

תעודות נאומות
מדינת ישראל

משרד ראש הממשלה

גנזך המדינה

ארכיון חורב אנטוניוס

ת"ק מ"א,

18

האנשים באולם

8/1933-11/1936

מחלקה

מדינת ישראל

גנזך המדינה



האשורים בעיראק

325 / 18 - 2

מס פריט : 1086925

65.4/3 - 18

02/02/2014

02-112-08-04-08

מזהה פילי:

מזהה לוגי :

כתובת

מזגזגות וזמזומים

ממ, $\frac{m}{g} \frac{h}{m} = c/bce$
ממ, $0.21, \frac{h}{m} = 218$

18

No.

Leitz

00812

329/0

סודי

משרד החק
מחלקה מדינית

THE ASSYRIANS IN IRAQ

מדינת ישראל
ננוך המדינה

329

פ

ארכיונים
לא רשמיים

19

19

AT/155

19

19

No.

Leitz Alpha — Quarto

remain a disarmed minority on the Khabur
security as an

THE ASSYRIANS IN IRAQ.
=====

1. Despatch from Baghdad, (Times, 9.VIII.33).
2. Leading article, (Times. 10.VIII.33).
3. Article by Times League Correspondent, (Times. 11.VIII.33).
4. Letter from E. Main. (Times. 17.VIII.33).
5. Leading article, (Times. 17.VIII.33).
6. Despatch from Baghdad. (Times. 18.VIII.33).
7. Leading article, (Times. 18.VIII.33).
8. Despatch from Baghdad. (Times. 19.VIII.33).
9. Letter from A.T. Wilson. (Times. 19.VIII.33).
10. Despatch from Baghdad. (Times. 25. VIII.33).
11. Letter from Moury Pasha Said. (Times. 28.VIII.33).
12. Letter from H. Dobbs. (Times. 29.VIII.33).
13. Debate in House of Lords, (Times, 29.VIII.33).
14. Leading article. (Times. 29.XI.33).
15. Despatch from Mosul. (Times. 1.XII.33).
16. Questions in House of Commons. (Times. 31.I.34).
17. French communiqué about Assyrians in Syria. (Falastin. 16.IX.34.)
18. "Home for the Assyrians." Cutting from "The Times." 29.IX.34.
19. Statement by the Syrian Kitla about the Assyrians imported into Syria. (al-Ayyam. 14.IX.34.)
20. Article on Assyrian question (L'Asie Française, Dec. 1933)
21. Proposed settlement in Syria. The Times. 18.IV.35.
22. British Financial assistance to Assyrians. (The Times. 13.IX.35.)
23. Protest against settlement of Assyrians in Syria. (al-Ayyam. 18.IX.35.)
24. Debate in the House of Lords ("The Times" 12.II.36)
25. Settlement of Assyrians in Syria. ("Times" 6.VI.36).
26. Assyrians for Syria. 2,000 more to leave Iraq. ("Times" 10.VI.36)
27. Letter from J. G. Browne to the Editor about the settlement of the Assyrians. ("Times" 19.VI.36)
28. League of Nations to take up Question. ("Times" 19.VI.36).
29. Failure of Ghab Valley Proposal. ("Times" 6.VII.36).
30. Geneva and the Assyrians. ("Times" 7.VII.36).
31. Plight of the Assyrians. ("Times" 19.XI.36).
32. The Debt to the Assyrians. ("Times" 19.XI.36).

1. ...
2. ...
3. ...
4. ...
5. ...
6. ...
7. ...
8. ...
9. ...
10. ...
11. ...
12. ...
13. ...
14. ...
15. ...
16. ...
17. ...
18. ...
19. ...
20. ...
21. ...
22. ...
23. ...
24. ...
25. ...
26. ...
27. ...
28. ...
29. ...
30. ...
31. ...
32. ...
33. ...
34. ...
35. ...
36. ...
37. ...
38. ...
39. ...
40. ...
41. ...
42. ...
43. ...
44. ...
45. ...
46. ...
47. ...
48. ...
49. ...
50. ...
51. ...
52. ...
53. ...
54. ...
55. ...
56. ...
57. ...
58. ...
59. ...
60. ...
61. ...
62. ...
63. ...
64. ...
65. ...
66. ...
67. ...
68. ...
69. ...
70. ...
71. ...
72. ...
73. ...
74. ...
75. ...
76. ...
77. ...
78. ...
79. ...
80. ...
81. ...
82. ...
83. ...
84. ...
85. ...
86. ...
87. ...
88. ...
89. ...
90. ...
91. ...
92. ...
93. ...
94. ...
95. ...
96. ...
97. ...
98. ...
99. ...
100. ...

The Debt to the Assyrians

The latest appeal issued by the ARCHBISHOP of CANTERBURY on behalf of the Assyrians is painful, and indeed humiliating, reading for all who are acquainted with the calamitous history of a brave and honourable community. The scheme for a large-scale settlement of these unfortunate people on the Upper Orontes in Northern Syria has been abandoned owing to the French Government's decision to surrender the Mandate and the certainty that the coming Arab Government of Syria would be hostile to any such proposal. Some 20,000 Assyrians, most of whom have opted for transfer to Syria, remain in Iraq. Their position is precarious. The antecedents and attitude of the men who compose or control the new Government of Iraq make it improbable that they will do anything for this immigrant minority. The Iraqi Assyrians are therefore in a position fraught with hardship to themselves and embarrassment to the Iraqi Government. The future of those who have entered Syrian territory on the faith of French promises is equally uncertain. The Turkish Government object to their presence on the Khabur river near the Syro-Turkish frontier. The proximity of French garrisons guarantees them for the present against the attacks of Kurds and Beduins; but when these forces are withdrawn, as they may be before long, the newcomers are likely to suffer. The recent riots in Beirut, which passes for being the most progressive city in the French Levant, do not hold out much hope for a minority tucked away in a distant corner of a generally unfriendly country.

Meanwhile the search for an alternative scheme of settlement is being pursued at Geneva, where it is hoped that a new plan will be ready for the Council early in the coming year. Past experience, however, does not justify complete confidence that the scheme will be acceptable or accepted, and in any case a great many Assyrians will require aid and relief during this winter. The vacillations or inertia of successive Governments can to some slight extent be repaired by private initiative. The ARCHBISHOP's appeal will at least give those who are more jealous of their country's reputation an opportunity of relieving the immediate distresses of a people whose chief error was their trust in British assurances.

47.

PLIGHT OF THE ASSYRIANS

APPEAL FOR WINTER HELP

The Archbishop of Canterbury, president of the Assyrian Settlement National Appeal, and Mr. L. S. Amery, chairman, have issued the following statement:—

Since the Assyrian National Appeal was launched at the Mansion House in March last, the scheme for a large-scale settlement in the Ghab region of Upper Syria has had to be abandoned as a result of the decision of the French Government to surrender the mandate. This does not mean an abandonment of the effort, through the League, to find some tolerable solution of the Assyrian problem. At the meeting of the League in September our Foreign Secretary assured the Council that the balance of the £250,000 offered last year by his Majesty's Government would still be available, under the same conditions, for any alternative permanent scheme. The Foreign Minister of Iraq undertook to recommend to his Government to provide funds *pari passu* with his Majesty's Government for the continuance of the work of the Assyrian Committee of the League, while the £86,000 subsidy voted by the Assembly last year is also still in hand. The search for an alternative scheme of settlement is, we understand, being actively continued.

Meanwhile we are confronted with the immediate plight of the Assyrians themselves. Some 8,500 of them, 2,500 of whom only left Iraq since last May, are temporarily camped in 15 villages along the river Khabur in the north-east corner of Syria. The remainder, some 20,000 in all, are still in Iraq. Most of these opted for transfer to Syria, and their position, as the Iraqi Foreign Minister pointed out to the League, is now one of great difficulty for themselves and of embarrassment to the Iraqi Government. Both those in Iraq and those on the Khabur are faced with dire distress in the coming winter.

The chairman of the Board of Trustees, who, under the League, has superintended the Khabur settlement, has appealed to us stating that there is most urgent need of winter clothing for practically the whole of the people under his care as well as of supplementary foodstuffs for those in need and especially for the sick, and that he has no funds available for these purposes. From Iraq letters of appeal continually reach us both from the Assyrians themselves and from our own people distressed at the sufferings endured by those whose loyalty and devotion maintained British policy and British credit through the difficult and anxious years after the War. Whatever scheme of settlement may eventually be arrived at we realize that our first and imperative task is to see these helpless people through the next few months. Money and gifts in kind are urgently needed.

All communications should be addressed to: The organizing secretary, the Assyrian Settlement National Appeal, 20, Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.

31

"The Times"

19.XI.36.

Geneva and the Assyrians

On Saturday the League Council added one more disappointment to its score. This time the Assyrians, a feeble folk, were the victims of the discovery that the new home which the French Government proposed to offer them in Mandatory Syria was unsuitable. The news was communicated to the Council by SEÑOR BARCIA, on behalf of the League Advisory Committee which has been charged with the problem of their settlement. He stated that the area rentable on the valley of the Upper Orontes, in the Republic of Latakia, was much smaller than had been anticipated, and that the owners demanded terms which could not be met out of the budget of the scheme. It is somewhat surprising that these facts did not come to light before HIS MAJESTY'S Government had voted a grant of £57,000 towards the settlement of these refugees and the ARCHBISHOP of CANTERBURY had launched an appeal on their behalf.

A more convincing explanation of the unsuitability of the region proposed for their settlement was supplied on behalf of the French Government. Stripped of its diplomatic trappings, it amounted to an admission that the French Foreign Office had been negotiating a treaty with the Arab Nationalists of Syria under which the States of Syria and the Lebanon would acquire the same status as Iraq and would become independent allies of the French Republic; that the treaty involved the cession to Syria of the Republic of Latakia; that the Arabs opposed the supervision by representatives of the League of Nations of their relations with their racial or religious minorities; and that they were so hostile to the projected Assyrian settlement that even the indigenous minorities were threatened. The French who are trying to obtain safeguards for these minorities could not increase their responsibilities. This attitude on the part of the Arabs was to be expected. The Government of Iraq in somewhat similar circumstances had objected successfully to League supervision. It had honoured the military men who had permitted a massacre of Assyrians and threatened British officers who displayed an inconvenient curiosity on the subject. Damascus took its cue from Baghdad, and the French, having changed their policy in the Levant, are not in a position to protect an Assyrian settlement.

No one can fairly blame the present French Government for their failure to carry out the scheme which their predecessors had played with and dropped. Negotiation between the Quai d'Orsay and the Syrian Arab delegates had made great progress before M. BLUM became Prime Minister. It is believed indeed that the only question other than that of the minorities which remains unsettled concerns the frontiers of the Lebanon, which the Syrian Moslems would confine to the narrow limits of Turkish days. But it is regrettable that M. SARRAUT'S Government were unable to inform the League of Nations or the British Government, who are specially interested in the Assyrian question, of the extent to which they had committed themselves with the Arabs. It now remains for this country and for the League to resume their efforts on behalf of these luckless people. Both have to bear the moral responsibility for their recent disasters and present suffering. In 1925 the League of Nations refused to allow the Assyrians' homeland of Hakkari to be included in Iraq and thus doomed them to remain unpopular refugees in a country where they were disliked and suspected. The British Government, when the Assyrians sought their help after the Russian collapse in 1917, settled the fugitives in Iraq, trained many of them as soldiers—and very good soldiers they were—used them to suppress risings against the Mandatory Government, and thus gave the Iraqis the impression that the Assyrian was merely a British janissary. Having produced this impression, and given many Assyrian leaders an inflated sense of their importance, the British Government signed a treaty with Iraq. By this pact they gave the Baghdad Government a blank cheque so far as the non-Arab minorities were concerned, and they were genuinely horrified when Iraqi gendarmes and irregulars filled it up in blood. Such is a brief summary of British responsibilities in the Assyrian tragedy. Now that the League's first effort to find a home for this unhappy community has failed, it is clearly the business of this country to try once more to remove a scandal which has done great harm to its prestige in the Near and Middle East.

"The Times"

7.VII.36.

SETTLEMENT OF THE ASSYRIANS

FAILURE OF GHAB VALLEY PROPOSAL

FROM OUR LEAGUE CORRESPONDENT

GENEVA, JULY 5

The announcement was made in the League Council yesterday that the plan for the settlement of the Assyrians in the Ghab Valley, in Syria, which seemed to be so promising in January, had now fallen through. After three years of strenuous effort on the part of the League authorities to find a home for the Assyrians of Iraq, efforts involving also research into the possibilities of Brazil and of British Guiana, the whole problem arises once more.

The report presented to the League Council yesterday by Señor Barcia (Spain) showed that when a detailed examination came to be made of the land believed to be available in the Ghab Valley the area rentable was much smaller than had been expected, and the prices asked such as to render the budget of the settlement scheme insufficient for its realization. Later the French Government drew attention to other and more serious difficulties due to local political developments and the present state of mind in the Arab world, where the increasingly uncompromising attitude of the majority elements towards minorities has to be taken into consideration.

At yesterday's meeting the Council approved the proposals of the League Advisory Committee that it should continue its efforts on behalf of the Assyrians and also the suggestion of the *Rapporteur* that the Government of Iraq should be reminded of the undertaking given by Iraq concerning the security and welfare of Assyrians.

Seyyid Sabih Najie, who represented Iraq at the Council Table, promised that until a solution had been found to the settlement problem the Assyrians still in Iraq would continue to enjoy complete security.

Mr. Eden, who presided over the Council meeting, expressed the hope that the further effort which was to be made would lead to a settlement by collective action on the part of the League.

Earlier in the Council meeting, as the outcome of a report by Mr. Eden on the question of slavery, the Council repeated a previously expressed hope that the Slavery Convention of September, 1926, might be ratified without delay by those States which, having agreed or acceded to it subject to ratification, had not yet ratified.

"The Times"

6.VII.36.

The Assyrians Once More

It is good news that the Council of the League of Nations is to take up the question of the resettlement of the Assyrians during the session which will open on June 26. Administrators, unless they are exceptionally patient and tolerant, are apt to become impatient of refugees and the problems which they present; and there are indications that they are being tempted both in Iraq and in French Syria to find a short cut to the solution of the Assyrian problem by recommending the settlement of the emigrants from Iraq on the banks of the Khabur river, where some have been temporarily placed, instead of on the slopes above Orontes. At first sight the proposal is a tempting one. Difficulties have arisen with the Arab Nationalists of Syria, whose representatives are attempting to negotiate a treaty with the French Government on the lines of the British Treaty with Iraq. The Arabs claim the coastal territory of Latakia, though its population of Ismailis and Ansairis is scarcely to be reckoned as Moslem and is not noticeably eager to be linked with the rather fanatical cities of Damascus, Hama, and Aleppo. Their leaders are believed to object, as the Iraqi Government did, to the idea that the League of Nations should maintain a representative in their territory to watch over the interests of the Assyrians. French officials have asserted, apparently through a misunderstanding, that the pasturage near the Ghab is insufficient; and malaria is certainly frequent in that marshland, only part of which is to be drained under the reclamation scheme. The Khabur region on the other hand is described as healthy and thinly inhabited. It is therefore suggested on both sides of the Syro-Iraqi border that a deal of political trouble might be saved if the refugees were to be settled in the Khabur valley.

Unfortunately for the advocates of the Khabur scheme, it presents almost as much difficulty and much greater danger than the plan which was blessed by the League of Nations last year. The Khabur runs through the Military Territory of Syria. This is an exposed border region of small economic value which the French would naturally be disposed to surrender to an Arab Government. The massacres of 1933 and other events have left the suspicion that Moslem Arabs, unlike the hospitable and progressive Egyptians and the Europeanized Syrians of the Lebanese Republic, are generally too jealous and intolerant to be trusted to protect racial minorities. And even if this suspicion is unfounded, even if the Syrian Nationalists were readier to accept League supervision than they appear to be, the fact remains that the Khabur region is annually visited by numbers of nomad Kurds and Shammar Beduins, who joined in the Assyrian massacres, and that the Circassians who inhabit it have already fallen foul of the new settlers. The Turkish Government also objects to the establishment of its old enemies near its borders, and made a formal reservation to that effect at Geneva last year. In these circumstances the plan of settling the refugees in such an exposed region seems so dangerous that it is to be hoped that the British representative will be instructed to oppose it if it is advocated at Geneva. As BRIGADIER-GENERAL BROWNE, the chief authority on the Assyrian question, points out in a letter this morning, the deciding principle in choosing the Ghab was that of future security. A people who suffered terrible disasters through their support of the British and Allied cause during the War deserve this much. If they are settled in the Republic of Latakia near the Mediterranean and its ports, near telegraph lines, newspaper offices and metalled roads and other appurtenances of civilization, they may have some security against attack, even if the French rashly decide to cede that region without obtaining any guarantees to an utterly inexperienced Arab Government. If they remain a disarmed minority on the Khabur they will have no security at all.

27

SETTLEMENT OF THE ASSYRIANS 19.VI.36

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—I have been deeply perturbed by the article from your Beirut Correspondent on the settlement of the Assyrians.

Such settlement should be one of permanent security for a loyal people who served us and the Allied cause when their services were of great benefit both to us and to the Iraq State. The transfer of Assyrians from Iraq to the Khabur was only a temporary plan, due to the exigencies of the situation which arose in 1933. After that temporary settlement was made the League of Nations sent a commission of inquiry to Brazil and British Guiana, but both plans proved unsuccessful. Then, in response to an urgent appeal by the League, the French Government agreed in principle to accept the Assyrians as settlers in Syria. This was in the spring of 1935, and as the problem was urgent the League sent out a mission (under a distinguished Spanish diplomat, Senor Lopez Olivan) to Iraq and Syria. After the mission had reported its findings to the League Assembly of September, 1935, the League decided on the Ghab rather than the Khabur and adopted a detailed plan, presented by the French Government, for settlement in the Ghab. A beginning was to have been made with the transfer of the Assyrians to the vicinity of the Ghab in the spring of this year. It is true that the programme has had to be delayed, but this is due not to the absence of land upon which to place the Assyrians pending the reclamation of their permanent lands in the Ghab, but owing to the difficulty in finding temporary lands at a reasonable rent.

The Ghab, like other marshes, is malarial; but apart from the fact that the essence of the scheme is that the valley should be drained and irrigated, the settlement budget contains the provision for anti-malarial treatment recommended by the French authorities.

It is true that some of the Assyrians in Iraq enjoy considerable prosperity, but it is left to them to decide whether they prefer to be settled in Syria or to remain in Iraq. The deciding principle in choosing the Ghab was that of future security. In the Khabur area, which is governed by military posts and far from the central Government, the Assyrians would be close to the Iraq and Turkish frontiers and to the very elements with whom they were in trouble in 1933. It would be no easy matter to guarantee their safety in the event of a breakdown of public order or an outbreak of religious fanaticism. Moreover, the Turkish Government made a formal reservation at Geneva in 1935 against any permanent settlement of the Assyrians within 100 kilometres of the Turkish frontier. On the other hand, if the Assyrians are settled in the State of Latakia, it would be easier to guarantee their security in this area near the Mediterranean seaboard and among a more amenable population. For these reasons the French Government and the League decided on the Ghab, despite higher initial cost and greater complications.

Further, I understand that the advance of the transfer of the 2,000 odd Assyrians to the Khabur from August of this year (as originally planned) to the present month was decided for psychological reasons in view of the delay in beginning transfers to the Ghab. This decision was not an indication of a breakdown but rather of a postponement of the Ghab programme.

I am, &c.,

J. GILBERT BROWNE, Brigadier.

"The Times"

19.VI.36

ASSYRIANS FOR SYRIA

10 VI 36

2,000 MORE TO LEAVE IRAQ

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

BAGHDAD, JUNE 9

About 2,000 Assyrians who have expressed the desire to emigrate from Iraq will leave Mosul during the present month for the Khabur district in north-eastern Syria, which is being used as a temporary settlement area pending the completion of the irrigation and drainage projects that are to make the Ghab district (on the Orontes) suitable for the settlement of an agricultural people. Six thousand Assyrians are already in the Khabur district.

* Our Special Correspondent at Beirut, in an article in *The Times* on June 6, reported that the Ghab, the area allotted by the Syrian authorities for the permanent settlement of the Assyrians, had been found to have serious disadvantages. Not only did it need to be expensively drained and irrigated, but it was malarial, the pasturage was insufficient, and the nearest town, Hama, was a centre of Moslem fanaticism. The area on the Khabur river, however, though near the Turkish frontier, provided an alternative for permanent settlement, since space and pasturage were ample and irrigation would not be costly.

"The Times"

10.VI.36

SETTLING THE ASSYRIANS

A REBUFF TO OPTIMISM

From Our Special Correspondent

BEIRUT

Inquiry into the progress which is being made with the removal of the Assyrians of Iraq to Syria reveals that unforeseen difficulties, chiefly political, have arisen. They have held up its execution entirely for the time.

The area in Syria allotted by the French Mandatory authorities for the permanent settlement of the Assyrians is known as the Ghab. It is a large tract of marshland lying on both banks of the Orontes, between 30 and 40 miles north-west of the town of Hama. Besides being water-logged by springs flowing into it from the foot of the hills which lie on either side of the valley, it is flooded yearly by the river. The Mandatory authorities plan to drain the area and hold up the flood-water in a



reservoir to be built higher up the river. The left bank is to be drained first, and 15,000 hectares of the land to be reclaimed is earmarked for the Assyrians, the work to be completed by 1940. It was proposed that the Assyrians should be moved meanwhile in batches from Iraq and settled temporarily, partly on vacant land on the banks of the River Khabur in north-eastern Syria, partly in the neighbourhood of the Ghab on land to be leased for the purpose. An international Assyrian Settlement Trustee Board has been appointed to supervise the work of settlement from Beirut. The cost of the scheme is estimated at £800,000 for reclamation and £350,000 for settlement.

NO LAND AVAILABLE

The first step towards the transfer of the Assyrians to the Ghab was to have been made this spring, when 6,000 of them were to have been brought from Iraq and planted near the area to be reclaimed, so that they could be employed on the drainage works. This move has had to be abandoned because there is no land on which to put them, although representatives of the League who visited Syria a year ago were told by the French authorities that an area of land sufficient to provide temporary settlement for 20,000 persons was being reserved.

This sudden change in the situation is not altogether the fault of the French, although their guarantees seem to have been somewhat lightly given, and the details of the scheme rather sketchily worked out. The prospect of France surrendering her Mandate over the State of Syria, envisaged when M. de Martel promised the Syrian Nationalists their independence on March 1, has entirely altered the conditions. The land promised by the French Administration last autumn was mainly land heavily mortgaged to the banks. The officials counted on being able to put pressure on the banks to foreclose and thus release the land for settlement. Now that the future of the Mandate is in question their authority is not what it was. The Nationalists, most of them Moslems, are asserting themselves and are not at all anxious that men of their country and religion should lose land for the benefit of a batch of Christian aliens.

It is true that the Ghab land, on which it is intended ultimately to settle the Assyrians, does not lie in the State of Syria, but in that of Latakia, whose inhabitants are chiefly Metwallis and Ismailis, mild and peaceable people and hardly to be considered as Moslems; but the building of a reservoir to hold up the flood-water of the Orontes involves the submersion of some 7,000 hectares of good land, most of which is Syrian. The nearest town to the Ghab, in which the settlers will have to do their marketing, is Hama, a notorious centre of Moslem fanaticism.

A HOT-BED OF MALARIA

What was at first thought to be one of the scheme's chief recommendations was that the Ansariyeh Mountains, which form the western limit of the valley, would provide pasture for the Assyrians' flocks.

"The Times"

6.VI.36.

...the... of... to... and...
...after a... rest, did a...
...to the... where they... to...
...raft.
A change was then made in the order. M. C. C.

Parliament

HOUSE OF LORDS

TUESDAY, FEB. 11

The LORD CHANCELLOR took his seat on the Woolpack at a quarter-past 4 o'clock.

