

[Distributed to the Council
and the Members of the League.]

Official No.: **C. 578. M. 285.** 1932. VI.
(with Map Annexes 1, 2, 3a and 3b.)

Geneva, July 1932.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

MANDATES

Report of the Commission

entrusted by the Council with the Study of the

FRONTIER BETWEEN SYRIA AND IRAQ

Series of League of Nations Publications

VI.A. MANDATES

1932. VI.A. 1.

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY
TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

[*Translation.*]

Geneva, September 10th, 1932.

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report of the Commission entrusted, under the terms of the Council resolution of December 9th, 1931, with the duty of investigating on the spot the question of the frontier between Iraq and Syria.

As regards the Jebel Sinjar, the Commission did not succeed in putting forward a unanimous suggestion.

The minority opinion is stated in a note inserted in the report at the end of Chapter VI.

It should be emphasised that the Commission was unanimous with regard to the unity of the Jebel Sinjar. This opinion is founded, as will be seen from the enclosed report, on all the various factors of the case and it served as a basis for the suggestion made by the majority of the Commission.

The Commission's report is accompanied by a list of the documents submitted to the Commission during its proceedings, and these documents have been collected in a dossier which I also have the honour to attach.¹

For the Commission:

(*Signed*) FR. ISELIN,
Chairman.

¹ These documents are kept in the archives of the Secretariat of the League of Nations and are at the disposal of the Members of the League.

EXPLANATION OF PRINCIPAL ARABIC, TURKISH AND KURDISH TERMS USED
IN THE REPORT.

<i>Bir :</i>	Well.
<i>Dagh :</i>	Kurdish word meaning mountain.
<i>Jabal (jebel) :</i>	Mountain or hill.
<i>Kaïmakan :</i>	Sub-prefect.
<i>Keui :</i>	Turkish word meaning village.
<i>Liva :</i>	District governed by a "mutessarif".
<i>Mutessarif :</i>	Prefect governing a Liva.
<i>Qadha :</i>	Territory under a cadi (judge); consequently administrative district or commune; subdivision of a Liva.
<i>Sabkha :</i>	Salt deposit.
<i>Sandjak :</i>	Administrative district (generally subdivision of a vilayet).
<i>Tell :</i>	Isolated hill in the desert.
<i>Wadi :</i>	Valley, generally formed by the dry bed of a river.
<i>Vilayet :</i>	Province under a governor-general or "vali".

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LIST OF DOCUMENTS PLACED BEFORE THE COMMISSION.¹

1.

Mandate for Syria and Lebanon.

(League of Nations document C.528.M.315.1922.VI.)

Decisions of the Council of the League of Nations of September 27th, 1924, and March 11th, 1926, relating to the application of the principles of Article 22 of the Covenant to Iraq, together with certain treaties and agreements between the United Kingdom and Iraq, forming the mandate for Iraq.

(League of Nations document C.216.M.77.1926.VI.)

Franco-British Convention, dated December 23rd, 1920, on Certain Points concerning the Granting of the Mandates for Syria and Lebanon, Palestine and Mesopotamia.

Joint notes of the British and French Governments, dated November 11th and 10th, 1931, respectively, bringing the frontier limitation question before the Council of the League of Nations.

(League of Nations document C.843.1931.VI.)

Minutes of the nineteenth meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the Council of the League of Nations, held on December 9th, 1931, at which the question of the delimitation of the frontier between Syria and Iraq was considered (*Official Journal*, 1931: No. 2963, pages 2372 to 2374).

Note from the French Government, dated January 23rd, 1932, concerning the tracing of the frontier line.

(League of Nations document C.106.VI [with map].)

Supplement to above document.

(League of Nations document C.514.1932.VI.)

Note from the British Government, dated January 30th, 1932, concerning the tracing of the frontier line.

(League of Nations document C.182.1932.VI [with map].)

Supplement to above document, April 11th, 1932.

Note from the British Government, dated February 27th, 1932, forwarding an additional memorandum containing proposals for the revision of the frontier line.

(League of Nations document C.313.1932.VI [with six maps].)

Note from the French Government, dated February 29th, 1932, forwarding certain documents concerning the tracing of the frontier line.

(League of Nations document C.317.1932.VI [with annex and nine maps].)

Statement by the High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and the Lebanon, dated from Beirut, March 19th, 1932, and concerning the existing situation arising out of frontier relations between Syria and Iraq.

Statistics of the trade of Syria and the Lebanon with Iraq, prepared by the Economic Affairs Service of the High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and the Lebanon.

Statistics submitted by M. Ringrow, Deputy Collector of Customs, Mosul, relating to exports from Iraq and from the Liva of Mosul to Syria; imports from Syria into Iraq and the Liva of Mosul.

Extracts from the official *Öttoman Year-Book* of 1909 concerning the vilayets of Mosul and Diarbekir, with list of chief towns of the various communes.

2.

NOTES SUBMITTED BY THE FRENCH AND SYRIAN ASSESSORS IN THE COURSE OF THE COMMISSION'S WORK.

Descriptive memorandum on the frontier between Syria and Iraq, drawn up by the High Commissariat of the French Republic in Syria and the Lebanon, February 18th, 1932, forming part of the documents forwarded by the French Government with its note of February 29th, 1932, mentioned above.

(League of Nations document C.317.1932.VI.)

¹ These documents are kept in the archives of the Secretariat of the League of Nations and are at the disposal of the Members of the League.

Joint reply by the assessors of the two parties to questions asked at the eighth meeting (April 4th) as to the southern starting-point of the frontier between Syria and Iraq.

Suggestions by the French assessor as to the tracing of the frontier in the district south of the Jebel Tenf.

Suggestions by the French and Syrian assessors as to the tracing of the frontier in and south-west of the Euphrates valley.

Map showing the French and British proposals for the frontier line in the region of the Euphrates.

Note on the Jebel Tenf frontier at the Leachman boundary stone.

Replies of the assessors (April 12th, 1932) to questions asked on April 10th in regard to the Albu Kemal district.

