

C.770.1932.VI.
(C.P.M.1320(3).)

Geneva, November 14th, 1932.

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ications from the Assyrian population forwarded
nection with the termination of the mandatory
in Iraq and referred to in the Council decision
tember 24th, 1932.

OPINION OF THE PERMANENT MANDATES COMMISSION.

Note by the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General has the honour
communicate herewith to the Council the
inion (with 1 appendix and 1 annex) given
the Permanent Mandates Commission during
s twenty-second session after the examination
the petitions from the Assyrian population
Iraq, in conformity with the Council recom-
ndation of September 24th, 1932.

OPINION OF THE COMMISSION.

When formulating its opinion, the Commission fully
how delicate was its task from the constitutional
view.

When, on September 24th, 1932, the Council of the
of Nations asked the Mandates Commission to examine
itions of the Assyrians of Iraq, that country was
subject to the régime provided for in Article 22 of
enant, and Great Britain was responsible for the
tion to it of the tutelary principles of this Article.
hen Iraq has been emancipated from its guardianship,

"to Iraq. Furthermore, the Iraqi Govern-
"is alone responsible for the administra-
"could not be heard by the Commission.

"Subject to this observation t
"response to the Council's formal invita-
"the following opinion:

"The Permanent Mandates Commis-

"Having examined the petitions
community in Iraq which have been f
of Nations since the Commission's t

"Having noted the observations
Government on those petitions and h
information given orally by the rep
Government,

"Endorsing the attached concl
1)
Rapporteur ,

"Draws the Council's special
great importance both for the Assyr
for Iraq of providing the Assyrians
for settlement in a homogeneous gro
in keeping with their traditions and
economic needs,

"For the rest, it considers,
in its Rapporteur's conclusions, th
for it to submit to the Council any
commendation in regard to those pet

From a comparison of the documents analysed above* and of the numerous petitions previously addressed to the League by Assyrian groups or on behalf of the Assyrians of Iraq, there arises a definite impression that this community is dissatisfied with its present lot and profoundly uneasy as to its future. A few discordant voices in this concert of complaints and appeals to the League only emphasise its practical unanimity.

It should not, however, be inferred - as the Commission has already pointed out on other occasions, while expressing the concern with which it views the position of the minorities - that either the mandatory Power or the Iraqi authorities are open to grave reproach for the manner in which the Assyrians settled in Iraq have been treated under the mandatory system. No proof has indeed ever been provided that they were treated with unjustifiable severity by the Iraqi authorities, or that they were victims of an abuse of power; it is remarkable that in the petitions dealt with in the present report no complaint that can be entertained has been brought against these authorities.

Among the Assyrians of Iraq the greater number, who have come from Turkey in Asia, have found shelter in this country in the course of the last few years. They are encamped there in conditions which, in most cases, are precarious and miserable: they are "refugees

They have had to be settled on the land. In fact, these mountaineers have been settled in districts consisting of marshy and unhealthy plains, or dispersed in small groups or families in the midst of the Kurdish or Arab population, according to the possibilities offered by the occupation of the soil.

of the feeling of insecurity only by the climate, with their ranks, by the sterility assigned to them and by the to cultivate the soil, but their community among popu

It is this latter these individual acts of persons and property which complained of, and which British control has appeared to the point of making the community definitely into

The root cause by the petitions we are d that it has not yet been of Iraq into a homogeneous their needs.

Your Rapporteur as this has not been done of this section of its po in the flesh of Iraq. that of the Government of that "the return of the A the Hakkiari mountains wo solution."

It has not been an impartial observer th

ability of re-settling them in their country of origin must be definitely ruled out. It would be desirable for the Council of the League to use its influence in favour of one or other of these solutions being sincerely sought.

We share the confidence of the Government of the United Kingdom in the part which the Assyrian element is destined to play in Iraq, but we are inclined to believe that the Assyrians would be still more likely to remain loyal subjects if they were placed in conditions more closely approaching to those which they had been led to expect in view of the circumstances to which they draw attention.

There is here a situation worthy of engaging the League's attention. It concerns the very existence of a race whose glorious past goes back to the earliest history, and it also concerns the future of Iraq. The League has followed the progress accomplished by this young State, and has consecrated its political emancipation; any factor which may hamper its peaceful and harmonious development cannot leave the League indifferent.

On the other hand, there is one aspiration of the Assyrians which cannot find any encouragement: namely, that of granting the widest administrative autonomy to the Assyrian "nation" (Millet) grouped in the territory which Iraq may assign to it. The adoption of such a solution would imperil the unity of the Iraqi State, and could not but perpetuate the antipathy with which the Assyrians believe themselves to be viewed by the other elements of the nation in the midst of which they are destined to live.

1) The request for the Assyrian section put forward in this matter on which the Permanent Commission may express an opinion;

2) A modification of the provisions of the Anglo-Iraqi agreement between the State of Iraq should it be found that the provisions of the second petition could only be satisfied if Iraq itself which was suitable as a homogeneous group.

3) As regards the future of Iraq, which is also dealt with in the petition already been defined and granted in the agreement recently signed by the Iraqis, the Commission of the Council of the League of Nations makes it open in future to the consideration of minorities in Iraq, to resolve the matter of the protection of the minorities.

4) The Commission should in more general terms the same as in his previous petitions, and should recommend to change the Commission's