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Formation Headquarters

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January 1918



AWM4-1/10/11PART2

1/1

The Intelligence Officer JAFFA held a census of the population of JAFFA on the evening of the 31st December, 1917, and obtained the approximate total of 16, 103 inhabitants, compared with the Turkish census for the year 1915 -1916, of 29,138.

The various committees in Jerusalem offered their New Year congratulations to the Military Governor of Jerusalem. The latter impressed upon those desiring instant reform of long standing abuses, that for the present they were under a purely military government, that Jews Arabs and Armenians would be more likely to attain their several ends by studying how to unite than by preferring exaggerated demands unlikely to be conceded.

A number of original Jaffa Residents, now in Jerusalem are desirous of returning to their native town.

The Military Governor, Jerusalem has suggested initiating an employment bureau.

2/1

A report was received that the Bedouin Tribes between JERUSALEM and HEBRON were in possession of arms left behind by the Turks, and that there was a certain number of deserters (approximately 5,000) at large. It is believed that large quantities of arms (approximately 5,000) are hidden in the HEBRON District, and the Military Governor has been asked to conduct a search. Sheikhs of the Tribes in the BIR SABA area are considered friendly and have reported to the Assistant Military Administrator. Information was obtained from a refugee of RESHADIE (6 hours distant from KERAK) that the following tribes were friendly towards the SHERIF.

- (1) TAWFILAH Arabs - who are anxious to come to the East side of the DEAD SEA to effect purchases.
- (2) SIREFHE Arabs -
- (3) IPSAIRA Arabs -
- (4) THANA Arabs -

2/1

- (5) SHOUBAK Arabs -
- (6) MAAN Arabs -

The GHAWARIN ARABS, north of the DEAD SEA are, however, reported as neutral.

An espionage system is been instituted via the country South of the DEAD SEA, by the Intelligence Officer, BIR SABA.

HEBRON(1) Population of HEBRON and District is estimated at 56,000.

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At HEBRON itself the population is composed as follows :-

95% Moslems of which 60% estimated pro-Ally,
and 35% without political sentiments.
4 1/2% Jews.
n% Christians.

As a whole the population is settling down. Difficulties were experienced in establishing a Government but they have now been overcome, the Government having been elected by vote, and representing the religious communities. The Government is run on Turkish lines, but the Military Governor is the Court of Appeal, and his decision is final.

- (2) POLICE and GENDARMERIE - consisting of 80 men are stationed, the former in HEBRON and the latter in the villages, and are under the command of a good Arab Officer.

Government and other schools are open and well attended.

- (3) BOARD OF PUBLIC FINANCE - controls the taxation and the revenue is used for Municipal requirements.

- (4) GENERAL COUNCIL - at which litigious questions are settled is held twice

*weekly and attended
by the military Governor*

- (5) CRIME - only about 10 cases of petty theft.
- n (6) HEALTH - Good.
- (7) SUSPECTS. - No AUSTRIANS, GERMANS, or TURKS. Two cases of suspected espionage are under investigation.
- (8) WIRE CUTTING. - village picquets established to prevent, and villagers held responsible if cases should occur.
- (9) CULTIVATION. - not equal to past years, but satisfactory on the whole.
- (10) SUPPLIES. - plentiful, and JERUSALEM even has been supplied.
- (11) DESERTERS - Approximate number of deserters estimated at about 5,000 for HEBRON and DISTRICT. A great number employed on road work.
- (12) ARMS - estimated that there are about 5,000 in HEBRON itself, but not considered advisable to collect whilst elections for Government were on.
- (13) ESPIONNAGE - is being started, and two men considered suitable have been found.
- (14) RELIEF - Not needed to any large extent.

The Italian Minister enquired whether M.PICOT, the French Commissioner, "presided over" the midnight Mass at the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem on Xmas Eve, and whether M.PICOT on that occasion assumed precedence customarily accorded to the French Consul, suggesting that if this was the case M.PICOT was unwarrantably discharging a Political function in PALESTINE.

2/1 M.PICOT had an interview with the Military Governor of JERUSALEM in the course of which he supplied the information that feeling was running high in PARIS on the subject of French participation in the Administration of occupied enemy territory in PALESTINE, but that he was doing his best to allay this anxiety. He also requested

- (1) that M.GERASIMO, the Director of the Credit Lyonnais, might be allowed to return to JERUSALEM,
- ((2) that the REGIE OTTOMANE should be re-instated.
- (3) that the French Guard in JERUSALEM should be re-inforced to the strength of 150 men.