Assessors' suggestions for the tracing of the Jebel Baghuz at the Buara salt fields.

Continuation of assessors' note dated April 12th, with additional information on Heri.

Note forwarding two telegrams from the High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and the Lebanon concerning the appointment and arrival of the new President of the Commission.

Information as to the salt fields.

Assessors' suggestions for the frontier line between the Euphrates, the Buara salt fields and north of the latter to Wadi Ajij.

Assessors' suggestions for the tracing of the frontier from the confluence of Wadi Ajij and Wadi Hauissa to the Tigris.

Supplementary note to the suggestions in the preceding note concerning the frontier in the Sinjar region.

Military observations (with map), in continuation of the previous note.

Note concerning the inhabitants of Khatuniya and El Hol.

Note on the tribes which can be regarded as belonging to the Yezidi population, and on their distribution in and outside of the Jebel Sinjar.

Note regarding the religious hierarchy of the Yezidis and its influence on tribal political life, and the relations between the Yezidis and the representatives of other religions.

Note on commercial relations between Hassechel traders and the population of the Jebel Sinjar.

Joint proposals of the assessors of the two parties as to the programme of work in the Senuni camp.

Reply to the questions asked at the meeting of May 3rd, 1932, as to the relations between the Yezidis and the Tays.

Note on the Kabur basin.

Note forwarding a map of the Ottoman Empire with administrative boundaries.

Note forwarding a photograph of Rumelan Keui (the photograph was returned to the assessors at their request, as it was the only copy in existence).

Note on the tracing of the frontier between the Sinjar and the Tigris.

Note forwarding six 1:200,000 maps of Buara and Deir-ez-Zor.

Note on Rumelan Keui.

Note on the Lake Khatuniya basin as defined by the British and Iraqi assessors.

Note on the watershed between the basin of the Kabur and the neighbouring basins.

Note on the reconnaissance of May 16th south of Qara Chok Dag and south of Wadi Suaidyia.

Note forwarding that of Captain Delienne on the geodesic point of Imtan.

Note forwarding tables showing trade between Syria and Iraq.

Note forwarding the administrative map of the States of the Levant under French mandate, together with a map showing gendarmerie posts along the eastern boundary.

Note mentioning certain works concerning the Bedouins.

3.

NOTES SUBMITTED BY THE BRITISH AND IRAQI ASSESSORS DURING THE COMMISSION'S PROCEEDINGS.

The frontier between Iraq and Transjordan.

Letter from the Secretariat of the High Commissioner for Iraq, Baghdad, dated May 18th, 1932, submitting a modification to the formulæ defining the frontier between Iraq and Transjordan as per preceding note.

Extract from the Protocol relating to the fixing of the frontier between Syria, the Jebel Druse and Transjordan, Paris, October 31st, 1931.

Copy of annex to the above Protocol.

Map submitted by the representatives of the two parties indicating (1) the line Imtan-Albu Kemal; (2) the line point 3,200 m. north Tell Rohma-Albu Kemal.

Sketch submitted with the joint note of the representatives of the two parties, employed for drawing up the Transjordan-Iraq Arrangement.

First memorandum, transmitted April 4th, 1932, containing observations on the letter dated January 23rd, 1932, addressed by the French Government to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations.

Second memorandum, transmitted April 4th, 1932, containing observations on the "Mémoire descriptif de la frontière entre la Syrie et l'Irak", dated Beirut, February 18th, 1932.

Note verbale concerning the proceedings at the Jebel Tenf.

Memorandum (No. 3) on the *de facto* frontier and administrative arrangements.

Suggestions in connection with the desert sector of the frontier between the Jebel Tenf region and the Euphrates, with a skeleton tracing attached.

Suggestions for modifications of the frontier in the Euphrates sector.

Note on Heri and the Jughaifa referred to in paragraph 8 of the preceding note.

Notes submitting further information on the economic relationships of the region where the frontier cuts the Euphrates.

Note on the Turkish Land Code.

Reply to request concerning proposals regarding the frontier line between the Euphrates and the salt area.

The Salman, Kerabila, Albu Hardan and the estates near the frontier.

Photo-maps of the Syrian Desert showing winter, spring, summer and autumn grazing grounds of the Bedouins.

Note drawing the Commission's attention to the historical *exposé* concerning the Buwara salt fields in paragraph 28 of Chapter III, page 8, of the second memorandum.

Reply to questions regarding the value and extent of exploitation of the Buwara salt fields.

Note transmitting copy of the report of the officer in charge of the Frontier Survey Party of the Iraqi Government on the trigonometrical point L.S.29.

Reply on the request for further suggestions regarding the frontier line north of the Euphrates.

Suggestions regarding the alinement of the frontier in the Sinjar region.

Proposals of the French, Syrian, British and Iraqi assessors for a programme of work for Monday, April 25th, 1932.

Note transmitting six copies of provisional sheet of the area between Raggassat on the south and Wadi Abu Hamda to Badi' on the north, issued by the Survey Directorate of Iraq.

Note on the frontier line between the Jebel Sinjar and Buwara, with a sketch.

Note on Heri.

Note, dated May 3rd, 1932, containing observations on memorandum of April 20th, and memorandum of April 22nd, 1932, of the French and Syrian assessors.

Note, dated May 16th, 1932, in continuation of preceding note of May 3rd, 1932, on the memorandum of the French and Syrian assessors.

Note of May 11th, 1932, in continuation of above note of May 3rd, 1932, and transmitting a sketch showing the drainage system of Lake Khatuniya.

Proposals of the French and Syrian, British and Iraqi assessors for a programme of work from Senuni camp.

Note transmitting six copies each of the following maps received from the Iraqi Survey Directorate, Baghdad: Qara Chok Dag, 1: 100,000, April 1932; Albu Kemal No. 1, 1: 200,000, April 1932.

Suggestions for modification of the frontier in the northern sector.

Note regarding the basin of the Kabur.

Note transmitting the report of the officer in charge, Frontier Survey (Iraq), on the triangulation station of Tall Safra.