The EARL of MUNSTER, Lord-in-Waiting, presented a Bill to enable the Postmaster-General to acquire land in London for the purposes of the Post Office and for the purpose of executing certain street works in the Borough of St. Pancras; and to acquire land in Manchester and Hereford for the purposes of the Post Office.

The Voluntary Hospitals (Paying Patients) Bill was agreed to on Report.

The Unemployment Assistance (Temporary Provisions) (Extension) Bill, which has passed through the Commons, was read a second time.

ASSYRIANS IN IRAQ

THE PRIMATE'S MOTION

The ARCHBISHOP of CANTERBURY called attention to the position of the Assyrians in Iraq, and asked his Majesty's Government whether they were now able to give definite information as to the prospects of the settlement of the Assyrians in Syria and as to the contribution which his Majesty's Government were prepared to make towards the cost. The Most Rev. Primate, who also moved for papers, reminded the House of the special measure of responsibility which rested on the Government of the United Kingdom for the welfare of the Assyrians. That responsibility was on a twofold basis. First, in the years of the Great War the Assyrians were our allies, on a limited but not unimportant field; and when they had suffered severely at the hands of the Turks our Government took them under our protection. The best of them were organized as levies in Iraq under our control.

Secondly, the Assyrians came under our protection by virtue of our Mandate in Iraq, by which we were bound to protect the interests of minorities. Later, when we saw fit to recommend to the League of Nations that the Iraqi Government was sufficiently strong and trustworthy to be admitted as a member of the League of Nations and to be herself entrusted with this Mandate, assurances were given by our representative, Sir Francis Humphreys, to the Permanent Mandates Commission which directly influenced the decision of the League to transfer its Mandate to the kingdom of Iraq. The Assyrians, who had relied on our protection, were gravely alarmed and it was soon proved that they had good reason for their alarm.

In August, 1933, there broke out those terrible massacres which were carried out by the Iraqi Army. Those massacres were brutal and indefensible and they left behind them indelible memories which made the continuance of the Assyrian people in Iraq quite impossible. Our twofold responsibility made it impossible, consistent with the honour of this country, to leave the Assyrians to their fate or to contend that we had no greater responsibility for them than any other member of the League.

LEAGUE ACTION

After the massacres it was plain that the Assyrians could not stop in Iraq, nor did the Iraqi Government desire them to remain. The League of Nations appointed a committee of the Council which set about to discover opportunities of resettlement elsewhere, and they were actively assisted by the British Government. Various possibilities were explored, and finally the Ghab area of the French mandated territories of the Levant was investigated.

It was clear that the French authorities would welcome the development of their land by a large settlement of hardy and industrious people. That scheme was adopted and recommended by the League of Nations. The chairman of the League Council Committee last summer visited Iraq, held consultations with the chiefs of the Assyrian tribes, and found that the great majority—probably 24,000—were eager to leave as soon as possible. Chiefs representing some 8,000 hesitated before knowing about the conditions of settlement. The cost of resettling some 20,000 or 30,000 people was bound to be considerable. It had been estimated provisionally at £1,140,000. That, he thought, was on the basis of 21,000 Assyrians.

The Most Rev. Primate paid cordial testimony to the keen personal interest of Sir Samuel Hoare, who set himself to try to reduce the claim of the French Government for the cost of settlement and to increase the contributions of the Iraqi and United Kingdom Governments. Hitherto the attitude of the United Kingdom Government appeared to have been that they were unwilling to accept any liability beyond that shared by other members of the League. They had now promised, he understood, on condition that the Iraqi Government contributed a similar amount and the League found the balance, to contribute a sum of up to £250,000. He desired cordially to acknowledge this action of the Government. The result was that the Iraqi Government had been persuaded to double their contribution. Thus the French had promised for development work about £380,000, the United Kingdom Government £250,000, the Iraqi Government £250,000, and the League approximately £80,000, so that a balance remained of £180,000. £130,000 might be raised by credits and loans, leaving £50,000 which the League desired to obtain from private sources.

THE SPECIAL APPEAL

It was in the autumn so strongly pressed on him that without some such sum contributed from private sources it would be impossible to transfer all the Assyrians, and that if any were left behind there would be great bitterness, that he pledged himself to make a special appeal to the people of this country. But before he ventured to do so he must be sure that the scheme of settlement was now certain to go forward.

ONE CHANGE IN OXFORD CREW

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
The weather was better for the practice of the University crews at Radley yesterday. Mr. P. Harg Thomas coached from 11.12.11.36.

"The Times"

When the crew goes ashore the boat was moored in the same place as on Monday. That would

If the Government attached real importance to the raising of a considerable sum by voluntary subscription and considered it essential to the success of the scheme, he was ready to inaugurate such an appeal and had already secured the appointment of a strong committee to further it. He was only awaiting the reply of the Government before taking immediate steps. If the Government could give him assurances that the scheme was well on the way and that it was of real importance that there should be a large sum raised from voluntary sources he was ready to do his best.

He felt that many people in this country, possibly some of their lordships, would be ready to take some personal share in delivering a people for whom they had deep sympathy from their present intolerable position and providing for them a home where they could live together and in peace. Some of the finest episodes in our history were concerned with what we had tried to do for small minorities. This was a question, not of numbers, but of our honour and of the cause of humanity. He was sure that the

Government would do their utmost to enable this ancient people, after its long and troubled voyages, to reach some haven of security at last.

DANGER OF DELAY

LORD NOEL-BUXTON said that this was no party question, but the Opposition were behind none in advocacy of discharging our national debt in this matter. There was an urgency in the matter at this day, on account of the danger in which many of the Assyrians found themselves. Many of them were not anxious to move, but they felt it better to move anywhere than to remain in a situation which might at any moment become dangerous for them. The British officers who had been in charge of the Assyrian levies had formed an extraordinarily high opinion of the Assyrians and became very much attached to them; they regarded them as particularly deserving of help.

It must be admitted that by every canon of honour we were morally and directly responsible in the matter. The Assyrians became unpopular in connexion with the services they rendered to us. He had experienced the fear that this might be one of those cases where we had been led to encourage confidence and had exposed people to trouble from which we were not able to rescue them. That was the danger alluded to by Sir S. Hoare in the speech he made on his resignation. In this case the danger of having led these 24,000 Assyrians into trouble would be removed. We gave an assurance when we gave up the Iraq Mandate that the Assyrians would be safe, and that proved to be unfounded.

It was not too much to say that the good name of this country was at stake. In this case they might be very thankful that the British Government had seen their way to announce that a large contribution would be made. They all owed a debt to the Most Rev. Primate for his action in this matter. If the country had been saved from what would have been a betrayal it was very largely due to him, and not only the Assyrians should be grateful to him but all who valued morality in politics. The Government did not see its way, however, to complete the task, and part of it fell on private charity. This was an object that should appeal to all, and both charity and honour enjoined a generous response to the appeal.

LORD LLOYD'S VIEW

A "DEBT OF HONOUR"

LORD LLOYD said that he was very glad that at last this debt of honour was in some measure to be discharged. There had in the past been some attempt to suggest that our responsi-

bilities in regard to the Assyrians were not so definite as the Most Rev. Primate had rightly urged that they were. Iraq owed a very great debt to the Assyrians, for the situation there in 1924-26 was very grave and difficult, and it was largely due to the courage and loyalty of the Assyrian levies at that time that the situation was cleared up. The £250,000 to be paid by the Iraqi Government to the Assyrians was in fact being given by the British Government, and he suggested that the Iraqi Government might make a somewhat larger contribution to this purpose.

EARL STANHOPE, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, said that he could not place the responsibilities of this country to the Assyrians quite so high as the Archbishop of Canterbury had done, and certainly not so high as Lord Lloyd had done. It was quite true that when we relinquished our Mandate a pledge was given to the League of Nations that we held ourselves responsible for having made the recommendation that Iraq should be allowed to join the League, but that pledge was limited to the extent that Iraq was fit to become a member of the League. He thought that the British Government were justified by what had happened since in giving that pledge. It was true that there had been the unfortunate and regrettable incidents of the attacks between the Assyrians and Iraqi troops, but nevertheless he thought that the House would agree that the Iraqi Government had shown itself fully fitted to become a member of the League. That was the only responsibility we undertook, although he entirely agreed with Lord Lloyd as to the splendid service rendered by the Assyrian levies, not only during the War but subsequently. In that respect we certainly had a moral obligation towards these people, but beyond that the Government could not really say that we had any further obligation.

The noble lord referred to the efforts made since October, 1933, by a Committee of the League of Nations to settle the Assyrians outside Iraq and to the arrangements eventually made with France, as the Mandatory authority, for the settlement of 6,000 Assyrians in Syria. It had taken a great deal of persuasion, he said, to get the French eventually to agree to this. The Iraqi Government last year made a conditional offer to pay £125,000 towards the Assyrian settlement fund, as well as the cost of the transport of Assyrian migrants to the frontier of Iraq, and £60,000 of the sum offered was later advanced. The Council of the League had adopted, after much consideration, a recommendation by the French authorities that efforts should be directed towards a permanent settlement of the Assyrians within the State of Latakia, in the valley of the Orontes, in what was known as the Ghab plain. It was the cost of the drainage and irrigation works which made the cost of the settlement considerable. The detailed plan for the Ghab area was worked out by the French authorities in consultation with representatives of the League. The total cost of the scheme, on the basis of 21,000 Assyrians, was estimated originally at £1,220,000, of which £820,000 represented the cost of reclamation and £400,000 the cost of settlement.

In July, 1935, the League renewed its appeal for funds. Although his Majesty's Government felt that they had no actual liability for the placing of these Assyrians, in order to give a lead to other nations, they decided to make an offer of £250,000 to the League. The offer was made on fairly wide conditions. The result of their offer and of much discussion and hard work at Geneva had been that although the French Government were not able to go as far as the British Government had hoped, they increased their offer of 22,000,000 French francs by a further 6,500,000, and decided to accept responsibility for any excess expenditure on reclamation work. The Iraqi Government agreed at once to increase their contribution up to £250,000, and the League decided to make a contribution of £86,000.

A DEFICIT OF £180,000 BRIDGING THE GAP

The total cost of the settlement scheme was £1,146,000, of which £820,000 was for reclamation and £326,000 for settlement. The receipts were £250,000 each from the United Kingdom and Iraq, £86,000 from the League, and £380,000 from the French authorities, a total of £966,000, leaving a gap to be filled of £180,000. Their estimate was that the number of 21,000 Assyrian settlers was likely to be exceeded, though it was impossible to give the exact figure at present. It was estimated that every additional settler would cost £13 7s. per head to settle. There were 12,000 acres of additional land which were capable of irrigation and drainage, and that would add to the cost.

While the deficit was likely to be larger than £180,000, the contributions so far offered were all fixed and final. It might be possible to meet part of the gap by means of credit operations, but the only security at present was contributions from those Assyrians who might purchase their lands. That was not a sufficient security to raise so large a sum as £180,000, and payments would not begin until some four or five years hence, because it would take that time for the drainage and irrigation works to be completed. In the meantime the Assyrians would be settled in villages at the top end of the Ghab valley, where there would be land available for them for growing crops, thus assisting towards the cost of feeding them, and there would be pasture lands for their herds on the mountains between them and the Mediterranean.

CONTROL VESTED IN THE LEAGUE

The ultimate financial control, both for reclamation and settlement, rested in the League of Nations. The Council of the League had set up an autonomous body called the Assyrian Settlement Trustee Board, which held its first meeting on January 3 last. It worked under statutes and financial regulations approved by the Council, to whom it had to submit periodical reports. The Council had power at any time to inquire how the board was discharging its functions, and League supervision was adequately ensured throughout.

The British Government saw no other way by which the gap of £180,000 could be bridged except by a lead being given in this country from voluntary sources. The Government would therefore commend the appeal when the Most Rev. Primate made it. It had the full support not only of Sir S. Hoare, but also of Mr. Eden, who was most anxious that the proposal should be a great success.

If the scheme proved a success these unfortunate people who had suffered so much and so long would at last be provided with a permanent home, instead of being centred among other peoples and other religions, and open to every kind of danger and difficulty. This country would also have done much more than that. It would have removed a source of friction and danger in the Near East and done much to establish peace in one quarter of the globe at least. It would be tragic if, for want of funds, it were not found possible to remove from Iraq all those Assyrians who, for one reason or another, wanted to leave that country.

LORD CECIL'S PROTEST "TERRIBLY SORDID" PROPOSAL

VISCOUNT CECIL said that the financial position was that £180,000 was to be raised, and part of that might be raised by loan while the remainder, estimated at about £50,000, would be raised by private subscription. That £50,000 was not a fixed sum, because if more Assyrians wished to be removed the cost of that also would have to be raised by private subscription. He appealed to the Government to reconsider their decision. It was terribly sordid of the Government to say that they would insist on private funds being found to meet this sum of £50,000 or more that would be required for the scheme.

He could not accept Lord Stanhope's view of the responsibility of this country in the matter. At the time of the War we accepted, not a legal responsibility, but a very clear moral responsibility for the Assyrians. At the time of the handing over of the Mandate for Iraq, the future treatment of minorities under the new Iraqi Government was one of the most urgently considered questions, and the question was put as to whether we were quite sure that these people would be safe. If Lord Stanhope had been sufficiently informed of all that took place on that occasion, he would recognize the every clear moral responsibility of this country. If that were so—and the grant of £250,000 showed that the Government recognized their responsibility in some form—it was surely a wretched thing for the Government to say that they would grant £250,000, but not the odd £50,000 which was necessary to clear up the job. This £50,000 was to come from the pockets of charitable people, and it meant that it would be diverted from other causes that were at least as worthy of relief.

The ARCHBISHOP of CANTERBURY said that a considerable portion of the public might naturally take up the position which Viscount Cecil had taken, and it might be very difficult to persuade the charitable public to do what they would think should be done by the Government. If in a few days he were to hear that the Government had taken Viscount Cecil's appeal to heart he would be most grateful. He had already taken the responsibility for an appeal for Abyssinian Red Cross work, and was shortly to be responsible for an appeal for German refugees in all parts of the world, and it was not easy to take this additional responsibility.

The motion was, by leave, withdrawn.

Oxford and Cambridge will meet at the Empress Stadium, Earl's Court, in the twenty-first annual University ice hockey match. Oxford so far having won 12 matches to the seven of Cambridge with one game drawn. The face-off to-night is at 8 o'clock sharp, to enable the Universities' supporters to catch trains to Oxford and Cambridge.

Little is known of the form this season of the two Universities, as Cambridge are not in the league and Oxford so far have played very few games. In their respective Continental tours at Christmas Cambridge have shown the better form, and for once appear to be favourites for to-night's game.

CAMBRIDGE'S HOPE

In S. J. Fraser Cambridge have an Australian player, this being the first time that either University has been represented by an Australian. K. B. McLennan is the player on whom the Cambridge hopes will largely rest, as he has scored the majority of the Cambridge goals this season, although being a defence player. F. S. Tazewell and P. A. Holmes both played last year for Cambridge, but the remainder are new, and in this respect Oxford will have an advantage, as four of their side are C. S. Cowan, B. L. Finerty, W. A. Tanner, and D. P. Wallace took part in last season's game.

Wallace and Cowan are likely to cause the Cambridge defence most trouble, but if J. Ragsdale goal upholds his reputation Oxford will no more nervously. Cambridge may prove on the whole to be the slightly better balanced side, but anything may happen, and the game will in any case be fought out with the usual vigour.

The teams are—

OXFORD UNIVERSITY.—G. K. Reid (Goalkeeper); D. R. Wilson (Captain); J. J. McLean (Goalkeeper); J. L. Owen (G. Line); G. S. Cowan (Defence); R. L. Pearce (Defence); W. A. Tanner (Defence); D. P. Wallace (Forward); and G. L. Wilson (Forward).
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY.—J. Ragsdale (Goalkeeper); F. S. Tazewell (Captain); K. B. McLennan (Defence); D. S. Tazewell (Defence); A. M. (Defence); G. S. Cowan (Defence); B. L. Finerty (Defence); G. F. Owen (Defence); and P. A. Holmes (Forward).
Referee.—S. J. Fraser (Oxford).

ENGLAND WIN

In the last of their four international matches



NOTE.—Figures in parentheses denote the

ACROSS

- 1 It came whirling through the biggy wood (10).
- 4 Sounds as he on a horse but should only be mounted by pedestrians (4).
- 10 Not necessarily a place in which to know (5).
- 11 There's not a ghost (5).
- 12 Knock out Edward (7).
- 13 The dog you are up against (6).
- 16 It's no longer in office, having taken this (4).
- 17 Statement by a very large bird? (10).
- 20 Imagine test (anagram) (10).
- 21 This fight ought to have been on the square (4).
- 23 Red at a boundary (4).
- 25 Synonym with a 2x4x1 = 2 three points (7).
- 28 Message by taxi, runner and the press (9).
- 29 One sort of tea gas (5).
- 30 The means of correspondence to retain an style (4).
- 31 So different from a black pudding (10).

DOWN

- 2 Doubtless they require patience in the doing (4).
- 3 Some people have two of the second to their first (9).
- 5 Game warty (6).
- 6 A rabbit hole led from (10).
- 8 (Leaving) circuit (4).
- 7 Choose (3).
- 9 Not one who plants a row of shrubs (10).
- 11 He is old but nimble on his feet in the last (7).
- 14 Hair there is not enough to go round (10).
- 15 Beard region (10).

The eighteen hundred and - - - - - (19-second) solution of puzzle No. 1,071, 507

Copies of *The Times* Crossword Puzzle Book and solutions may be obtained from booksellers, Messrs. C. Arthur Pearson, Limited, London, W. 2, or direct from the publishers at 2s. 6d. each.

ICE HOCKEY

TO-NIGHT'S UNIVERSITY MATCH

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1931

نقل الاشوريين من الحابور الى اللاذقية مكتب الكتلة يصدر بياناً بالاحتجاج على هذا النقل

وعلى هذا بات في حكم الاكيد ان يصدر مكتب الكتلة الوطنية في دمشق بياناً يتناول قضية الاشوريين وكيفية نقلهم الى سورية دون ان يكون لاهلها اي رأي في هذا الامر ، ثم نقلهم من منطقة الحابور الى جهات اللاذقية والاغراض الموحية الى هذا النقل .

ثم تسجل الكتلة الوطنية في بيانها هذا احتجاج البلاد على هذا التدبير الذي من شأنه ان يزيد في التضييق على ابنائها كما انه يزيد في عدد العناصر الدخيلة على الوطن السوري .

وربما صدر بيان الكتلة الوطنية يوم الاربعاء او الخميس .

انصل بالدوائر الوطنية في دمشق انه بات في حكم المقرر نقل الاشوريين من ضفاف الحابور الى منطقة اللاذقية ، وان موظفاً كبيراً زار اللاذقية قبل اسبوعين وتفقد الاماكن اللازمة لجمعها منطقة خاصة لاسكان المطرودين من الحوار وقد وجدت الدوائر الوطنية في هذا

التدبير ضربة موجهة مباشرة الى ابناء جزء عزيز من اجزاء سورية ، هو منطقة اللاذقية ، حيث يفسح المجال للاشوريين ان يزاحموا ابناء هذه المنطقة على كسرة الخبز ، وان يناقسهم في جميع اعمالهم الزراعية والاقتصادية ، وفي هذا ما فيه من البلاء على ابناء تلك المنطقة والتضييق على موارد رزقهم .

(22)

SETTLEMENT OF ASSYRIANS

BRITISH FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

OFFER TO THE LEAGUE

FROM OUR LEAGUE CORRESPONDENT

GENEVA, SEPT. 12

The British Government will make an independent contribution, apart from their share in any contribution which the League of Nations itself may decide to make, towards the settlement of the Iraqi Assyrians in the Ghab regions of French Syria.

This decision, which is announced in the report of the Committee dealing with the problem, is conditional on the scheme of settlement being satisfactory from the material point of view and financially well regulated. It also requires that there shall be a reasonable probability that the funds forthcoming from other sources will, combined with the British contribution, be sufficient to ensure the success of such a scheme.

The British Government state that their contribution will depend on what the Iraqi Government are prepared to pay and on the readiness of the League to provide whatever balance may remain to be found after the contributions from all independent sources have been taken into account. Provided that the Iraqi Government contribute at least an equal amount, and that the British contribution does not exceed £250,000, the British Government are prepared to seek Parliamentary sanction for a contribution equivalent to five-twelfths of that part of the expense of the scheme which the League Committee might be called upon to find.

IRAQI CONTRIBUTION

The final decision of the Iraqi Government on the request addressed to it by the committee on July 13 to double its offer of £125,000 is not yet known. It will be observed, adds the report, that an essential feature of the British offer is that there shall be financial participation by the League of Nations itself. The question of such participation lies outside the competence of the committee, and, impressed by the urgency of reaching a solution of the Assyrian question, the committee feels it necessary to report the decision forthwith for the consideration of the League Council.

It is proposed to settle the Assyrians on the left bank of the Orontes, immediately below the Acharné in the territory of the Alawaite State. It will be possible to build villages at the foot of the mountains, but five schemes, costing altogether 62,000,000 francs (£830,000), will be necessary for irrigation and drainage. It is expected that the cultivation of cotton and rice will be the principal occupation, but the report states that the raising of livestock also offers excellent prospects.

"The Times."

13th September, 1935.

SETTLEMENT OF ASSYRIANS

PROPOSED COLONY IN SYRIA

FRENCH CONSENT

FROM OUR LEAGUE CORRESPONDENT

GENEVA, APRIL 17

The *rapporteur* on the question of settling Assyrian refugees from Iraq, Señor de Madariaga, informed the League Council to-day that the proposal that the refugees should be given a home in British Guiana had been found unsuitable by the committee. The report added, however, that the French Government had favourably received the suggestion that the refugees should be allowed to enter the mandated territory of Syria, where a number of Assyrians from Iraq have already settled.

It was possible, the report stated, to contemplate enlarging the existing settlement of Assyrians in Syria from 2,200 to 6,500 persons, and the investigations now proceeding, which would occupy until the end of July, would doubtless reveal wider possibilities which would be of benefit to such other Assyrians as might express a desire to leave Iraq. The eventual settlement of 16,500 refugees was mentioned as a possibility. The French Government, however, require an assurance from the League that no burden will be placed on the French Budget or on the local budgets on account of the settlement, and an understanding that the sums necessary will be made available. Señor Madariaga therefore asked for authorization to draw a further sum not exceeding 40,000 Swiss francs from the working fund of the League, thus bringing the total advances for this purpose up to 110,000 Swiss francs.

The Iraqi representative promised to do everything to facilitate the transport of the Assyrians and thanked the French Government for their willingness to receive the refugees.

Sir John Simon expressed regret that the proposal for the settlement of the Assyrians in British Guiana had come to nothing. As neither the importance nor the urgency of the problem had diminished during the unavoidable lapse of time since the matter came before the League Council, he was sure, he said, that all were grateful to the French Government for their readiness, in spite of local difficulties, to do their utmost to assist the League.

The President of the Council, M. Tawfik Rushdi Aras, speaking as a representative of Turkey, said that it was in the interests of Iraq and of the neighbouring countries that the establishment of the Assyrians in Syria should take place at least 100 kilometres from the frontiers of those countries and that the place of final settlement should be in any case not less than 50 kilometres from the frontier.

After acknowledgment by M. Massigli (France), the committee's report was adopted, and the extraordinary session of the Council came to an end.

"The Times."

18th April, 1935.

L'ASIE FRANÇAISE

BULLETIN MENSUEL

DU

COMITÉ DE L'ASIE FRANÇAISE

Publié sous la direction de M. Henri Froidevaux

Administration et rédaction de l'ASIE FRANÇAISE : PARIS 6^e, 21, RUE CASSETTE.

Téléph. LITRÉ 97.39. — Chèques postaux : PARIS, n° 1900.