3/1 Permission has been granted for a school to be opened in JAFFA for the children of GERMAN families there, provided that only children from the GERMAN COLONY attend. So far, 130 names have been given in, and the community will find their own teachers, etc. It is proposed to include English among the subjects taught.

4/1 The Navy have again been requested to allow sailing vessels to ply at their own risk between Egypt and Jaffa for purposes of trade.

The necessity for sending more troops into HEBRON, while arms are being collected, came under consideration.

A telegram was received by the Chief Political Officer from the Foreign Office to the effect that the French Government, in view of the uncertainty of the position in PALESTINE, fully appreciates the congruent that an exclusively military administration should be maintained under the supreme control of the Commander-in-Chief, but suggests that, without modifying the principle, it might be possible to ~~effect~~ evolve a scheme giving effect to the agreement of December 1916.

4/1

A reply was sent to the Foreign Office that the report which the Italian Minister had received concerning M. PICOT's attendance at the Bethlehem Mass was substantially correct, although, as far as could be ascertained, M. PICOT attended as a private individual.

C.F. Jan 2nd.

The Italians are resenting M. PICOT's efforts to emphasize French Protectorate over Latin Christianity in the Orient.

News was received that a Jewish, Armenian-Arab Committee was to sit in LONDON under the direction of a British official.

5/1

The following is reported from BASLE under date 29-11-17 :-
ZIONIST MOVEMENT IN GERMANY.

The German Jews are trying every means in their power to induce the German Government to approach the Turkish Government with a view to the latter's agreeing to the settlement of Jews in Palestine under Turkish Rule. The object is to lessen the effect of Mr. Balfour's declaration to Lord Rothschild. The German Government is interesting itself in the Zionist question, and will try to obtain concessions from the Turks in favour of the Jews. The German Jews are represented in the meantime at ZURICH by Dr. Adolf Friedemann of BERLIN. Dr. Friedemann is in close touch with the German Legation at BASLE, presumably in connection with Zionist matters.

M. PICOT made application to the Military Governor of Jerusalem to have the Italian Guard removed from the Casa Nova, where the Colonel of the Italian Detachment was residing, an instance of his anxiety to maintain the shadowy, but jealously guarded prerogatives in regard to the Latin Church. The Military Governor suggested that if the ancient rights of the Franciscans are to be recognized, no attempt should be made to define them.

M. PICOT has lodged a complaint of damage done by British troops to the convent of NOTRE DAME DE FRANCE in JERUSALEM.

(6)

- 6/1 The Comité de l'Alliance Libanese have through ADIB PASHA communicated their views as to the future of Syria to the Chief Political Officer, who in turn communicated them to M.PICOT. The latter, commenting upon them, declared that these views only represent those of the "Comité"; that it was not worth while to communicate them to the Allied Powers, as the only result of such action would be to start a counter-movement among hot annexationists in Syria and France. M.PICOT declared that the French Government was not annexationist, and that M.PICHON's recent declaration in the Chamber did not differ materially from that of ADIB PASHA. He also volunteered the statement that the general lines of French policy in the matter resembled those of British policy in Egypt - government through local native officials, but with a proportionately much smaller French supervisory staff.
- 7/1 A suggestion was made by the War Office to the Commander-in-Chief that if the military situation was favourable, such a scheme a French Officer should be appointed as Deputy Governor of BETHLEHEM, and another as a sanitary or police officer, and that two Italian officers should be appointed to fill posts similar to the latter, all these officers to be under the Commander-in-Chief. This suggestion, it was explained, was made with a view to allaying the suspicions of our Allies.
- 8/1 The American Red Cross has forwarded an offer to send out four medical units for service in this theatre of War.
- 9/1 A reply has been received from the Naval Authorities stating that, although sailing vessels had been under suspicion in the past for conveying information to the enemy, and in ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ the future it would be impossible to control their movements, the Navy were prepared to allow such traffic, if guarantees could be forwarded as to the reliability of Masters and Crews.

C.F. 4/1.

The Commander-in-Chief has sent a reply to the War Officer that the military situation does not at present admit of French and Italian Officers being employed on the administration, but that he is willing to accept ~~one~~ ^{one} French Officer, and one Italian Off-

icer as medical or sanitary officers to act under the British Administrator.