Note transmitting observations on the Western Kabur by Mr. W. Allard, Director of Irrigation, Baghdad.

Proposals of the French and Syrian, British and Iraqi assessors for a programme of work from Khanik camp.

Extract from a letter (No. 102), dated Beirut, April 20th, 1932, from the officer in charge, Brigade géographique des frontières, to the officer in charge, Iraq Frontier Surveys.

Copy of the Minutes of a conference held at Beirut on October 10th to 12th, 1931, between Mr. Booth, Acting-Director of Surveys in Iraq, Captain Delienne, Director of the Topographical Bureau of the French Troops in the Levant.

Note on the Miran.

Observations on note (No. 12) of April 22nd, 1932, of the French and Syrian assessors.

Note on Rumelan Keui.

Note on the boundary between the vilayets of Diarbekir and Mosul.

Note containing general considerations on the frontier line.

Letter, dated June 3rd, 1932, from Mr. Edmonds, Baghdad, concerning maps sent by the Survey Department.

Letter, dated June 4th, 1932, from Mr. Edmonds, Baghdad, concerning maps sent by the Survey Department.

Letter from the Ministry of Interior, Baghdad, dated June 14th, 1932, transmitting two lists of villages of Sinjar Qadha, south side and north side.

Letter, dated June 28th, 1932, from Mr. Edmonds, London, on his research in the archives of the Foreign Office, London, concerning the maps used for the negotiations of the convention of 1920.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION.

[Translation.]

CHAPTER I. — ORIGINS OF THE QUESTION UNDER CONSIDERATION.

In the month of December 1920, the French and British Governments, desirous of finally settling the problems raised by the assignment to the United Kingdom of the mandates for Palestine and Mesopotamia, and by the assignment to France of the mandate for Syria and the Lebanon, sought by mutual consent a practical solution of these problems.

The negotiations undertaken for this purpose by the two Governments resulted in the signature of the Franco-British Convention of December 23rd, 1920.¹

Article 1 of this Convention fixed the boundaries between the territories under British mandate and the territories under French mandate.

According to the terms of Article 2, a mixed commission was to be established to trace on the spot the boundaries so fixed. The same article stipulated that any dispute that should arise in connection with the work of this commission would be referred to the Council of the League of Nations, whose decision would be final.

The Commission met in June 1921, and proceeded to carry out the delimitation of the frontier from the Mediterranean as far as El Hamme.

Beyond this point, it was confronted with the difficulty of establishing a line which should take local conditions into account, and was consequently obliged to suspend its operations, which were not afterwards resumed.

Only after an interval of several years — when, by the decision of the Council of the League dated December 16th, 1925, and by the signature of the Franco-Turkish Protocol of June 22nd, 1929, a definite allotment was made of all the territories to which the Convention applied — did the British and French Governments carry out a joint enquiry into the problem of the section of the frontier not yet delimited.

The difficulties which had stopped the work of the commission of 1921, however, soon arose anew. In the first place, divergencies of opinion existed as to the exact interpretation of the definition of the frontier given in Article 1 of the Convention. Secondly, it was found that, whatever that interpretation might be, a frontier drawn in strict conformity therewith would be likely to be unsatisfactory for various reasons.

It was in consequence of these findings, and in order to promote a final settlement of the problem, that the British and French Governments, by two identical notes dated November 11th and 10th, 1931, respectively, laid the question before the Council of the League of Nations.²

At a meeting held at Paris on November 9th, 1931, the Council undertook the examination of this question.³ The representative of Yugoslavia, Rapporteur for mandates questions, explained the origins of the question, and supported the suggestion of the Governments concerned that the Council should appoint a commission of enquiry.

He pointed out that the commission's task would be defined by the actual terms of the request made by the British and French Governments; it would consist in collecting on the spot full information and particulars as to the military, political, administrative, tribal, economic, geographical and other problems which the question involved, so as to permit of its thorough investigation.

The Council adopted the following resolution:

“The Council,

“In pursuance of the joint request by the British and French Governments:

“(1) Decides to accept, in principle, the British and French Governments' request that it should examine all aspects of the difficulties raised by the delimitation of the frontier between Syria and Iraq, should form its conclusions as to the intentions of Article 1 of the Franco-British Convention of December 23rd, 1920, and should then indicate a frontier between Syria and Iraq based on this Convention but modified as required by the aforementioned considerations;

“(2) Decides to set up a Commission consisting of three commissioners selected for their special competence, being nationals of countries not parties to the question, assisted by four assessors, to collect full information and particulars on the spot, and to make such suggestions as may assist the Council in framing its decision on this question; this decision will be final;

“(3) Requests the President in Office of the Council to appoint, with the assistance of the Rapporteur for mandates questions, the members of the above-mentioned Commission; the two parties are requested to submit jointly proposals in this connection;

“(4) Decides that the sums required by the Commission for the accomplishment of its work shall be borne by the British and French Governments, the mandatory Powers for Iraq and Syria.”

¹ See *Treaty Series* (League of Nations), Volume XXII, 1924, Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4, pages 355 to 361.

² Document C.843.1931.VI.

³ See Minutes of the sixty-fifth session of the Council, No. 2963, pages 2372 to 2374.

On the proposal of the President of the Council, who happened to be the representative of one of the parties concerned, the appointment of the members of the commission of enquiry was entrusted to his predecessor in office, the representative of Spain, with the assistance of the Rapporteur for mandates questions.

At the beginning of March 1932, the Commission was constituted as follows:

Chairman :

Colonel James DE REYNIER (Swiss), former President of the Danzig Harbour and Waterways Board, former Commissioner of Plebiscite Archives in the Saar Territory, former Chairman of the Mixed Greco-Bulgarian Emigration Commission.

Members :

M. Pedro MARRADES (Spanish), First-class Commercial Attaché at the Spanish Embassy in Berlin, former Consul at Damascus, Jerusalem, Beirut and Sète;

M. Carl PETERSÉN (Swedish), Director of Section at the Secretariat of the International League of Red Cross Societies.

The Secretariat of the League of Nations appointed M. Horace DE POURTALÈS to be Secretary to the Commission.

