FRONTIER BETWEEN SYRIA AND PALESTINE - WESTERN PART.

Report by the Representative of Czechoslovakia.

The Council has been asked, in a joint request dated February 15th, 1934, from the Governments of France and the United Kingdom to approve the provisions of an agreement concerning the frontier between Syria and the Lebanon and Palestine.

The purpose of this agreement is to establish the exact line of the western section of the boundary between the territories detached from the former Ottoman Empire and placed under British and French mandates, as defined in the Franco-British Convention of December 23rd, 1920.

The eastern section of the line defined by the Convention of 1920 - i.e., the frontier between Iraq and Syria - was finally fixed by the Council's decision of November 26th, 1932, on the basis of the report of a Commission of Enquiry which had been appointed by the Council at the request of the two mandatory Powers concerned, and also of an opinion given by the Permanent Mandates Commission.

The Syrian-Jebel Druze-Transjordan section of the frontier, which lies between the two sections mentioned above, was settled by a Franco-British Agreement dated October 31st, 1931, approved by the Council on January 30th, 1932.

On that occasion the United Kingdom and French representatives signified their intention of examining the reasons for which the Agreement of March 7th, 1923, delimiting the western section of the frontier between the mandated territories had not been submitted to the Council's approval.

In their joint letter of February 15th, 1934, the Governments of France and of the United Kingdom state that, after examining the question, they have reached the conclusion that no necessary measures on their part had been overlooked in refraining to ask the Council's approval at the time with regard to the western section of the frontier between the territories under their mandate.

Nevertheless, being anxious to take into account the observations made both by the Permanent Mandates Commission at its Twenty-third Session and by the Council on September 26th, 1933, and in deference to the wish expressed by the latter, but without prejudice to their views on the legal question involved, which might in their opinion give rise to controversy, the two Governments have submitted the Agreement of March 7th, 1923, for the Council's approval.

Communicated to the Council.

1) Document C.114.1934.VI.
The text on which the Council is asked to give its opinion is a frontier delimitation agreement dating over ten years back, the provisions of which do not seem to have given rise to any objection either on the part of the populations concerned or of third States or of Members of the Council, and their application does not seem to have occasioned any criticisms on the part of the Permanent Mandates Commission.

When it approved the central section of the same frontier on January 30th, 1932, the Council adopted its resolution in the following terms:

"The Council,

"Considering that, in their Agreement of October 31st, 1931, Great Britain and France have drawn up a frontier line which the Council has every reason to believe to be in the interests of the populations under mandate;

"Considering that, in those circumstances and in view of the importance of an immediate settlement of the question, it does not seem essential to refer the matter to the Permanent Mandates Commission, whose opinion in other circumstances it would certainly have asked;

"In response to the joint request of the British and French Governments:

"Approves the Agreement of October 31st, 1931, regarding the Syrian-Jebel Druze-Transjordan frontier."

As the reasons of urgency on which this resolution was based are not invoked in the present case, I propose that the Council should give the Permanent Mandates Commission an opportunity of considering whether the frontier line fixed by the Franco-British Convention of March 7th, 1923, calls for any observations on its part in connection with the execution of the mandates.

Should the Council endorse the foregoing considerations, I propose that it adopt the following resolution:

"The Council,

"In response to the joint request of the Governments of France and the United Kingdom, the mandatory Powers for Syria and Palestine,

"Declares its willingness to examine, with a view to approval, the Franco-British Agreement of March 7th, 1923, which delimits the western section of the frontier defined by the Convention of December 23rd, 1920,

"Accordingly invites the Permanent Mandates Commission to inform it as soon as possible of its opinion on the line fixed by the said Agreement from the point of view of the execution of the mandates,

"Therefore requests the Secretary-General to communicate to the Permanent Mandates Commission the documentation submitted by the French and United Kingdom Governments and the minutes of the present meeting of the Council."