C.F.7/1.

Having made searching enquiries with regard to Turkish sacrilege in Jerusalem and elsewhere, the Chief Political Officer telegraphed to the Foreign Office that information at present does not disclose any authentic cases of sacrilege or systematic looting and that the general state of JERUSALEM did not appear to support any charge of this nature.

10/1

A report was received from the Hejaz that King HUSSEIN in a recent interview with a British Representative at JEDDAH, on being asked for his views on the ZIONIST movement, declared that he was ready to welcome Jews to any Arab country. The King, although cautious, seemed contented with our success in PALESTINE, comparing our action with regard to the Holy Places, to the magnanimity of the CALIPH OMAR in the days of yore. He also volunteered the remark that he quite realised that the new course of events might hinder the British Government from fulfilling every minor point of our original agreement.

11/1

A number of telegrams are being despatched to Germany on behalf of Professor Dr. JERAMIAS, head of the Protestant and Evangelical Community of JERUSALEM, stating that all Religious Institutions are working, and commending the British Treatment of the inhabitants.

The Intelligence Officer MEJDEL reports that, from information received, the Turks on the Lines of Communication were not so depressed at the fall of GAZA as might have been expected, and some of the Officers and men hailed the event by saying "the sooner the English take the country, the better, so that peace may come."

The population of PALESTINE was, generally speaking, well treated by the Turks.

The chief complaint against the Turks was the requisitioning of supplies of all sorts for which only paper money was given.

The great majority of the population appear genuinely pleased at our occupation, and a Christian inhabitant of MEJDEL reports that the attitude of Moslems towards Christians has now changed and is good.

11/1.

The attitude of the population towards the troops is good, and only isolated cases of hostile acts have occurred, these being done probably by nomad Arabs, and not by the native inhabitants.

The Intelligence Officer, JAFFA is informed by two of the most influential Mohammedans of that town that the people are contented. It is clear, however, from the "Bazaar talk" that there is a feeling that JERUSALEM has been given preferential treatment in the matter of Relief. Confidence is being gained as the firing line recedes, trade is improving, and silver is gradually coming into fresh circulations. Troops in the neighbourhood are very orderly and complaints are few.

In reply to proposals put forward for the enlargement of the areas ~~of~~ which the Eastern Mediterranean Special Intelligence Bureau operates, the Director of Military Intelligence, England, approved in general, and arrangements have been made for the "A" Branch (Espionage) of the E.M.S.I.B. to move up the JERUSALEM from CAIRO.

12/1

A copy of a Decree issued by the Sultan of TURKEY has been found condemning to death HUSSEIN KAMEL, the son of ISMAIL PASHA.
A copy was sent to the Residency for information.

The Chief Political Officer has informed M. PICOT that arrangements are being made for PERE JAUSSEN (who has worked for the Intelligence Branch since 1914) to proceed to PALESTINE, and that M. GERASIMO ~~will~~ be given permission to proceed as soon as transport was available.

C.F 2/1

Advanced Intelligence, East has applied for a collapsible boat to be sent up to JERUSALEM to land agents on the East shore of the DEAD SEA, as it was possible that sooner or later the Turks would guard the passes and the East side of the River JORDAN, making it impossible for agents to get through unless by a long detour. This boat has been supplied.

12/1 The Minister at ADIS ABABA has reported to the Military Governor of JERUSALEM that the capture of the city has made a profound and favourable impression on the ABYSSINIANS, but anxiety was felt for the welfare of the ABYSSINIAN Community in the town, and the safety of their property. The Minister also asked that the Head of the ABYSSINIAN Community KAMERHU MAHASANTU, now in his native country, might be allowed to return to JERUSALEM.

A reply was sent by the Chief Political Officer to the Foreign Office that when transport facilities existed in PALESTINE, there would be no objection to the American Red Cross units coming, that they would be welcome if self contained, and that therefore, their preparations might be proceeded with.

C.F. 8/1.

13/1 At a meeting of the BEDOUIN Sheikhs at BEERSHEBA, it was stated that they were willing to disarm in the country near the British Troops, but that it was not safe for the tribes near the DEAD SEA to do so, as an armed enemy could then pass through them without opposition.