SOMMAIRE

A nos adhérents	337
Le Comité. — Nos morts : le professeur Calmette ; M. Gabriel Bonvalot. — M. Louis Finot, membre de l'Institut	338
L'Irak et la question assyrienne	338
Le problème birman, par P. M.	349
Deux rapports sur le Commerce extérieur de la Chine, par A. M.	350
Variétés. — Souvenir d'Asie : en baie d'Along, par P.-Louis Rivière	353
Généralités. — La marine marchande britannique à la fin de 1933. — Les Américains en Asie en 1931..	356
Indochine. — L'arrivée du premier évêque annamite. — Le typhon de Qui-nhon. — Le Conseil des inté- rêts économiques et financiers au Cambodge. — Réduction de l'impôt personnel indigène au Tonkin. — L'aménagement hydraulique du delta. — La co- lonisation intérieure. — La situation financière. — La culture du maïs	356
Levant. — La situation économique. — La foire de Bari. — La question libanaise. — Echanges commer- ciaux avec l'U. R. S. S. — Relations syro-égypti- ennes pour 1932. — Une émeute à Tel-Aviv. — Une entente économique entre Transjordanie et Irak. — Le pacte turco-yougoslave et ses suites. — Le ministre turc des affaires étrangères à Sofia. — L'amitié turco-grecque. — Le dixième anniversaire de la République. — L'unification du calendrier et la question du repos hebdomadaire	360
Extrême-Orient. — Chine. — Les inondations. — Les Finances chinoises et la démission de M. Soong. — Le nouveau Conseil national économique. — Le Plus Grand Changhaï. — Statistique des Ecoles catholi- ques. — Succès scolaires des élèves des missions étrangères au Sé-tchoan. — Les Chinois à Tahiti..	364
Japon. — L'accroissement de la population. — Les Finances et la Défense nationale. — Une base aérienne japonaise aux îles Bonin. — Contre une colonisation japonaise en Australie	366
Asie anglaise. — Le parti du Congrès national et Gan- dhi. — Les affaires d'Alwar	368
Bibliographie	370
Table des Matières publiées dans l'Asie française en 1933	371

A NOS ADHÉRENTS

Est-il besoin d'adresser, une fois encore, à nos amis, un chaleureux appel en faveur du Comité de l'Asie française ? Tous savent que l'heure est difficile pour des groupements tels que le nôtre, que la crise persiste et ne semble pas encore près de son terme, que rares sont les symptômes d'amélioration, ou plutôt de légère atténuation des difficultés de toutes natures au milieu desquelles se débat le monde entier. Tous savent aussi, d'autre part, que les problèmes politiques, économiques et sociaux vont chaque jour se multipliant, se posant avec une acuité nouvelle et nécessitent par conséquent une étude plus attentive, visant à en éclairer les origines, à en mettre en pleine lumière l'importance et les multiples aspects et enfin à en découvrir, si possible, la solution.

C'est la tâche de revues telles que l'*Asie française* de s'attaquer à ces problèmes, en tant du moins qu'ils sont de son domaine, et de les examiner sur toutes leurs faces. Nos amis savent comment nous nous efforçons de remplir ce programme et de les renseigner sur les événements qui se produisent par toute l'étendue de l'immense continent asiatique, dans le Levant aussi bien que dans le Centre-Asie et en Extrême-Orient, comme aussi de suivre partout dans le monde, et non pas seulement par toute l'étendue de l'Océan Pacifique, l'action des Asiatiques. Nous ferons de notre mieux pour remplir notre tâche dans l'avenir comme nous nous y sommes efforcés dans le passé.

Nous leur demandons, en échange, de venir en aide de tous les manières au Comité de l'Asie française. En lui conservant leur confiance d'abord, et en lui demeurant fidèles personnellement ; puis en parlant de lui, et aussi de sa revue (trop de gens capables de s'y intéresser en ignorent l'existence), en faisant connaître son œuvre, en répandant la revue autour d'eux, en préparant notre recrutement futur. Ainsi nous rendront-ils service et nous aideront-ils à franchir les heures laborieuses au lendemain desquelles il nous sera possible, espérons-le, de donner enfin à notre publication l'essor que nous ne saurions lui procurer maintenant.

..

Les ressources du Comité proviennent (nos adhérents le savent, mais il est bon de le rappeler ici) de dons et de souscriptions.

Tout Français souscripteur d'une somme annuelle d'au moins cinquante francs devient membre adhérent du Comité de l'Asie française et reçoit pendant l'année le *Bulletin* publié par ses soins.

Le chiffre minimum de la cotisation est réduit à quarante-cinq francs pour les souscriptions personnelles des fonctionnaires coloniaux, diplomatiques et consulaires, de l'armée, de la marine et des membres de l'enseignement. Tout versement inférieur sera considéré comme un simple don et ne donnera aucun droit au service du *Bulletin*; celui-ci est réservé aux seuls adhérents payant une souscription minimum de quarante-cinq francs.

Adresser les souscriptions à M. le Trésorier du Comité, 21, rue Cassette, Paris VP, ou les verser au compte de chèques postaux Paris 1900.

Pour les libraires et commissionnaires, comme aussi pour toutes les collectivités (cercles, bibliothèques, services, établissements et groupements divers, civils et militaires), l'abonnement au bulletin du Comité est fixé à soixante francs.

Par suite de l'abandon de l'étalon-or par l'Angleterre et par nombre d'autres pays, force nous est de fixer, à cause de l'élévation des frais de poste, l'abonnement pour l'étranger, de façon uniforme, à cent vingt-cinq francs français.

NOS MORTS

Le professeur Calmette

Bien que le professeur Calmette ne fût pas un des membres du Comité directeur de l'Asie française, sa mort ne saurait nous laisser indifférents. Non pas seulement parce que les travaux et les découvertes de ce grand savant intéressaient les pays tropicaux, mais aussi parce que lui-même s'intéressait personnellement à notre œuvre, parce qu'il tenait à nous verser régulièrement sa cotisation, parce qu'il était pour nous un ami. Aussi tenons-nous à rendre ici un dernier hommage à cet homme qui faisait honneur à la science et à l'homme, et à qui rien de ce qui touchait la France ne demeurait indifférent.

M. Gabriel Bonvalot

Ce que nous venons d'écrire du professeur Calmette, nous pourrions le répéter à peu près complètement au sujet de Gabriel Bonvalot. Pourquoi le fondateur du Comité Duplex, qui avait débuté par exécuter dans l'Asie centrale de très beaux voyages (dont le plus considérable le mena, en 1889-1890, de la Russie au Tonkin, à travers la Mongolie et le Tibet), n'a-t-il jamais fait partie du Comité de l'Asie française, alors que sa place y était marquée ? nous l'ignorons ; mais nous savons bien, dans tous les cas, avec quelle chaleur Bonvalot a naguère parlé de l'Indochine, avec soin, jusqu'à son dernier jour, à l'âge de 80 ans, il a suivi toutes les questions politiques capables d'intéresser directement la France, et combien les affaires d'Asie, en particulier, retenaient son attention. Nous ne saurions oublier non plus quel programme colonial contenait en 1913, son livre intitulé *Une lourde tâche*. « Nous avons, y disait Bonvalot, un immense empire colonial à gouverner et à administrer », et il indiquait comment, dans son idée, devait être menée à bien cette œuvre difficile. Les souvenirs de voyage

qu'il avait commencé d'évoquer dans les derniers temps de sa vie, et qui devaient compléter à beaucoup d'égards les attachantes relations écrites par lui au lendemain même de ses principales expéditions, seront-ils publiés un jour ? Il faut le souhaiter. Ainsi, en effet, se fixera davantage dans la mémoire de nos contemporains la mémoire d'un des principaux voyageurs français en Asie, durant les temps « héroïques » de la fin du XIX^e siècle.

M. Louis Finot, membre de l'Institut

Le 8 décembre, l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres a élu membre non résidant, un des membres de notre Comité directeur, M. Louis Finot. C'est une joie pour nous de féliciter notre confrère de cet honneur, justifié par de nombreuses et savantes publications comme aussi par l'œuvre accomplie par lui en Indochine, à la tête de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient. Cette institution n'a cessé de prospérer, en effet, sous sa direction pendant plusieurs années et de développer son activité dans tous les sens ; le Musée archéologique et le *Bulletin* de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient en portent témoignage, comme aussi le *Bulletin de la Commission archéologique de l'Indochine*. Autant donc que son œuvre scientifique personnelle, et surtout que son ouvrage sur le *Bouddhisme, son origine et son évolution*, son œuvre administrative et éducatrice fait grand honneur à M. Finot. Aussi notre regretté président Emile Senart eût-il, comme nous et avec nous, applaudi des deux mains à l'entrée de son élève à l'Institut.

L'Irak et la question Assyrienne

Les malheurs des Assyriens réfugiés en Irak ont fait naître depuis quelques semaines une émotion dans les milieux européens qui ont de l'attention pour les choses orientales. Après avoir été campés dans des régions chaudes et malsaines, du moins pour eux, de la plaine mésopotamienne, les montagnards de rite chrétien nestorien et de langue syriaque, déracinés pendant la guerre de leurs foyers des montagnes du Hakkari, au sud-est du lac de Van, et réfugiés en Irak, ont eu avec les forces irakiennes des conflits dont il est difficile de démêler l'origine, mais qui semblent bien avoir, dans une région, tourné au massacre systématique.

..

Pour préciser les faits nous attendrons d'avoir des informations de source impartiale qu'on ne saurait d'ailleurs être assuré de pouvoir se procurer : jusqu'ici nous n'avons guère que les plaintes des Assyriens et les versions du gouvernement de Bagdad. C'est le cas de s'inspirer de l'humour de l'officier anglais qui disait : « En Orient, je ne crois rien de ce que j'entends dire et seulement la moitié de ce que je vois ». Le

résumé des faits paraît pouvoir en gros s'établir de la manière suivante :

Depuis un certain temps, les Assyriens étaient agités par la déception que leur causait l'impossibilité de se faire donner des terres et de s'assurer en Irak un établissement convenable. Leur inquiétude était d'autant plus grande que disparaissait la garantie que leur avait assurée le Mandat britannique. La manière dont le gouvernement irakien voulait les installer, pour donner suite aux recommandations de la Société des Nations, ne leur plaisait pas : ils devaient être disséminés au milieu de populations différentes et ne leur inspirant pas confiance. De petits mouvements, assez vite réprimés, se produisirent. Au printemps dernier, le gouvernement irakien convoqua à Bagdad Mar Chimoun, le Patriarche des Assyriens et le chef temporel de leur « Nation » au sens que ce mot avait dans l'ancien Empire Ottoman, et l'invita à signer une déclaration de loyalisme et à prêter son autorité au plan d'installation arrêté par l'administration irakienne, avec l'aide d'un Anglais, le major Thomson. Mar Chimoun s'y refusa et fut retenu à Bagdad en résidence forcée.

Sur ce, une bande d'Assyriens traversa le Tigre pour s'établir dans le pays de Mandat français : elle campa sur le territoire qui devait être remis quelques jours après par l'Irak à la Syrie, en exécution de la décision de la Commission, nommée par la Société des Nations, qui a récemment fixé la frontière. L'autorité française les désarma, mais rendit leurs fusils à quelques centaines d'Assyriens qui se déclaraient décidés à repasser le Tigre et à remettre leurs armes aux autorités irakiennes. A peine de l'autre côté du fleuve, ces Assyriens entrèrent en collision avec un détachement irakien, sans qu'il soit possible de déterminer de quel côté fut prise l'initiative d'ouvrir le feu. Il est toutefois à remarquer que l'on entendit tout de suite un tir régulier d'armes automatiques qui montra que le détachement irakien était, tout au moins, prêt au combat.

Cet incident, qui se produisit dans les premiers jours d'août, fut presque immédiatement la cause ou le prétexte d'attaques contre des groupes assyriens qui n'avaient pris aucune part à la bataille. Le *Times*, dont la sympathie pour le gouvernement irakien s'est, à plusieurs reprises, affirmée d'une manière non douteuse, donnait quelques jours après des informations d'après lesquelles un certain nombre de hameaux habités par les Assyriens avaient été brûlés un peu au nord de Dohouk, c'est-à-dire assez loin de la rive du Tigre. Cinq cents hommes auraient été tués, dont beaucoup après avoir remis leurs fusils à la police irakienne, et 1.500 femmes et enfants molestés et laissés dans une situation misérable. Ces exploits auraient été commis en grande partie par ce que l'on appelle assez singulièrement, dans certaines informations, la « police irrégulière », composée pour une large part de Kurdes. Il est impossible de considérer ces nou-

velles sans se rappeler les méthodes adoptées naguère par les Turcs pour résoudre la question arménienne en faisant massacrer cette minorité par les Kurdes que le Gouvernement d'Angora s'applique maintenant à asservir et à décimer à leur tour.

Ces événements causèrent une impression pénible en Angleterre où les journaux publièrent beaucoup de lettres de protestations ou d'observations. Le *Times*, bien qu'il ait pris dans l'ensemble le parti du gouvernement irakien, écrivait le 18 août :

L'obstination intransigeante de Mar Chimoun, le jeune patriarche des Assyriens, et la stupide violence du commandant irakien ont eu de déplorables conséquences. La trahison d'un groupe de déserteurs assyriens, qui ont repassé le Tigre, rentrant de la Syrie française sous prétexte de rendre leurs armes et qui sont tombés à l'improviste sur les avant-postes irakiens, a eu sa répercussion sur beaucoup de leurs compatriotes qui n'avaient eu aucune part à la rébellion... Le commandant n'a pris aucune précaution pour assurer la protection des Assyriens loyaux et l'observation de quelque discipline civilisée. Il semble avoir lui-même donné le pire exemple aux Kurdes en ordonnant l'exécution de prisonniers sans aucune forme de procès. Il n'est pas étonnant que, dans de telles conditions, une opération de police ait dégénéré en attaques sur tous les groupes du voisinage, sans distinction, attaques au cours desquelles plusieurs centaines d'entre eux ont été tués et beaucoup de villages ont été brûlés.

Et le *Times* exprimait sa confiance dans le roi Faysal pour faire faire une enquête sur ces actes et dans sa volonté de restaurer la paix et la discipline.

Au même moment, le Premier Ministre de l'Irak recevait le correspondant du *Times* à Bagdad et déplorait ces tristes événements. Mais le journaliste anglais devait constater que les journaux locaux parlaient des « braves et victorieuses troupes irakiennes qui s'étaient conduites comme l'exigeaient le devoir et l'honneur ». Le 25 août, cette armée entra en triomphe à Bagdad ; pour la récompenser de ses exploits, les chefs des corporations de la ville avaient lancé un appel aux cafetiers et aux barbiers pour obtenir que, pendant trois jours, les soldats fussent abreuvés de café et rasés gratis. Le 27 août, le correspondant du *Times* constata que tous les officiers irakiens qui avaient pris part aux « opérations » contre les Assyriens avaient été gratifiés d'une année d'ancienneté et que l'on annonçait que leur chef, le colonel Békir Sidky Bey, allait être promu général. La station de radiodiffusion de Bagdad lançait, à l'usage des pays voisins de langue arabe, des discours en l'honneur de l'armée irakienne et à la honte des sauvages montagnards assyriens. Et les journaux irakiens déclaraient, à l'annonce de l'arrivée de Sir Francis Humphrys, ex-haut commissaire et ambassadeur britannique en Irak, envoyé pour s'occuper de l'affaire assyrienne avec le gouvernement de Bagdad, que l'Angleterre n'avait pas à se mêler des affaires intérieures du Royaume irakien.

Cette fin préalable de non-recevoir était mal-

heureusement fondée, du moins juridiquement, puisque l'Angleterre a tenu à bien montrer, par le libellé de son traité d'alliance avec l'Irak signé en 1930 et par ses commentaires, qu'elle rejetait toute responsabilité en ce qui concerne le gouvernement de ce pays. Malgré l'émotion soulevée dans un grand nombre de milieux britanniques par les malheurs des Assyriens, ce désintéressement de ce qui se passe dans l'Irak, dont ils ont affirmé la maturité, la tolérance, et assuré l'admission dans la Société des Nations, reste le système de beaucoup d'Anglais et, semble-t-il, de la politique britannique : au lendemain de la mort de Faysal et alors que l'on se demandait ce que pourrait être le gouvernement du roi Ghazi, *The Evening Standard* résumait sans ambages cette manière de voir dans les termes suivants : « L'Irak est maintenant un pays indépendant, responsable de ses propres affaires. Nous avons déjà dépensé assez de sang et d'argent en mettant ce pays en état de pouvoir assumer cette responsabilité. Nous ne devons pas en dépenser davantage, et nous devons nous en tenir fermement à l'esprit et à la lettre du traité. Ce qui nous regarde, c'est de protéger les communications de l'Empire, et tout ce qui se passera dans l'Irak, sans affecter ces communications, ne nous regarde pas. »

Cette thèse, qui paraît continuer à inspirer la politique anglaise, a été repoussée par un assez grand nombre d'Anglais qui ont conscience des responsabilités encourues par leur pays du fait de la manière dont il a imposé à la Société des Nations l'émancipation de l'Irak, des déclarations faites au nom du Gouvernement britannique devant la Commission des Mandats, de la situation particulière des Assyriens en Irak et des obligations que les Alliés doivent se reconnaître entre eux.

Les Assyriens ne sont pas, comme les autres groupes émancipés de la Turquie à la suite de la Grande Guerre, une population passive qui doit tout aux sacrifices des Alliés et n'a presque rien fait pour les aider. Comme le rappelait l'évêque de Gloucester, dans une lettre adressée le 19 août au *Times*, les Assyriens ont pris les armes contre les Turcs à l'instigation des Russes, en 1916, et, isolés peu après par l'effondrement du front russe, ils se sont frayé passage à travers le territoire persan pour rejoindre les forces britanniques, perdant, au cours de cette marche, les deux tiers de leur effectif. L'Angleterre s'est servie d'eux et, depuis 1921, ils ont fourni la plupart des « levies » qui ont appuyé, parfois dans des combats, la politique britannique en Irak. Encore à l'heure actuelle, ces « levies » assyriennes « gardent l'aérodrome anglais en Irak pour la bonne raison que la Royal Air Force sait parfaitement que l'on ne peut se fier pour cette garde à l'armée arabe » (1). Le *Times* lui-même

constatait que ces services rendus à l'Angleterre peuvent expliquer en partie le peu de sympathie de la population arabe pour les Assyriens.

Et cependant, comme le disait l'évêque de Gloucester, « dans beaucoup de cas, ils n'ont pas reçu de terres à cultiver... il ne leur a rien été donné de l'autonomie qui leur avait été promise. »

Ils se plaignent (2), comme l'ont confirmé des Anglais qui les ont visités après la guerre, d'avoir été trimballés pendant quatorze années, période pendant laquelle les seuls foyers qui leur aient été offerts étaient dans des lieux où ils ne pouvaient pas vivre et où la mortalité infantile était de près de cent pour cent des naissances. Tout emplacement valable proposé pour eux par les officiers anglais chargés de les établir se trouvait invariablement réclamé par les Kurdes, dont les revendications étaient d'ordinaire soutenues par les fonctionnaires irakiens. Quant au « gouvernement bienveillant » qui leur avait été promis (lorsque l'on renonça à exclure du territoire turc leurs montagnes natales), les intentions du roi Fayçal et de son premier ministre purent être aussi excellentes que celle du Haut Commissaire britannique, mais, en pratique, les fonctionnaires locaux ont été tout autre chose que bienveillants. La demande des Assyriens d'être placés dans des conditions telles qu'ils seraient soustraits au contrôle de ces fonctionnaires a été écartée.

Le traitement fait aux Assyriens a vivement inquiété la Commission des Mandats et, devant les événements de l'été dernier, certains de ses membres ont rappelé la déclaration qui leur avait été faite pour les rassurer par Sir Francis Humphrys, le dernier haut-commissaire chargé de soutenir le rapport spécial présenté en 1931 à la Commission pour résumer les progrès de l'Irak et justifier la proposition de mettre fin au Mandat.

Il suffit de la lecture, très édifiante, des procès-verbaux de la Commission des Mandats, pour voir combien l'affirmation de la maturité de l'Irak l'a laissée sceptique. Pour résumer son attitude, on peut dire qu'elle n'a donné à l'émancipation de l'Irak qu'un assentiment plein de réserves, fondé non sur sa conviction, mais sur les affirmations de la Puissance Mandataire dont elle n'avait aucun moyen de vérifier le bien-fondé. Sans sa prudence et sa déférence envers le Conseil, dont elle a simplement pour mission d'éclairer les décisions, il est à croire qu'elle aurait manifesté beaucoup plus clairement l'opinion péjorative qui transpire dans tous ses débats. Impressionnée par les inquiétudes exprimées par des minorités vivant dans le royaume irakien, elle a été particulièrement sceptique en ce qui concerne les garanties qu'elles pourraient trouver après avoir perdu celle que leur donnait le Mandat britannique. Cette question des minorités avait eu tous les soins de la Commission pendant qu'elle établissait, sur la demande du Conseil, la liste des conditions qui devraient être imposées à tout pays sous Mandat devant être émancipé. Pour la rassurer, Sir Francis Humphrys lui avait laissé entendre, dans une formule

(1) Lettre adressée au *Times*, le 16 août, par M. A. T. Wilson.

(2) Lettre adressée au *Times*, le 9 août, par M. W. A. Wigram.

n'entraînant d'ailleurs aucun engagement précis, que la responsabilité de l'Angleterre ne cesserait pas complètement en même temps que le Mandat. C'est cette déclaration que rappelleront, dans des lettres adressées par eux au *Times* au mois d'août, Lord Lugard et M. Pierre Orts, membres anglais et belge de la Commission des Mandats. Nous croyons utile d'en donner la traduction, car elles résument en grande partie la situation et expriment le sentiment avec lequel la Commission des Mandats, soucieuse du sort des minorités, a vu s'imposer, pour des raisons qui n'avaient que des rapports lointains avec les réalités locales, l'émancipation de l'Irak.

Voici d'abord la lettre de Lord Lugard :

Les nouvelles que vous publiez aujourd'hui, qu'il y a des raisons de croire que 500 Assyriens ont été tués », et d'après lesquelles 1.500 de leurs femmes et des enfants sont dans une condition pitoyable, m'obligent à rappeler les mots prononcés par le Haut Commissaire pour l'Irak à Genève :

« Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté se rend pleinement compte de la responsabilité qu'il assume en recommandant l'admission de l'Irak dans la Société des Nations... Si l'Irak se montrait indigne de la confiance qui lui serait accordée, la responsabilité morale en incomberait au Gouvernement de Sa Majesté (1). »

Le membre de la Commission auquel il répondait se déclara « complètement satisfait de cette déclaration du Représentant accrédité, peut-être la plus importante de toutes celles qui avaient été faites ».

La portée de cette déclaration était, comme on doit le penser, comprise par le Gouvernement Britannique, au nom de qui elle était faite. Il convient que le Gouvernement irakien se rende compte du point auquel il lui doit son statut actuel.

Il y a intérêt à rappeler ce qui s'est produit ensuite. L'Irak a été admis en octobre 1932 comme membre de la Société des Nations. La Commission des Mandats, pendant sa session de novembre-décembre 1932, a été appelée à examiner plusieurs pétitions assyriennes, qui ont donné lieu à de nouvelles inquiétudes, en dépit des assurances préalablement reçues du Haut Commissaire. La Commission chargea son rapporteur d'assister à la réunion suivante du Conseil pour exposer ses vues. Le Conseil nomma une Commission, et son Président, Benès, se déclara convaincu que la résolution qu'il adoptait « provoquerait une solution conforme à l'opinion de la Commission des Mandats, c'est-à-dire que la communauté assyrienne serait établie de manière à obvier à ce qu'elle soit dispersée parmi des populations d'autre race ».

Cette résolution fut acceptée par Noury Pacha Saïd, représentant l'Irak, qui déclara que son gouvernement avait une profonde sympathie pour les Assyriens.