Following the death by accident of the Chairman, Colonel de Reynier, on March 29th, the representative of Spain on the Council and the Rapporteur for mandates questions appointed as the new Chairman, on April 18th:

Colonel Frédéric ISELIN (Swiss), Commanding the Second Artillery Brigade, Engineer holding the diploma of the Ecole polytechnique fédérale.

CHAPTER II. — WORK OF THE COMMISSION.

The Commission met at Geneva on March 12th, 1932, and at once proceeded to examine the material collected for it by the Secretariat of the League of Nations.

The Commission embarked at Marseilles on March 15th, and reached Beirut on March 22nd. There it was joined by the assessors whom the two Governments concerned had respectively appointed, in accordance with the Council's decision, to assist the Commission in its work. These assessors were:

On the Franco-Syrian side: Squadron-Leader BONNOT; Nessib Bey AYOUBI, Mutessarif of Hasseche.

On the Anglo-Iraqi side: Major C. J. EDMONDS, Adviser to the Ministry of the Interior of Iraq; Colonel Sabih Bey NEJIB, Director-General of the Iraqi Police.

The Commission, to which the four assessors had now been added, met the day after its arrival to come to an agreement on the general plan of its work. To facilitate a thorough study of the various areas in question, the Commission decided to divide the frontier line into six sectors.

In each sector a centrally-situated and easily-accessible place was chosen as a base for the work of the Commission, which was to camp at these bases successively.

The sectors and camps were as follows:

Jebel Tenf to Albu Kemal, Camp on the Jebel Tenf;

Euphrates Area, Camp at Albu Kemal;

Salt Deposits Area, Camp at Bir Sehil;

Southern Sinjar Area, Camp at Sukenia;

Northern Sinjar Area, Camp at Senuni;

Tigris Area, Camp at Khanik.

As the season was already advanced, it was agreed that the work should start from the south — that is to say, at the Jabal Tenf — and that the Commission should move gradually northward so as to avoid the great heat, which is already formidable in May in the southern parts of the desert.

During its brief stay at Beirut, the Commission was cordially welcomed by the French authorities. It desires to tender its thanks to the High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and the Lebanon, M. Henri Ponsot, and all his assistants, who gave the Commission every facility to accomplish its task.

The Commission then proceeded by aeroplane to Baghdad in order to get into touch with the British and Iraqi authorities.

At the last moment, Colonel de Reynier was obliged to postpone his departure for a few days.

Arriving at Baghdad on the morning of March 26th, the Commissioners were very cordially received by the representatives of H.M. the King, by Sir Francis Humphrys, H.B.M. High Commissioner in Iraq, and by certain members of the Government, with whom they had several interviews during the succeeding days.

The Commission desires to thank them for their kind assistance in the organisation of its work.

Meanwhile, Colonel de Reynier, anxious to rejoin his colleagues at Baghdad as quickly as possible, left Damascus by aeroplane on March 29th.

Starting at dawn in fine weather, the aeroplane was caught between Rutba and Ramadi by a sudden storm, such as frequently arises in those parts. What happened then can only be conjectured. Probably the pilot, flying low in order to follow the caravan trail, was blinded by the sand-clouds, which are carried very high by hurricanes. The machine crashed at full speed and was destroyed. The three occupants, Colonel de Reynier, the pilot and his assistant, were killed instantaneously.

Meanwhile, the Commission, alarmed by the apparently inexplicable delay, asked the Iraqi and Syrian authorities to undertake a search forthwith. Orders were at once given accordingly, but the search was made very difficult by bad atmospheric conditions. Not until thirty-six hours later was it learned at Baghdad that Iraqi police patrols had found the remains of the aeroplane and the bodies of the passengers in the desert.

The Commission at once went to meet the party which was bringing back the bodies of Colonel de Reynier and the two airmen. The bodies rested one night in the Baghdad Military Hospital, whence they were taken to Beirut.

At the time of departure, a moving ceremony took place in the Residency Park, in the presence of the coffins of the three victims. The King's representative, the High Commissioner, and all the members of the Iraqi Government and the Diplomatic Corps associated themselves with this last tribute. Detachments of British and Iraqi troops rendered the funeral honours. The coffins were then placed in a military aeroplane, which conveyed them to Damascus, accompanied by another machine carrying the members of the Commission.

The High Commissioner, M. Henri Ponsot, attended by the civil and military authorities, was at the Damascus aerodrome awaiting the arrival of the aeroplane, which was met by three French flights.

As soon as the aeroplane landed, the last honours were paid by the troops of the garrison, and the body of the Chairman, Colonel de Reynier, was then conveyed to Beirut, and afterwards to Switzerland.

We desire to pay a heartfelt tribute to the memory of Colonel James de Reynier.

His energy, clear-sightedness, and uprightness made him eminently suitable for the delicate task with which he had been entrusted; in a few days, he had gained the high esteem and complete confidence of those who had to work under him, and his death was a very real grief to them.

At the request of the two mandatory Powers concerned, the Commission was authorised by the Secretary-General of the League of Nations to continue its work provisionally, pending the appointment and arrival of the new Chairman.

It was then decided what method was to be followed in the enquiry. The Commission was to proceed to the frontier zone and endeavour to collect on the spot all information that might be of use. It was to study the area, travelling all over it, visiting the villages and questioning the inhabitants.

This work was to be greatly aided by the new 1:200,000 maps which had been prepared jointly by the topographical departments of the two Governments for the Commission's special use.

Transport of various kinds had been placed at the Commission's disposal by the Governments concerned. Convoys of motor-cars, escorted by motor machine-gun detachments supplied by the two parties, had been organised. In addition, to facilitate long-distance reconnaissance, the Officer Commanding the British Air Force detailed a large transport aeroplane capable of carrying all the members of the Commission and the assessors. Later, a field wireless station was erected in the camps, also by the Royal Air Force.

