

Commerce Reports (Washington)

Nr. 43

Concessions in Palestine.

The Palestine Weekly (Jerusalem) of November 19, 1920, states that the Palestine Government has given notice to those who claim to hold concessions in Palestine, granted by the Turkish Government,

to present their claims. Article 311 of the Treaty of Sèvres prescribes that allied nationals and companies controlled by allied nationals or groups holding concessions granted before October 29, 1914, by the Turkish Government or by any local Turkish authority shall continue in complete enjoyment of their duly acquired rights. Nevertheless, if the maintenance of these concessions is considered by the powers contrary to the public interest it is entitled within a period of six months after the date on which the territory is placed under its authority or tutelage, to buy out the concessions or to propose modifications. In that event it is bound to make compensation, which is to be settled either by agreement or arbitration. It should be observed that these arrangements apply only to allied subjects, so that they would not apply to the United States, which, incidentally, was never at war with Turkey. Presumably neutrals would have to appeal to the ordinary principles of international law.

The Times (London)

Nr. 42.686

CONCESSIONS IN PALESTINE.

LIEUT.-COL. AMERY, Parliamentary and Financial Secretary to the Admiralty (Birmingham, Sparkbrook, C.U.), replying for the Colonial Office to Mr. LEONARD LYLE (Stratford, C.U.), said that no concessions for development work of any sort had yet been granted in Palestine. Owing to the long delay which had occurred in the ratification of the Treaty of Sèvres and the urgent need for fostering the economic development of Palestine, the Secretary of State for the Colonies was considering, in consultation with his Majesty's High Commissioner for Palestine, the adoption of a new policy whereby applications for concessions for constructional development and schemes providing for the employment of labour might be granted by the Palestine Administration, provided that (1) the terms of the draft mandate for Palestine were strictly observed, and (2) that the concessions were not in conflict with any existing concessions, which it might be necessary to deal with under Article 311 of the Treaty of Sèvres. No modification of the decision not to grant concessions for working and prospecting for minerals and oils pending the entry into force of the Treaty of Sèvres was, however, at present proposed. Mr. LAMBERT (South Molton, L.).—When are we likely to have the policy adumbrated by the Secretary for the Colonies presented to the House? LIEUTENANT-COLONEL AMERY.—I hope he will be back in this country on Wednesday, and I have no doubt he will wish to bring the results of his journey before the House at the earliest possible moment, after having communicated with the Cabinet. LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER KENWORTHY (Hull, Central, L.).—May we take it no preference will be given to any special nationality in granting concessions? LIEUTENANT-COLONEL AMERY.—Yes, I think so.

The Near East and India (London)

Nr. 1123

PALESTINE IN PARLIAMENT.

On November 15 Colonel J. C. Wedgwood asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether and, if so, how the Palestine Local Government Bill safeguarded minority rights; and whether, in view of the Indian democratic ~~difficulties~~, he would see that the Jewish and Arab inhabitants of Palestine were not offered a self-governing constitution before they both wanted it.

Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister: "In its present form, the draft Palestine Local Government Ordinance contains no special provision for safeguarding minority rights, and it is not clear to me that any such ~~provision will be required~~. It would, however, be premature to discuss the details of the draft Ordinance, which is liable to be amended in the light of the comments of local authorities. As regards the latter part of the question, I cannot do better than refer the Rt. Hon. Member to the statement made by the High Commissioner for Palestine, with the approval of H.M. Government, before the Permanent Mandates Commission on November 10. I am sending him a copy and I will have it printed in the official Report."

Colonel Wedgwood asked further: "Will the Jewish minority in Palestine have in this question of the constitution the same rights and privileges as the Muhammadan minority has had in the Indian constitution?"

Sir P. Cunliffe-Lister: "All these questions are very premature because, as stated, in drawing up the constitution of any Legislative Council, every care and the fullest consideration will be taken in its preparation and there will be consultation with all the interests concerned. I can certainly assure the Hon. Member that, as the High Commissioner made perfectly plain in his statements to the Mandates Commission, one essential of anything that is done is that the terms of the Mandate shall be meticulously observed."

The statement of the High Commissioner before the Mandates Commission to which the Colonial Secretary referred was as follows:—

"The intention of the Government as regards the establishment of a Legislative Council remains unchanged, and we shall take steps towards the formation of a Legislative Council when a 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."