

MISCELLANEOUS No. 4 (1921).

FRANCO-BRITISH CONVENTION

OF

DECEMBER 23, 1920,

ON

CERTAIN POINTS CONNECTED WITH THE MANDATES FOR SYRIA AND THE LEBANON, PALESTINE AND MESOPOTAMIA.

Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty.



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MISCELLANEOUS No. 4 (1921)

Franco-British Convention of December 23, 1920, on certain points connected with the Mandates for Syria and the Lebanon, Palestine and Mesopotamia.

THE British and French Governments, respectively represented by the undersigned Plenipotentiaries, wishing to settle completely the problems raised by the attribution to Great Britain of the mandates for Palestine and Mesopotamia and by the attribution to France of the mandate over Syria and the Lebanon, all three conferred by the Supreme Council at San Remo, have agreed on the following provisions :—

ARTICLE 1.

The boundaries between the territories under the French mandate of Syria and the Lebanon on the one hand and the British mandates of Mesopotamia and Palestine on the other are determined as follows :—

On the east, the Tigris from Jeziret-ibn-Omar to the boundaries of the former vilayets of Diarbekir and Mosul.

On the south-east and south, the aforesaid boundary of the former vilayets southwards as far as Roumelan Koeui ; thence a line leaving in the territory under the French mandate the entire basin of the western Kabur and passing in a straight line towards the Euphrates, which it crosses at Abu Kemal, thence a straight line to Imtar to the south of Jebul Druse, then a line to the south of Nasib on the Hedjaz Railway, then a line to Semakh on the Lake of Tiberias, traced to the south of the railway, which descends towards the lake and parallel to the railway. Deraa and its environs will remain in the territory under the French mandate ; the frontier will in principle leave the valley of the Yarmuk in the territory under the French mandate, but will be drawn as close as possible to the railway in such a manner as to allow the construction in the valley of the Yarmuk of a railway entirely situated in the territory under the British mandate. At Semakh the frontier will be fixed in such a manner as to allow each of the two High Contracting Parties to construct and establish a harbour and railway station giving free access to the Lake of Tiberias.

On the west, the frontier will pass from Semakh across the Lake of Tiberias to the mouth of the Wadi Massadyie. It will then follow the course of this river upstream, and then the Wadi Jeraba to its source. From that point it will reach the track from El Kuneitra to Banias at the point marked Skek, thence it will follow the said track, which will remain in the territory under the French mandate as far as Banias. Thence the frontier will be drawn westwards as far as Metullah, which will remain in Palestinian territory. This portion of the frontier will be traced in detail in such a manner as to ensure for the territory under the French mandate easy communication entirely within such territory with the regions of Tyre and Sidon, as well as continuity of road communication to the west and to the east of Banias.

From Metullah the frontier will reach the watershed of the valley of the Jordan and the basin of the Litani. Thence it will follow this watershed southwards. Thereafter it will follow in principle the watershed between the Wadis Farah-Houroun and Kerkera, which will remain in the territory under the British mandate, and the Wadis El Doubleh, El Aioun and Es Zerka, which will remain in the territory under the French mandate. The frontier will reach the Mediterranean Sea at the port of Ras-el-Nakura, which will remain in the territory under the French mandate.

ARTICLE 2.

A commission shall be established within three months from the signature of the present convention to trace on the spot the boundary line laid down in article 1 between the French and British mandatory territories. This commission shall be composed of four members. Two of these members shall be nominated by the British and French Governments respectively, the two others shall be nominated, with the consent of the mandatory Power, by the local Governments concerned in the French and British mandatory territories respectively.

In case any dispute should arise in connection with the work of the commission, the question shall be referred to the Council of the League of Nations, whose decision shall be final.

The final reports by the commission shall give the definite description of the boundary as it has been actually demarcated on the ground; the necessary maps shall be annexed thereto and signed by the commission. The reports, with their annexes, shall be made in triplicate; one copy shall be deposited in the archives of the League of Nations, one copy shall be kept by the mandatory, and one by the other Government concerned.

ARTICLE 3.

The British and French Governments shall come to an agreement regarding the nomination of a commission, whose duty it will be to make a preliminary examination of any plan of irrigation formed by the Government of the French mandatory territory, the execution of which would be of a nature to diminish in any considerable degree the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates at the point where they enter the area of the British mandate in Mesopotamia.

ARTICLE 4.

In virtue of the geographic and strategic position of the island of Cyprus, off the Gulf of Alexandretta, the British Government agrees not to open any negotiations for the cession or alienation of the said island of Cyprus without the previous consent of the French Government.

ARTICLE 5.

