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1924

SOCIÉTÉ DES NATIONS.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

Classement.

MINORITY QUESTIONS.

REGISTRY.

Classement  
No.

Document No.

Dossier No.

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33595

807.

Expéditeur.

Mr William  
O'Molony.  
(Brussels)

Date.

Jan. 23. 1924

Sujet.

Protection of Minorities in Turkey & the Near East.

Forwards copy of his Memorandum on  
the present situation of these minorities  
drafted for the use of the Minorities  
Commission of the Federation of League of  
Nations Societies.

L'USAGE DE CET EMPLACEMENT EST  
RÉSERVÉ AU REGISTRY.REMETTRE CE DOCUMENT A—  
(En Premier lieu.)

DATE.

REMETTRE CE DOCUMENT A—  
(En second lieu.)

Date.

Réponses, &amp;c. (Out Letter Book):—

Mr O'Molony 26.1.24.

Mr Rostrop 

28.1.24.

Mr Silchrist 

29.1.24

Mlle Radziwill 

30.1.24

Mr Walter 

31. 24

M. Altoleo 

1.2.24

Mr Colban 

9.4.25

Secretary General 

15.4.25

seen by S.G.

Document  
précédent

No. 33506

Index A.

Index B.

Sommaire.

Imprimé.

Distribution.

Voir les dossiers:—

Index C.

A classer.

H.A.

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33595  
Mr. Rosting

Mr. Gilchrist

Please read and draft reply for me to sign. As it refers to a meeting in Zurich on January 29th, it is very urgent to send, at any rate, a provisional reply.

~~E. C.~~  
90x

25/1/24

33595



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.....With regard to the question of minorities strictly speaking, I have read the statement on Turkey with great interest. With reference to Greece, I think you ought perhaps to mention that the Greek Minorities Treaty signed on 10th August 1920 at Sèvres has not yet come into force, owing to a stipulation in the same Treaty that it should come into force at the same time as the Treaty concerning the status of Thrace, also signed at Sèvres on the same date. Protocol 16, annex to the Treaty of Lausanne, provides that those two Treaties should be ratified and come into force at the same time as the Treaty of Lausanne.

This is what I  
think should be  
said on minorities  
Kotzy



ca | 33595 | 807

GENEVA.

January 26th 1924.

*Private*

Dear Mr. O'Molony,

Your "Memorandum on the present Plight of Minorities in Turkey and Greece" is most interesting. As you have asked for our observations, I shall be glad to be of such assistance as I can.

With regard to the question of minorities strictly speaking, I have read the statement on Turkey with great interest. With reference to Greece, I think you ought perhaps to mention that the Greek Minorities Treaty signed on August 10th 1920 at Sèvres has not yet come into force, owing to a stipulation in the same Treaty that it should come into force at the same time as the Treaty concerning the status of Thrace, also signed at Sèvres on the same date. Protocol 16, annex to the Treaty of Lausanne, provides that those two Treaties should be ratified and come into force at the same time as the Treaty of Lausanne.

As regards the exchange of populations, it is true that article I provides that the exchange should begin from May 1st 1923.

W. O'Molony Esq.,  
Federation of League of Nations Societies,  
1 Avenue de la Toison d'Or,  
Brussels.



but as you know, the Exchange Convention did not come into force until the Treaty of Lausanne had been ratified by the Greek and Turkish Governments. These ratifications took place on August 25th and August 23rd 1923, respectively. Within less than a month, on September 17th 1923, the three neutral members of the Exchange Commission were appointed by the Council of the League, and the Commission itself was organised in Athens early in October.

It is not this Commission, however, which is taking care of the refugees in Greece, who are to be provided for under the auspices of the Greek Refugees Settlement Commission. The plan for this Settlement Commission was approved by the Council of the League in September last and was established under a protocol signed by the Greek Government. Mr. Henry Morgenthau, formerly United States Ambassador to Turkey, is President of the Commission. I am sending you under separate cover Document C.660.M.263.1923.II., which contains the essential papers with regard to the creation of that Commission.