Quelques jours après Lord Lugard, M. Pierre Orts écrivait à son tour au Directeur du *Times* :

J'ai lu dans le *Times* du 14 août la lettre qui vous a été adressée au nom des Assyriens de l'Irak par Lord Lugard, mon Collègue dans la Commission des Mandats de la Société des Nations.

Comme rapporteur de cette Commission pour toutes les pétitions reçues des Assyriens par la Société des Nations de 1930 à la fin de 1932, j'ai eu l'occasion d'étudier directement des documents volumineux émanant non seulement des pétitionnaires, mais aussi de la puissance mandataire

pour l'Irak. J'avais en même temps devant moi les documents apportés par le Mar Chimoun dans sa visite à Genève. En dernier lieu, au mois de décembre 1932, j'ai siégé dans le Comité nommé par le Conseil de la Société des Nations pour examiner, devant les représentants de l'ex-puissance mandataire et le Ministre des Affaires étrangères de l'Irak, le rapport de la Commission des Mandats sur une série de pétitions assyriennes. C'était le dernier appel d'une ancienne communauté qui, au moment où se terminait le Mandat britannique sur l'Irak, allait être confiée à la discrétion d'un gouvernement dominé par l'influence d'éléments qui lui avaient été irréconciliablement hostiles. Je crois que ces circonstances me permettent de me faire une opinion très motivée sur la position des Assyriens, à qui les autorités britanniques ont donné asile en Irak lorsque, pendant la grande guerre, leur pays d'origine, dans la région de Hakkari, a été occupé par les Turcs.

C'est pourquoi je me permets de confirmer personnellement l'opinion exprimée dans la lettre de mon collègue, et de lui donner mon appui.

Je me garderais d'exprimer une opinion relative aux déplorable événements qui se sont produits sur la frontière de l'Irak et de la Syrie, événements sur lesquels je ne possède aucune autre information que celles publiées par la presse depuis juillet 1927. Je veux néanmoins faire ressortir qu'ils ne doivent pas influencer un jugement porté sur les conditions faites à la communauté assyrienne en Irak, et qu'ils ne doivent pas servir à déplacer la responsabilité de la situation qui est à l'origine de ces incidents.

L'insécurité dans laquelle les Assyriens ont vécu pendant plusieurs années, les violences infligées aux individus, les crimes commis contre les personnes et les biens, dont ils ont trop souvent été victimes, n'ont été rendus possibles que par la dispersion de leur communauté au milieu d'autres races. La Commission des Mandats était arrivée à la conclusion que le seul remède à cet état de choses était de réunir les Assyriens en un groupe homogène dans quelque région répondant à leurs besoins. (Rapport à la Commission du Conseil à la fin de sa 22^e session.)

En présence de l'opposition de l'Irak, cette recommandation de la Commission des Mandats n'a pas été admise, et une solution mitigée a été adoptée, laquelle ne pouvait pas répondre au besoin qu'avaient les Assyriens d'être en sécurité. Depuis lors, quiconque connaissait ce peuple énergique pouvait facilement prévoir que son désespoir le porterait bientôt aux plus extrêmes mesures.

Lorsque l'on consulta la Commission des Mandats pour savoir si elle jugeait recommandable l'admission de l'Irak dans la Société des Nations, elle prit soin de manifester dans son rapport au Conseil qu'elle n'aurait pas recommandé l'octroi de l'indépendance à ce pays si elle n'avait pas été assurée que le Gouvernement britannique répondait du sort des minorités religieuses et nationales en Irak. En fait, l'expérience de la Commission ne lui permettait pas de considérer avec confiance l'avenir de ces minorités à partir du moment où elles dépendraient complètement du Gouvernement assyrien.

Par suite de l'émancipation de l'Irak, le contrôle des affaires de ce pays a été retiré à la Société des Nations, et l'examen des événements récents a cessé de faire partie du domaine de l'activité de la Commission des Mandats. Contre les abus auxquels ils sont exposés de la part de la majorité musulmane, les Assyriens n'ont donc désormais d'autre recours qu'un appel au Gouvernement britannique. C'est, pour la même raison, le cas des autres minorités de l'Irak, toutes menacées des mêmes périls. Je ne veux pas douter que la protection sur laquelle les espérances de toutes les minorités se concentrent maintenant ne manquera pas.

Pierre ORTS.

(1) Déclaration faite au cours de la vingtième session de la Commission des mandats (juin-juillet 1931).

Dans son « rapport spécial au Conseil sur la proposition du gouvernement britannique tendant à l'émancipation de l'Irak », rédigé à l'issue de sa 21^e session (octobre-novembre 1931), la Commission avait pris acte de la déclaration faite par Sir Francis Humphrys au cours de sa vingtième session et ajouté :

A défaut de cette déclaration, la Commission se fût trouvée dans l'impossibilité d'envisager, pour ce qui la concerne, la fin d'un régime qui, il y a quelques années, avait paru s'imposer dans l'intérêt même de tous les éléments de la population.

Rappelant au Conseil que, invitée à formuler les conditions à imposer à un Etat émancipé du Mandat, elle-même avait suggéré que cet Etat contractât vis-à-vis de la Société des Nations des engagements qui garantissent : « la protection effective des minorités de race, de langue et de religion », la Commission concluait :

a) Dans le cas de l'Irak, la Commission est d'avis qu'il importe d'assurer la protection des minorités de race, de langue et de religion par un ensemble de dispositions à insérer dans une déclaration du Gouvernement de l'Irak au Conseil de la Société des Nations et par l'acceptation des règles de procédure établies par le Conseil en matière de pétitions concernant les minorités, d'après lesquelles, notamment, les minorités elles-mêmes, ainsi que toute personne, association ou Etat s'y intéressant, ont le droit d'adresser des pétitions à la Société des Nations;

b) La déclaration de l'Irak, dont les termes seraient établis de concert avec le Conseil, contiendrait les dispositions générales relatives à la protection desdites minorités auxquelles ont souscrit plusieurs Etats européens.

En outre, l'Irak adhérerait à toute disposition spéciale que le Conseil de la Société des Nations, d'accord avec le Gouvernement irakien, pourrait éventuellement juger nécessaire d'établir, à titre temporaire ou permanent, pour assurer la protection effective des minorités de race, de langue et de religion en Irak.

Diverses suggestions concernant les moyens pratiques de réaliser cette protection ont été formulées au sein de la Commission :

ii) L'Irak accepterait que, dans la mesure où elles affecteraient des personnes appartenant à des minorités de race, de religion ou de langue, ces dispositions constitueraient des obligations d'intérêt international, et seraient placées sous la garantie de la Société des Nations. Elles ne pourraient être modifiées sans l'assentiment de la majorité du Conseil de la Société des Nations.

L'Irak accepterait également que tout Membre du Conseil de la Société des Nations ait le droit de signaler à l'attention du Conseil toute infraction ou danger d'infraction à l'une quelconque de ces obligations, et que le Conseil puisse procéder de telle façon, prendre telle mesure ou donner telles instructions qui paraîtraient appropriées et efficaces dans la circonstance.

L'Irak consentirait enfin à ce qu'en cas de divergence d'opinions sur des questions de droit ou de fait concernant ces dispositions, entre l'Irak et un Membre du Conseil de la Société des Nations, cette divergence soit considérée comme un différend ayant un caractère international selon les termes de l'article 14 du Pacte de la Société des Nations. Tout différend de ce genre serait, si l'autre partie le demande, déferé à la Cour permanente de Justice internationale. La décision de la Cour serait sans appel et aurait la même forme et valeur qu'une décision rendue en vertu de l'article 13 du Pacte.

Le 28 janvier 1932 le Conseil de la Société des

Nations adopta cette suggestion et nomma un Comité chargé d'arrêter les termes de la déclaration à demander à l'Irak et composé de ses rapporteurs pour les Minorités, les Mandats, le droit international et le Représentant de la Grande-Bretagne. MM. Pierre Orts et Noury Saïd Pacha prirent part à titre consultatif à ses délibérations comme représentants de la Commission des Mandats et du Gouvernement irakien. Au cours de la délibération, Lord Cecil, représentant du Gouvernement britannique, avait cru devoir affirmer, une fois de plus que la tolérance régnait en Irak, et indiquer, sur un ton assez autoritaire, au Comité qui venait d'être nommé, qu'il n'y avait pas à demander à ce pays des garanties exceptionnelles. Voici dans quels termes le procès-verbal résume son intervention :

Lord Cecil désire présenter une observation au sujet d'un passage du rapport de la Commission qui a trait aux garanties à accorder aux minorités. Lord Cecil ne discute pas ce que dit ce rapport, mais il tient à souligner, au nom des Irakiens, qui n'ont pas le moyen de s'exprimer eux-mêmes ici, que l'histoire de ce pays a toujours été celle de la tolérance religieuse; les musulmans, les juifs, les chrétiens ont vécu ensemble en bons termes, dans les mêmes villages, pendant des siècles, et il n'y a aucune raison de croire, maintenant que l'Irak assume la pleine responsabilité du gouvernement, que cette situation doive se modifier et devenir mauvaise. Il est tout à fait nécessaire que l'on exige des garanties convenables, mais Lord Cecil espère que cet aspect de la question sera examiné par le Comité spécial. Il ne s'agit pas d'une question nouvelle; il existe déjà des précédents nombreux capables de guider le Comité et Lord Cecil est persuadé que celui-ci se conformera à ces précédents.

Le Comité élabora un texte qui fut adopté par le Gouvernement irakien. Celui-ci le communiqua, le 30 mai 1932, à la Société des Nations, dans une « déclaration à l'occasion de l'extinction du régime mandataire, contenant les garanties fournies par le Gouvernement de l'Irak ».

Nous croyons intéressant de reproduire ci-après la partie de ce document relative aux droits des Minorités.

ARTICLE PREMIER

Protection des minorités.

Les stipulations contenues dans le présent chapitre seront reconnues comme lois fondamentales en Irak. Aucune loi, aucun règlement ni aucune action officielle ne seront en contradiction ou en opposition avec ces stipulations, et aucune loi, aucun règlement, ni aucune action officielle ne prévaudront contre elles, ni maintenant ni à l'avenir.

ARTICLE 2

1^o Il sera accordé à tous les habitants de l'Irak pleine et entière protection de leur vie et de leur liberté, sans distinction de naissance, de nationalité, de langage, de race ou de religion.

2^o Tous les habitants de l'Irak auront droit au libre exercice, tant public que privé, de toute foi, religion ou croyance dont la pratique ne sera pas incompatible avec l'ordre public et les bonnes mœurs.

ARTICLE 3

Les ressortissants ottomans établis sur le territoire de l'Irak à la date du 6 août 1924 seront considérés comme

ayant acquis, à cette date, la nationalité irakienne, à l'exclusion de la nationalité ottomane, sur la base de l'article 30 du Traité de paix de Lausanne, et dans les conditions prévues dans la loi irakienne du 9 octobre 1924 sur la nationalité.

ARTICLE 4

1° Tous les ressortissants irakiens seront égaux devant la loi, et jouiront des mêmes droits civils et politiques, sans distinction de race, de langue ou de religion.

2° Le système électoral assurera une représentation équitable aux minorités de race, de religion ou de langue en Irak.

3° La différence de race, de langue ou de religion ne devra nuire à aucun ressortissant irakien en ce qui concerne la jouissance des droits civils et politiques, notamment pour l'admission aux emplois publics, fonctions et honneurs, et pour l'exercice des différentes professions et industries.

4° Il ne sera édicté aucune restriction au libre usage, par tous les ressortissants irakiens, d'une langue quelconque, soit dans les relations privées ou de commerce, soit en matière de religion, de presse ou de publications de toute nature, soit dans les réunions publiques.

5° Nonobstant l'établissement par le Gouvernement irakien de la langue arabe comme langue officielle, et nonobstant les dispositions spéciales que le Gouvernement irakien prendra en ce qui concerne l'emploi des langues kurde et turque, dispositions prévues à l'article 9 de la précédente déclaration, des facilités appropriées seront données à tous les ressortissants irakiens de langue autre que la langue officielle, pour l'usage de leur langue, soit oralement, soit par écrit, devant les tribunaux.

ARTICLE 5

Les ressortissants irakiens appartenant à des minorités de race, de religion ou de langue jouiront du même traitement et des mêmes garanties en droit et en fait que les autres ressortissants irakiens. Ils auront notamment un droit égal à maintenir, diriger et contrôler à leurs frais, ou à créer à l'avenir des institutions charitables, religieuses ou sociales, des écoles et autres établissements d'éducation, avec le droit d'y faire librement usage de leur propre langue et d'y exercer librement leur religion.

ARTICLE 6

Le Gouvernement irakien s'engage à prendre à l'égard des minorités non musulmanes, en ce qui concerne leur statut familial et personnel, toutes dispositions permettant de régler ces questions selon le droit coutumier des communautés auxquelles ces minorités appartiennent.

Le Gouvernement irakien enverra au Conseil de la Société des Nations des renseignements sur la façon dont auront été exécutées ces dispositions.

ARTICLE 7

1° Le Gouvernement irakien s'engage à accorder toutes protections, facilités et autorisations aux églises, synagogues, cimetières, autres établissements religieux, œuvres charitables et fondations pieuses des communautés religieuses des minorités existant en Irak.

2° Toutes ces communautés auront le droit de constituer, dans les divisions administratives importantes, des conseils qui auront qualité pour percevoir les revenus produits par ces biens, pour les utiliser conformément aux vœux du donateur ou à l'usage établi dans la communauté. Ces communautés devront également veiller sur les biens des orphelins, conformément à la loi. Les conseils susmentionnés seront placés sous le contrôle du Gouvernement.

3° Le Gouvernement irakien ne refusera, pour la création de nouveaux établissements religieux ou charitables, aucune des facilités nécessaires qui seront garanties aux établissements de cette nature déjà existants.

ARTICLE 8

1° En matière d'enseignement public, le Gouvernement irakien accordera, dans les villes et districts où réside une proportion considérable de ressortissants irakiens de langue autre que la langue officielle, des facilités appropriées pour assurer que l'instruction dans les écoles primaires sera donnée, dans leur propre langue, aux enfants de ces ressortissants irakiens. Cette stipulation n'empêchera pas le Gouvernement irakien de rendre obligatoire l'enseignement de la langue arabe dans les dites écoles.

2° Dans les villes et districts où réside une proportion considérable de ressortissants irakiens appartenant à des minorités de race, de religion ou de langue, ces minorités se verront assurer une part équitable dans le bénéfice et l'affectation des sommes qui pourraient être attribuées sur les fonds publics par le budget de l'Etat, les budgets municipaux ou autres dans un but d'éducation, de religion ou de charité.

ARTICLE 9

1° L'Irak s'engage, en ce qui concerne les liwas de Mossoul, Arbîl, Kirkuk et Soulimanié, à ce que la langue officielle, à côté de l'arabe, soit le kurde dans les qadhas où la population prédominante est de race kurde.

Toutefois, dans les qadhas du liwa de Kifri, où une partie considérable de la population est de race turcomane, la langue officielle sera, à côté de l'arabe, soit le kurde, soit le turc.

2° L'Irak prend l'engagement que, dans lesdits qadhas, les fonctionnaires devront, sauf exception justifiée, posséder la langue kurde ou, le cas échéant, la langue turque.

3° Bien que, dans lesdits qadhas, le critère pour le choix des fonctionnaires soit, comme dans le reste de l'Irak, la capacité et la connaissance de la langue plutôt que la race, l'Irak s'engage à ce que les fonctionnaires soient choisis, comme jusqu'à présent, autant que possible, parmi les ressortissants irakiens originaires de ces qadhas.

ARTICLE 10

Dans la mesure où les stipulations des articles précédents de la présente Déclaration affectent des personnes appartenant à des minorités de race, de religion ou de langue, ces stipulations constituent des obligations d'intérêt national et seront placées sous la garantie de la Société des Nations. Elles ne pourront être modifiées sans l'assentiment de la majorité du Conseil de la Société des Nations.

Tout membre de la Société représenté au Conseil aura le droit de signaler à l'attention du Conseil toute infraction ou danger d'infraction à l'une quelconque de ces obligations, et le Conseil pourra prendre telles mesures et donner telles instructions qui paraîtront appropriées et efficaces dans la circonstance.

En cas de divergences d'opinions, sur des questions de droit ou de fait concernant ces articles, entre l'Irak et l'un quelconque des Membres de la Société représentés au Conseil, cette divergence sera considérée comme un différend ayant un caractère international selon les termes de l'article 14 du Pacte de la Société des Nations. Tout différend de ce genre sera, si l'autre partie le demande, déféré à la Cour permanente de Justice internationale. La décision de la Cour permanente sera sans appel et aura la même force et valeur qu'une décision rendue en vertu de l'article 13 du Pacte.

Telles sont les garanties que les Assyriens ont reçues, en commun avec les autres minorités de l'Irak. Il est à remarquer qu'elles sont bien inférieures à celles que la Commission des Mandats, après une étude consciencieuse de la question, aurait voulu voir donner aux Assyriens. La politique du Gouvernement britannique a, au

contraire, constamment tendu à les réduire. La Commission est d'ailleurs revenue à la charge et, usant de l'occasion que lui donnait l'examen d'ultimes pétitions assyriennes qu'elle eut à faire dans une session postérieure à la fin du Mandat, elle renouvela, non au Gouvernement Mandataire qui n'existait plus, mais au Conseil de la Société des Nations, son vœu de voir établir les Assyriens en un groupe homogène.

Dans sa 22^e session (novembre-décembre 1932), elle adopta, en effet, un rapport de M. Pierre Orts sur les ultimes pétitions assyriennes et ses conclusions.

La Commission permanente des Mandats, disait-elle, ayant examiné les pétitions qui émanent de la Communauté assyrienne de l'Irak; ayant pris connaissance des observations du Gouvernement du Royaume Uni sur ces pétitions et entendu les renseignements complémentaires qui lui ont été fournis verbalement par le représentant de ce Gouvernement; fait siennes les conclusions ci-jointes de son rapporteur, attire de façon toute spéciale l'attention du Conseil sur le haut intérêt qu'il y a, aussi bien pour les Assyriens eux-mêmes que pour l'Irak, à ce que soit assuré aux Assyriens un établissement en un groupement homogène qui convienne à leurs traditions et qui satisfasse à leurs besoins économiques.

Il convient de citer les passages suivants du rapporteur :

« Parmi les Assyriens de l'Irak, le plus grand nombre, venus de Turquie d'Asie, ont trouvé asile dans ce pays au cours des dernières années. Ils y sont campés le plus souvent dans des conditions précaires et misérables... »

Il a fallu les fixer sur la terre. En fait, ces montagnards ont été installés dans des régions de plaines marécageuses et malsaines, ou dispersés, par petits groupes, ou par familles, au milieu de la population kurde ou arabe, au gré des possibilités qu'offrait l'occupation du sol.

Dans les pétitions dont la Commission a eu à connaître au cours de ses précédentes sessions, on trouve l'expression du sentiment d'insécurité qu'inspirent aux Assyriens, non seulement le climat avec les vides qu'il provoque dans leurs rangs, la stérilité des terrains qui leur ont été assignés, la précarité de leurs droits à la jouissance du sol, mais surtout l'éparpillement de leur communauté parmi des populations d'autres races.

C'est cette dernière circonstance qui explique ces violences individuelles, ces attentats contre les personnes et les biens dont se sont constamment plaints les Assyriens et dont ils craignent — depuis qu'est apparue comme prochaine la cessation du contrôle britannique — qu'ils ne se multiplient au point de rendre décidément intolérables les conditions d'existence de leur communauté.

La cause profonde de l'état de malaise que révèlent les pétitions qui nous occupent réside dans le fait que les Assyriens d'Irak n'ont pu, jusqu'ici, être réunis en un groupement homogène, dans une région convenant à leurs besoins.

Et votre rapporteur n'est pas éloigné de penser qu'aussi longtemps qu'il n'en aura pas été fait ainsi, persisteront, comme une épine au flanc de l'Irak, le mécontentement et la dissidence morale de cette partie de sa population. Cette opinion semble concorder avec celle du Gouvernement du Royaume Uni, lorsqu'il déclare que « le retour des Assyriens dans leurs montagnes du Hakkari resterait assurément la meilleure solution ».

La preuve n'a pas été faite à la satisfaction de l'observateur impartial que des terres réunissant les conditions

voulues pour un établissement en un groupe homogène des Assyriens n'existent point en Irak, ni que la perspective du rétablissement des Assyriens dans leur pays d'origine doit être définitivement écartée. Il serait à souhaiter que le Conseil de la Société des Nations usât de son influence pour que l'une ou l'autre de ces solutions soit loyalement recherchée. » (Procès-verbal de la 22^e session, page 375.)

Moins d'un an après l'émancipation de l'Irak, les événements sont venus justifier les inquiétudes et les recommandations de la Commission, et montrer ce que valaient les « garanties de papier » qui, pour reprendre l'expression d'un Anglais ému de leur sort, avaient été données par l'Irak, en ce qui les concerne, à la Société des Nations. Une fois de plus, en Orient, un texte n'avait été que de la poudre aux yeux, une phraséologie sans relations avec la réalité : la déclaration du Gouvernement irakien qui devait assurer aux Assyriens des droits variés n'avait même pas eu pour effet de leur garantir la vie.

..

Mais il y a quelque chose de plus : on peut se demander si les droits même que la déclaration irakienne reconnaissait aux minorités en général couvraient tous ceux que les Assyriens étaient en droit de revendiquer et les Alliés dans le devoir moral de leur assurer. Il est bon, pour se faire une opinion sur ce point, de lire une lettre publiée par le *Times* (1) et dont nous traduisons ci-dessous les passages essentiels :

Les Assyriens, quoique juridiquement sujets de l'Irak, ne le sont que d'une manière tout à fait arbitraire et artificielle. Par la religion, non plus que par la race, la langue, les coutumes, le consentement et l'industrie, les Assyriens n'ont pas de relations avec la plaine mésopotamienne, sa capitale ni ses habitants. Il en est de même des Kurdes, sauf en ce qui concerne la religion. On ne saurait déclarer trop nettement que l'inclusion des Assyriens et des Kurdes dans le nouveau royaume de l'Irak n'a qu'une base purement artificielle et de création toute récente... Cette inclusion n'est pas conforme au Pacte de la Société des Nations qui déclare expressément que les différentes communautés ayant appartenu à l'Empire Turc ont droit à être reconnues comme nations indépendantes et, par conséquent, à ne pas être greffées de force sur des races ou communautés qui leur soient étrangères. Il convient de noter ici que le douzième des quatorze points posés par le Président Wilson était ainsi conçu :

« Une souveraineté indiscutée doit être assurée à la partie turque du présent empire ottoman, mais les autres nationalités qui sont actuellement sous la domination turque doivent être complètement assurées de leur vie et de la possibilité indiscutée d'un développement autonome. »

Les Assyriens (et aussi les Kurdes) sont des nationalités distinctes des Arabes mésopotamiens et, que le Pacte de la Société des Nations ait été inspiré ou non des déclarations du Président Wilson, il semble clair que son intention était que les nationalités distinctes fussent traitées comme telles.

La conclusion du correspondant du *Times* était que les Assyriens devraient être replacés, comme une nationalité autonome, dans leur pays d'origine. Il n'est pas à espérer que les Puissances im-

(1) Lettre publiée le 28 août par le *Times*, sous la signature de M. W. H. Stoker.

posent rien de tel à la Turquie, dont le territoire comprend les montagnes du Hakkîari. Mais du moins le gouvernement britannique, voyant que la décision prise en 1925 par la Société des Nations ne les avait pas comprises dans le territoire irakien, aurait-il dû appliquer toute son énergie à l'installation des Assyriens en Irak sous la forme du groupement homogène que recommandait la Commission des Mandats, dont les suggestions n'ont pas été retenues par le Conseil, qui n'est pas un organe technique, mais un corps politique, c'est-à-dire beaucoup plus sensible à la volonté d'une grande puissance qu'aux réalités locales les moins contestables.