14/1 In reply to an enquiry from the Army Council as to the possibility of attaching a representative of the British Museum to G.H.Q., PALESTINE for Historical, and Archaeological research, the Army Council was informed that owing to the difficulties in travelling and to the fact that normal conditions have not yet been re-established in the more important centres, facilities could not be granted at present to such an official.

The Intelligence Officer, BEERSHEBA, reports the following :

ARMS. An agent reports that considerable numbers of rifles are being purchased from the inhabitants of towns and villages in the vicinity of RAMLEH, LUDD, JULIUS, and MEDJDEL by the Bedouins, and re-sold by the latter to tribes East of the DEAD SEA. There certainly are arms among the Bedouins as shots have often been heard by patrols. Presumably Bedouins trying rifles. Several efforts were made by the patrols to round up the firing but were unsuccessful.

14/1

MOVEMENTS OF TRIBES. A considerable body of TERABIN Bedouins (including HEIG MOHAMED el SUFI - most important Sheikh of the TERABIN) have returned from the Sherif and camped at the WADI EL MALAH, 15 miles due East of BEERSHEBA. The Assistant Administrator proposes to visit this place shortly, if so, the Intelligence Officer will accompany him.

PUBLIC OPINION.

(1) The feeling of the population in this district on our occupation is distinctly favourable, among all the townspeople and all Bedouins who have hitherto been sounded.

(2) With regard to the attitude of the various elements of the population towards each other, Jews are seemingly non-existent in this district. The Bedouin and Fellaheen are outwardly quite friendly, but as has been previously stated, there is very little actual sympathy between these two classes.

(3) The attitude of the population in general towards the troops is distinctly friendly. The Bedouins apparently endeavour to avoid intercourse as much as possible with the troops themselves.

The Committee in Egypt for the Prevention of Leakage of information to the enemy by Sea decided to increase the personnel of the Customs Guards, and called on the Egyptian Government to bear this charge. A query was raised by the Financial Advisor to the Egyptian Government as to the utility of this increase, and he expressed the opinion that any such charges should be defrayed by the Army. He has been informed that this additional personnel has been sanctioned by the Commander-in-Chief. There can be no doubt as to the utility of the measure now, and it is hoped that he will agree to defray the necessary expenses.

15/1

The Intelligence Officer, MEJDEL has reported as follows on the GAZA District :-

MEJDEL, the present Headquarters is estimated as having a population of 7,000, ie. 2,000 in excess of Turkish estimates, the difference being attributed to the presence of refugees from this district.

15/1

PUBLIC OPINION. 90% pleased at our occupation.

PRINCIPAL INDUSTRY. Weaving.

ADMINISTRATION. All records destroyed by the Turks, consequently the Administrator has little or nothing to go on. Rolls of suitable officials are being made. Ainmals have been hired out to workers on the land, and seed given on condition of an equivalent return from the harvest. Assistance in kind, and not in cash.

ARMS, exist in large quantities, and are being nought up by Bedouins from the BEER; SHEBA district.

16/1.

The Navy was informed by telegram that as satisfactory guarantees as to the bona fides of masters and crews could be obtained, it was hoped that trading would be resumed as soon as possible.

CWF. 9/1.

The Chief Field Censor was asked to supply the following newspapers for propaganda purposes to the Military Governor of Jerusalem :- Copies of EL MOKATTAM, LA BOURSE EGYPTIENNE, JOURNAL DU CAIRE, HAKIKAT, KIBLA, KAUKAB - English, French, Italian and Arabic copies of the original British White Book, French Yellow Book, RAEMAKER's Cartoons, and pamphlets on ARMENIAN atrocities, exposition of the YENI TURAN movement, etc.

17/1.

With regard to the policy laid down for dealing with applications to enter Egypt from Occupied Enemy Territory, it was decided that there was no objection to persons who had been issued with a pass for Egypt travelling on the Military Railway, provided no other means were available. Persons travelling Eastwards from KANTARA, however, could not be allowed to utilize this railway.