1. The French Government agrees to facilitate by a liberal arrangement the joint use of the section of the existing railway between the Lake of Tiberias and Nasib. This arrangement shall be concluded between the railway administrations of the areas under the French and British mandates respectively as soon as possible after the coming into force of the mandates for Palestine and Syria. In particular the agreement shall allow the administration in the British zone to run their own trains with their own traction and train crews over the above section of the railway in both directions for all purposes other than the local traffic of the territory under the French mandate. The agreement shall determine at the same time the financial, administrative and technical conditions governing the running of the British trains. In the event of the two administrations being unable to reach an agreement within three months from the coming into force of the two above-mentioned mandates, an arbitrator shall be appointed by the Council of the League of Nations to settle the points as to which a difference of opinion exists and immediate effect shall be given as far as possible to those parts of the agreement on which an understanding has already been reached.

The said agreement shall be concluded for an indefinite period and shall be subject to periodical revision as need arises.

2. The British Government may carry a pipe line along the existing railway track and shall have in perpetuity and at any moment the right to transport troops by the railway.

3. The French Government consents to the nomination of a special commission, which, after having examined the ground, may readjust the above-mentioned frontier line in the valley of the Yarmuk as far as Nasib in such a manner as to render possible the construction of the British railway and pipe line connecting Palestine with the Hedjaz Railway and the valley of the Euphrates, and running entirely within the limits of the areas under the British mandate. It is agreed, however, that the existing railway in the Yarmuk valley is to remain entirely in the territory under the French mandate. The right provided by the present paragraph for the benefit of the British Government must be utilised within a maximum period of ten years.

The above-mentioned commission shall be composed of a representative of the French Government and a representative of the British Government, to whom may be added representatives of the local Governments and experts as technical advisers to the extent considered necessary by the British and French Governments.

4. In the event of the track of the British railway being compelled for technical reasons to enter in certain places the territory under French mandate, the French Government will recognise the full and complete extra-territoriality of the sections thus lying in the territory under the French mandate, and will give the British Government or its technical agents full and easy access for all railway purposes.

5. In the event of the British Government making use of the right mentioned in paragraph 3 to construct a railway in the valley of the Yarmuk, the obligations

assumed by the French Government in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 of the present article will determine three months after the completion of the construction of the said railway.

6. The French Government agrees to arrange that the rights provided for above for the benefit of the British Government shall be recognised by the local Governments in the territory under the French mandate.

ARTICLE 6.

It is expressly stipulated that the facilities accorded to the British Government by the preceding articles imply the maintenance for the benefit of France of the provisions of the Franco-British Agreement of San Remo regarding oil.

ARTICLE 7.

The French and British Governments will put no obstacle in their respective mandatory areas in the way of the recruitment of railway staff for any section of the Hedjaz Railway.

Every facility will be given for the passage of employees of the Hedjaz Railway over the British and French mandatory areas in order that the working of the said railway may be in no way prejudiced.

The French and British Governments agree, where necessary, and in eventual agreement with the local Governments, to conclude an arrangement whereby the stores and railway material passing from one mandatory area to another and intended for the use of the Hedjaz Railway will not for this reason be submitted to any additional customs dues and will be exempted so far as possible from customs formalities.

ARTICLE 8.

Experts nominated respectively by the Administrations of Syria and Palestine shall examine in common within six months after the signature of the present convention the employment, for the purposes of irrigation and the production of hydro-electric power, of the waters of the Upper Jordan and the Yarmuk and of their tributaries, after satisfaction of the needs of the territories under the French mandate.

In connection with this examination the French Government will give its representatives the most liberal instructions for the employment of the surplus of these waters for the benefit of Palestine.

In the event of no agreement being reached as a result of this examination, these questions shall be referred to the French and British Governments for decision.

To the extent to which the contemplated works are to benefit Palestine, the Administration of Palestine shall defray the expenses of the construction of all canals, weirs, dams, tunnels, pipe lines and reservoirs or other works of a similar nature, or measures taken with the object of reafforestation and the management of forests.

ARTICLE 9.

Subject to the provisions of Articles 15 and 16 of the mandate for Palestine, of Articles 8 and 10 of the mandate for Mesopotamia, and of Article 8 of the mandate for Syria and the Lebanon, and subject also to the general right of control in relation to education and public instruction, of the local Administrations concerned, the British and French Governments agree to allow the schools which French and British nationals possess and direct at the present moment in their respective mandatory areas to continue their work freely; the teaching of French and English will be freely permitted in these schools.

The present article does not in any way imply the right of nationals of either of the two parties to open new schools in the mandatory area of the other.

The present convention has been drawn up in English and French, each of the two texts having equal force.

Done at Paris, the 23rd December, 1920, in a double copy, one of which will remain deposited in the archives of the Government of the French Republic, and the other in those of the Government of His Britannic Majesty.

HARDINGE OF PENSHURST.
G. LEYGUES.