped that it would increase.

APPLICATION TO PALESTINE OF THE IMPERIAL PREFERENCE
ORDINANCE, 1922.

M. VAN REES observed that, up to the present, the United Kingdom Government had not thought fit to extend to Palestine the operation of the Imperial Preference Ordinance of 1922, which was applicable to the mandated territories in Africa -- Togoland and the Cameroons under British mandate. He asked whether, in this time of crisis, it would not be worth while to reconsider the matter.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that an official announcement by the Secretary of State was expected shortly.

LOANS.

M. MERLIN suggested that the evil of usury might be combated by means of credit societies or Government "pawnshops". Experience had shown him that the latter often brought great relief to the population.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said he could certainly give due consideration to this suggestion.

M. MERLIN said it had been suggested that the interest charged by Syria on credits to traders in Palestine and Trans-Jordan -- 9 per cent -- was excessive, though the remarks of an accredited representative for another mandated territory would appear to indicate that this was not the case. If, however, the rate was felt to be excessive, could not a friendly arrangement be made with Syria?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE would be extremely glad to see the rate of interest charged by both Syria and other lenders reduced. Nine per cent, was, however, a normal rate of interest on loans in Palestine.

CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES.

Lord LUGARD understood the co-operative societies were opposed by the local lawyers, because the latter were excluded, and by the Jews because they gave powers to the Registrar. Should there be different ordinances for Jews and Arabs with regard to co-operative societies?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE pointed out that Arab co-operative societies were not as yet actually in existence. There had simply been a proposal to set them up. A Registrar had been appointed, and so far no opposition whatever had been raised. Naturally, they would have to begin on a very small scale, and Mr. Strickland was going to Palestine as adviser.

Lord LUGARD understood that, in Mr. Strickland's view, the Registrar should be very highly trained. Was this being provided for?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said the Registrar had already spent some four months in different European countries for

training purposes, and, in a few months' time, would probably continue his studies in other countries. Sir Arthur Wauchope was very hopeful of the eventual success of the co-operative societies. He must raise one note of warning: progress would be very slow at the beginning.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE PIPE-LINE AND THE PROPOSED RAILWAY FROM
HAIFA TO BAGHDAD.

M. RUPPEL asked for information as to the construction of the pipe-line and the proposed railway from Haifa to Baghdad.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that the construction of the pipe-line was proceeding satisfactorily, and he understood it was hoped to complete it before the anticipated date, 1934. He had no information as to the proposed railway.

M. RAPPARD supposed that the railway would in no case be a charge on the Palestine budget.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE confirmed this statement.

HOLY PLACES.

M. PALACIOS drew attention to the statement on page 13 that the findings of the Commission entrusted with the study of the rights and claims of the Arabs and Jews at the Wailing Wall, presented in December 1930, had been promulgated and put into force in June 1931 by the mandatory Power. The text of the Order in Council promulgating these conclusions was set out in an appendix to the annual report.

The report stated that the findings of the Commission had been received without enthusiasm by Moslems and Jews alike, but that there had been no significant public comment. It added that no serious difficulty had been experienced in administering the regulations prescribed in the Order in Council (page 13).

Was the Administration convinced that the feelings of anxiety were now calmed and that protests such as those of the 1931 Moslem Congress were rather inspired by considerations of principle than by actual popular discontent?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE explained that the Government had decided to adhere to the report of the Wailing Wall Commission, and had had no difficulty in maintaining its decision.

M. PALACIOS said the Commission had received certain petitions on this matter, one from the Central Agudath Israel, dated June 28th, 1931 (C.P.M.1223), in respect of repairs to the Wailing Wall, and one from the Permanent Committee of the Liberal Arab Party, dated June 15th, 1931 (C.P.M.1224), contesting the right of the Wailing Wall Commission to take decisions in the matter. M. Palacios understood the mandatory Power had replied in the sense just indicated by the High Commissioner, basing its reply on the competence granted to the Commission by the Council of the League of Nations. Could he add anything to that reply, particularly with regard to the petition from the Arab party?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE had nothing to add.

The CHAIRMAN observed that there had been a number of incidents in 1931 in connection with repairs to certain holy sites (page 51). The impression had arisen in different circles that the mandatory Power showed a preference for the Orthodox. The Commission hoped the High Commissioner would continue to adopt an absolutely impartial line of conduct in order to remove that impression. It had confidence in the tact and savoir-faire of the High Commissioner to ensure that the status quo would be maintained, as required by the mandate.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE was hopeful that the Commission would see more signs in the future than in the past that the chief religious communities were co-operating with the Government.

CHILD MARRIAGE.

Mlle. DANNEVIG pointed out that when, at the seventeenth session of the Mandate Commission, she had raised the question of child marriage, one of the accredited representatives Mr. Luke, had replied that there was no problem in Palestine of the sort that existed in India.⁸ This problem seemed still to be of great concern to several associations dealing with the

welfare of women and children, which appeared to consider that the situation was not satisfactory in Palestine. Mlle. Dannevig had been informed that the Ottoman family law prohibited the marriage of boys under 17 and girls under 9 years of age. In Egypt, in 1926, the age of marriage for girls had been raised to 16 and in India, in 1929, to 14 years of age. She understood that the High Commissioner had agreed to have an enquiry made into this matter in Palestine. Could he give the Commission any information as to the actual position?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said this question had interested him greatly shortly after his arrival in Palestine, when he had learned that a question had been asked in the Mandates Commission.