We have not received any detailed information with regard to Greeks still in Asia Minor, but I have seen several estimates to the effect that there are 150,000 still there, subject to exchange. This number did not include



the able-bodied men referred to in Article 4 of the Exchange Convention and in the Protocol attached to that document. Recent information has indicated that several thousands of able-bodied men were recently brought to Greece from Asia Minor, and I am under the impression that there are not many of them left in Turkey, although I am not absolutely sure about it.

We have recently been informed that up to January 17th 1924, 45,000 Moslems had been sent away from Greece to Asia Minor under the Convention, and that the Commission, which now is continuing the evacuation at the rate of about 10,000 a week, expects to send away a total of 200,000 by May 1st 1924. This information was contained in a communiqué given to the press by the Commission. It is the most complete paper which we have received from the Commission, and I beg to enclose a copy for your information. These figures will probably be more useful than those contained in the paragraph in the middle of page 4 of your memorandum, and I should perhaps point out that the 25,000 Moslems mentioned in Mr. Bratli's letter of December 8th 1923 were in Crete and not in Greece. Moreover, although it is the general plan of the Exchange Commission to transfer some 200,000 Moslems from Greece to Asia Minor up to May 1st next, this would leave, according to such unofficial estimates as we have received, some



150,000 still in Greece.

The letter from the Greek League of Nations Society, which you quote in your memorandum, is also of interest in connection with the exchange question, for there has apparently been some confusion between the position of Moslem Turks and Moslem Albanians. This question was considered by the Council at its last Session, as the Albanian Government protested because Albanian Moslems were, in its opinion, being improperly assimilated to Turkish Moslems subject to exchange. I am sending you the Minutes of the Council Meeting of December 17th 1923, at which this question was considered, and at the end of the Minutes you will find the Resolution which was adopted.

For a general survey of the exchange question, you may be interested in an article in the "Temps" of January 16th 1924, from a correspondent in Constantinople. I am sorry I have not an extra copy to send on to you with this letter.

The question of Irish Free State citizens as members of the Secretariat I shall take up at the first opportunity with my colleagues on the Appointments Committee here.

Yours sincerely,

E.L.



UNION INTERNATIONALE DES ASSOCIATIONS

POUR LA SOCIÉTÉ DES NATIONS

ENCLOSURES 2.

Secrétariat général : **PALAIS MONDIAL**, BRUXELLES

*Adresser pour la Correspondance:*

1<sup>o</sup> PROF. TH. RUYSSSEN, SECRÉTAIRE GÉNÉRAL  
DRÈVE DES VOLUBILIS, 2  
WATERMAEL-BRUXELLES

2<sup>o</sup> SÉNATEUR H. LA FONTAINE, TRÉSORIER  
SQUARE VERGOTE, 9  
BRUXELLES

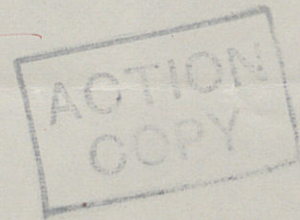
FEDERATION OF LEAGUE OF NATIONS SOCIETIES  
1, Avenue de la Toison d'Or  
BRUSSELS

January 23rd, 24.

M. Eric Colban,  
League of Nations,  
Geneva.



*Personal*



Dear Mr. Colban,

I am enclosing a copy of a short memorandum which I have drafted for the use of the Minorities Commission of this Federation. It is not as complete as I should like it to have been but it is extremely difficult to receive any reliable information at the present moment regarding the present plight of Minorities in the Near East other than news regarding those that fall under the Compulsory Exchange Convention. The Commission meets at Zurich on the 29th and 30th of this month. If there is anything obviously wrong with the facts contained in the document I will be most grateful to you if you would draw my attention to the same.

