

LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

Communicated to
the Council.

C.167.1935.VII.

Geneva, April 17th, 1935.

SETTLEMENT OF THE ASSYRIANS OF IRAQ.

Report by the Representative of Spain.

For reasons that will be set out in a detailed report, to be circulated to the Council shortly, the Committee of the Council for the Settlement of the Assyrians of Iraq has been forced to realise, much to its regret, that the settlement of the Assyrians in British Guiana, as proposed by the United Kingdom Government, is impracticable.

The other offers made in response to the repeated appeals of the Council and the Committee do not afford all the guarantees of success that the Committee regard as indispensable, and have therefore had to be abandoned.

With regard to the possibility of a more extensive settlement of Assyrians from Iraq in Syria, the French Government, as mandatory Power, explained, as soon as the Committee was formed in 1933, the difficulties of various kinds which it thought would be involved. Since, however, the Committee has not been able to find a place in which to settle the Assyrians anywhere else, and since it is essential that the question should be dealt with urgently, the Committee has been obliged to revert to the idea of a settlement in Syria. For reasons both humanitarian and political, therefore, the Committee has pressed the French Government to accept, as permanent settlers in the mandated territories of the Levant, not only those Assyrians who are now provisionally settled there, but also those for whom the Committee has to find a place of settlement - always on the understanding that they will be in no degree a charge upon the budget of the States of the Levant under French mandate.

In response to this appeal, the French Government has supplied the Committee with a variety of material relating to the question under consideration, and has intimated what material possibilities of settlement have already been recognised, and on what others no final opinion can be formed without further investigation.

By a letter dated April 14th, the French Government has informed the Chairman of the Committee that, from the information available, it is now possible to contemplate, subject to arrangements to be made, enlarging the existing settlement of 2,200 persons to 6,500. The investigations now proceeding will doubtless reveal wider possibilities which would be of benefit to such other Assyrians as may express a desire to leave Iraq.

P.T.O.

Nevertheless the French Government, in its above-mentioned letter, said "that it could not in practice respond to the appeal addressed to it without an official assurance by the Council that no burden would be placed either on the French budget or on the local budgets on account of the settlement of the Assyrians in Syria, and without a plan setting forth the means to be employed to obtain the sums required for this settlement."

The Committee has always considered that the work of settlement could only be undertaken and carried out if sufficient sums were available as and when required. The Committee will as soon as possible establish a detailed plan on this basis, in close co-operation with the Iraqi Government and the French Government.

As regards the wish expressed that "no burden should be placed either on the French budget or on the local budgets on account of the settlement of the Assyrians in Syria", the Committee has always held that no financial obligation in respect of the capital expenditure involved by the proposed settlement operations or in respect of the subsistence of the settlers until they should be able to provide for themselves should be laid either on the French Government or on the States of the Levant under French mandate.

In order to meet the wish expressed in the last paragraph of the French Government's letter of April 14th, 1935, I would request the Council to approve the attitude taken up by the Committee in this connection.

I also ask the Council to authorise the Secretary-General to draw a further sum not exceeding 40,000 Swiss francs from the Working Capital Fund in accordance with Article 33(2) of the Financial Regulations; the total advances approved by the Council would thus be brought up to ~~36~~ 76,000 francs.

This credit of 40,000 francs would serve to cover, among other expenditure preliminary to the carrying out of the plan, the cost of the journey of the Chairman of the Council Committee to Iraq and Syria, which it was decided to undertake on the Baghdad Government's invitation and which is regarded by the Iraqi Government and by the Council Committee as likely to facilitate negotiations and contribute effectively to the realisation of the plan of settlement. It is understood that this advance will be refunded to the League of Nations out of the funds which are made available for the financing of the proposed action as a whole.
