

LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

C.599.1928.XI
Geneva, December 7th, 1928.

TRAFFIC IN OPIUM AND OTHER DANGEROUS DRUGS.

COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY INTO THE CONTROL
OF OPIUM-SMOKING IN THE FAR EAST.

Report by the British Government with regard to the
arrangements for the Commission.

The Secretary-General has the honour to communicate to the Members of the Council the following letter and report received from the British Government upon the results of the enquiries addressed by it to the other Governments concerned as regards the arrangements for the proposed Commission of Enquiry into the opium situation in the Far East.

F.6587/229/87

Foreign Office,
S.W.1
December 1st, 1928.

To the Secretary-General:

Sir,

In fulfilment of the undertaking given on behalf of His Majesty's Government in Great Britain during the Ninth Ordinary Session of the Assembly, I am directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to transmit to you herewith, for the consideration of the Council of the League of Nations, a report upon the results of the enquiries made by His Majesty's Government of the other Governments concerned as regards the arrangements for the proposed Commission of Enquiry into the opium situation in the Far East.

2. Full replies have not yet been received from all the governments and the report is thus necessarily incomplete; but it is thought that the Members of the Council would prefer that a tentative and incomplete report should be submitted now rather than that the report should be delayed until full replies have been received.

3. A supplementary report will be forwarded when further information is available.

(signed) GEORGE MOUNSEY

OPPIUM-SMOKING IN THE FAR EAST: PROPOSAL BY H.M.
GOVERNMENT IN GREAT BRITAIN FOR A COMMISSION
OF ENQUIRY.

In the course of the discussions in the Fourth and Fifth Committees of the Ninth ordinary session of the Assembly on the subject of the proposed Opium Commission to the Far East, His Majesty's Government in Great Britain undertook to consult with the other Governments concerned as to the arrangements for the enquiry and to prepare a report for the consideration of the Council at its 53rd session.

His Majesty's Government have based their enquiries on the assumption that the expenses of the Commission may be placed at about 210,000 Swiss francs. The details of the estimate by which this figure has been arrived at are annexed. The estimate was drawn up in consultation with the Treasurer of the League and subsequently revised in London. It has been framed in the expectation that the Commission will spend altogether 180 days in the Far East, and a margin of 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ per cent has been left for contingencies.

The following financial provision had already been made during the session of the 9th Assembly :-

(a) The 4th Committee of the Assembly recommended that the sum of 100,000 Swiss francs should be included in the budget of the League;

(b) His Majesty's Government in Great Britain undertook to contribute 50,000 Swiss francs towards the general expenses of the enquiry.

It remained therefore to provide the balance, namely, 60,000 Swiss francs; and to ascertain whether the Governments concerned were prepared to afford hospitality to the Commission

during its stay in their territories.

Financial Provision.

The Japanese and Portuguese Governments had already made it known that they were not prepared to contribute towards the general expenses of the Commission. His Majesty's Government therefore approached only the French, Netherlands and Siamese Governments on this question. They communicated copies of the annexed estimate to these three Governments, expressing the hope that they would between them be prepared to provide the 60,000 Swiss francs required, and suggesting that the contribution from the French and Netherlands Governments might be 25,000 Swiss francs each, and from the Siamese Government 10,000 Swiss francs.

The Netherlands and Siamese Governments have agreed to contribute the sum proposed. The French Government have promised to notify their decision as soon as possible.

Hospitality.

The French, Netherlands, Siamese and Japanese Governments were at the same time asked whether they were prepared to extend hospitality to the Commission. The Netherlands, Siamese and Japanese Governments have replied that they are ready to do so. No reply has yet been received from the French Government. The Portuguese Government had already informed the Opium Section of the League that they would extend hospitality to the Commission during its visit to Macao and that this hospitality would include food, lodging and transport within the island.

Arrangements in British territories.

His Majesty's Government in Great Britain desire to submit the following information in regard to the arrangements in British territories:

Burma. The Government of India state that the Burmese authorities will be glad to extend hospitality to the Commission during its stay in Burma. They suggest that the Commission should visit Rangoon, Mandalay, Lashio, Namkhan and Bhamo, and estimate that the enquiries in Burma should be completed within three weeks.

Malaya. The Governments of the Straits Settlements and of the Federated Malay States will meet the cost of entertainment of the Commission for the period of its visit to these territories. The local authorities consider that the whole visit to Malaya need not last longer than from 10 to 14 days, but the Commission will judge whether their enquiries can be completed in this time.

North Borneo. The Court of Directors would welcome any proposal by the Commission to visit North Borneo, and will meet the cost of entertainment of the Commission if it should decide to visit the territory.

Hong Kong. The Government of Hong Kong will be prepared to meet the expenses of entertainment whilst the Commission is in Hong Kong. Hong Kong, owing to its proximity to the coast of China, is the British possession where the conditions to which His Majesty's Government called the attention of the League of Nations in their memorandum of August 1928 exist in the most acute form and in which the problem is most urgent. It is thought therefore that the Commission may desire to make a special study of the problem there.

General Conduct of the Enquiry.

The interested governments were also invited to indicate at as early a date as possible those places in their territories which it would be most profitable for the Commission to visit, and the probable period within which its

enquiries could be completed; and to submit any suggestions which they might desire to offer as to the conduct of the enquiry.