I was very glad to have received your letter of December 20th, in which you informed me of the changes made in your department. I still trust that you will bear my case in mind, as I am as anxious as ever to work in your section. Perhaps you would let me know whether, now that the Irish Free State is a member of the League, it would be of any use getting Desmond Fitzgerald, our Minister



UNION INTERNATIONALE DES ASSOCIATIONS  
POUR LA SOCIÉTÉ DES NATIONS

Secrétariat général : ~~PALAIS~~ MONDIAL, BRUXELLES

~~Adresses pour la Correspondance :~~

1° PROF. TH. RUYSSSEN, SECRÉTAIRE GÉNÉRAL  
DRÈVE DES VOLUBILIS, 2  
WATERMAEL-BRUXELLES

2° SÉNATEUR H. LA FONTAINE, TRÉSORIER  
SQUARE VERGOTE, 9  
BRUXELLES

FEDERATION OF LEAGUE OF NATIONS SOCIETIES

1, Avenue de la Toison d'Or  
RUSSE

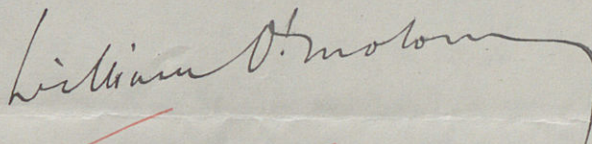
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for External Affairs, to approach you in this connection.

With very best wishes for the present year,

I remain,

Yours sincerely,



~~WILLIAM O'MOLONY.~~  
~~Assistant Secretary General.~~

LD.



33595

FEDERATION OF LEAGUE OF NATIONS SOCIETIES.

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M E M O R A N D U M

O N

T H E P R E S E N T P L I G H T O F M I N O R I T I E S

I N T U R K E Y A N D G R E E C E .

BY

W I L L I A M O ' M O L O N Y .

BRUSSELS.

JANUARY 1924.  
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PRESENT FLIGHT OF MINORITIES IN TURKEY AND GREECE.

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P R E A M B L E.

The Treaty of Lausanne and its signatories must bear the responsibility for the future protection accorded to Minorities in the Near East. After several centuries of oppression and disaster, of ruthless intrigue committed by Turkey, her neighbours and the Powers alike, a real effort has at last been made to set some sort of standard by which justice could be administered and protection offered to Christians and Moslems alike. The failure of the Treaty of Sevres, the occupation of Smyrna by the Greeks, the savage warfare in Asia Minor and the subsequent victory of the Kemalists and withdrawal of the Greek forces, render it, however, unlikely that a code for the Protection of Minorities could be accepted and enforced, that would really attain to that degree of justice which the world had hoped to see administered. There were so many political obstacles and unprecedented forces at play at Lausanne that the results achieved after long months of nervous negotiations bore rather the stamp of compromise than of justice. Yet a code was drafted and some sort of order introduced into a section of the world which has perhaps given greater rise to inter-race hatred than any other.

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I. NEGOTIATIONS AT LAUSANNE.

The Conference of Lausanne opened on November 20th 1922. On February the 4th, 23 the Turks refused to sign the Treaty submitted to them by the Powers. On March the 8th counter-proposals were submitted by the Angora Government, to which the Allies replied on the first of the following month. On April the 8th the Turks agreed to resume ne-



negotiations; on April the 23rd, the Lausanne Conference re-assembled. Three months later the agreement was reached and on July the 24th the Treaty was signed.

## II. THE QUESTION OF RATIFICATION.

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According to art.143, fourth and fifth paragraphs, the Treaty will come into force when it has been ratified by Turkey and three out of the four principle Allied Powers, viz:- Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan. The text of the article in this connection runs as follows:-

"A first procès-verbal of the deposit of ratifications shall be drawn up as soon as Turkey, on the one hand, and the British Empire, France, Italy and Japan, or any three of them, on the other hand, have deposited the instrument of their ratifications. From the date of this First Procès-Verbal the Treaty will come into force between the High Contracting Parties who have thus ratified it. Thereafter it will come into force for the other Powers at the date of the deposit of their ratifications."