L'installation en un groupement homogène a cependant été recommandée par tous ceux qui ont eu à s'occuper du problème assyrien en lui-même et non sous l'inspiration de soucis étrangers à la réalité. La Commission constituée en application de la décision prise le 30 septembre 1924 par le Conseil de la Société des Nations pour régler la question de la frontière entre la Turquie et l'Irak, et qui, pour des raisons de procédure diplomatique et non de fond, avait conclu à un tracé laissant le Hakkîari à la Turquie, disait à la fin de son rapport, daté du 16 juillet 1925 :

Ce territoire contesté (le Vilayet de Mossoul) devant de toute façon se trouver sous la souveraineté d'un Etat musulman, il est nécessaire, pour répondre aux vœux des minorités, particulièrement chrétiennes, que des mesures soient prises en vue de leur protection.

Il n'est pas dans notre compétence d'énumérer toutes les conditions qu'il serait nécessaire d'imposer à l'Etat souverain au sujet de la protection de ces minorités; nous pensons toutefois devoir signaler qu'il faudrait que l'on assurât aux Assyriens le rétablissement des anciens privilèges qu'en fait — sinon de façon officielle — ils possédaient avant la guerre. Quel que soit l'Etat souverain, il devra assurer aux Assyriens une certaine autonomie locale, leur reconnaissant le droit de nommer leurs propres fonctionnaires et se contentant de leur faire payer un tribut par l'intermédiaire de leur patriarche.

La Commission paraissait avoir peu de confiance dans la capacité du Gouvernement irakien d'assurer les droits des minorités : elle disait :

Nous pensons que les dispositions édictées en faveur des minorités pourraient n'être qu'illusoires si un contrôle efficace n'est pas exercé sur place. Le délégué de la Société des Nations sur les lieux pourrait être chargé de veiller à l'application des garanties.

La Commission concluait d'ailleurs que l'état de l'Irak était encore tel que ce pays devrait « se trouver sous le mandat de la Société des Nations pendant une durée de vingt-cinq ans environ », faute de quoi il aurait encore mieux valu que le vilayet de Mossoul fût attribué à la Turquie qu'à l'Irak.

Le Conseil, sur la proposition de la Commission, adopta, le 16 décembre 1925, une résolution ainsi conçue :

Le Gouvernement britannique est invité à soumettre au Conseil un nouveau traité avec l'Irak qui assurera la con-

tinuation pendant vingt-cinq ans du régime de mandat défini par le traité d'alliance entre l'Angleterre et l'Irak et approuvé par le Conseil en date du 27 septembre 1924, sous réserve de l'admission, avant l'expiration de cette période, de l'Irak dans la Société des Nations, conformément à l'article premier du Pacte.

Aussitôt que, dans un délai de six mois à compter de ce jour, l'exécution de cette stipulation aura été portée à la connaissance du Conseil, celui-ci constatera que la présente décision est devenue définitive et avisera aux mesures propres à assurer la délimitation sur le terrain de la ligne frontière.

Le Gouvernement britannique, en tant que Puissance mandataire, est invité à soumettre au Conseil les mesures administratives qui seront arrêtées pour accorder aux populations kurdes, visées par le rapport de la Commission d'enquête, les garanties d'administration locale recommandées par cette Commission dans ses conclusions finales.

Le Gouvernement britannique qui, en tant que Puissance Mandataire, est invité à s'inspirer aussi fidèlement que possible des autres suggestions de la Commission d'enquête, on ce qui concerne les mesures propres à assurer l'apaisement, à protéger également tous les éléments de la population...

On doit constater que sauf, dans une certaine mesure, en ce qui concerne les Kurdes dont le cas devra faire l'objet d'une étude particulière, aucune de ces conditions et recommandations n'a été observée dans la manière dont l'Irak a été émancipé.

Un traité anglo-irakien, prolongeant pour vingt-cinq années, à dater du 16 décembre 1925, la durée de validité du traité d'alliance du 10 octobre 1922 et des accords subsidiaires, c'est-à-dire le Mandat, fut sans doute signé le 13 janvier 1926 et communiqué le 2 mars au Conseil de la Société des Nations qui l'approuva le 11 mars 1926. Mais il prévoyait un examen périodique de la question de la recommandation de l'Irak pour son admission dans la Société des Nations qui devait faire cesser le Mandat même avant l'expiration de la période de vingt-cinq années.

En réalité l'acceptation de cette prolongation du Mandat n'avait été demandée par l'Angleterre à l'Irak que pour lui assurer la possession du vilayet de Mossoul. Une fois ce but atteint, on pourrait éluder, par la présentation et l'admission de l'Irak à la Société des Nations, la prolongation du Mandat. C'est ce qui a été fait : le traité de 1926 n'a été qu'un moyen temporaire, mis de côté aussitôt que possible après qu'il eût rempli son objet territorial.

Quant aux suggestions relatives « aux mesures propres à assurer l'apaisement et à protéger également tous les éléments de la population », suggestions que la résolution du Conseil invitait la Commission des Mandats « à prendre en considération lors de l'examen des rapports annuels relatifs à l'Irak », on sait le sort qui leur a été fait, notamment en ce qui concerne les Assyriens. Jamais la recommandation de donner à ce peuple une autonomie locale sous son Patriarche n'a eu la moindre suite. C'est cependant ce que les Assyriens ont toujours demandé, ce que Mar Chimoun a réclamé : voilà pourquoi il a été traité en factieux par le gouvernement ira-

kien, interné pendant quelque temps à Bagdad et obligé depuis à se réfugier à Chypre.

C'est sur ce point qu'il y a eu un malentendu constant, une équivoque même dans la manière dont la situation a été conçue et présentée par les deux parties. Quand Mar Chimoun s'est adressé à la Société des Nations en août dernier pour dénoncer une politique qui privait systématiquement les Assyriens d'établissement homogène et pour demander l'envoi en Irak d'une Commission internationale d'enquête, il visait le maintien de son peuple dans son individualité. On l'a accusé pour cela d'ambitions personnelles : c'est ce qu'a dit notamment M. H. Dobbs, ancien haut-commissaire britannique en Irak, dans une lettre adressée le 25 août au *Times*. D'après lui, si Mar Chimoun demandait l'établissement des Assyriens en un groupe compact, c'était par crainte que, s'ils étaient disséminés, « sa domination ecclésiastique disparaîtrait et que les Assyriens, qui sont de la Confession Nestorienne, se fondraient dans les nombreux chrétiens chaldéens de la province de Mossoul et finiraient par transférer à Rome leur allégeance spirituelle ». Il est fort possible que l'ambition s'associe à la sollicitude pour sa nation dans l'attitude du Patriarche, mais on peut en dire autant de presque tous les pasteurs d'hommes. Et la conduite du gouvernement irakien a été pour lui inspirer à la fois des inquiétudes pour le maintien d'une nationalité linguistique et traditionnelle assyrienne et pour sa propre autorité.

Bagdad n'a cessé en effet de tendre à émietter les Assyriens pour leur faire perdre leur individualité nationale. Non seulement il n'a pas jugé bon qu'ils constituassent dans l'Irak un « Millet », mais encore il n'a fait aucun effort pour les établir en bloc. La manière dont il les a démunis, ballottés, a certainement contribué à causer des désordres auxquels des hommes guerriers, habitués à l'indépendance devaient être beaucoup plus naturellement portés que les molles minorités chrétiennes anciennement établies en Irak.

Le travail de dissociation systématique des Assyriens par le Gouvernement de Bagdad n'est pas contestable. Il s'est appliqué non seulement à les disséminer, de manière à les fondre dans les masses ambiantes, mais encore à les diviser. C'est ainsi que l'autorité irakienne s'est appliquée à saper l'autorité du Patriarche Nestorien, chef traditionnel du Millet. D'après une lettre de Bagdad publiée le 25 août par le *Manchester Guardian*, les Irakiens auraient systématiquement donné des postes aux ennemis du Patriarche, favorisé les Assyriens convertis au Presbytérianisme, cherché des opposants au Patriarche parmi les évêques. Les partisans de celui-ci étaient molestés et les chefs de village poussés à trahir Mar Chimoun.

Les ministres irakiens, Noury Saïd Pacha et Djafar Pacha el Askri, ont transporté cette politique sur le terrain européen en écrivant aux journaux anglais des lettres où Mar Chimoun

était accusé de fomenter la révolte, contre les vœux mêmes des Assyriens dont « l'écrasante majorité » ne veut pas de son autorité et sont loyaux au gouvernement irakien. On est même arrivé à dire que nombre d'entre eux avaient félicité le Gouvernement des mesures de répression qu'il avait prises. Il serait intéressant de savoir si ces Assyriens sur-loyalistes ont été inventés de toutes pièces et, sinon, comment on les a recrutés. Cette histoire, trop corsée, rappelle que, en Orient, la vérité est tout ce que l'on peut espérer faire croire.

L'œuvre systématique de dissociation s'ajouta à la politique d'établissement par groupes disséminés pour exaspérer les Assyriens et les pousser aux mouvements séditions. Ce ne sont assurément pas des hommes commodes, ce qui, du reste, tend à les rendre plus sympathiques que tels ou tels autres minoritaires sans épine dorsale. Mais Noury Saïd Pacha et Djafar Pacha sont allés un peu loin en les dépeignant, dans des lettres au *Times*, comme des gens d'une férocité exceptionnelle, ayant mutilé les morts et les blessés, brûlé le corps des officiers irakiens, massacré femmes et enfants. Nous ne garantirions pas qu'ils n'ont commis aucune de ces gentilleses, mais il est probable que, ce faisant, ils ont agi exactement comme leurs adversaires. Les ministres irakiens savent certainement à quoi s'en tenir et quelle est la réalité de la face asiatique de leur politique tandis qu'ils tournent vers l'occident sa face européenne qui nous montre un Gouvernement bien intentionné, dont la générosité a été méconnue et qui souffre d'avoir été obligé d'user de rigueur contre un troupeau égaré.

Si l'on écrivait l'histoire des Assyriens en Irak, on devrait sans doute montrer en eux un élément que l'on a cherché à annihiler le plus possible — il ne reste plus que 20.000 Assyriens dans le pays — pour en assimiler plus facilement les débris. La presse irakienne n'a cessé d'exciter contre eux l'opinion de l'élément arabe. Le Gouvernement s'est efforcé d'en faire une poussière d'hommes, éparpillée parmi des groupes malveillants, privée de son homogénéité et de ses cadres, c'est-à-dire réduite à l'état de matière première, bonne à faire, réserve faite de la conservation aléatoire de sa religion, des Irakiens arabes.

Rien cependant n'obligeait envers l'Irak les Alliés, et particulièrement l'Angleterre, à admettre cette politique de destruction d'une nationalité minoritaire, et la conduite des Assyriens pendant la guerre leur commandait même moralement toute autre chose. L'Irak est une création de la victoire des Alliés. Son territoire s'étend au nord et au nord-est sur des régions de nationalités diverses et où l'élément arabe est beaucoup moins nombreux que l'ensemble des Chrétiens, des Yézidis, etc., sans parler même des Kurdes qui peuplent presque toute la montagne, au nombre de 500.000. Les Gouvernements alliés, créateurs de l'Irak et, en particulier, celui de Lon-

dres étaient en droit de lui imposer leurs conditions, c'est-à-dire le respect de ces nationalités incorporées au nouvel Etat. Il n'y avait aucune nécessité pour que celui-ci fût nationalisant et unitaire et on peut penser que lorsque la Commission des Mandats s'est, au nom de l'unité de l'Irak, prononcée, à la suite de l'examen d'une pétition des Assyriens, contre l'organisation de cette nationalité en « Millet », tout en recommandant son établissement en groupe homogène, elle a cédé beaucoup plus à son souci de discrétion qu'à son sentiment intime de la réalité des choses.

La protection des groupes minoritaires est partout affaire délicate ; en Orient elle n'est vraiment assurée que par leur organisation dans un certain cadre autonome qu'il convient de leur donner partout où ils sont établis ou peuvent l'être d'une manière assez compacte pour rendre possible la constitution d'une telle autonomie territoriale.

Nous croyons intéressant à cet égard de reproduire les paroles prononcées le 18 mai 1932 par M. Paul Boncour devant le Conseil de la Société des Nations, qui examinait le projet de déclaration demandée au Gouvernement irakien comme condition de la levée du Mandat.

... Etant donné qu'il s'agit du Proche-Orient, où l'autonomie répond à des notions traditionnelles, le représentant de la France demande s'il n'eût point été possible d'instituer, dans les cas où les conditions d'habitat des populations le permettent, le régime minoritaire dans la forme d'une autonomie administrative ; un tel régime qui, mieux qu'aucun autre, pourrait assurer en fait l'exercice des droits des minorités dans ces pays, n'eût d'ailleurs pas été sans précédent dans les traités de minorités eux-mêmes. En formulant cette observation, M. Paul Boncour pense aussi bien aux recommandations très précises qu'avait exprimées la Commission de Mossoul qu'aux bons rapports de voisinage entre populations minoritaires et majoritaires, et aussi à la tâche délicate de contrôle qui doit échoir au Conseil de la Société des Nations et que l'institution de ce régime eût facilitée.

Rien qui approche d'une autonomie administrative n'a été accordé aux Assyriens livrés à la politique de dénationalisation d'un Gouvernement qui représente sans doute la majorité de la population du territoire irakien, mais pas celle des régions du nord où existent des nationalités auxquelles on n'avait, en créant un Etat irakien, aucune raison de permettre aux gens de la plaine d'attenter.

..

Le fait a montré d'ailleurs que la bonne volonté affectée par le Gouvernement de l'Irak et les « garanties » résultant de sa déclaration n'assuraient même pas aux Assyriens, en fait de droits, celui de se croire en sécurité. Les conflits et massacres de l'été dernier ont conduit à cette situation, peut-être visée par le Gouvernement de Bagdad, que les Assyriens ne veulent pas plus de l'Irak que l'Irak ne veut des Assyriens. Le sentiment de ceux-ci à l'égard de l'Irak s'est révélé par d'autres faits sanglants encore, après le

massacre de la région de Dohouk. Les journaux turcs des derniers jours d'août ont annoncé que deux bandes assyriennes, l'une de 200 hommes et l'autre de 100, avaient essayé de forcer la frontière turque ; l'une et l'autre fut repoussée par le feu des mitrailleuses turques, laissant trente et vingt morts sur le terrain. Ces tentatives désespérées pour regagner la patrie perdue du Hakkari en disent long sur la situation des Assyriens et leur désespoir. Il ne s'agit plus maintenant pour ce peuple d'établissement, homogène ou non, en Irak, mais d'exode.

La Société des Nations a été saisie de la question, le 31 août 1932 ; le Comité des Minorités a décidé de saisir le Conseil de la situation en Irak, dénoncée dans des télégrammes du Patriarche. Dans une réunion tenue par le Conseil, le 14 octobre, Yassine Pacha el Hachimi, représentant du Gouvernement irakien, après avoir fait le procès des Assyriens, a demandé leur établissement hors de l'Irak. Le rapporteur, M. de Madariaga, a proposé de nommer un Comité de cinq membres pour étudier cette question, et qui serait composé des représentants du Royaume-Uni, de la France, de l'Italie, du Danemark et du Mexique, plus le rapporteur. Cette proposition a été adoptée et le Comité est encore en fonctions à l'heure où nous écrivons. Il a transpiré qu'il s'occupe d'un projet d'établissement des Assyriens dans le sud du Brésil.

Nous ne savons pas si la déportation des Assyriens, ou tout au moins de la majorité d'entre eux, dans le Nouveau Monde, est maintenant nécessaire, mais il paraît bien qu'elle ne le serait pas devenue si on avait plutôt pris en mains la question et imposé au gouvernement de Bagdad de traiter cette population comme on était en droit de lui demander de le faire alors qu'il était créé grâce aux sacrifices des Alliés et étendu, par la décision de la Société des Nations, au Vilayet de Mossoul, mosaïque de nationalités. Sans doute l'établissement des Assyriens en groupe homogène se heurtait à des difficultés, mais il est permis de se demander si celles-ci n'étaient pas, au moins pour une part, dans l'esprit du Gouvernement irakien, voué à une politique de dissociation des minorités. Le groupe Assyrien ne compte pas que 20.000 individus, ce qui ne demande pas de vastes concessions. Cette histoire de la faillite de la recherche de terres convenables pour les Assyriens en Irak est, pour une part appréciable, celle des responsabilités de l'Angleterre.

On peut se demander d'autre part jusqu'à quel point la France n'aurait pas pu ouvrir plus largement à ce peuple, qui ne pouvait trouver un foyer, le territoire pour lequel elle est mandataire. Une telle hospitalité aurait été dans ses traditions. Son territoire de Mandat couvre aussi dans le Nord une région très mêlée, où sans doute il n'y a pas de montagnes rappelant le pays d'origine des Assyriens, mais où on trouve de vastes terres irrigables, grâce aux eaux des rivières qui forment le Khabour. Dans cette région

les habitants sont rares et son peuplement dépasse les capacités des populations syriennes proprement dites, peu nombreuses pour l'étendue du pays, et qui auront à fournir une main-d'œuvre importante pour utiliser les terres qui doivent être irriguées dans l'ouest de la Syrie et dont les exigences en travail et le rendement seront décuplés par l'aménagement des eaux.

Il s'est réfugié en Syrie et l'on a installé à Hassetché, sur le Khabour, de 500 à 600 hommes assyriens, qui seront sans doute rejoints par leurs familles. Mais peut-être aurait-on pu concevoir avec moins de prudence la politique du Gouvernement français telle que l'a exprimée M. Paul Boncour devant le Conseil de la S.D.N., le 4 octobre 1933, dans la déclaration suivante :

« La France a été appelée à recueillir provisoirement sur le territoire syrien quelques centaines d'Assyro-Chaldéens. Elle est prête à poursuivre, dans le cadre du règlement général qui interviendra sous les auspices de la Société des Nations, les conversations qui ont été engagées par le gouvernement irakien en vue du transport en Syrie des familles de ces réfugiés et du règlement financier qu'implique cet établissement. Mais, pour ne pas ouvrir des espérances trop vastes qui ne pourraient être satisfaites, M. Paul Boncour tient à dire que les possibilités d'absorption de la Syrie se trouvent commandées par des conditions à la fois géographiques, financières et politiques, dont le gouvernement français est obligé de tenir compte, étant donné sa responsabilité envers les territoires sous Mandat.

C'est pourquoi M. Paul Boncour est heureux de relever, dans le rapport de M. de Madariaga, l'idée que le Comité du Conseil qui aura à étudier les possibilités d'établissement des Assyro-Chaldéens, ne devra pas nécessairement limiter ses recherches aux contrées situées à proximité de l'Irak.

Les capacités d'absorption d'un pays, surtout s'il est aussi peu peuplé que le nord-est des territoires sous Mandat français, où il y a quelques nomades à fixer et où s'infiltreront les Kurdes, peuvent beaucoup varier selon ce que l'on désire qu'elles soient : il en est de cela comme de l'impossibilité déclarée par le Gouvernement irakien d'établir les Assyriens en un groupe homogène. Une tâche est difficile non seulement en proportion des obstacles qu'elle rencontre, mais encore et plus peut-être en proportion de l'énergie du désir que l'on a de l'accomplir ; notre réputation de peuple généreux et les steppes du nord-est du territoire sous Mandat qui ont grand besoin d'agriculteurs auraient trouvé leur compte à l'adoption d'une politique moins réservée.

Nous espérons du moins que les quelques centaines d'Assyriens qui sont déjà venus demander asile au territoire de Mandat français, et doivent être rejoints par leurs familles, et ceux qui viendront se grouper avec eux plutôt que d'aller sous « des cieux ignorés », trouveront un foyer dans le nord-est de la Syrie.

..

Nous laisserons le soin d'exprimer la moralité de toute cette histoire à M. H. Dobbs, dans sa lettre déjà citée au *Times* et à la conclusion de l'article du *Manchester Guardian* que nous avons également cité.

Après avoir dit qu'il avait en vain essayé de faire accepter les Assyriens au Canada, à l'Australie et à la Nouvelle-Zélande ou à l'Argentine, M. H. Dobbs, qui n'avait sans doute pas encore entendu parler du projet brésilien, écrivait le 25 août :

Il semble qu'il ne reste rien à faire que de maintenir ces Assyriens en Irak et de faire de notre mieux pour leur établissement et pour obtenir de l'Irak des garanties réellement solides et positives pour leur sécurité avant que cesse le contrôle britannique de la politique irakienne. Il est clair maintenant que nous aurions dû insister sur un établissement satisfaisant des Assyriens et sur la nomination pour un certain nombre d'années, comme condition préalable à l'abandon de notre contrôle, d'un inspecteur de la Société des Nations pour les minorités qui aurait dû être officiellement reconnu. Nous ne l'avons pas fait.

Que doit-on faire maintenant ? Les journaux arabes protestent que le Gouvernement britannique n'a, pas plus qu'aucun autre, droit d'enquête et d'intervention dans les affaires intérieures de l'Irak. Ceci semble exact juridiquement et si le gouvernement irakien prend cette position, nous devons nous replier sur la Société des Nations. La Société des Nations a attribué à l'Irak plutôt qu'à la Turquie la province de Mossoul à la condition expresse que le contrôle britannique serait maintenu pendant vingt-cinq années (condition qui n'a pas été remplie). Elle a accepté la frontière turco-irakienne proposée par l'Angleterre principalement sur la foi de son Commissaire, le général Laidoner, qui confirmait la dénonciation par les Anglais de massacres de chrétiens par les Turcs sur la frontière irakienne. Ainsi la raison principale de l'attribution de Mossoul à l'Irak a été la confiance que tous les chrétiens seraient en sécurité sous le gouvernement irakien. S'il y a lieu de croire que cette condition et les engagements relatifs aux minorités pris par l'Irak envers la Société avant la fin du Mandat britannique ont été violés, la Société a le droit d'intervenir et, si l'Irak ne veut pas d'enquête britannique, la Société a le droit d'en faire une et ensuite d'insister sur des garanties effectives pour la sécurité des minorités dans la province de Mossoul. A l'Irak de décider : une enquête britannique, ou une enquête de la Société est inévitable.

Quant à la lettre adressée de Bagdad au *Manchester Guardian*, pour exposer la politique de l'Irak à l'égard des Assyriens, elle concluait :

Les Assyriens ont été forcés à se décider à quitter l'Irak en désespoir de cause. Ceux qui sont partis ne rentreront jamais en Irak. Si on les y oblige, ils combattront, tenteront d'aller en Turquie, ou se débattront dans les montagnes. Si la France les accepte, tous les autres suivront peu à peu. Les Assyriens savent maintenant que le gouvernement de l'Irak ne veut pas d'eux et que la masse du public les hait. Au mois de décembre dernier, ils étaient prêts à se rendre en Perse, mais ils ont préféré se livrer à la France, que l'on tient toujours en Orient pour la protectrice des opprimés. En Syrie, ils apprendront qu'ils ne peuvent demander aucun privilège, aucun traitement particulier, et qu'ils doivent abandonner leurs armes. Mais ils sont prêts à se soumettre à ces conditions, afin de pouvoir paisiblement cultiver leurs terres et faire paître leurs troupeaux. Toutefois, il y a là une erreur dans la politique britannique en Orient et le jugement de l'histoire sera sévère.

En attendant ce jugement, on peut dire que l'affaire des Assyriens s'ajoute à d'autres pour montrer que le monde de l'après-guerre est surtout pavé de velléités et de vagues bonnes intentions.

بلاغ مكتب الكتلة الوطنية

عن اجتماع ليل امس والاحتجاج على الاشوريين

ابلغنا مكتب الكتلة الوطنية نص البيان التالي :

ازدانت دار التاجر الوطني المحترم السيد عبد الله القباني مساء يوم الاربعاء بالوافدين من حضرات كبار تجار المدينة ووجوهها واعيانها وزعماء الاحياء والشباب الوطني والنخبة المفكرة من طبقات الامة حتى غصت الدار بنورها وابهاها وساحتها الكبرى والفرف الملوحة منها بالحاضرين تلبية للدعوة التي وجهت اليهم لبحث القضايا العسامة وموقف البلاد منها .