The Netherlands Government consider that the enquiry in the Netherlands East Indies might be conducted as follows:-

The Commission, after completing its preliminary examination, would on arrival at Batavia get into touch with the Head of the Opium Régie, who would supply it with information on the principal points of the system in operation in the Netherlands East Indies. The Commission might then visit a number of places to study on the spot the working of the system. It might in the first place examine this system at Batavia and possibly in certain other places in Java. Later, it might visit the island of Banka with its extensive government tin mines, where a study could be made of the results of a restrictive system which has been in operation for several years. Finally, the Commission might go to Medan, the centre of the important district of the east coast of Sumatra, where there are numerous rubber and tobacco plantations. An enquiry conducted in this manner will take a fortnight or three weeks at most.

The Netherlands Government emphasise the importance of including the Philippine Islands within the scope of the enquiry. In a letter dated October 16th, 1928, the Secretary-General enquired of the United States Minister at Berne whether the United States Government would be willing to permit the Commission to visit the Philippines and inform itself of the system of prohibition in operation there. His Majesty's Government are not aware whether any reply has yet been received.

A copy of the note from the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs is annexed.

In view of the uncertainty on this point, and of the fact that no suggestions as to an itinerary have so far been received from any of the other interested Governments, His Majesty's Government are not in a position to suggest any detailed programme, even if it were proper for them to do so. The following tentative suggestions as to the order in which the various territories might be visited may, however, assist the Council in scrutinizing the estimate.

The route to be followed by the Commission will depend to some extent on the time of year at which it arrives in the Far East. It might however find it convenient to proceed first to Burma. Starting from Rangoon, it might visit the places suggested by the Government of Burma and return again to Rangoon. Thence it might proceed to Singapore, from which visits could be paid to (a) the Netherlands East Indies, in the manner suggested by the Netherlands Government; (b) British North Borneo, if this should be considered necessary; and (c) the Federated Malay States, this being done on the way northward by rail to Bangkok, unless the Commission prefers to take them en route from Rangoon to Singapore. From Bangkok, on the completion of enquiries in Siam, it might travel to Saigon, if the French Government agree, and after finishing its work in Indo-China, might then go to Hongkong. From Hongkong it would be possible to visit (1) Macao (2) the Philippines; or the Philippines might alternatively be taken on the return journey from Japan. After Hongkong, the Commission could visit the Japanese territories.

December 1st, 1928.

ESTIMATE

Swiss France

(1)		
Journey to Geneva		3,000
Four tickets Geneva to Marseilles		320
Fares, Marseilles to Far East and back	(2)	26,000
Four tickets Marseilles to Geneva		320
Honorarium to commissioners (2300 each)		22,520
Outfit allowances for commissioners (2100 each)		7,590
Outfit allowance for Secretary		2,050
Out of pocket allowances for commissioners (10/- a day during enquiry)		10,800
Subsistence allowance for commissioners while preparing report (70 frs. a day)		5,000
Allowance for Secretary		3,600
Life assurance for whole mission		20,000
Incidental expenses of mission (including subsistence etc. in countries not providing hospitality, clerical assistance and other necessary services)		30,000
Printing		20,000
Allow in addition for possible visit to Philippines		<u>7,000</u>
		138,200
Reserve of 33 ¹ / ₃ % for contingencies	(3)	<u>52,733</u>
		<u>210,933</u>
	approx.	210,000

Note (1). The estimate assumes that the three commissioners will assemble at Geneva and start together for the Far East from there.

Note (2). Marseilles to Rangoon; Rangoon to Singapore, Singapore to Java and back, Singapore to Dairen via Bangkok, Saigon, Hongkong, Dairen to Marseilles via Hongkong and Singapore.

Note (3). The estimate is based on the assumption that the Commission will spend altogether 180 days in the Far East.

It is quite possible that this may be exceeded, and this possibility, as well as other reasons, make anything like an exact estimate very difficult, hence the rather large reserve of 33¹/₃% for contingencies.

ANNEX.

LETTER FROM THE NETHERLANDS MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
TO THE ACTING CHARGE D' AFFAIRES FOR GREAT BRITAIN.

The Hague, November 21st, 1928.

Translation.

Sir,

In reply to letter No. 191 of November 1st, 1928, from His Excellency Sir Odo Russell concerning the arrangements for the enquiry into the use of prepared opium in the Far East, I have the honour to inform you that the Netherlands are prepared to contribute, in accordance with the British Government's proposal, the sum of Swiss Fr. 25,000 (twenty-five thousand) to the general expenses of the enquiry.

The Government of the Netherlands East Indies will, moreover, offer the Commission hospitality during its visit.

The Netherlands Government is at present of opinion that the enquiry in the Netherlands East Indies might be carried out in the following manner. The Commission, after completing its preliminary investigations, would, on its arrival at Batavia, apply to the Chief of the Opium Monopoly who would explain to it the main features of the system in force in the Netherlands East Indies. The Commission might then visit certain localities with a view to studying the operation of this system on the spot. Firstly, the Commission might examine the system at Batavia and possibly in a few other places in Java. It might afterwards visit the Island of Banka with its important State-owned tin-mines, where it would be able to examine the results obtained by a system of restriction which has been in force for several

years. Lastly, the Commission might proceed to Medan, the centre of an important district on the east coast of Sumatra, where rubber, tobacco etc. are largely cultivated. An enquiry on these lines would not take more than a fortnight or at most three weeks.

I would avail myself of this opportunity to remind you that the Netherlands Government considers it important that the Commission of Enquiry should visit the Philippines, where a system of total prohibition is now in force. In this connection, I would refer to paragraph 7 of my letter of July 18th last (No.22201) to His Excellency Lord Granville. The Netherlands Government trusts that the British Government will be successful in obtaining the co-operation of the United States Government in order that the Philippines may be included in the enquiry.