In reply to an enquiry from the Residency as to whether the Turks had looted or committed acts of sacrilege in JERUSALEM, the following telegram has been received from JERUSALEM:-

17/1

"Sacrilegious depredation of Turks aaa At beginning of war Churches
"were respected and even sealed up but later as Turkish Officers
"took possession of them robbers of Church ornaments, robes etc.,
"began. aaa Church of ~~UATR~~TRUN suffered most being transformed into dor-
"mitory and monastery into agricultural school by order of Jemal
"Pasha aaa the Mudir of Ramleh and his wife were seen wearing gold
"church vestments and a gold chalice was sold to a Jew aaa Towards
"the end many chapels were pillaged and soldiers were seen attempting
"to sell church lamps aaa I have personally interviewed all the Pat-
"riarchs and find that when Patriarchs were deported were ordered to
"carry with them for safety their most precious relics and objects
"of value aaa Patriarchs however took with them either nothing or
"or else for appearance sake trifling objects of little value aaa
"Treasures of JERUSALEM shrines therefore practically intact." "ends.

The Residency has been informed.

The High Commissioner has telegraphed to the effect that the advantages to be gained from a generous treatment of ABYSSINIANS in JERUSALEM are important, and that he was prepared to request a special fund from Foreign Office for this purpose C.F.11/1

Naval Intelligence reported that Captain SIMON of the new "SERVICE D'INFORMATION DE LA MARINE FRANCAISE DU LEVANT" has returned to FRANCE, and that REAR ADMIRAL VARNEY has resumed charge of the French Naval Intelligence Service as before.

18/1

Permission has been granted to M. HOOFIEN (Manager of the Anglo-Egyptian Bank - JERUSALEM) to proceed to CAIRO to organize the despatch of grain and supplies for the Jewish Communities in PALESTINE, on the assurance that by so doing, the JEWISH Community would no longer require assistance from the Military Authorities.

20/1

A report and an explanatory diagram dealing with the progress made in the formation of an Intelligence Economic Section has been forwarded to the War Office.

A scheme has been approved whereby agents for Espionage and Contre Espionage work will obtain information over the area from the Mediterranean just north of Jaffa to MUANNIS from there to MULEBBIS, thence to YEHUDIEH and RAMLEH, and from RAMLEH to KIBBIEH. In this way the whole of the West Sector of our front line is covered by Espionage and Contre Espionage agents. There are also three rings of ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Contre-Espionage agents round JERUSALEM, and an agent at RAMALLAH, thus covering the East Sector of the line from KIBBIEH to JERICHO. (cf)

A report from BEERSHEBA again states that to the East of BEERSHEBA there are considerable camps of various tribes along the WADI EL MALAH, and to the North of the Wadi. These men are reported to be armed with a considerable number of Turkish and British rifles. There also appears to be a certain amount of anti-British feeling among these tribes.

A report from JAFFA, under date of the 14th January, states that the Chief question of interest in that town is still the dearness of bread and cereals. Although the pressure is somewhat relieved by the retailing of a small amount of wheat by the Government at a low price. It has also been ascertained that there is a considerable amount of grain hidden in the outlying villages.

The arrival of the French troops caused little comment, they appear to be a very well disciplined and orderly unit.

A telegram was sent to the High Commissioner informing him that two months' food was now held by the ABYSSINIANS in JERUSALEM, and that £200 would be acceptable to them if supplied in silver from Egypt.

In reply to enquiries from the War Office as to whether permission might be granted to Father's

cf. 11/1
17/1

20/1

DIACLEVI and CIMINO to proceed to JERUSALEM via EGYPT as guardians of the HOLY LAND, the War Officers were informed that after a discussion of the matter with the High Commissioner, the Commander-in-Chief was of opinion that facilities might be granted them to land in EGYPT, but that, owing to the policy laid down of restricting the entry of persons into PALESTINE to original inhabitants, their onward journey to JERUSALEM would have to be temporarily delayed.

22/1

A report from BEERSHEBA states that the O.C. Troops has seized so far 200,000 rounds of S.A. Ammunition in the village of SHERIA (East of BEERSHEBA).

The following is an extract from a telegram sent by the German Emperor and communicated to the Commander of the Turkish Army on 30-9-32 (30-9-16).

"Order of the Day of the Expeditionary Force."

"Article 1. This telegram has been sent to the Units by the German Emperor.
"In view of the complete defeat of the Roumanians, and the continual
"failure of the English and French on the SOMME Front, and of the
"Russians on the East, the military situation is favourable to us,
"so I, with my Allied Governments have proposed peace to our enemies.
"I hope you will trust in God and continue in your determination to
"fight the enemy with the same heroism."

2.

"Jerusalem
30-9-16.

(Sd) von KRESS,
O.C. of the 1st Expeditionary Force."