Being thus enabled to move about with ease, the Commission succeeded in carrying out a very full enquiry in each sector of the frontier in a comparatively short space of time. Wherever additional information was felt to be necessary, the Commission applied to the assessors of the two parties, who replied by written notes to the questions put to them.

Further, availing themselves of the right granted to them to call evidence in support of their cases, the assessors summoned before the Commission numerous representatives of the local populations.

To exclude all possibility of intimidation, and to inspire the witnesses with confidence, they were questioned in the sole presence of the interpreter of the party by whom they were summoned. They were also given an assurance that their statements would remain confidential.

Having made all necessary arrangements, the Commission occupied its first camp, close to the Jebel Tenf, on April 3rd.

Its enquiry in this first sector, which is complete desert and uninhabited, could be only of a topographical nature. It was required so as to determine the points of intersection of the following three lines: the frontier according to the Convention of 1920, the new frontier-line between Syria and Transjordan as fixed by the Protocol of October 31st, 1931, approved by the

Council of the League on January 30th, 1932,¹ and the frontier between Iraq and Transjordan, the probable course of which had been communicated for information by H.B.M. High Commissioner in Iraq.

With the assistance of survey officers of both parties, the Commission had no difficulty in placing these three lines on the ground, and thus fixing the starting-point of the frontier it was required to define.

On April 9th, the Commission moved its camp to Albu Kemal, where it made a close study of the economic situation in that part of the Euphrates valley. Numerous notables of the town were invited to appear before the Commission and furnished valuable information.

The Commissioners also visited the villages on either side of the river and took evidence from the inhabitants regarding the distribution along the Euphrates of the semi-sedentary tribes which cultivate its banks.

The Commission then proceeded to Deir-ez-Zor, in order to get into touch with Colonel Goudounex, delegate of the High Commissioner of the French Republic for the Euphrates territories, whose authority extended over the whole of the area to be studied. Thence, it proceeded on April 17th to Bir Sehil, to the north of the salt deposits which extend from that point to the neighbourhood of Albu Kemal. It examined the relative values of these various deposits, their technical exploitation, and the communications by which they are served.

It was at Bir Sehil that the Commission learned from the Secretary-General of the League of the appointment of Colonel Iselin as Chairman in place of the late Colonel de Reynier.

It was decided, pending the new Chairman's arrival, to transfer the camp to Sukenia, in the neighbourhood south of Jebel Sinjar, and to suspend its work for a few days so as to allow Colonel Iselin to take charge of the enquiry in the Sinjar sector, which was so important as to require the presence of the entire Commission.

The Chairman proceeded, on April 29th, to Aleppo, where the Secretary of the Commission was awaiting him, and arrived at the Sukenia camp on April 30th. Next day, he held a meeting at which Colonel Goudounex and Major Wilson, Administrative Inspector of Mosul, were present.

The Chairman took advantage of the presence of a French military aeroplane in the camp to make a first flight over the Sinjar area.

Staying a week at Sukenia, the Commission, with the exception of M. Marrades, who was unwell, visited a number of villages on the southern slope of the mountain, and ascertained in detail the conditions in which the Yezidi population lived. In particular, it spent a whole day at Beled Sinjar, the centre of the district, and had interviews with delegations of the Administrative Council, the religious authorities, and the traders.

When the time came to move camp to Senuni, north of the Sinjar, the Commission stayed at Mosul while the transfer was being carried out. It was very cordially received by the authorities there, and took advantage of the opportunity to obtain information regarding the commercial relations between this important centre and the frontier districts.

From Senuni, where a landing-ground had been made, several air reconnaissances were carried out between May 6th and 12th, in particular as far as Albu Kemal, passing over the salt deposits, Colonel Iselin thus being given an opportunity to examine the details of this area, which the Commission had previously studied. Several flights over the Qara Chok Daglı as far as the Tigris afforded a general view of the Kabur basin and the area known as the "Bec de Canard" (Duck's Bill). In the intervals, the Commissioners motored to the important villages of Bara, Mamissa, and Adika, on the northern flanks of the Jebel Sinjar. Several days were also spent in interviewing witnesses summoned by the assessors to inform the Commission as to the economic relations between the Jebel and the towns of Hasseche and Kameshlia, on the Syrian border. When these witnesses were being heard in camp, the whole Commission was always present; but when it visited the villages on the northern slope of the Sinjar, M. Marrades, who was still not fit for motoring, was unable to accompany his colleagues.

On May 12th, the Commission left Senuni by car on the way to its last camp at Khanik, on the Tigris, opposite Faish Kabur. On the way it stopped at the encampment of Sheik Ajil, the supreme chief of the Shammar tribe of Iraq, with whom the Commissioners discussed the general question of the tribes and their changes of pastureland.

From Khanik, reconnaissances were made by motor and on horseback along the Tigris and the Qara Chok Daglı, and also in the Rumelan Keui area, and as far as the French post at Derik, in the "Bec de Canard".

Regarding its enquiry on the ground as completed, the Commission held a final meeting on May 16th, at which the Chairman thanked the four assessors for their valuable assistance.

While Colonel Iselin, accompanied by the Secretary, went by air to Baghdad to pay a visit of courtesy to H.M. the King and the Members of the Iraqi Government, M. Petersén and M. Marrades returned direct to Beirut.

The Commission reassembled at Beirut on May 19th, and spent nearly a week in classifying and working out the conclusions drawn from its work on the ground.

The Chairman and the Secretary left Beirut for Geneva by sea on May 25th. M. Petersén left for Geneva the same day, via Ankara and Istanbul, where he obtained some additional technical information.

The Chairman and M. Petersén met again at Geneva on June 2nd, and were rejoined on June 8th by M. Marrades, who had been detained at Beirut.

¹ See *Official Journal* of the League of Nations, March 1932, pages 503 to 506 and 798 to 801.