After some consideration as to the most hopeful avenue of improvement, he had decided to write a personal letter to the heads of the greater religious communities in Palestine. He had received sympathetic letters in reply from all these heads, and was now studying the problem anew. He was hopeful that some action would be taken on the lines suggested by the Commission.

The CHAIRMAN thought the High Commissioner would have no difficulty with the Christian religious communities, their age-limit being 14 years. Difficulties might arise with the Moslem communities, because the Moslem law fixed the age-limit for a girl at 9 years of age. The Commission did not desire to interfere in any way or to offer any advice, but thought it might assist the High Commissioner to know that in other countries it had been found possible to reconcile the religious laws of the Moslems with the laws of the Government administering the territory.

POLICE AND MILITARY ORGANISATION.

M. RUPPEL understood the Jews complained that they were not allowed to join the police force in a sufficiently high proportion. Had this question been considered?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE replied that it had not only been considered but to some extent adjusted.

M. RUPPEL understood that the Government had taken measures to merge the municipal constabulary units in the general Palestinian police force, and that the town of Tel Aviv had objected to this measure.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that very soon after his arrival in Palestine he had come to the conclusion that unification would greatly add to the strength and usefulness of the police force in time of trouble. He therefore decided that it must take place.

At first, this caused considerable perturbation among the inhabitants of Tel Aviv. It was found, however, that unification could be brought about. Certain concessions had been granted -- in the matter of uniform, for example -- which satisfied the people of Tel Aviv and did not affect the principle of unification.

M. SAKENOBE said that when the accredited representative had referred in his statement that morning to security and had said that the present force should be maintained, he had understood him to mean the Royal Air Force, the Trans-Jordan Frontier Force, the Police Force and the special British troops garrisoned in Palestine since the 1929 trouble.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE confirmed this observation.

M. RAPPARD asked the High Commissioner how the different races were co-operating in the police and in the Trans-Jordan Frontier Force. He understood that, after the riots, the presence of Moslems and Jews in the same ranks had raised some difficulty. Had there been any new developments?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said he had made many enquiries from the Inspector-General and had been assured that the relations between Jews and Arabs in the Palestine Police Force were excellent: there was no trouble and no friction.

There was only a small number of Jews in the Trans-Jordan Frontier Force, mostly experts such as tractor drivers, and, according to conversations he had had with them, they were perfectly happy.

M. RAPPARD thought this question of great importance from the point of view of security.

Lord LUGARD asked whether there was not considerable disappointment among the Jews that so few were enlisted in the Frontier Force.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that there was. Similar terms were offered to all Palestinian citizens, but very few Jews volunteered for the Trans-Jordan Frontier Force. One condition was that they must know Arabic: it was felt that all the members of such a Force should understand the same language.

M. SAKENOBE asked whether the word of command was given in English or Arabic.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that words of command to the troops were given in English, as was generally the case, he believed, in India, but executive orders were given in Arabic.

M. SAKENOBE noted that the standard of literacy of the Force was steadily rising, that the troops were taught arithmetic, writing and reading in Arabic and that classes were held in English (page 57, paragraph 21). Was Hebrew also taught?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE replied in the negative.

M. VAN REES noted that colloquial examinations in Arabic and Hebrew had been introduced for British personnel in the Police Force qualifying for promotion, and that nine members of the British Section had passed in Arabic (page 53, paragraph 4). Had any candidates presented themselves for examination in Hebrew?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE replied that candidates had offered Hebrew, although not in large numbers.

INTELLIGENCE SERVICE.

The CHAIRMAN observed that it must be somewhat difficult to organise the Intelligence Service with members of both races. He understood, however, that it was working well.

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE repeated that security was increasing. The conditions governing security must remain the first consideration of the Administration.

COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES.

M. RUPPEL noted that 101 persons were prosecuted under the Criminal Law (Seditious Offences) Ordinance 1929, in connection with subversive communist activity, and all except 15 were convicted (page 55, paragraph 14). Could the accredited representative give further Information as to communist activities in Palestine? Was there any serious infiltration of communist ideas from outside the country?

Sir Arthur WAUCHOPE said that the persons mentioned had been deported in 1931. Since then there had been a certain number of agitators in the country.

Notes

- 1/ See Minutes of the twentieth session, page 230.
- 2/ See Minutes of the twentieth session, page 74.
- 3/ See Minutes of the twentieth session, page 101.
- 4/ See Minutes of the twentieth session, pages 81 and 82.
- 5/ See petition dated July 30th, 1931 (document C P M 1284)
- 6/ See Minutes of the twentieth session, page 110.
- 7/ See Minutes of the twentieth session, page 87.
- 8/ Minutes of the seventeenth session, page 115.