وفي تمام الساعة الثامنة شرف الدار حضرة صاحب المعالي جميل بك مردم بك يرافقه حضرات نواب دمشق الاساتذة عفيف بك الصلح واحسان بك الشريف وفخري بك البارودي وسعد الدين بك الجابري والدكتور ناظم بك القدسي وعبد القادر بك برمدا والحاج احمد افندي الاسود ممثلو حلب في المؤتمر الزراعي وفريق كبير من الشباب الوطني ، فاستقبلهم صاحب الدار وجهرة كريمة من شباب الحلي بالهتاف والترحيب ودخل معاليه ورفاقه الدار بين عاصفة من التصفيق .

وخطب في الاجتماع الحافل حضرات الاستاذ رشيد افندي الملوحي والدكتور سيف الدين بك المأمون والدكتور ناظم بك القدسي وفخري بك البارودي وهشاني افندي الجلاد وقائب دوما نسيب بك الكيلاني ، في مواضيع عامة تناولوا فيها مضار الهجرة الآشورية الى سوريا وحالة البلاد السيئة والضائقة التي تعانيها واهمال السلطات العسابة عرافق البلاد العامة والشكوى المستمرة من هذا الاهمال .

وقد اقترح السيد الكيلاني ارسال وفد الى باريس ، يطلع وزارة الخارجية والرأي العام الفرنسي على الحالة التي صارت اليها البلاد وان تمدد الامة بانال .

ونهض صاحب المعالي جميل بك مردم بك فقال بأن الكتلة الوطنية اذا وجدت الضرورة مبرمة الى ارسال الوفد بحثت قضيتهم وقررت الواجب فيه . واني مستعد لان اسافر على نفقتي الخاصة ، ذلك لاني افضل ان انفق ثروتي القليلة في سبيل نفع البلاد على ان أفقدها تحت تأثير الظروف السيئة التي تساس بها البلاد .

فدوى المكان بالتصفيق والهتاف . وانهض من بعد الاستاذ الحاج رشيد افندي الملوحي

وتلا نص البرقية التالية :

« ان الجموع المحتشدة الممتلئة لطبقات الامة تؤيد الكتلة الوطنية في احتجاجها على الغارة الاشورية وعلى موقف الحكومة الصامت وعلى السياسة المتبعة بالهجرة كل متشرد وطريد الى هذه البلاد التي تعاني شر نكبات القحط والجوع واهمال السلطات ومهاجرة اهليها منها طلباً للقوت .

El-Ayyam.

14th September,
1934.

فارتفعت الاصوات بالموافقة على هذا النص وارسالها الى وزارة الخارجية والى
 صبة الامم .
 وانه مما يسر الكتلة الوطنية ان الاجتماع الحاشد كان مظهرًا رائعًا من مظاهر تضامن
 الامة واتحادها وشعورها بجراجه الموقف الحاضر والتفاهم حول الكتلة الوطنية
 وتأييدها لها .

تحت شعار اوقات حزن

تصرف حزن

جاء من جنود الثوري سعد
 وتصرفوا بحسن جيل تلك الدمام
 بعد ان قضى مدة اجازته الرسمية منتظلاً
 في روم لبنان ومضايقتها الجيدة فترحب
 بخدمه

من تقرير الشرطة

جاء في تقرير الشرطة ان السيد
 مصطفى الارزوقم التركي اليه اجناب
 الحدود السورية برون جواز قاتل وهو
 قيد التحقيق

واقفل السيد محمدان على اخرى حله
 خيراً بدين الان رسمي وارسلته اوراق
 الدعوى الى المحكمة واقفل السيد عبد
 الرحمن ابن احمد القزالي لصاحبه اربعة
 كرويات دفان مهرب منه

خطا مطيعي

جاء في رسالة يوم الثلاثاء ان السيد
 حسن وحسي وال عمال للذات انتشيك في
 معركة جسر الخرابي بأل الطيناع
 والمسيح بن حسن بن حسي وال هو
 الذي كان موجوداً في تلك المعركة

من المظهر ان تفتتح لجنة الدفاع
 عن الاوقاف الاسلامية في حزن خدال
 الشهيد وهي مؤلفة كما ذكرت قبلاً من
 خمسة اشخاص يشكون حزن في مؤثر
 الاوقاف التي يقدر في لهو الجارى ولم
 الشيخ توفيق الانسي ، الشيخ ابراهيم
 حلف ، مصطفى امين المروحي ، القاضي
 نديم الموصل ، الشجر يحيى الحانكا

نادي الدوحة

جاء في لبة امس ان حساب رئيس
 نادي دوحه طاب في حزن
 بعد ان استلم رتبته واستمره السابق
 وقد فاز الاستاذ العتيق حبيب وسلاط
 الكادف المسلم الذي بدأ فلاح الاستاذ
 وحسن ساني اوتاد فقيتها على ما تالا
 من الثقة وزجر نادي دوحه الميساس
 الاضطرار والندم في حياته الجديفة

صناير ، الحريق

بشرت البلدية بوضع صناير الماء
 التي من شأنها مساعدة رجال الاطفاء على
 اطفاء الحريق واوشكت ان تنتهي من
 هذه العملية بانها بشرت بمد انابيب

لماذا الاطباء يصفون دائماً الحليب المحمّد

نستنتج

HOME FOR THE ASSYRIANS

THE BRITISH GUIANA SUGGESTION

SIR J. SIMON'S LETTER

Sir John Simon in a letter to M. Oliven, president of the League Committee for the Settlement of the Assyrians, suggests a League inquiry into the possibility of finding a home for Assyrians from Iraq in British Guiana. M. Oliven had written on June 11 asking the British Government to reconsider the possibility of settling



Assyrians who may wish to leave Iraq in territory under British jurisdiction, in view of the breakdown of the scheme proposed for their settlement in Brazil.

The letter states that his Majesty's Government have renewed their efforts to find a suitable destination within the Colonial Empire for the Assyrians of Iraq. In view of the fact that it is a case of finding not merely land which can be made available, but land on which, from the point of view both of physical and economic conditions, the Assyrians can be expected to prosper, and into which they can be introduced without creating new and difficult problems of a political, social, or economic order, this is no easy matter.

The results of the examination which has been undertaken into the possibilities of settlement in various territories in the Colonial Empire have hitherto, with one exception, been unfavourable. That exception concerns an area in the Rupununi district of British Guiana, where the prospects seem to be *prima facie* such as to justify his Majesty's Government in bringing them to the notice of the committee.

The area is an extensive one, and should be sufficiently large to accommodate all the Assyrians who may desire to leave Iraq. At present it is for the most part unsettled. A considerable number of horses and cattle are grazed upon it, and it appears to have possibilities of further development as a stock-raising area. Its agricultural potentialities have not yet been properly tested, but it is thought that limited areas would lend themselves to cultivation sufficiently to meet the requirements of the Assyrian settlers and their stock. Much closer examination will, however, be necessary before the district can definitely be pronounced as suitable

for Assyrian settlement, and an independent and impartial investigation conducted on the spot with this object, under the auspices of the League of Nations, appears to his Majesty's Government to be essential.

ATTITUDE OF COLONY

The land concerned is the property of the Government of British Guiana, but certain parts of it are at present leased to private interests. The largest of these interests is the Rupununi Development Company, which holds approximately 1,500 square miles of what is probably the best grazing land. The Government of British Guiana have accordingly taken the necessary steps to secure an option, under which, if the League of Nations decide to proceed with the scheme, the entire assets of the above company could be purchased for the sum of \$168,000, at any time prior to March 20, 1935.

The letter refers to a resolution of the Legislative Council agreeing that the Government of British Guiana should cooperate in carrying the settlement into effect if it is decided to proceed with the project, and continues:—

Until such time as the new community is successfully established as an integral part of the population of the colony and is in a position to make its due contribution to the general revenue, it will constitute a financial liability. The Government of British Guiana are not in a position to accept any part of this liability. The possibilities of settlement in British Guiana are accordingly placed before the committee at this stage without prejudice to the question of the provision of the necessary finance.

His Majesty's Government fully appreciate the importance of the Assyrian problem, and they are impressed by the great urgency of finding a satisfactory solution for it. They trust, therefore, that the committee will lose no time in taking the necessary steps to institute the independent inquiry in British Guiana which is recommended above.

A memorandum was enclosed giving details of the area in question, discussing possible lines of communication, and giving a general idea of the probable cost of settlement so far as it can at present be estimated.

"The Times."

29th September, 1934.

المفوضية الافرنسية واسكان الاشوريين

بيروت في ١٥ ايلول - لمراسل فلسطين الخاص - اذاعت دائرة المطبوعات في المفوضية العليا البيان التالي :

نشرت بعض الصحف اخباراً غير صحيحة بشأن الاشوريين والكلدانيين فاصدرت المفوضية العليا بلاغاً بالابضاجات التالية :

في شهر آب سنة ١٩٣٣ التجأ الى الاراضي السورية ٥٠٠ شخص من الاشوريين الكلدانيين من قبيلة (تباري) فعرضت مشكلة النجائهم على جمعية الامم واتفق على ان هؤلاء اللاجئين يظلون معتبرين رغم وجودهم في سوريا من مجموع الطائفة الاشورية الكلدانية الموجودة في العراق والتي تفتش لها جمعية الامم عن مقر جلاء نهائي في العالم

وبناء على طلب صريح من جمعية الامم قبلت الدولة المنتدبة بصورة استثنائية بدخول نساء اللاجئين واولادهم الموجودين في سوريا منذ سنة وقد خصصت حكومة العراق اعتمادات لتأمين معاشهم

فالمفوضية العليا لا يمكنها الا ان تبدي اسعها لما ترى من سوء النية التي تستعملها بعض العناصر في محاولتها استقلال هذا العمل الانساني لانه الاضطرابات السياسية .

Palastin.

September 16th, 1934.

ASSYRIANS IN IRAQ

Mr. MANDER asked what was the present position with regard to the negotiations being carried on by the League of Nations for removing the Assyrians from Iraq and establishing them in some other country.

Mr. EDEN, Lord Privy Seal (Warwick and Leamington, U.), who was received with loud cheers on rising to reply for the first time since his new appointment, said:—The Committee which the Council of the League of Nations has set up to deal with this problem are at present investigating a scheme for the settlement of any Assyrians, who may wish to leave Iraq, on land owned by a British company of high standing, in the State of Paraná in Southern Brazil. The Brazilian Government have generously offered on certain conditions to accept the whole of the Assyrians in groups of 500 families a month, as and when the company can provide for their settlement.

Meanwhile, the Committee have thought it essential to assure themselves by means of a local investigation that the land proposed is suitable for the purpose and that the conditions are such as to enable the Assyrians to become a useful element in Brazil. They have entrusted this investigation to Brigadier J. G. Browne, until recently Officer Commanding the Assyrian Levies in Iraq, Brigadier Browne, who will be assisted

by a representative of the Nansen Office at Geneva and by the Counsellor of the Swiss Legation at Rio de Janeiro, left for Brazil on January 27.

16

'The Times'

31st January 1934

ASSYRIAN REFUGEES AT MOSUL

15

A DIFFICULT PROBLEM

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MOSUL, Nov. 30

It is important not to delay the decision as to the fate of those Assyrians who wish to leave Iraq, and to put it into effect as soon as possible.

The number of those who have constituted themselves refugees is increasing daily. Apart from the 1,500 women and children, left destitute as a result of the killings in August, who are being maintained in a concentration camp here by the Iraqi Government, many families have arrived here from their villages in the expectation of being sent to the destination selected by the League.

It is impossible to persuade these people that the arrangements for their departure are unlikely to be made in the near future, and that they had better, therefore, remain in their villages and sow their winter crop. The events of the autumn have thoroughly scared them, and they profess to believe they will not be safe from raids by their Kurdish neighbours if they remain in their villages, or else that the fact of their remaining will be regarded by the Iraqi Government as proof that they do not wish to emigrate. They are by no means attracted by the idea of emigrating to Brazil, the only country so far to have been very seriously suggested, and would prefer to go to Syria, the Government of which is unwilling to receive them. When it is explained to them that there is no other alternative, and that if they do not plough and sow they will starve before many months are past, they say, "So be it." Actually the state of public security in this region is comparatively good; but occasional thefts of sheep and such like suffice to maintain the sense of insecurity in their troubled minds.

The Settlement Officer, Major Thompson, and the Administrative Inspector of Mosul, Major Wilson, are now touring the district trying to reassure the Assyrian population and explaining what is being done by the League, but little caravans of refugees continue to trickle in, adding to the number of *bouches inutiles*, which is now probably nearly 5,000 in Mosul. Until some country has been selected and means for financing the transfer of the Assyrians have been arranged, these refugees will continue to be a cause of anxiety to those concerned.

The difficulty of arranging for the migration of the Assyrians is complicated by the fact that a large number, possibly 5,000, refuse to follow the Patriarch Mar Shimun in any new settlement scheme, as they look upon him, not without reason, as the chief cause of their tribulations. These are the inhabitants of the villages which remained quiet and loyal to the Iraqi Government in the summer, but were, nevertheless, involved in the reprisals upon the insurgent faction. Thus it would seem that two separate settlements may be necessary if the migration is to be satisfactorily arranged.

The Times'
Dec 1, 1933.

The Assyrian Problem

14

LORD HAILSHAM'S reply to the ARCHBISHOP of CANTERBURY, who asked for information yesterday about the policy of the League of Nations towards the Assyrians in Iraq, was satisfactory so far as it answered this limited question. The problem of the resettlement of those Assyrians who wish to leave Iraq is not to be solved in a few weeks. Its successful solution depends upon the fulfilment of three conditions—the agreement of some Government to accept these refugees; the existence in its territories of lands suitable for settlement by about 25,000 highly specialized Near-Eastern mountaineers; and the provision of funds to cover the cost of their transportation to their new home and of their maintenance there until they become self-supporting. At present a committee appointed by the Council of the League of Nations is studying the problem, and it would clearly be improper to canvass in public the merits of such regions as might suit the Assyrians until their respective Governments agree to accept the refugees.

In other respects, however, it must be confessed that LORD HAILSHAM'S reply to an extremely effective speech from the ARCHBISHOP—notably his attempt to exonerate successive British Governments entirely from any suspicion of blame, and his refusal to admit any separate British liability for their resettlement—leaves a certain sense of uneasiness. It is perfectly true that the League of Nations, and not the British Government, were responsible for the failure to include the home of the Assyrians within the boundaries of Iraq; that the British Government had no part in inducing them to revolt against the Turks in 1915; that British assurances of our moral responsibility for their welfare when Iraq became independent should not be quoted apart from their context. It is equally true that some of the Assyrian leaders asked for concessions which no native Government of Iraq could safely grant; that they were "difficult" and sometimes overbearing is probable enough; and it is certain that the local revolt, which had such tragic consequences for many innocent people, was an act of criminal folly and a grave threat to the new Arab State. But when all is said the fact remains that the Assyrians in Iraq were enlisted, paid, and trained by British Governments in order to avoid the expense of employing British troops to uphold the British Mandate against local opposition; that they thus accumulated a large stock of unpopularity among the numerous anti-British elements in that country; and that British statesmen might have foreseen the probable consequences of the militarization of an alien minority which had faithfully served British policy in Iraq, and had thus become an object of Arab suspicions and fears. This country has no legal responsibility for the present plight of the Assyrians; but, as more than one speaker pointed out in the House of Lords, it has a moral duty to do its best for the remnant of a brave, if misguided, people.

'The Times'

Nov 29, 1933.

THE PRIMATE'S APPEAL

The ARCHBISHOP of CANTERBURY called attention to the position of the Assyrians in Iraq. He asked the Government whether they could give any information as to the policy of the League of Nations concerning them, and moved for papers.

He said that he made no apology for his motion, which dealt with a matter which very directly affected the chivalry and honour of this country. He had a deep personal interest in it, inasmuch as since the time of his predecessor, Archbishop Lord Davidson, there had been what was called an Archbishop's mission to the Assyrians, endeavouring to give to them what educational help was possible. Ever since the Assyrians had looked, and he hoped not in vain, for the friendship and protection of the holders of his office, but their present plight and their future were entitled to make a very strong appeal to the interest and compassion of the people of this country.

The Assyrians were the remnant of a very ancient people, and a very ancient Church. Those two things went together; they were both a nation and a Church. As a nation they were proud of their traditions; as a Church, nominally Nestorian in creed, they had held with the utmost bravery and tenacity their Christian faith during centuries of persecution. The head of the Church and nation, the present Patriarch, who had held office since his uncle was murdered in 1918, was a young man of 25 years of age, who was educated at St. Augustine's College, Canterbury, and at Westcott House, Cambridge. The Assyrians were only a remnant, and it was somewhat pathetic to think of the contrast between what they were now and what they were in the dim vistas of the past.

Having referred to the part played by the Assyrians in fighting the Turks in the War, the most rev. Primate said that he would not go into the long and painful story of the attempted settlement of the Assyrians after the War. In 1930 the Assyrians were not unnaturally both surprised and alarmed at the prospective Anglo-Iraq Treaty, by which this country was to deliver

up its mandate and the Iraq kingdom was to be constituted an independent sovereignty and to apply for admission to the League of Nations. It was thought, and perhaps diplomatically rightly thought, that guarantees for the protection of minorities was a matter for the League of Nations itself; if it saw fit to admit the Iraq kingdom into the League it was entitled to impose what guarantees it thought fit. Nevertheless, it was not surprising that the Assyrians were deeply disappointed at finding that their particular position received no apparent recognition in the Anglo-Iraq Treaty.

The matter went before the League of Nations, and he had an interview with, among others, Lord Passfield, who was then Secretary of State for the Colonies. Lord Passfield gave an assurance that after the conclusion of any treaty and after the admission, if it were brought about, of Iraq into the League of Nations, the welfare of the Assyrian people would be a matter of the closest concern of his Majesty's Government. At Geneva in the same month Sir Francis Humphrey, who was our Commissioner at Baghdad, stated that if Iraq should prove herself unworthy of the confidence which had been placed in her the moral responsibility must rest with his Majesty's Government which would not attempt to transfer it to the Mandates Commission. We knew from the *rapporiteur* that that declaration was the determining factor in the decision of the League to give the mandate to the Iraq kingdom.

BRITISH RESPONSIBILITY

His Majesty's Government and this country had put themselves in a position of quite special responsibility, even after the mandate had been transferred to the Iraq kingdom, to secure the safety and protection of the Assyrian people. He admitted that the difficulties were very great, but he thought it ought to have been possible to find some place in which the Assyrians could live and fulfil their own life together. He held that Mar Shimun, the young Patriarch, in circumstances of peculiar difficulty, had proved himself, though sometimes unwise and hot-headed, at the same time single-minded and upright. As far as he knew from January, 1933, Mar Shimun had tried to counsel calm-

ness and patience among his people, but it was extremely difficult. After seeing all the documents he (the Archbishop) thought that if there was obstinacy on the part of the Patriarch there had also been unfair pressure brought to bear by the Iraq Government.

Speaking of the shooting of 300 Assyrians by Iraq machine-gunners on August 11, the Archbishop said that the occasion had been described by someone not too friendly to the Assyrians as such an exhibition of savage fanaticism as had seldom been seen. The representative of the Iraq Government at the League of Nations had fully admitted and deplored the excesses. The League acted with commendable promptitude, and the matter must now be left in their hands. The Committee had been appointed by the League to arrange some scheme of resettlement. Some people who were competent to give information thought that certainly half the Assyrians would wish to leave the country; others thought that a much larger number would go if they were free and resettlement proved to be successful. Where could a country be found willing to receive a new population of between 20,000 and 30,000 people and house them in conditions where a mountain-bred people could live and work? He understood that negotiations were proceeding with the Government of Brazil, and he believed that there was land there large enough and suitable enough even for such a large immigration. The cost would be very great, and he hoped the British Government would give an assurance that they would be prepared to grant a credit for some amount.

He appealed to the Iraq Government to use this opportunity to show their generosity and to prove that they were not unworthy of the confidence which had been placed in them, and which of late had been so rudely shattered. They ought to be generous enough to contribute largely to the cost of resettlement, to do their utmost for the satisfactory relief of the destitute families, to compensate for injury done, and, when the League Commission reached Iraq, to see that no obstacle was put in the way of all Assyrians having the full opportunity that was open to them.

It was of the utmost importance that someone should belong to or accompany the Commission who knew the Assyrian language, was regarded as representative by the Assyrian people, and who could put the case fully and frankly before them. He hoped that the Iraq Government, considering its immense responsibility, would be willing to act in the way desired.

He appealed to the leaders of the Assyrians and their friends in this country most earnestly at this juncture to exercise some self-restraint, to refrain from recrimination and grave accusations, which could do no good at present and could only prejudice the chances of a happier future for the Assyrian people. He asked his Majesty's Government to show that they were willing to shoulder a very considerable part of the expense which might be involved. He asked them not to be punctilious in measuring the degree of their responsibility for this people, and not to be penurious in the fulfilment of their obligations. (Cheers.)

LORD NOEL-BUXTON said that in this question the good name of our country was indeed at stake, unless we showed determination to provide such security as was still possible for the Assyrians who remained. It was our bounden duty to give to them what future was possible to the very limits of possibility.

The EARL of LISTOWEL laid emphasis on the moral responsibility of the British Government for the welfare of the Assyrian people. Both the most rev. Primate and Lord Noel-Buxton had mentioned that the Assyrians had fought on our side in the War, but they had not pointed out the enormous sacrifices which that small and brave people made at that time.

GOVERNMENT REPLY

VISCOUNT HAILSHAM, Secretary of State for War, said that this country had no connexion at all with the Assyrians entering the War. After the withdrawal of the Russians from the War in 1917 Britain rescued the Assyrians from what would otherwise have been inevitable destruction. Without seeking to apportion responsibility for the series of misfortunes which had fallen upon that people, it was quite untrue to suggest that this country had been guilty of any wrong-doing towards them. Every effort had been made by the British Government to assist the Assyrians in trying to resettle in the land

which they occupied before the War, or, that was not possible, in some other suitable territory.

Speaking of the period before the termination of the mandate régime, Lord Hailsham said that it was only just and fair to the Iraqis to recognize that the Assyrians on their part proved in 1930 very difficult to please, and still seemed to expect to be given a special and privileged position and better conditions with regard to taxation and other matters than those which were enjoyed by the neighbouring Kurds, among whom they were being settled. It had been said that when the Iraq application for admission to the League and the cancellation of the mandate was being considered at Geneva Sir Francis Humphreys gave an assurance that the British Government would accept moral and special responsibility for the future safety and welfare of the Assyrians and for their protection in Iraq. That was a complete misunderstanding. No such thing happened. What did happen was that a direct question was put, whether or not Iraq had reached such a pitch of development that she could be relied on for religious tolerance, and Sir Francis Humphreys used the words: "His Majesty's Government fully realizes its responsibility in recommending that Iraq should be admitted to the League, which was, in its view, the only legal way of terminating the mandate. Should Iraq prove herself unworthy of the confidence which had been placed in her the moral responsibility must rest on his Majesty's Government, which would not attempt to transfer it to the Mandates Commission." Sir Francis Humphreys never undertook any moral or legal responsibility for the conduct of Iraq; the responsibility which he did undertake was the responsibility of assuring the Council that the Mandatory Power was satisfied that Iraq had at that date reached such a pitch of maturity as justified her application for admission to the League. That ought to be made clear beyond a doubt.