CHAPTER III. — FRANCO-BRITISH CONVENTION OF DECEMBER 23RD, 1920.¹

I. TEXT OF ARTICLE I.

Article 1 of the Franco-British Convention of December 23rd, 1920, defines 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, 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 Rumelan Keui; 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 Albu Kemal, thence a straight line to Imtar to the south of Jebel Druse. . . . ”

The rest of Article 1 does not concern the frontier between Syria and Iraq, but only that between Syria and the Lebanon and between Transjordan and Palestine. It therefore has no bearing on the present enquiry.

2. THE CARTOGRAPHICAL BASIS OF THE CONVENTION.

It is unfortunate that the text quoted above was not accompanied by any map. Obviously, however, the negotiators, none of whom appears to have been acquainted with the country itself, must have discussed the matter over a map. But what map? They nowhere refer to one, and, in spite of considerable research, we have not been able to settle this point definitely, though it is of high importance in endeavouring to grasp the negotiators' intentions.

We note, however, that the Governments of the two mandatory States agree to regard the “British International 1:1,000,000 map published in 1916 and revised in 1918”² as the one which was used for the negotiations and for the conclusion of the 1920 Convention. The French Government, in its letter dated January 23rd, 1932, to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, after explaining its interpretation of Article 1 of the Convention, observes:

“The foregoing definition is based on the British 1:1,000,000 International Map, published in 1916 and revised in 1918, which the negotiators of the Franco-British Convention of December 23rd, 1920, had before them.”³

The British Government, in its letter of January 30th, 1932, to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, states:

“All external and internal evidence points to the 1:1,000,000 Asia map of 1916. It is understood that this is not questioned.”⁴

Although no positive proof has been advanced in favour of this argument, it is highly probable that the map referred to above was indeed the one used by the negotiators. It contains all the names given in the Convention, indicates the administrative boundaries specified therein, and also shows quite distinctly — though incompletely — the basin of the Western Kabur, which the Convention expressly mentions. At a first glance, however, one peculiar point will be noted: the orthography of all the place-names quoted in the Convention differs from that employed in the map, whereas, throughout the rest of the text, greater accuracy is observed. True, the original text of the Convention was doubtless prepared by some French authority, since the points of the compass (East, South-East and South) are always quoted in their relation to Syria. It is therefore probable that, in this first draft, the English orthography employed in the map was more or less gallicised, whereas the map was no longer consulted when the French text came to be translated into English.

However that may be, we cannot, in the absence of other evidence, do otherwise than concur with the opinion of the two parties and regard the 1:1,000,000 map as that which must have been used for the negotiations and for the conclusion of the 1920 Convention.

This map is obviously not an ideal cartographical basis for the study of so important a question. It was prepared mainly on the basis of the 1:850,000 map “Syrien und Mesopotamien”, published by Dr. Richard Kiepert in 1893, and also on the basis of other data derived from various sources. In point of fact, when the map was prepared, no general survey of this sparsely-populated and desert region had been made. The only maps in existence were those prepared by scientific expeditions. It is therefore not surprising that a compilation of this kind should be very incomplete and even, in some places, inaccurate. At the present time, it would be regarded rather as a sketch than as a map. Naturally, it would have been far more satisfactory had the negotiators been able to base their work on some more accurate and adequate document. In the absence of anything better, however, they were reduced to using the map in question.

¹ See Annex No. 1.

² Asia 1:1,000,000. Projection of the International Map compiled at the Royal Geographical Society under the direction of the Geographical Section, General Staff. Drawn and printed at the War Office, 1916. This map is reproduced as Annex No. 1.

³ Document C.106.1932.VI.

⁴ Document C.182.1932.VI.

3. THE INTERPRETATION OF ARTICLE I BY THE GOVERNMENTS.

Owing to the wording of Article I of the Convention and the deficiencies of the map, it is difficult to divine the real intentions of the negotiators. It is therefore not surprising that each of the parties should have interpreted this article quite differently, and that, when the elasticity of the text was thus discovered, each should have wished to submit its official interpretation to the Council in the form of notes, which we deem it desirable to reproduce here *in extenso*:¹

- (a) *French interpretation*, contained in a letter from the French Government to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations:

[Translation.]

To the Secretary-General.

January 23rd, 1932.

By a resolution dated December 9th last, the Council of the League of Nations decided to accept in principle the British and French Governments' request that it should examine all aspects of the difficulties raised by the delimitation of the frontier between Syria and Iraq, should form its conclusions as to the intentions of Article I of the Franco-British Convention of December 23rd, 1920, and should then indicate a frontier between Syria and Iraq based on this Convention but modified as required by the aforementioned considerations.

In view of the decision which the Council of the League of Nations is called upon to take in these circumstances, I have the honour to inform you that the French Government feels entitled to claim for Syria, in strict application of the above-mentioned Convention of December 23rd, 1920, the frontier described and briefly commented upon below:

I. TIGRIS SECTOR.

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

The Turco-Iraqi frontier, as a result of the decision of the Council of the League dated October 9th, 1925, and the Treaty of Ankara of June 5th, 1926, concluded between the United Kingdom and Iraq, of the one part, and Turkey, of the other part, in conformity with this decision, having been displaced to the south as far as the confluence of the Tigris and of the Kabur, this confluence is the point of departure of the Syro-Iraqi frontier.

From this confluence, the frontier is marked by the thalweg of the river as far as the point where the river is intersected by the boundary between the former vilayets of Diarbekir and Mosul, as shown on the 1 : 1,000,000 map.²

II. TIGRIS-RUMELAN KEUI SECTOR.

To the south and south-east the aforesaid boundary of the former vilayets southwards as far as Rumelan Keui.

From the point of intersection between the thalweg of the Tigris and the boundary of the vilayets, the frontier follows this boundary, as shown on the 1 : 1,000,000 map;² the boundary bends towards the south in its western portion and passes slightly south of Rumelan Keui.

The expression "as far as Rumelan Keui" should therefore be taken to mean "as far as the point opposite Rumelan Keui" — *i.e.*, as far as the nearest point to Rumelan Keui on the boundary of the vilayets.

The position of Rumelan Keui is determined by the geographical co-ordinate assigned to it on the said map.

