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UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

SUPPLEMENT TO THE TWELFTH PROGRESS REPORT

(for the period from 8 October 1952 to 24 November 1952)

Note by the Secretary-General: The Secretary-General has the honour to communicate to the Members of the United Nations, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 512 (VI) of 26 January 1952, a supplement to the twelfth progress report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine.

1. Since the Conciliation Commission submitted its latest progress report^{1/} to the Secretary-General on 8 October further progress has been made in connexion with the matters of compensation for Arab refugees and the release of bank accounts blocked in Israel, which the Conciliation Commission wishes to bring to the attention of the Members of the United Nations.
2. As the Commission indicated in its recent progress report, the Government of Israel agreed to the release of all accounts belonging to former residents of Palestine and indicated its readiness to enter into discussions with the banks concerned in order to reach an agreed method of procedure. It was suggested that Barclay's Bank Limited (Dominion, Colonial and Overseas) might be approached in the first instance.
3. These discussions between representatives of the Government of Israel and Barclay's Bank took place in London over the period from 20 October to 3 November and were attended by an economic expert of the Commission. As a result of the negotiations, a general agreement was reached on the outline of the scheme to be submitted to the Government of Israel for its approval. The scheme in general outline establishes that Barclay's Bank agrees in principle to undertake the

^{1/} A/2216.

operation if procedures can be set up which would permit the Bank to establish a central control office at their Jerusalem Branch. Barclay's Bank would then prepare standardized application forms setting out particulars to be supplied by each applicant to enable the various banks concerned to verify and identify the validity of each claim. All claims would be sent to the depository banks concerned for verification and, after being verified by the Bank and cleared by the Custodian of absentee property, would be returned to Barclay's Bank which would then make the necessary transfer in pounds sterling, or the equivalent in other acceptable currency, to the appropriate bank on behalf of the claimant.

4. It is expected that the first instalment will effect the rapid liquidation of small accounts, which constitute the great majority, within the framework of existing Israel law and without the need for special legislation.

5. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency has agreed to lend its assistance in order to facilitate contact between bank and depositor. Further details of the effective application of the procedures outlined in London are being decided on the spot between the Israel authorities, the local representative of Barclay's Bank and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and will be announced shortly.

6. As regards the question of compensation, the Commission invites attention to the fact that at its request the Secretary-General has set up the necessary machinery for the identification and assessment of individual Arab property holdings in Israel, for which compensation may be claimed. The Commission's land specialist with two assistants is now engaged in extracting from the Palestine land registers the necessary information regarding ownership, area, description and value of the hundreds of thousands of parcels of land involved. For this purpose, the micro-photographs of the registers which were furnished by the United Kingdom Government at the Commission's request and at United Nations expense are being used. Machines for viewing the micro-photographs have been made available at United Nations Headquarters. From the information contained in the land registers, supplemented by information which will be obtained subsequently from the taxation records of the former mandatory administration, it is anticipated that it will be possible to make reasonably accurate estimates of the value of each individual holding. The taxation records are in the possession of the Government of Israel, which has

offered to make them available to the Commission for the purpose envisaged. It is expected that the personnel which are now undertaking this work will be reinforced early next month with the services of a former officer of the mandatory administration who has spent a lifetime in Palestine and is a recognized authority on land values in that country. The operation has been planned in such a way as to allow for rapid expansion of the staff and acceleration of the work when circumstances are propitious.

7. The Commission will keep the Secretary-General informed of all further developments that may take place in connexion with the questions of blocked accounts and compensation for Arab refugees.