The Assyrians were never asked nor encouraged to make their exodus in Syria. They marched there with arms, leaving their women and children behind. The Assyrians determined to return armed, although they had been warned not to do so. When they communicated their intention, they were invited to give up their arms, but instead they crossed the river at a ford and attacked an Iraq outpost. The attack was undoubtedly a serious one, and for a bit it looked as if it might have been successful. If it had succeeded there could be no doubt that the consequences would have been very serious and there would have been a first-class war in Iraq, with very great repercussions. One outpost of Iraq troops was wiped out and when the position was recovered the bodies of the killed or wounded were found to have been mutilated. It was not possible or desirable to go into a nice appraisal of the exact measure of responsibility which rested on one side or the other. He agreed with the Archbishop of Canterbury that, whatever provocation might or might not have been received, the excesses committed afterwards by the Iraq army were quite unjustifiable, and merited, and had received, the severest condemnation.

So far as he knew the Government had given to the most rev. Primate all the information they possessed with regard to the Committee set up by the Council of the League of Nations. The Committee adjourned at the end of October for certain inquiries to materialize. The Government had to-day received a telegram from Geneva informing them that a meeting of the Committee, which was to have been held yesterday, had been postponed until Thursday. The reasons for the postponement were not given, but it looked as though further inquiries were proceeding and further information was hoped for.

He was glad to be able to give what he thought would be regarded as satisfactory news with regard to what was now being done in Iraq. A Committee was set up in Iraq, in addition to that set up by the Council of the League, which was charged with the duty of seeing that the best possible provision should be made for the refugees and victims, and with the rehabilitation of the villages. Major Thompson, the British adviser, was a member of the Committee. The Government had been informed by him that the work of reconstructing and repopulating the looted villages was placed in his hands. He at once arranged that the destitute women and children should be brought to Mosul, where a camp was being established. About £200 a week was being spent on this camp, which contained some 1,500 refugees. There was a special doctor

in attendance and the refugees were stated to be well cared for and in excellent health. Meanwhile, under the supervision of another British official in the service of the Iraq Government, the majority of the looted villages had been repaired. Arrangements had been made for the provision of seed, implements, and other necessities for their restocking, and that work was actively going on.

So far as the Committee of the Council of the League was concerned, there had been, he thought, about eight meetings. He believed that one of the schemes, to which the most rev. Primate had referred as being under consideration, was being actually pursued, but he could not tell whether it would be successful. The problem of settling an uncertain but considerable number of refugees of another race in a foreign country was, under existing conditions, one of very great difficulty. So far as the Government had been able to ascertain, there did not seem to be within our own Dominions and Colonies a suitable place available. Inquiries with regard to Brazil were being actively carried on.

THE QUESTION OF COST

The Government of Iraq had undertaken to make a substantial contribution towards whatever cost might be concerned. How much that provision would ultimately amount to he was not in a position to say: no figures had been fixed, but the discussion was going on between the Committee and the Iraq Government. It had been suggested that the British Government might either, by way of credit or guaranteeing a loan, find a very substantial part of the money. The view of his Majesty's Government was that, apart from the special responsibility of Iraq, there rested also a very grave responsibility on the League of Nations as a whole. Any financial responsibility which was accepted by the League of Nations involved, indirectly, a very considerable financial responsibility on this country, because, speaking from memory, he thought that nearly a quarter of the expenditure of the League was borne by the British Empire. He did not know what steps might be taken by the League to assist in finding the money which would ultimately be necessary to make any emigration scheme a success. He was quite sure that the Government would be prepared to do their best to get the League to take a generous view of its responsibility, and he did not think we should be backward in sharing that responsibility with the members of the League. But he could not give an assurance that we should individually, apart altogether from the League of Nations, which was handling this matter, accept a separate and independent liability outside of our liability as members of the League.

He could not say what solution the League of Nations Committee would find for this problem, or whether they would find a solution, but he had tried to show that the lines on which the League were moving were the right lines. They were fully alive to the seriousness of the situation and the need for helping the Assyrians, but while their inquiries were proceeding, which must take some time, the Iraq Government were doing all they could be expected to do to prevent further suffering among the Assyrians and to maintain them. The representative of this country would collaborate with the League in trying to find a satisfactory solution with the least possible delay.

The ARCHBISHOP of CANTERBURY, in withdrawing his motion for papers, expressed the hope that his Majesty's Government would induce the Iraq Government to see that if they were to stand right in the eyes of this country and the League it was their duty to do all they could to relieve the Assyrians, and when the time came for a resettlement scheme to come before the League Assembly to see that every opportunity was given to the Assyrian people freely and voluntarily to accept the offer.

ASSYRIANS IN IRAQ

A BRITISH OR LEAGUE INQUIRY?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—As the Bishop of Gloucester has, in his letter on the Assyrians, quoted extensively from my memorandum printed with the letters of Miss Gertrude Bell, and as I was deeply concerned with the fortunes of the Assyrians during my six years' term of office as High Commissioner for Iraq, I feel that some words on the subject are now due from me.

There is, I fear, little room for doubt that something dreadful has happened; but I do not believe that the responsible members of the Iraq Government were privy to it. They showed themselves extraordinarily tolerant when in 1926 the Assyrian Levies in British employ, without the slightest justification, burst out of their barracks on the day of the great Moslem festival and shot down in the streets of Kirkuk about 100 defenceless Moslem men, women, and children, in spite of the efforts of their British officers to control them. King Feisal at that time, at my request, in order to assuage communal feeling, pardoned a number of Assyrians convicted of taking part in this massacre. Moreover, the Iraq Government made earnest attempts to settle the Assyrians in as large blocks as possible on fertile vacant uplands in the north. This settlement was well under way when I left Iraq in 1929, but was, I understand, upset later by the rebellious attitude of the Kurdish Sheikh of Barzan.

No one could reasonably expect the Government to turn out Kurdish tribes wholesale and give their lands to the Assyrians. This would only have provoked intense resentment, and would have led to perpetual fighting. Yet this is what the Patriarchal family has in practice demanded, fearing that, if the Assyrians were not settled in one solid enclave, their ecclesiastical dominance would disappear and the Assyrians (who are of the Nestorian faith) would become merged among the many Chaldaean Christians of the Mosul Province, and would ultimately transfer their spiritual allegiance to Rome. *Hinc illae lacrimae* and hence the traditional interest which the Church of England has taken in the Assyrians. Knowing all these difficulties, I tried to get Canada, Australia, or New Zealand to accept the Assyrians as immigrants, but they refused. I even approached the Argentine with the same result. No country would have them. There seemed to be nothing left but to keep the Assyrians in Iraq, do our best for their

settlement, and obtain really solid and practical guarantees from Iraq for their security before the termination of British control over Iraq policy. In short it is clear now that we should have insisted on the satisfactory conclusion of the Assyrian land settlement and the appointment for a term of years of an officially recognized League Inspector of Minorities as a preliminary condition of relinquishing control. We did not do so.

What should now be done? The Arab papers are protesting that the British Government has no more right of inquiry and interference in Iraq internal affairs than any other Power. This seems to be technically correct. If the Iraq Government itself takes up this line we must fall back on the League of Nations. The League assigned the Mosul Province to Iraq rather than to Turkey on the express condition that British control in that Province should be maintained for 25 years (a condition which was not fulfilled) and they agreed to the boundary between Iraq and Turkey proposed by the British, mainly on the strength of the report by General Laidoner, their Commissioner, which confirmed the British allegations of Turkish massacres of Christians on the Iraq border. Thus a principal reason for the assignment by the League of Mosul to Iraq was the assumption that all Christians would be safe under Iraq rule. If there are grounds for believing that this condition and the undertakings regarding minorities given to the League by Iraq before the termination of the British mandate have been violated, the League has a right to intervene and, if Iraq will not have a public British inquiry, the League has a right to make one and after it to insist on effective guarantees for the future safety of minorities in the Mosul Province. It is for Iraq to decide. Either a British inquiry or a League inquiry seems inevitable.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

H. DOBBS.

Camphire, Cappelquin, Co. Waterford,
Aug. 25.

'The Times'

27th August, 1933.

ASSYRIANS IN IRAQ

THE PATRIARCH'S DETENTION

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—The explanatory note published in *The Times* of August 9 below your Baghdad Correspondent's telegram on the Assyrian trouble contains one or two erroneous statements of fact, which are reproduced in your leading article of August 10 (the essential fairness of which I take this opportunity of acknowledging) and in the Rev. Dr. Wigram's letter published in your issue of August 11.

The campaign of armed disobedience initiated by Mar Shim'un preceded and did not follow his detention in Baghdad (he was never arrested but was always free to move about the city and environs). The earlier manifestations of this campaign led to the decision to summon him to the capital to receive a statement of the Government's policy in implementing the ruling of the League of Nations regarding the Assyrians. The Minister of the Interior first interviewed him on May 31. Discussions continued for three weeks, and the instructions to Mar Shim'un not to leave were not issued until June 22.

The first Yaku affair referred to by your Correspondent, and which ultimately led to the calling in of the military in support of the civil power, began to assume serious proportions in May; on May 22 he had come into Dohuk with an armed following and defied the local administrative authorities; by June 19 the numbers of his band had risen to 200 and loyal Assyrians were being intimidated. Before a show of military force Yaku submitted on June 24, two days after the detention order to Mar Shim'un, and, with what now is shown to have been mistaken clemency, was pardoned.

No protest against the Patriarch's detention was in fact ever made by the Tiyari and Tkhuma or, indeed, any other Assyrians, nor (surprisingly perhaps but such is the fact) has it ever been mentioned by them throughout the whole affair. On July 24, after the exodus, Yaku addressed to the Qaim Maqam of Zakho a letter explaining that he and his party had emigrated because they "did not agree with the policy" explained to them at the Mosul meetings of July 10 and 11. The movement was not merely a gesture of discontent but an attempt to force the League to settle them in Syria.

Those familiar with the recent history of the Assyrian question will find no difficulty in realizing that the detention of Mar Shim'un in Baghdad was not required to prompt the exodus to Syria any more than it was required to cause the mutiny of the Assyrian levies against their British officers in 1932, when a British battalion was flown over from Egypt to deal with them, or to give rise to the scheme for a

mass migration to Persia of which much was heard some months ago.

All would yet have been well had it not been for the extraordinary action of the mandatory authorities in Syria. The sudden restoration of 500 rifles (the figure officially admitted) could only be interpreted by the simple-minded tribesmen as a direct incitement to attack the Iraqi forces on the opposite bank of the Tigris, and so interpreted it was.

Your obedient servant,

NOURY SAID.

Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Baghdad,
Iraq, Aug. 21.

11

'The Times'
25th August 1933.

KING FEISAL STAYS IN BAGHDAD

10

REBELLIOUS ASSYRIANS BLAMED

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

BAGHDAD, AUG. 24

The King's departure has again been postponed for a week. The Arabic newspaper *Alam al Arabi* politely suggests that "the presence of his Majesty at the heart of his kingdom amid his people continuously at all times has become necessary for the reinforcement of the agencies making for peace and the continued maintenance of calm and tranquillity." The Arabic Press in general on the occasion of yesterday's anniversary of his coronation hailed King Feisal as the maker of the regenerated and independent Iraq of to-day.

A telegram in the name of 14 Assyrian sectional leaders has been sent to the King from Amadiyah, which runs:—

We, forming a majority of the Assyrian leaders, denounce the rebellious section of our race which has proved forgetful of the continued kindness shown them by our King, the Iraqi Government, and people. We deem ourselves bound by a sacred duty to express our gratification at the splendid punitive action undertaken by the forces of the State in purging the country of faithless elements set upon undermining the edifice of Iraqi unity.

The telegram praises the "fresh measure of sympathy" extended to the Assyrian community by the relief offered to the distressed families and the grant of mercy to penitent rebels.

Preparations are being made to give a rousing welcome to the Iraqi Army on its return to Baghdad to-morrow from the operations in the north. The Guildmasters of Baghdad appeal to the barbers and coffeshop keepers to give free shaves and free coffee to the returning soldiers for three days.

THE ASSYRIAN PETITION

FROM OUR LEAGUE CORRESPONDENT

GENEVA, AUG. 24

In accordance with the usual procedure in connexion with minority petitions, the Chairman in Office of the Council of the League of Nations, Don Francisco Castello Najera, of Mexico, has nominated two members of the Council to act with him on the Committee of Three which will consider the petition of the Patriarch Mar Shimun about the Assyrians in Iraq. These are Norway and the Irish Free State, and both have accepted.

Having considered the evidence submitted by Mar Shimun any member of the Committee will have the right to place the matter on the agenda of the Council.

'The Times'

25th Aug. 1933.

ASSYRIANS IN IRAQ

PROBLEMS OF SETTLEMENT

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—A trustworthy report which reached me last week from Mosul showed clearly that the Assyrians, than whom no people in Asia have served us more loyally or at greater cost to themselves, were being driven to desperation. They were ready last December to migrate as a body to Persia, where religious and racial toleration and public order are guaranteed not by the League of Nations, nor by the "moral responsibility" of his Majesty's Government, but by a strong and just ruler. They were discouraged from doing so, partly by the fact that the Persian Government declined to allow them to settle anywhere as a single community. As long as October 20, 1931, the Assyrians, in a petition to the Permanent Mandates Commission, declared that "it would be impossible for us to live in Iraq after the withdrawal of the Mandatory Power," and they pressed for facilities to migrate to Syria, where France still enjoys the reputation, and has the ability and the intention, to protect minority interests. In deference, it is to be supposed, to British views, the French Government, whose local representatives were known to favour this solution, closed the frontier against them.

The Permanent Mandates Commission realized the probable effect on the Assyrians of the admission of Iraq to the League of Nations. They were unmoved by the optimistic declaration of the present British Ambassador in Iraq that Moslem officials could be trusted to show wisdom and tolerance to minorities, whether Kurdish or Assyrian, that settlement operations were proceeding smoothly, and that, in the words of Voltaire, "tout est pour le mieux, dans le meilleur des mondes possibles." Their misgivings were, however, allayed by the declaration made at the XXth Session that

Should Iraq prove herself unworthy of the confidence which has been placed in her, the moral responsibility must rest with His Majesty's Government.

They proceeded to devise paper safeguards, which must, in practice, be ineffective, as the onus of finding at any given moment a member of the League willing to champion their cause, in the event of a breach by Iraq of the "minority" provisions of the Declaration, rests with the minorities themselves. With the leaders under arrest, in gaol, in flight, or killed, what chance have they of being heard?

A few months after Sir Francis Humphrys's declarations at Geneva some Kurds, goaded into rebellion by official ineptitude, were disposed of with the assistance of the Royal Air Force, which wiped out 40 villages with, it is believed, small loss of life. Now, apparently, it is the turn of the Assyrians; let us hope, however, that the Royal Air Force will not, on this as on past occasions, be used to bolster up misgovernment. Assyrian levies are still guarding our aerodromes in Iraq, for the simple reason that the Royal Air Force are well aware that the

Arab army cannot be trusted to do so. Yet their titular head is under arrest, their friends are being killed by Kurdish irregulars, their families scattered and starving among their hereditary foes.

The only remedy now open, in my judgment, is to arrange for the settlement of the Assyrians as a whole in Syria. Correspondence that has reached me during the past few months makes it clear that they no longer trust British promises (we have placated our enemies at their expense too often). They regard the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem as committed to an uncritical acceptance of Iraqi assurances.

The appointment by the League of Nations of a Commissioner, with the fullest powers, with the cooperation of France and Great Britain, to arrange for the transfer of the Assyrian nation to Syria, affords the best hope of a solution.

When Great Britain assumed "moral responsibility" for what has actually happened, the League of Nations contracted out of its own responsibility, an ominous precedent. The financial liability for securing the settlement of the Assyrians, so far as it is not borne by Iraq, should therefore rest on this country.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

A. T. WILSON.

Much Hadham, Hertfordshire, Aug. 16.

'The Times'

19th August 1933.

ASSYRIAN PATRIARCH DEPORTED

Aug 19 1933

8

DEPRIVED OF IRAQI NATIONALITY

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

BAGHDAD, Aug. 18

The Nestorian Patriarch Mar Shimun XXI, the Ethnarch of the Assyrians, who had been under detention for some time for having declined to sign a declaration of loyalty to King Feisal and agree not to thwart the League's scheme for settlement for the Assyrians, was deported to-day by order of the Government and deprived of Iraqi nationality.

The British Air Officer Commanding in Iraq was present at the Hinaidi aerodrome when Mar Shimun, whose expression was quite impassive, left in a British machine for Jerusalem on his way to Cyprus.

Mr. Ogilvie-Forbes, the British Chargé d'Affaires, has been making urgent representations to the Iraqi Government to ensure that adequate safeguards be provided against the renewal of Kurdish attacks upon Assyrian villages.

The deportation of the Nestorian Patriarch has caused no surprise here, as it was known that such action was being considered by the Government; but it is thought that the cancellation of his Iraqi nationality may raise a constitutional question.

BRITISH AMBASSADOR'S JOURNEY

Sir Francis Humphrys, the British Ambassador to Iraq, who had an interview with the Prime Minister on Thursday about the Assyrian trouble in Iraq, has arranged to leave London to-day by train for Brindisi, whence he proposes to start on Monday in an Imperial Airways liner for Baghdad, where he is due to arrive on August 23.

The King of Iraq yesterday instructed his Legation in London to inform the British Government that "although everything is normal now in Iraq, and in spite of my broken health, I shall await the arrival of Sir Francis Humphrys in Baghdad; but there is no reason for further anxiety."

At the request of the Iraqi Government the British Government provided the means for the removal of the Nestorian Patriarch to a place of safety, and arranged for him to be brought by air to Jerusalem. He was accompanied by his father and brother.

'The Times'

19th August, 1933.

⑦

4 18th August 1933.

mission at Geneva in 1931, the Representative of the British Mandatory Government expressed his confidence in Iraqi tolerance for religious and racial minorities; last year, when Iraq became an independent State and a member of the League, its Government furnished the Council with guarantees of the rights of these minorities which should have secured members of the loyal Assyrian majority against the treatment which they have recently experienced. There is no evidence whatever that the present Government of Iraq sanctioned the display of anti-Assyrian violence, which has caused grave concern among its friends in this country; but its failure to appoint a competent military commander in the area in which the minorities are most numerous or to exercise any control over the methods employed in the suppression of a minor rebellion must invite attack. It will certainly be surprising if no reference to these lamentable events is made at Geneva next month, and if British official optimism does not incur almost as much criticism as Arab negligence. The best defence the Iraqi Government can make is to deal severely with any officers or officials whose violence has injured its reputation, to lose no time in completing the settlement of the loyal element among the Assyrians, and to make what restitution can be made to the innocent communities which have suffered violence and spoliation. A statement made by the PRIME MINISTER to our Correspondent yesterday encourages the hope that some at least of these steps will be taken immediately.

There still remains, however, the serious problem presented by the ASSYRIAN PATRIARCH and his immediate followers. Whether MAR SHIMUN or any member of his family was or was not responsible for the absurd and finally tragic flight of over a thousand armed Assyrians into French Syria, his attitude during the last four years has been increasingly obstructive and defiant. His attempts to arouse British sympathies by attacks on the Arab Government and by exaggerated claims have naturally aroused Arab ill will. No doubt he and his people had cause to complain of the incapacity or worse of some Iraqi officials, but there is no evidence that they suffered more than other communities. A well-armed minority always girding at the natives of the country, always invoking the aid of the mandatory authority, constantly expressing its distrust of Arab rule, nevertheless expected preferential treatment and demanded territorial privileges which its hosts could not grant without injustice to other elements. When the Council of the League of Nations refused his demand for administrative autonomy within Iraq, but assisted the Government of the country to settle the landless Assyrians in so far as was possible in homogeneous units, he not only refused to accept this concession but lost no opportunity of inciting those clans which he could influence to oppose and obstruct the scheme of settlement and to emigrate to Syria. His detention after he had been summoned to Baghdad was an error on the part of the Government in that it encouraged the wilder spirits among his followers to leave their

homes and families unprotected and undertake a hare-brained march into Syria without even ascertaining whether the French authorities would receive them; an adventure which led directly to the disasters which have overwhelmed many of his simple followers. But, while the responsibility for the most recent tragedy in the unhappy history of the Assyrians must be divided between the PATRIARCH and the Arab General at Simel, its roots lie in the failure of the League Council to foresee the consequences of its refusal to include their homeland of Hakkari within Iraq in 1925. Such mistakes are not easily repaired: the Council can still, however, assist such of the Assyrians who wish to leave Iraq—as many will—to find new homes in Syria or elsewhere.

THE ASSYRIAN PATRIARCH, MAR SHIMUN, has been reported to have fled from his home in Hakkari, Iraq, to the mountains of Syria, where he is believed to be hiding. This news, if true, would be a significant development in the ongoing conflict between the Assyrian community and the Iraqi Government. The Patriarch's flight is seen by many as a direct challenge to the authority of the Iraqi Government, which has been accused of mistreating the Assyrian minority. The Assyrian community, in turn, has been accused of harboring and supporting the Patriarch's forces. The situation remains tense, with both sides claiming the right to self-determination in the region.

Various reports from the region suggest that the Patriarch's forces are still active, despite his flight. Some claim that they have taken control of certain areas, while others report that they are being pursued by Iraqi troops. The Assyrian community is divided, with some supporting the Patriarch and others seeking a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The international community, including the League of Nations, is closely watching the situation, hoping for a peaceful settlement that respects the rights of all communities in the region.

FORIN
The Assyrian Patriarch, Mar Shimun, is reported to have fled from his home in Hakkari, Iraq, to the mountains of Syria, where he is believed to be hiding. This news, if true, would be a significant development in the ongoing conflict between the Assyrian community and the Iraqi Government. The Patriarch's flight is seen by many as a direct challenge to the authority of the Iraqi Government, which has been accused of mistreating the Assyrian minority. The Assyrian community, in turn, has been accused of harboring and supporting the Patriarch's forces. The situation remains tense, with both sides claiming the right to self-determination in the region.

THE ASSYRIAN PATRIARCH, MAR SHIMUN, has been reported to have fled from his home in Hakkari, Iraq, to the mountains of Syria, where he is believed to be hiding. This news, if true, would be a significant development in the ongoing conflict between the Assyrian community and the Iraqi Government. The Patriarch's flight is seen by many as a direct challenge to the authority of the Iraqi Government, which has been accused of mistreating the Assyrian minority. The Assyrian community, in turn, has been accused of harboring and supporting the Patriarch's forces. The situation remains tense, with both sides claiming the right to self-determination in the region.

ON THE
The Assyrian Patriarch, Mar Shimun, is reported to have fled from his home in Hakkari, Iraq, to the mountains of Syria, where he is believed to be hiding. This news, if true, would be a significant development in the ongoing conflict between the Assyrian community and the Iraqi Government. The Patriarch's flight is seen by many as a direct challenge to the authority of the Iraqi Government, which has been accused of mistreating the Assyrian minority. The Assyrian community, in turn, has been accused of harboring and supporting the Patriarch's forces. The situation remains tense, with both sides claiming the right to self-determination in the region.

THE ASSYRIAN PATRIARCH, MAR SHIMUN, has been reported to have fled from his home in Hakkari, Iraq, to the mountains of Syria, where he is believed to be hiding. This news, if true, would be a significant development in the ongoing conflict between the Assyrian community and the Iraqi Government. The Patriarch's flight is seen by many as a direct challenge to the authority of the Iraqi Government, which has been accused of mistreating the Assyrian minority. The Assyrian community, in turn, has been accused of harboring and supporting the Patriarch's forces. The situation remains tense, with both sides claiming the right to self-determination in the region.

Various reports from the region suggest that the Patriarch's forces are still active, despite his flight. Some claim that they have taken control of certain areas, while others report that they are being pursued by Iraqi troops. The Assyrian community is divided, with some supporting the Patriarch and others seeking a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The international community, including the League of Nations, is closely watching the situation, hoping for a peaceful settlement that respects the rights of all communities in the region.

FORIN
The Assyrian Patriarch, Mar Shimun, is reported to have fled from his home in Hakkari, Iraq, to the mountains of Syria, where he is believed to be hiding. This news, if true, would be a significant development in the ongoing conflict between the Assyrian community and the Iraqi Government. The Patriarch's flight is seen by many as a direct challenge to the authority of the Iraqi Government, which has been accused of mistreating the Assyrian minority. The Assyrian community, in turn, has been accused of harboring and supporting the Patriarch's forces. The situation remains tense, with both sides claiming the right to self-determination in the region.