23/1

The ARAB BUREAU telegraphed the Director of Military Intelligence, England, with regard to the action to be taken re "MAURICE." This man has travelled from SWITZERLAND (where he was an Intelligence Agent) via AUSTRIA, BULGARIA, CONSTANTINOPLE, HAMA, ALEPPO, and HOMS, and has given information concerning the Turkish en-

23/1

deavour to enlist the synpathies of the BEDOUINS, and also as to the movement of Turkish troops. He is reported to be in German pay.

24/1

A report has been received from BEERSHEBA dealing with the country East of that town towards the DEAD SEA.

- (1) Harvest prospects seem good, and the whole of the land is under cultivation for wheat and barley. There are plenty of camels in this district yet, and a large number of donkeys are used for ploughing.
- (2) To the West of BIR EL HAMAM (7 miles East of BEERSHEBA) the tribes of BENI SELAH and TERABIN predominate; further East ZULLAM Bedouins are in the majority and a few TERABIN. It is reported that a quantity of arms exist in this district. Refugees are returning from the wells to GAZA and BEERSHEBA now that all is quiet.

In the MEJDEL area, 90% of the population are reported to welcome the British occupation. This popularity is somewhat increased by the issue of seed, grain, and cattle, although there is some apprehension that the military authorities will commandeer the resulting crops. One hundred tons of seed grain have been issued to date to be repaid after the harvest. The area sown is reported to be equal to or even to exceed the pre-war normal area.

ABYSSINIAN

It is reported that members of both Orthodox and Anglican/Communities in JERUSALEM are practically destitute and have been allowed to purchase wheat under Military arrangements at a low price.

A telegram was received from the War Office that in the ~~xxxx~~ future the Chief Political Officer will be instructed direct by the Foreign Office on matters purely affecting British policy in PALESTINE; that a new and separate branch of the ARAB BUREAU, under the Chief Political Officer should be established in PALESTINE, and that the proposed new line of demarcation between theatres of operations under the

24/1

Commander-in-Chief E.E.F., and the High Commissioner was to be drawn through TEBUK, leaving AKABA to the E.E.F.

A telegram was received from ROME stating that Father CIMINO has been replaced by Father MINOTTE, who together with Father CHABERT MOULIN is accompanying Father DIACLEVI from ITALY to EGYPT. Six Franciscan Nuns have also joined these representatives from the VATICAN. A reply was sent stating that the departure of the Nuns should be deferred as they could not be allowed to enter PALESTINE for some time, but all the above had already left for EGYPT

cf.20/1

25/1

It is reported from GAZA that the reason for the incomplete or untrue stories told by deserters when interrogated is, in the majority of cases, due to their fear that

- (1) They would be recruited into the British Army.
- (2) They would be taken away from their families and sent to EGYPT.

The attitude of the inhabitants towards the troops continues to be good. Although the inhabitants are impressed by the discipline, equipment and supplies of our troops, they still appear to be apprehensive that the enemy will regain possession of PALESTINE, not by force of arms, but that when peace is declared, the country will revert to its former masters, our occupation being merely a temporary military measure.

There is every prospect of an excellent harvest, and the inhabitants report that the area under cultivation exceeds that of the last seven years.

It is reported from JAFFA that

- (1) The recent shelling of MULEBBIS was the cause of rumours that the Turks were returning.
- (2) A certain amount of needless damage has been done to the property of local inhabitants: This matter has been taken up by the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration.

25/1

- (3) There appears to be a desire among the better educated classes to see the municipality re-established. Instead of the Council being composed of Jews, Moslems and Christians in any proportion, as was formerly the custom, the members being subject only to certain qualifications, it is now proposed to elect members on a religious basis. There appears, however, some difficulty in settling the correct proportion of members.
- (4) The rate of exchange of ~~the~~ Egyptian pound note is now at P.T. 88.
- (5) It is suspected that the reason the inhabitants are not sowing as much of their land as in former years is either due to instructions left by the enemy with a view to lowering our supplies, or to a fear of heavy taxation on the resultant crop, such as was levied by the Turks when in occupation.