Unhappily, of the Powers referred to, only Turkey has so far ratified the Treaty; it was ratified by the Angora Government on August 23rd 1923, and the ratification was on the same day followed by the evacuation of Constantinople by the Allied Armies. The evacuation was completed on October 2nd, 1923.

Thus it is that since October 2nd, to the present date, the Minorities in Turkey and Greece have neither enjoyed the putting into force of the Minorities clauses of the Treaty, nor in the case of Constantinople, freedom from anxiety afforded them by the Allied occupation. On first appearances, one is induced to fear that the Minorities are now entirely at the mercy of the whims and fancies of the Angora and Athens Governments, and will continue to be so until the Treaty is ratified. It is, however, not necessary to assume that their plight has as yet become desperate.



III. PRESENT PLIGHT OF MINORITIES IN TURKEY AND GREECE  
 REVIEWED.

Such Minorities as are left <sup>in Turkey</sup> must be approached under two headings, on the one hand those who do not fall within the Convention for the Exchange of Populations, and on the other hand those who do. The Convention, it must be noticed, solely applies to the Ottoman-Greek Minorities, with the one exception of Constantinople, whose Ottoman-Greek inhabitants are exempted from exchange under art. 2 of the Convention.

a) Those falling under the Exchange of Populations Convention.

*Ref.*  
 The Convention was signed at Lausanne on January 30th, 23. According to art. 1 the exchange commenced to operate from May the 1st 1923, onwards. In the language of the article: "There shall take place a compulsory exchange of Turkish Nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established on Turkish territory, and of Greek Nationals of the Moslem religion established in the Greek territory." And then again in article 2, "the following persons shall not be included in the exchange provided for in art 1:-

- a) The Greek inhabitants of Constantinople,
- b) the Moslem inhabitants of Western Thrace."

And continuing in the same article we read:- "All Greeks who were already established before the 30th of October 1918 within the area under the Prefecture of the City of Constantinople, as defined by the Law of 1912, shall be considered as Greek inhabitants of Constantinople. All Moslems established in the region to the East of the frontier line laid down in 1913, by the Treaty of Bucharest, shall be considered as Moslem inhabitants of Western Thrace."

The Convention does not therefore apply to these, nor does it apply to Armenians, Assyrians, or any other



a) Those falling under  
the Exchange of popula-  
tions Convention cont:

150,000  
 of the smaller minorities. Almost all the Ottoman-Greeks of Turkey, affected by the Convention, have already left or been expelled. These number approximately one million and are now being cared for in Greece by the Mixed Commission, appointed (by the League of Nations) to supervise the execution of the Convention. A certain number of Greeks, however, still remain to be exchanged, most of these being survivors of the 1920 - 1922 deportations, and who are being collected on the coast, mainly in Pontus by Relief Societies such as the Near East Relief and the Imperial War Relief Fund. Furthermore, a certain number of survivors from amongst the Ottoman-Greek men of military age, deported to the interior during the exodus of the autumn of 1922, still await exchange under the Convention. It is impossible to state their numbers at the present.

La Turquie  
 last figure  
 X  
 As for the Moslems of Greece, affected by the Exchange, the Secretary General of the ~~League's~~ Mixed Commission at Athens, in a letter dated December 8th, 1923, gave the figure of those prepared for departure from Macedonia as 120,000 and those from Greece as 25,000. Some 15,000 had by the middle of December last already set sail from Greece for Asia Minor. It is anticipated that all the Moslems will have left Greece by May 1st, 1924.

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 This somewhat lengthy reference to the Exchange of Populations Convention is here made because, although the Convention is not in any way/in <sup>connected</sup> documentary form with the articles of the Treaty concerning the Protection of Minorities, it will be seen to what extent the numbers involved under Minorities Protection are decreased and to what extent the problem of coping with their protection may have been diminished.



b) Those constituting the Minorities in the future.