III. RUMELAN KEUI-EUPHRATES SECTOR.

Thence a line leaving in the territory under French mandate the entire basin of the Western Kabur and passing in a straight line towards the Euphrates, which it crosses at Abu Kemal.

Albu Kemal is not on the Euphrates, but 400 metres to the west of the right bank of the river. The frontier cannot cross the Euphrates at Albu Kemal itself; it crosses it at the nearest point on its course to Albu Kemal.

The beginning and end of this line being thus determined, the line should, according to the Convention,

- (1) Leave the whole of the Kabur Basin to the French mandate;
- (2) Proceed in a straight line to the Euphrates, which it crosses opposite Albu Kemal.

If reference is made to the 1 : 1,000,000 map, a straight line joining the two above-mentioned points seems to answer to these two conditions.

IV. EUPHRATES-IMTAN SECTOR.

Thence a straight line to Imtan, to the south of Jabal Druse.

This definition calls for no comment.

The foregoing definition is based on the British 1 : 1,000,000 international map, published in 1916 and revised in 1918,² which the negotiators of the Franco-British Convention of December 23rd, 1920, had before them.

The following maps should also be mentioned for reference: The map of 1 : 1,000,000 annexed to the Treaty of Sèvres; the map annexed to the report of the Commission of Enquiry appointed by the League of Nations to consider the question of the frontier between Turkey and Iraq; the map of 1 : 1,000,000 annexed to the British White Book containing the text of the Treaty concluded at Ankara on June 5th, 1926, between the United Kingdom, Iraq and Turkey (*Treaty Series*, No. 18 [1927]).³

I enclose for your information a copy of the British 1 : 1,000,000 international map on which the Syro-Iraqi frontier between the Tigris and the Euphrates has been traced in conformity with the definition given above.

I should be obliged if you would communicate the particulars of the present letter to the Members of the Council.

(Signed) BERTHELOT.

¹ Document C.106.1932.VI.

² See map, Annex No. 1.

³ This treaty is also published in the League of Nations *Treaty Series*, Vol. LXIV, No. 1511.

- (b) *British interpretation*, contained in a letter from the British Government to the Secretary-General:¹

January 30th, 1932.

To the Secretary-General.

I am directed by His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to invite a reference to the resolution adopted by the Council on December 9th last, following upon a joint request from His Majesty's Government and the French Government, regarding the delimitation of the frontier between Iraq and Syria.

2. In view of that resolution, I am to transmit to you, for the information of the Council, the accompanying memorandum (together with eight copies of the map mentioned therein²) on the interpretation of Article 1 of the Franco-British Convention of December 23rd, 1920.

The Council will no doubt wish to refer this memorandum, for examination, to the Commission contemplated in Section 2 of its resolution of December 9th, when that Commission is set up.

3. A further memorandum, containing certain proposals for the revision of the frontier as defined in the Convention of 1920, is being prepared and will be transmitted to you as soon as possible.

(Signed) G. W. RENDEL.

MEMORANDUM ON THE INTERPRETATION OF ARTICLE 1 OF THE FRANCO-BRITISH CONVENTION OF DECEMBER 23RD, 1920, RELATING TO THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN IRAQ AND SYRIA.

1. The boundary between Iraq and Syria is defined in Article 1 of the Franco-British Convention of December 23rd, 1920, the text of which is 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 Rumelan Keui; 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 Jebel Druse."

2. The Convention makes no mention of a map, and, it is understood, no map was found annexed to the original document. The framers of the Convention, who had no first-hand knowledge of the ground, must, however, have used a map. All external and internal evidence points to the 1 : 1,000,000 Asia map of 1916. It is understood that this is not questioned.

3. The Convention must therefore be read in the light of the 1 : 1,000,000 Asia map of 1916. This map is admittedly little more than a sketch-map, and is far from accurate. The application to the ground of any line drawn on this map is likely to present many difficult problems which must come up for solution at a later stage. They have, however, no connection with the interpretation of the Convention, which must take the form of drawing on the map used the line which the framers of the Convention intended to describe.

4. The first sector as far as Rumelan Keui offers no difficulty of interpretation. The boundary would follow the Tigris from the mouth of the Kabur, where the frontier between Iraq and Turkey begins, to a point opposite Faish Kabur, and thence the administrative boundary marked on the map to Rumelan Keui.

5. The succeeding passage, from the words "thence a line" to the words "crosses at Abu Kemal", is obscure. It is not contended that the wording of the Convention absolutely rules out a straight line from Rumelan Keui to Abu Kemal. There is, however, no reason to doubt that, for the reasons developed in paragraph 6 below, the line which is described in the Convention, and which the framers intended to describe, is that shown in red on the accompanying copy from the map of 1916.²

This line may be more fully described in words as follows:

From Rumelan Keui a curved line running south of the Wady-er-Radd in the general direction west-south-west and then south-south-west so as to leave in Syria all the drainage-lines running to the Kabur; after passing between the Lake of Khatuniya, which it leaves to Iraq, and the heads of the two drainage-lines, which it leaves in Syria, the line continues in the same direction to a point on parallel of latitude 36° N. immediately to the east of the head of Shaib Abu Hamda, the most southerly of the drainage-lines to the Kabur shown on the map; from this point a straight line towards the Euphrates to the 'e' in 'Werdi', whence it crosses the Euphrates at right angles to Albu Kemal.

6. The following considerations are adduced in support of the line described above as opposed to the straight line:

(a) It is highly improbable that the framers of the Convention would have drawn a line bisecting so prominent a feature as the Jabal Sinjar.

(b) If a straight line from Rumelan Keui to Albu Kemal had been intended, there would have been no need to mention the basin of the Kabur, since the map shows the whole of the basin well to the west of such a straight line.

(c) Furthermore, the use of the word "line" in the phrase referring to the basin of the Kabur and "straight line" in the phrase referring to the approach to the Euphrates supports the view that the framers were not describing a line straight throughout its length between Rumelan Keui and Albu Kemal, though the clumsy wording of the sentence, taken alone, does not exclude such a meaning.

