

people of Palestine to elect representatives in order to express their desires in accordance with the Constitution.

I would now refer to the letter which your Committee has addressed to the Government on the subject of Education, to which there has not yet been a written reply. Your proposals have, however, been very fully considered in accordance with the importance that attaches to the subject. You propose that there should be a Body elected from the whole people to control the education of the country. I agree that the people of Palestine should have a larger share in the control of education than they now possess, but it is a matter for consideration whether that control could best be exercised through local or through central bodies. Indeed, the Government is anxious to develop local self-governing institutions. Such development is also required by the terms of the Mandate. Moreover, Education is only one matter of great importance to the people; Agriculture, Commerce and Industry, Health, Public Works are all matters which are of vital importance to the people; it is impossible to elect a Central Council for each one of them, but if that were done in the case of Education the same principle might properly apply in these other matters. In all constitutional countries it has been found advisable to have a Central Authority—a Legislative Assembly—which exercises general control over all. But in any case I would point out to you that if your proposal with regard to Education were accepted as it stands a new Law would be needed, and constitutionally the consent of the Legislative Council would be required, so that your request must ultimately be referred to that Legislative Council. I would remind you that in that Legislative Council the Elected Members would be in the majority, although it is true that if any section of the Elected Members voted with the Government, the Government would have the majority. At the same time I would repeat what has been said before that this Government, or any Government, would be very slow to reject any measure which was supported by proper feeling as expressed in the Council, and would only do so in the case of absolute necessity.

The same considerations which I have mentioned with regard to Education apply to Finance. There is a good deal of discussion in the country with regard to the methods of taxation, and there is no doubt that there is room for a reform in the matter of taxation. Particularly it is complained that the agricultural population pay heavy direct taxes, and that the townspeople pay much less heavy direct taxes, although it must also be remembered that the Customs Revenue is a very large one, and this is mainly paid by the townspeople. I consider that we ought to reform the direct taxes of the country. The Temettu Tax imposed by the Turks yielded very little; it was very unequal in its incidence, and gave rise to a great deal of trouble in its collection. I am proposing to appoint a Committee to consider the Temettu Tax, but here also I would wish to have the advice and co-operation of elected representatives of the people, and I should propose to put upon such a Committee Elected Members of the Legislative Council, among other members. Similar considerations apply to proposals for Customs changes, so that in all these matters it is very desirable that the Government should have the advice of men who have been elected by ordinary constitutional means.

At the same time I have not hurried on with the elections. In the first place the registration of voters has taken some time, and has only recently been completed; and also there have been two events which took place at the end of last year which I have had to take into account—one was the summoning of a new Conference to examine the revision of the Treaty of Sèvres, and the other was the change of Government and the elections of a new Parliament in England.

It was suggested here that one or both of these events might cause a change in policy as it affected Palestine. I personally did not think so, but I thought it advisable that the point should be made clear, if possible, before the new elections were held in Palestine. A Delegation of your body went to Lausanne, and from Lausanne to London. At the interview which I had the pleasure of having with them before they left, I told them that, while I was not sure that Palestine would not be discussed at Lausanne, I thought it most unlikely; and that has proved to be the case—it was not discussed. And in London the Delegation was told that there was no prospect of a change in the policy expressed in the White Paper. Therefore the recent events in Turkey and Lausanne and in London, and the visit of the Delegation, have made no difference, and the situation is exactly the same as it was. The position, therefore, has been made quite clear in that respect to the people of Palestine.

We are now approaching the latest date provided in the Constitution for the holding of the elections, and, with the full approval of His Majesty's Government, I am proposing to hold the elections this month. I have to-day signed, at a meeting

W.L. Mackenzie King Papers

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