Under this heading fall all those Orthodox Greeks, not covered by the Convention and all such Armenians, Assyrians, Arabs etc., who reside within the frontiers of Turkey, as defined by articles 2 - 22 of the Treaty. The numbers of these are approximately as follows:-

Greeks in Constantinople.....	300,000
Armenians in " .....	260,000
" " Anatolia.....	130,000
" " elsewhere in Turkey.....	50,000
Assyrians, .....	?
Arabs. . . . .	?
	<hr/>
In all about.....	1,000,000
	<hr/> <hr/>

This figure would be considerably increased were the reported number of Armenians who perished during and since the war prove to be less than supposed. It would be very greatly increased were the Kurds to be included amongst the Minorities of Asia Minor, as these number some millions (about 2½). Though Moslems, and generally on good terms with the Turks, their claim to recognition as a Minority at least, is apparently a strong one, as under the abortive Treaty of Sevres, Kurdistan was recognised as independent by the Turks.

Although, on first appearances, the plight of the Minorities, in view of the failure to ratify the Treaty hitherto and the evacuation of Constantinople by the Allies, tends to excite anxiety, there seems to be no reason as yet to suppose that either the Turkish or the Greek authorities have taken advantage hitherto of their exposed position. Moreover, pending the ratifications of the Treaty, an Amnesty Declaration was signed at Lausanne on July 24th, 1923, whereby a certain amount of protection is afforded to the Minorities until the League, according to the Treaty, (art. 44) takes over the responsibility. This

Amnesty Declaration numbers in all seven articles, together





b) Those constituting  
the Minorities in the  
future:

with a Protocol. The articles in question protect each inhabitant of Turkey and Greece from molestation, "under any pretext whatever, on account of any military action taken by him, or any assistance of any kind given by him to a foreign power, signatory of the Treaty of Peace...." Similarly, "no inhabitant detached from Turkey under the said Treaty of Peace, shall be disturbed or molested either on account of his political or military attitude against or in favour of Turkey....." And again, "full and complete Amnesty shall be respectively granted by the Turkish and by the Greek government Government/for all crimes and offences, committed during the same period, which were evidently connected with the political events which had taken place during that period." Further articles figure in the Declaration which render inviolable steps hitherto taken since 1918 by the Allied Powers with the object of reestablishing families scattered owing to the war and of replacing legitimate proprietors in possession of their goods. Claims respecting persons and goods "shall be examined by a Commission composed of a delegate of the Red Crescent and a Delegate of the Red Cross. In the event of a dispute, these Delegates will choose an umpire; if they are unable to agree, as to such choice, the umpire will be appointed by the Council of the League of Nations."

The only exception made to the rule above laid down is contained in the Protocol annexed to the Declaration, by which "the Turkish Government reserves the right to prohibit sojourn in and access to Turkey to 150 persons, included in the category referred to " paragraph 1 of the Declaration.

From the foregoing, therefore, it will be seen that even if the rights and especial liberties accorded to Minorities under the Minorities Conventions applied to many States in Europe, have not <sup>as yet</sup> ~~yet~~ been applied to the Minorities in



Turkey and in Greece, the <sup>Minorities</sup>~~Minorities~~ in these countries are at all events protected under the Declaration from molestation for military or political reasons.

#### IV. C O N C L U S I O N.

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That the necessity, however, for a regular code of justice for the protection of Minorities in the Near East is one of great urgency, cannot be disputed. A merely negative tolerance, where questions of life and death arise, such as is imposed upon both Greece and Turkey alike under the Amnesty Declaration, is not enough to ensure the prosperity of the Minorities. No real change of attitude on the part of either government will be believed in, until proof is forthcoming not only of their negative tolerance or policy of "let-live" but of their <sup>d.</sup> ~~re~~ readiness to accord the same positive rights to all nationals alike, whether Minorities or not. This proof cannot even be looked for until the Treaty of Lausanne had been ratified. Turkey and Greece have ratified it, but as Greece is not one of the four Great Powers from whom ratification under Art 143 is required, the present unsatisfactory position of the Greek, Turkish, Armenian, Assyrian and other Minorities must continue until three of the four Great Powers mentioned in art 143, have deposited the instruments of their ratifications.

