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Printed for the Cabinet. April 1923.

SECRET.

C.P. 179 (23).

CABINET.

PALESTINE: THE RECENT ELECTIONS.

MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

I CIRCULATE, for the information of my colleagues, a Memorandum prepared in the Colonial Office on the subject of the recent elections in Palestine.

DEVONSHIRE.

Colonial Office, March 28, 1923.

THE PALESTINE ELECTIONS.

(Memorandum by Middle East Department, Colonial Office.)

1. The Palestine Order in Council of the 10th August, 1922, provided for the constitution of a Legislative Council in Palestine and for the election of part (twelve out of twenty-two) of the Members of the Council. Article 22 provided that the first general election of the Legislative Council shall be held not more than six months after the publication of the order in the "Palestine Gazette."

2. The Palestine Legislative Council Electoral Order, 1922 (the 10th August, 1922), prescribed the system of election of the twelve Elected Members (see Appendix I). It was to come into operation on a date to be fixed by the High Commissioner.

3. The two Orders were published in the official Gazette of the Government of Palestine on the 1st September, 1922. Accordingly, the first general election was due to be completed before the 1st March, 1923.

4. At the time when the Constitution of Palestine was being elaborated by the Colonial Office and Sir Herbert Samuel, the Palestine Arab Delegation was present in London. One modification of the Constitution was made at their suggestion, namely, the omission of the members (three in number) to be nominated to the Legislative Council by the High Commissioner; but in general they adopted an intransigent attitude. They were unwilling to co-operate in the formation of a Constitution which took for granted the Balfour Declaration and the Zionist policy. This opposition was also carried on and intensified in Palestine from about the summer of 1922, and as the time for the elections approached, at the beginning of February, a meeting was held at the offices of the Executive Committee of the Arab-Palestinian Congress, at which it was decided to boycott the elections for the Legislative Council. On the 3rd February the Executive Committee published a proclamation calling for the boycott of the elections. On the 6th February the High Commissioner received representatives of the Executive Committee and addressed them on the subject of the elections (*vide* Appendix II).

5. Through a misunderstanding the High Commissioner's "Proclamation for Holding the Elections of Secondary Electors" laid down a procedure which would not have resulted in the election of members of the Legislative Council being completed before the 1st March; this would have, in any case, necessitated some extension of the period allowed for the completion of the elections (see paragraphs 7 and 8 below).

6. The nomination of secondary electors was carried out between the 20th and 28th February.

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W.L. Mackenzie King Papers

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