In reply to a telegram from the ARAB BUREAU, the Director of Military Intelligence suggested asking "MAURICE" certain discreet questions on military and political subjects in TURKEY with a view to checking his reliability. A wire from SWITZERLAND states that when there his conduct was most unsatisfactory. He had incurred heavy financial liabilities, and although he was given money to pay his debts, and arrangements were made for him to go to FRANCE, he went over to the GERMANS and is supposed to have been used by them for propaganda work amongst the BEDOUINS. He is probably very untrustworthy, but it is possible that having become disgusted with his new associates, he has returned to our fold.

cf.23/1.

It is reported by 21st Corps that the inhabitants of EL MEZERIAH, ABUD and RENTIS arrived outside the 75th Division line at ET TIREH with two months food supplies, and refused to return. The policy hitherto adopted with regard to refugees has been to refuse admission to lines, but the G.O.C. 75th Division having made the necessary arrangements with Military Administrator at RAMLEH, these refugees were allowed to enter our lines. Arrangements have been made with the Director of Labour that they shall be utilised for local labour.

In reply to requests from the Ottoman Bank, London for permission to communicate and eventually transact business with branches at JERUSALEM and JAFFA, they were informed that

25/1

their application was approved.

26/1

A report from BETHLEHEM states that :-

- (1) Grain There is a large quantity of grain at MADEBA (12 miles East of the North end of the DEAD SEA) left in charge of a few Turks who are to assist in removing it to AMMAN. Some of this grain, to the extent of 1,200,000 kilos. (1181.5 tons) of cereals, is stored in a Roman Catholic Monastery at MADEBA.
- (2) Bedouins. The Bedouins are extremely discontented with the Turks, who have commandeered their camels and donkeys for the transport of grain and consequently there is continual friction between the two parties. The Bedouins of the BENI SAKR tribe are with the Sherif, and the few remaining near MADEBA steal corn from the Turks. Fights between the BALGAR tribes (who are marauders) and the BENI SAKR and Christians are reported.

It was reported that an Italian Franciscan, PÈRE THEOPHILE CAPRIO of SAN SALVATORE CONVENT JERUSALEM had been giving trouble owing to his aggressive anti-French attitude, and the manner in which he is pressing Italy's claim to the protection of the HOLY PLACES. He has stated that the PALESTINE expedition was being financed by the Jews on the understanding that England cedes them PALESTINE after the war. His private life has not been exemplary and the Military Governor has suggested that the VATICAN might be moved to withdraw him.

27/1

A proposal has been made for the publication of a Government newspaper "The Palestine News" under military editorship, one edition in English for the Army and others in ARABIC and Hebrew for the population. This newspaper would be published weekly under military censorship.

28/1

It is reported from BEERSHEBA that a raid was effected about a month previously by the MOUSALI Arabs from the North of the DEAD SEA on animals belonging to a member of the ZULLAM tribe.

The harvest prospects are good round BEERSHEBA although the extent of the plough-

ing is less than in pre-war years. Barley and wheat have been distributed by the Sheikhs from stores secreted by the Bedouins, and a certain amount also by the A/Administrator.

In the ARARA district cultivation is patchy, but ploughing is fairly extensive along the AUJA road (S.W. of BEERSHEBA).

29/1

The following report has been received from JAFFA :-

- (A) Contre-espionage. Agents report that although there is practically no passage possible through our lines west of the Railway, it is possible that natives are able to slip through East of the Railway where the country is more hilly.
In MOANNIS (4 miles N.E. of JAFFA) there is no sign of any suspicious intercourse between the enemy and the peasantry and Bedouins; both parties keep very much to themselves.
- (B) Public Opinion. A great deal of pro-Turkish sentiment is expressed in the villages near JAFFA, where the partly educated inhabitants seem to regret the old regime. The former employees of the Turkish Government are rather discontented, as they are nearly penniless, and see little chance of any employment.
A number of people who have been heard talking politics or commenting more or less unfavourably on the military situation have been warned that such actions are inadvisable at the present juncture. This generally has the required effect.
Complaints from the civil population against the Army are gradually diminishing.
- (C) Economic Situation. The price of commodities has fallen considerably, as a certain amount of trade with EL ARISH and elsewhere is bringing foodstuffs into the town.
- (D) An agent reports that 4 priests ex-NABLUS stated that 200 of the inhabitants had been shot on account of their refusal to evacuate the town.