In the interest, therefore, of the millions of Minorities in the Near East, and of their future effective protection by the League of Nations, every step possible should be taken to induce the British, French, Italian and Japanese Governments or three of these Governments at all events, to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible.

W I L L I A M O' M O L O N Y.

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Jan: 1924.

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 MINORITIES COMMISSION ZURICH.
 

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January 29th and 30th, 24.

For the information of the members of the Commission.


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 PLIGHT OF MINORITIES IN TURKEY AND GREECE.
 

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A communication received from the Greek League of Nations Society, relative to the treatment of Catholic, Jewish, Moslem and Roumanian Koutslovak Minorities in Greece, describes the privileges enjoyed by the Moslem Minorities (Turk, Albanian and Tchitikouki Bulgars) approximately in the following terms:-

1. They enjoy the <sup>same</sup> rights and privileges as those enjoyed by Greek subjects of the Orthodox National religion and of the Catholic, Jewish or Roumainain creeds and are equal with these before the law.
2. Under the Treaties of 1881 and 1913 they were given three years in which to choose between Turkish and Greek nationality during which period they/immune without tax payment from military service. This period and its accompanying immunity from service was continually extended. During the late war, however, Moslems were conscripted but then only to serve in the labour battalions or as auxiliary forces. During these years in which the right of option could be exercised they enjoyed all the privileges of Greek nationality - having power to vote, to elect and to be elected, until after the elections of June 1915 when, owing to Greece's neutrality and the Turkish sympathies of the Moslems, the right could no longer be accorded.
3. In the profession of their religion they are at liberty to do as they please. They are, and indeed have been since the Treaty of London 1830, at liberty to cite the name of the Sultan of Turkey in their public prayers and retain full religious autonomy over their communities. In all questions concerning relations with the Sheik-ul-Islam at Constantinople, the election of the muftis, the administration of the Holy Law (Shariah), the distribution of property (Vakouf), in matters relating to marriage, divorce wills and inheritance, entire liberty is enjoyed. The Chief Mufti is primarily elected by the King of Greece from amongst three candidates chosen for election by the body of muftis in Greece, but the final investiture and appointment of office lies with the Sheik-ul-Islam at Constantinople, whose approval must be secured by the Greek Embassy in Constantinople. The Chief Muftis and the Kadis expenses in general are accounted for by the Greek public Treasury.

N.B. (The Treaties securing these privileges are:-  
 Treaty of London, February 1830.  
 Treaty of Constantinople, May 1881 and the  
 Treaty of Athens, November 1913.)

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 R E M A R K S.
 

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To what extent these privileges still remain in force since 1914 re-



mains to be ascertained.. As, however, all Turkish Moslems in Greece proper, Thessaly and the islands fall under the provisions of the Convention of Compulsory Exchange, the only Turkish minorities whose present plight requires to be considered are those inhabiting Western Thrace, as these are not included in the Exchange.

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This is the Greek statement of the case. The only Turkish protests against violation of Moslem property etc., by a Greeks, that have reached us, are such as refer to the Minorities about to be exchanged under the Lausanne Convention. It appears from the minutes (1099) of the last meeting of the Council of the League of Nations, that after a violent exchange of protests on both sides, agreement has been reached and both Greeks and Turks have expressed confidence in the Mixed Commission, responsible for the execution of the Convention. It seems, however, that the plight of those Turks and Greeks awaiting exchange is exceedingly wretched.

WILLIAM O'MOLONY

Brussels.

January 17th, 24.

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N.B. EXCHANGE OF POPULATIONS CONVENTION AND THE LEAGUE'S COUNCIL.

Minute 1099, Twenty-seventh session of the League of Nations Council.

Viscount Ishii ".....It should be remembered that the Council, "in accepting responsibility for appointing three "members of the Mixed Commission has assumed no "responsibility for the execution of the Convention "regarding the Exchange of Populations".

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MINORITY QUESTIONS 41.

28 JAN 1924

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