THE ASSYRIAN PATRIARCH, MAR SHIMUN, has been reported to have fled from his home in Hakkari, Iraq, to the mountains of Syria, where he is believed to be hiding. This news, if true, would be a significant development in the ongoing conflict between the Assyrian community and the Iraqi Government. The Patriarch's flight is seen by many as a direct challenge to the authority of the Iraqi Government, which has been accused of mistreating the Assyrian minority. The Assyrian community, in turn, has been accused of harboring and supporting the Patriarch's forces. The situation remains tense, with both sides claiming the right to self-determination in the region.

ON THE
The Assyrian Patriarch, Mar Shimun, is reported to have fled from his home in Hakkari, Iraq, to the mountains of Syria, where he is believed to be hiding. This news, if true, would be a significant development in the ongoing conflict between the Assyrian community and the Iraqi Government. The Patriarch's flight is seen by many as a direct challenge to the authority of the Iraqi Government, which has been accused of mistreating the Assyrian minority. The Assyrian community, in turn, has been accused of harboring and supporting the Patriarch's forces. The situation remains tense, with both sides claiming the right to self-determination in the region.

THE ASSYRIAN PATRIARCH, MAR SHIMUN, has been reported to have fled from his home in Hakkari, Iraq, to the mountains of Syria, where he is believed to be hiding. This news, if true, would be a significant development in the ongoing conflict between the Assyrian community and the Iraqi Government. The Patriarch's flight is seen by many as a direct challenge to the authority of the Iraqi Government, which has been accused of mistreating the Assyrian minority. The Assyrian community, in turn, has been accused of harboring and supporting the Patriarch's forces. The situation remains tense, with both sides claiming the right to self-determination in the region.

Various reports from the region suggest that the Patriarch's forces are still active, despite his flight. Some claim that they have taken control of certain areas, while others report that they are being pursued by Iraqi troops. The Assyrian community is divided, with some supporting the Patriarch and others seeking a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The international community, including the League of Nations, is closely watching the situation, hoping for a peaceful settlement that respects the rights of all communities in the region.

FORIN
The Assyrian Patriarch, Mar Shimun, is reported to have fled from his home in Hakkari, Iraq, to the mountains of Syria, where he is believed to be hiding. This news, if true, would be a significant development in the ongoing conflict between the Assyrian community and the Iraqi Government. The Patriarch's flight is seen by many as a direct challenge to the authority of the Iraqi Government, which has been accused of mistreating the Assyrian minority. The Assyrian community, in turn, has been accused of harboring and supporting the Patriarch's forces. The situation remains tense, with both sides claiming the right to self-determination in the region.

THE ASSYRIAN PATRIARCH, MAR SHIMUN, has been reported to have fled from his home in Hakkari, Iraq, to the mountains of Syria, where he is believed to be hiding. This news, if true, would be a significant development in the ongoing conflict between the Assyrian community and the Iraqi Government. The Patriarch's flight is seen by many as a direct challenge to the authority of the Iraqi Government, which has been accused of mistreating the Assyrian minority. The Assyrian community, in turn, has been accused of harboring and supporting the Patriarch's forces. The situation remains tense, with both sides claiming the right to self-determination in the region.

ON THE
The Assyrian Patriarch, Mar Shimun, is reported to have fled from his home in Hakkari, Iraq, to the mountains of Syria, where he is believed to be hiding. This news, if true, would be a significant development in the ongoing conflict between the Assyrian community and the Iraqi Government. The Patriarch's flight is seen by many as a direct challenge to the authority of the Iraqi Government, which has been accused of mistreating the Assyrian minority. The Assyrian community, in turn, has been accused of harboring and supporting the Patriarch's forces. The situation remains tense, with both sides claiming the right to self-determination in the region.

ASSYRIANS IN IRAQ

KING FEISAL'S TRIP POSTPONED

There is reason to believe that King Feisal has wisely decided to postpone his intended departure from Baghdad to Europe for the completion of his cure, and will remain in Iraq at least until the arrival of Sir Francis Humphrys, the British Ambassador, who will start on his eastward journey before the end of the week. Nuri Pasha, the Iraqi Foreign Minister, will also remain at Baghdad pending the Ambassador's return.

No further news has been received from the scene of the recent excesses against the Assyrians, but it is hoped that British representations have had the effect of restoring discipline.

KURDISH ATTACKS DEPLORED

MEASURES TO SECURE ORDER

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

BAGHDAD, AUG. 17

The Prime Minister received me this afternoon and said he wished to correct exaggerated reports of the recent events in Northern Iraq. He deplored Kurdish attacks on Assyrian villages resulting in such heavy casualties and absolutely denied that these attacks were instigated by the Iraqi Government. He said that while the death roll was high the casualties were sustained in fighting which the Assyrians brought on themselves. In contrast to other conflicts in which Kurds were involved, such as the Barzan and Sulaimani outbreaks, no attacks were made on Assyrian women and children and no old men were killed.

In regard to the immediate future the Prime Minister said he did not anticipate further trouble, and had received a reassuring message from the Minister of the Interior, who was visiting the troubled area. The Government's immediate steps to relieve distress among the Assyrians included the formation of committees to help the bereaved families, and Major Thomson had been unofficially asked to superintend the relief arrangements. Another committee had been formed to help the Assyrians who had surrendered; yet another would compensate the Assyrians whose property had been looted by Kurds. Some loot had already been returned to the owners; Government would pay compensation for the remainder. Twenty new police posts to be built under direction of the Minister of the Interior would be a guarantee against further Kurdish raids.

Meanwhile the Baghdad public knows nothing about the slaughter which has taken place in the north. A quieter atmosphere prevails in the city and the King's departure for Switzerland has been postponed at least for a week. An official statement explains that his Majesty needs further rest before undertaking the journey. It is understood, however, that British representations were made to King Feisal as to the unwisdom of leaving the country at such a serious time.

PRIME MINISTER IN LONDON

DISCUSSIONS ON IRAQ

FROM OUR PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT

The Prime Minister, who had travelled from Scotland during the night, reached Downing Street early yesterday morning, and spent the day in consultation with the representatives of a number of Government Departments.

The only Minister he saw during the day was Captain Eden, the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who visited Downing Street with Sir Robert Vansittart, the Permanent Under-Secretary. Special attention was given to the news which has been received during the last few days about the situation in Iraq. In the afternoon Sir Francis Humphrys, the British Ambassador to Iraq, also called and saw Mr. MacDonald. He has been on leave in Norway, but is returning to Baghdad immediately.

The Prime Minister also saw during the day Sir Horace Wilson, Chief Industrial Adviser to the Government, and Sir Edward Harding, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Dominions Office. Mr. MacDonald had hoped that it might be possible to return to Lossiemouth by air to-day, but as the weather reports were not favourable he decided to travel by train last night.

The Times'
18th August 1933.

ASSYRIANS IN IRAQ

PRISONERS SHOT UNTRIED

BRITISH PROTEST

KING FEISAL'S PROMISE

Further excesses are reported from Northern Iraq, where 315 more Assyrians are known to have been killed and several prisoners shot without trial. The British Government has made strong representations to the Iraqi authorities. King Feisal, however, does not seem to have abandoned his intention of leaving Baghdad by air for Europe on Friday.

There has been a massacre of Assyrians near the small town of Simel, 40 miles north of Mosul, where there is an advanced landing-ground used until last year by the Royal Air Force in Iraq. A British official who has visited several villages near Simel found them full of panic-stricken women and children and counted 315 Assyrian dead. They appear to have been killed by the so-called Irregular Police. Many of the dead were found within two miles of the local headquarters of the Iraqi Army.

Further news about the incidents which led up to the Assyrian outbreak and the ferocious reprisals of the Iraqi commander have reached London. There is scarcely

any doubt that the Assyrian rebels who had crossed into Syrian territory in July were entirely to blame for the collisions on August 4 and 5. The group of 500 men who recrossed the Tigris into Iraq on August 4 gave out that they would surrender their arms. The small Iraqi detachment which they met does not seem to have attempted to disarm them by force. The Assyrians, however, attacked and destroyed it. They then broke through a force sent to intercept them. These two encounters caused much



bitterness, which was increased by the usual Oriental rumours that the Assyrians had mutilated the dead.

The first of the reprisals reported to the British Embassy in Baghdad was the work of Bekir Sidqi Beg, the Iraqi commander in the north, whose Kurdish irregulars brought in a dozen Assyrian prisoners. These he ordered to be shot out of hand and without trial or inquiry whether they were rebels or not. He afterwards excused this order on the grounds of his indignation at the alleged mutilation of the dead. On receiving the news Mr. Ogilvie-Forbes, H.B.M.'s Chargé d'Affaires in Baghdad, made earnest representations to King Feisal, whom he urged to prevent any repetition of these severities. King Feisal pledged his honour that an inquiry would be held into the executions.

Since this pledge was given no news has been received of the opening of any inquiry. Bekir Sidqi apparently remains in command in the north. Meanwhile it is understood that King Feisal has decided to leave Iraq to continue his cure in Switzerland, and has booked his passage by Imperial Airways for August 18.

THE IRAQI COMPLAINT TO THE LEAGUE

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

PARIS, AUG. 16

It is understood that the French Government was notified by telegram from Geneva of the complaint of the Iraqi Government against the action of the Franco-Syrian authorities in releasing the armed Assyrians, who subsequently returned to Iraq from French mandated territory. No reply has been sent to the telegram pending the arrival of the report of the High Commissioner in Syria, which is not expected for some days. In the meantime the view is maintained in official circles that the French authorities cannot be held to blame for having released the Assyrians, as the Iraqi Government had failed to notify them that the men were rebels.

'The Times'

17th August 1933.

ASSYRIANS IN IRAQ

PROBLEMS OF PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT

A NATION IN ARMS

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—As one of your Correspondents for some little time in Iraq, may I put the following points?

The problem of the Assyrians is one of those problems of politics in which nationality, race, and religion are all major factors. What makes it apparently insoluble is the fact that the Assyrians are a nation in arms—and first-class material at that.

While the Ottoman Empire existed the Assyrians lived in the Hakkari country. It is well known how they joined the Allies against the Turks, and how the 1925 settlement, which gave Mosul to Iraq, gave the Hakkari country to Turkey. This territory is still empty, but the Turks, having been stabbed in the back once by the Assyrians, not unnaturally are unwilling to have anything more to do with this armed nation except across a frontier.

As the result of their taking service with the British, the Assyrians, about 37,000 in number, can put in the field about 10,000 men, fully trained on British lines, with full experience of British discipline and tactical methods, and each armed with a modern British rifle given to him on discharge from the British-maintained Levies. As fighting material the Assyrians can have few equals to-day in the Middle East.

As the Turks will not have them, Iraq must, unless Britain were able to dispose of them elsewhere, which is out of the question. The Arab Government in Baghdad does not want an armed Assyrian *enclave*, for such an *enclave* would soon be able to achieve effective autonomy, based on arms and worked through the Exarch, who is both the national and religious head, and could at a word stop the flow of Assyrian revenues to the Baghdad Exchequer. Such an *enclave* would keep its autonomy unless British forces aided the Arab army in reducing it. But British military action against "our smallest ex-Ally" seems also out of the question because of the *furor* which it would undoubtedly raise.

The Arabs say, with truth, that they have, in any event, no area big enough to settle the Assyrians in one body except by dispossessing long-established Moslems, which they argue would be unnatural for them to do even if it were legal. Moreover, as the Moslems thus to be dispossessed by Arabs in favour of Christians would be largely Kurdish, it is clear there is no solution on these lines.

The Assyrians, armed and race-conscious as they are, naturally do not wish to be split up and put at the mercy of possible fanatical outbursts—their past relations with the Kurds have been stormy enough to warrant such fears. Nor do they wish to give up their arms, for they say they do not trust the Arabs.

One very real difficulty is the open contempt with which the Assyrians look upon the Arabs. The ex-Levies have come to regard themselves as all but British, and the Arabs have found their superior attitude most galling. That I believe to be a factor in the problem which has not been sufficiently emphasized. Most unfortunately, it has given rise to the belief, which many

Arabs hold or at least express, that Britain is supporting this Assyrian agitation for her own anti-Arab ends. The more responsible Arabs do not share this view, but all last summer in Baghdad, when the trouble with the Levies came to a head and the Northampton were flown from Egypt to relieve them, it was commonly said in the coffee-shops that this was Britain's last-minute effort to postpone the termination of the mandate.

A minor, but real, difficulty is that the Assyrians' apologists in Britain have tended to over-emphasize the religious factor, and occasionally religious papers have dashed in, if one may so put it, where others might have feared to tread. The issue is *not* primarily one of Christian *versus* Moslem. Such a cry is easy to raise in Britain, but it is doing a positive disservice to the Assyrians to forget that it may just as easily start a counter-cry in Baghdad.

I am, &c.,

August 14.

E. MAIN.

'The Times'
17th August 1933.

PROTEST BY IRAQ

FRANCE AND THE ASSYRIANS

FROM OUR LEAGUE CORRESPONDENT

GENEVA, AUG. 10

A telegram from the Iraqi Government outlining events leading up to the present difficulties with certain elements of the Assyrian community and protesting against the attitude of the French authorities towards the Assyrians who crossed into Syria has been received by the Secretary-General of the League of Nations and is being transmitted to the Council and members of the League.

The telegram begins by recalling the measures taken for the settlement of Assyrians in Iraq. Funds were provided, and an expert, Major Thomson, was engaged to carry out the settlement. Mar Shimun, the Assyrian Patriarch, it is declared, refused to cooperate with Major Thomson, and a certain Yaku formed an armed band to intimidate those Assyrians who expressed readiness to cooperate. The Iraqi Government was obliged to send a military force to meet this threat, and on June 26 last Yaku submitted, with his band, and on giving assurances of good behaviour they were pardoned. At a series of meetings of the Assyrian leaders, held at Mosul in July, the policy of the Government in giving effect to the resolution of the League Council was explained, and almost unanimously approved. Nevertheless an armed band under Yaku crossed into Syrian territory, without permission of the Government, as a protest against the policy.

The telegram proceeds to state that on July 23 and 24 and on August 5 letters were addressed to the French Legation in Baghdad requesting that the band should be disarmed and removed from the frontier in accordance with the provisional agreement in force between the two Governments since 1927. Though no reply had been received from the French Legation the Iraqi Government was confident that the Syrian Government had taken all necessary steps to prevent the tribesmen from making Syria a base for hostile incursions into Iraq. On August 2 the Iraqi political officer attached to the military forces, at a meeting at Khanik with French representatives, was assured that the armed members of the band remaining in the territory just transferred from Iraq to Syria would be disarmed on August 3 if the Iraqi Foreign Minister would go to Syria to discuss the arrangements to be made for the execution of the provisional agreement and other matters regarding the emigrants.

On August 4 part of the Assyrians offered submission, which was accepted, but after crossing the river attacked detachments sent to take over their arms. On August 5 another large force crossed the river and attacked the camp of the Iraqi forces. On the evening of the same day the mandatory authorities had returned 500 rifles to those members of the Yaku band who had been disarmed.

"The Iraqi Government (the statement concludes) has been obliged to record the most vigorous protest against the failure of the mandatory authorities in Syria to execute the provisions of the provisional agreement, and in particular against the rearming of the rebels after they had been lodged and fed for two weeks by the mandatory authorities—an action that would only be justified on the basis that the rebels had been rendered harmless—and also against the facilities that have clearly been accorded to them for making Syrian territory a base for their incursions and attacks on Iraq troops.

"The Iraqi Government has informed the Chargé d'Affaires that it holds the mandatory power in Syria responsible for all moral and material losses which have occurred or may occur as a result of these proceedings."

FRENCH DISCLAIMER OF RESPONSIBILITY

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

PARIS, AUG. 10

The protest of the Iraqi Government to the League of Nations against the alleged failure of the French authorities in Syria to carry out their mandatory responsibilities after the attack on Iraqi forces by armed Assyrians who had come across the Syrian border is welcomed here as providing an opportunity to disprove this charge and the still more serious one of "aggression."

It is claimed here that the trouble was largely caused by the complexity of local conditions and the unwillingness of the Iraqi Government to make its domestic difficulties fully known to the Syrian and French authorities, who were therefore unaware of the seriousness of the problem. When, therefore, the first detachment of Assyrians made their way across the border into Syria, which is only guarded by a few widely separated posts, they were allowed to remain as the border authorities had no idea that the Assyrians were in rebellion. More of them followed, whereupon the Franco-Syrian authorities as a measure of precaution took over their arms and stored them. After a time some of the Assyrians expressed a desire to return to Iraq, which appeared natural enough, as they had left their wives and families behind them, bringing only their flocks, and, as they gave no indication of any warlike intentions, their arms were restored to them and they left. Immediately the Franco-Syrian authorities learned of the attacks on the Iraqi army they gave the strictest orders for the complete disarming of those who had remained and of all new arrivals.

In conclusion, the French authorities state that in their opinion there has been no infringement of the 1927 agreement and add that they have always been perfectly ready to cooperate with the Iraqi Government, but that the essence of cooperation is mutual understanding and the avoidance of reticence in matters of importance.

The Times

11th August, 1933.

The Assyrian Troubles

A series of errors, which began at Geneva in 1925, has led to a sanguinary collision between the Iraqi forces and a section of the Christian Assyrian minority and to a dispute between the Kingdom of Iraq and the French Government in its capacity of mandatory for Syria. The unhappy story of the Assyrians began in the War when they rebelled with Russian instigation against their Turkish overlords. When the Russian front collapsed in 1917 the Assyrians were driven into Persia, whence about 70,000 of them escaped with British aid into Iraq. There many of them joined the Iraqi levies which were raised and paid by the British Government. They were good soldiers, their British officers spoke well of them, and for ten years they rendered valuable services to the Arab State. But they were strangers to the country; they found its climate trying; their loyalty to the British and their support of the British mandate made them unpopular with sections of the Arabs and Kurds. The League Council's decision of December 16, 1925, to leave Southern Hakkari outside the northern borders of Iraq deprived the Assyrians of their mountain home, and these sturdy people found themselves in the difficult position of refugees in an unfamiliar and none too friendly country where most of the mountain valleys suitable for their settlement were already occupied by Kurds. Even so, some found homes with Iraqi aid, but the ambitions or the extreme conservatism of their PATRIARCH and other causes have prevented a section of the community from settling down contentedly as citizens of the Arab kingdom.

The agitation for the recognition by the League of Nations of the special rights of the Assyrians and other Iraqi minorities found many distinguished supporters in this and other countries when the independence of Iraq and its inclusion in the League were first formally proposed by the British Government. But it had the unhappy result of encouraging MAR SHIMUN, the Assyrian Patriarch, to press for concessions, such as the formation of an autonomous all-Assyrian enclave, which the Iraqi Government refused to grant; and its supporters sometimes forgot that modern Oriental Governments have no sympathy with particularism, however picturesque, and that Assyrian heads might be turned by European solicitude. That the Assyrians, like other minorities in Iraq, should have demanded guarantees of impartial justice and religious liberty was natural enough. Equally natural was their alarm when they discovered that the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930, which provided *inter alia* for the abandonment of the British mandate over the Arab kingdom as soon as it had been admitted to membership of the League, contained no mention of the minorities, an omission on the part of the Labour Government which incurred not a little criticism in this country.

But there has been no evidence whatever of any religious intolerance on the part of the Iraqi Government. If some of its officials have been failures, the Assyrians have not been the only sufferers from their incompetence; and the stringent guarantees for the protection of minorities which were adopted by the Council of the League and accepted and ratified by KING FEISAL'S Government last year should have satisfied even MAR SHIMUN.

They satisfied part of his flock, but the PATRIARCH and several chiefs remained obstinately hostile and attempted to thwart the settlement of landless Assyrians out of Iraqi funds under the direction of a British administrator. On the other hand it is doubtful whether the Arab Government was well advised in detaining the obstinate PATRIARCH at Baghdad, where he had been invited, and was unavailingly urged to sign a declaration of loyalty to the Government and to cease his obstructive policy. His detention in the comfortable quarters of the Y.M.C.A. had the unfortunate effect of exciting his hot-headed followers to acts of rebellion. They crossed into French Syria; the failure or the inability of the French authorities to disarm them completely enabled some of them to recross the Tigris into Iraq, where they suffered and inflicted many casualties in an encounter with the Arab Army. The latest news from Baghdad reports their surrender; but, while the Iraqi Government is naturally incensed at their behaviour, it is to be hoped that it will not allow its indignation to influence its hitherto friendly

attitude towards the loyal majority of the Assyrian community. Of the charges against the French authorities in Syria which it has laid before the League, it need only be said at present that the French side has not yet been heard.

'The Times'

10th August, 1933.

THE ASSYRIAN TROUBLE

SHARP FIGHTING

IRAQI CLAIM AGAINST THE FRENCH

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

BAGHDAD, AUG. 8

An official statement admits that the Iraqi Army lost 20 killed, including three officers, and 45 wounded in the fighting against the Assyrians, who left 95 dead after the encounters on August 4 and 5, and claims that Yaku, the rebel chief, was among the wounded. It adds that some of the Assyrians are still in Syria, and that the rest of Yaku's band have dispersed in small groups.

In view of the trouble to which this affair has given rise it may be as well to explain how it began. After the Council of the League of Nations had adopted a resolution affecting the Assyrian community in Iraq and providing for the settlement of landless Assyrians the Iraqi Government engaged an expert, Major Thomson, and provided funds for this purpose.

Mar Shimun, the religious and political head of the Assyrian community, declined Major Thomson's invitation to cooperate with him, and some of his followers, notably Yaku, formed an armed band to hinder progress. The Government sent a military force, and Yaku and his band submitted and were pardoned. All the sectional leaders of the Assyrians were then invited in July to Mosul, where the resolution of the Council of the League and the policy of the Iraqi Government in giving effect to it were explained.

Most of these leaders accepted that policy, but on July 21 a band of about 1,000 armed Assyrians, led by Yaku, crossed into Syrian territory as a protest against the policy which had been explained to them. Representations were immediately made to the French authorities asking that these tribesmen should be disarmed and removed from the frontier in accordance with the Provisional Agreement of 1927 which had been confirmed by a fresh agreement between the Syrian and Iraqi Governments, signed in Geneva on November 3, 1932, pending negotiations for the peaceful solution of the difficulty.

At the same time the Iraqi Government announced that any of the recalcitrants who wished to return to Iraq would be allowed to do so after having surrendered their arms. The French sent a large force to overawe the Assyrians and disarmed most of them.

On August 2 the Political Officer attached to the military forces on the Iraqi side of the frontier conferred at Khaniq with French representatives, who are said to have assured him that the armed members of the band remaining in the territory which has just been transferred from Iraq to Syria would be dis-

armed.

Next day the Iraqi Government, confident that the French had taken all necessary steps to prevent the Assyrians from making Syrian territory a base for raids, decided to send General Nuri Pasha, the Foreign Minister, to Syria to discuss with the mandatory authorities the arrangements for the execution of the Provisional Agreement regarding Yaku's Assyrians.

On the evening of August 4 some of these Assyrians applied to the Iraqi commander for permission to surrender their arms and submit. This was granted; but after having crossed the Tigris, which here forms the boundary, near Feishkhabur, they attacked the detachment sent to take over their arms. On the morning of August 5 a larger force, which had also crossed the Tigris, attacked the camp of the Iraqi Army. That evening the Iraqi Government was informed indirectly that the Franco-Syrian authorities had returned 500 rifles to some of Yaku's Assyrians, whom they had disarmed.

The Iraqi authorities claim that this action of the Franco-Syrian frontier authorities corresponds with the definition of "aggression" recently adopted by several States. They feel that the Iraqi Government in the determination to prevent any incident which might be misunderstood in Europe has shown great restraint in dealing with the Assyrians.

The Times
9th August, 1933.