29/1

The Military Governor of JERUSALEM reports that the occupation of that town by the British Troops was exceedingly popular, but that our popularity has waned somewhat for the following reasons :-

- (1) The repudiation of the Turkish Bank-note.
- (2) The delay in acceptance and in fixing the value of Turkish silver.
- (3) The lack of small change.
- (4) The difficulties of food supply.
- (5) The failure of their hopes ~~xxxx~~ for immediate communication with the outer world to realise.
- (6) The Mohamedan resentment at the supposed policy of the British Government with regard to the Jews.

30/1

XXth Corps reports that the collection of arms in the HEBRON district has resulted so far in the capture of 2,000 fire-arms. The situation is quiet at present, and to-morrow the town of HEBRON itself will be searched.

The Intelligence Officer JAFFA has proposed re-opening the German "salle-de lecture" for propaganda work and has asked to be supplied with papers etc., for that purpose.

Steps have been taken to place the AARONSOHN organisation on a working basis, in order that information should be obtained as before. In this connection, 2nd Lieut AARONSOHN proceeded to PORT SAID to embark for the purpose of pointing out the selected rendezvous on the coast to our agents.

31/1

In the MEJDEL area, 15 villages have been visited by the Intelligence Officer of that district for the purpose of ascertaining the area under cultivation and the property of the ~~in~~ inhabitants, etc. In each case it was found that a considerable area - said to be the greatest for seven years - was under cultivation round each village. Yet event this falls short of the area that might be cultivated, owing to lack of cattle for ploughing, and possibly labour.

31/1

It is reported from JERUSALEM that a special messenger was sent to see the Sheikhs of the SAH-WAHRI Tribe, and to invite them to meet the Intelligence Officer, JERUSALEM. The messenger reports that on meeting Sheikh IBRAHIM SHUKEIR he informed him that we expected the Sheikhs of the SAWAHRI Tribe to come to JERUSALEM to see us, and asked him why this visit had not been paid when they were asked to do so. The Sheikhs said that they were afraid to do so as a number of their men who had gone to JERUSALEM has been imprisoned. He was assured however, that if the Tribe had any intention of remaining in their present camp, they had no right to have relations with JERICHO. It was for this reason that the British were displeased with them, but they had no intention of doing the Tribe any harm.

This communication gave rise to some discussion between the Sheikhs, one of whom told the assembly that if they knew their own interests, they would take their rifles and use them against the Turks. The other Sheikhs were informed of the proposed deputation, and it was finally decided that our messenger should return later with another man bearing a letter stating that if any Sheikhs visited JERUSALEM they would be allowed to return after the meeting.

It is reported from Mejdal that on interrogation, a deserter stated that he determined to desert on hearing that the British had occupied PALESTINE and were treating the inhabitants well. He also reports that the Turks are using wood and petroleum rock on the HEJAZ Railway. This rock is quarried near MEZERIB (10 miles N.W. of DERAN) and TELESHE SHEHAB (4 miles W. of MEZERIB) and that large quantities are stacked near DERRA Station. He did not see any coal.

A telegram was received from the Foreign Office to the effect that as long as the Spanish Consul remains in JERUSALEM, his position is different from that of the Italian^{as} other consuls he has been resident there throughout the periods of the war, but would cease to be so once he reaches CAIRO. It would not be possible to ~~refuse~~ to allow him to return to JERUSALEM and at the same time to refuse permission on military grounds to other consuls. The Foreign Office suggested therefore that it would be better

31-7

if the Spanish Consul should remain where he is, unless the Commander-in-Chief was of the opinion that by the time he wished to return from CAIRO the situation would permit of other Consuls being allowed to enter PALESTINE. It was added that there was no objection to the Spanish Consul being in charge of GERMAN and AUSTRIAN interests.

The Military Governor, JERUSALEM has made a report of a dispute between the GREEK ORTHODOX Priests and the FRANCISCANS in the Church of The Nativity, BETHLEHEM, and of his subsequent interviews on the subject with the various Christian religious communities concerned. The Military Governor first informed the GREEK and the ARMENIAN ORTHODOX priests that he was prepared to receive written protests with regard to any alleged infringement of rights for consideration after the cessation of hostilities, that his orders were to maintain, pending that event, the status quo ante bellum, and that he would no longer tolerate any such incidents in the Christian Holy Places. The Armenians and Greeks promised that no such incident should occur again. The Military Governor addressed the same remarks to the President of the Franciscans. In the meantime the War Office has suggested that an adequate guard of British Military Police should replace military guards of various nationalities as the latter seemed to give no satisfaction.