(d) The line described in paragraph 5 corresponds closely with the actual situation obtaining at the time of the conclusion of the Convention.

7. The last sector, a straight line from Albu Kemal to Imtan, presents no difficulties of interpretation.

(c) *The French and British Interpretations compared.*

The two separate frontier-lines that emerge from these official interpretations are shown in Annex No. 1 on a reproduction of the map which the negotiators themselves in all probability employed.

¹ Document C. 182.1932.VI and erratum.

² This map, reproduced in the present document, constitutes Annex No 1.

The very considerable divergence between these lines is in itself clear proof of the extreme elasticity of Article 1 of the Convention. We will not, however, comment on these interpretations at this stage, because we shall have occasion later to state our own views as to what would appear to have been the intentions of the negotiators of the 1920 Convention.

4. INTERPRETATION OF THE CONVENTION BY THE COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY.

The Commission was not definitely instructed to give its own interpretation of Article 1 of the 1920 Convention; but it was asked to "make such suggestions as may assist the Council in framing a decision", on the basis of that Convention, and we are therefore obliged to begin by interpreting that article. What, in the first place, were the intentions which the negotiators sought to express in Article 1 of the Convention of December 23rd, 1920? Obviously we shall have to consult the same map as the negotiators used — *i.e.*, the 1:1,000,000 map (Annex No. 1).

We shall proceed, like the negotiators, by sectors, from north to south.

(a) *Tigris Sector.*

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

No difficulty of interpretation arises as far as this portion of the frontier is concerned: the Tigris, and the Tigris alone, is specified as the boundary, which means, according to universal practice, that its thalweg (the line of the deepest depression of the river-bed) forms the boundary between the two States.

True, the thalweg of a river is not immutable any more than are its banks, the beds of rivers being almost constantly undergoing change by erosion. The stronger the current, the deeper the water, and the less resistant the soil, the greater are these changes and the more rapidly do they occur. The relatively regular course of the Tigris in this region, however, warrants the assumption that the variations in its thalweg are not very appreciable, and that, taken over a fairly long stretch of river, the gains balance the losses.

We may therefore assume that the present thalweg of the Tigris is practically the same as that to which in 1920 the Convention was undoubtedly meant to refer, though, if we are not mistaken, no survey had been made at the time. Accordingly, this thalweg should form the frontier down to the spot at which the boundary between the former vilayets of Diarbekir and Mosul crosses the Tigris.

The old Turkish maps, which were consulted, though they indicate the general boundaries of the vilayets as shown in the 1:1,000,000 map, are too inaccurate and defective to enable us to determine this spot. More recent maps, like that published in 1893 by Dr. Kiepert of Berlin, or the map of halting-places prepared in 1917 by the *Kartogr. Abteilung der kgl. Preuss. Landesaufnahme*, do not indicate the boundaries of the Turkish vilayets.

The official year-book of the Ottoman Empire for 1325 (1909) also fails to show these boundaries, but it does mention the various districts and sub-districts in each vilayet. By ascertaining on the map the situation of the chief villages of these administrative divisions, it is possible to deduce the rough outline of the boundaries of the two vilayets. Such enquiries do not in any way suggest that the boundaries differ from those shown in the 1:1,000,000 map.

The information obtained from numerous inhabitants of the district was too vague to allow of any definite pronouncement. The only conclusion we were able to draw from their answers was that the village of Faish Kabur, on the left bank of the Tigris, has always formed part of the Qaza of Jeziret-ibn-Omar, and consequently of the vilayet of Diarbekir. The boundary thus appears to have crossed the Tigris below Faish Kabur; but how far below?

The 1920 negotiators certainly did not possess any other data on the subject; they could only rely on the map, which places the point of intersection immediately below Faish Kabur. We have no reason to suppose that they placed this boundary on the ground elsewhere than on the map. Moreover, both parties, in their official interpretation of the 1920 Convention, agree in adhering to the indications given in the map; and, as no more detailed information is available, we can only do likewise.

(b) *Sector from the Tigris to Rumelan Keui.*

"... on the south-east and south, the aforesaid boundary of the former vilayets southwards as far as Rumelan Keui..."

From the Tigris, therefore, the frontier is to follow the boundary of the former vilayets of Diarbekir and Mosul as far as Rumelan Keui. Here the intention of the negotiators is clear: but what were their ideas as to how the boundary was placed on the ground, and what point did they mean by "Rumelan Keui"?

As regards this part of the boundary, there can be no doubt that the negotiators were entirely at the mercy of their map, according to which the boundary, after leaving the Tigris, proceeds south-west in a slightly S-shaped course for about thirty kilometres. It then gradually turns westwards. The map does not show between the Tigris and Rumelan Keui any landmark — village, river, or trigonometrical mark — by which this sector of the frontier could be defined. In this case also, the answers of witnesses did not throw any certain light on the question. We think, therefore, that the terms of the Convention can best be fulfilled by marking on the ground, with the greatest mathematical accuracy possible, the boundary indicated in the map.

We now come to the question of Rumelan Keui ("keui" means in Turkish a village). The map "Syrien und Mesopotamien" of Dr. R. Kiepert (1893) indicates, by means of the conventional sign (a small circle), at latitude 36° 57' N. and longitude 41° 58' E., a village, Rumelankoï, the terminal point of a track coming from Demir Kapu, a place about seven kilometres further west. This map does not, however, show the boundaries of the former vilayets.

The British international map, which, as we pointed out, is based on Kiepert's map, places the same village about six kilometres further east and slightly north of the former boundary of the vilayets. The name is spelt "Rumelan Keui", and the track coming from Demir Kapu continues south-eastwards.

On the other hand, the copy of this map reproduced by the Survey Directorate at Baghdad, which is attached to this report,¹ shows Rumelan Keui, but without the conventional sign for a village. The name is written right across the former boundary of the vilayets, and is the terminal of a track coming from the south-east.

Finally, the most recent maps of French origin — namely, the 1:500,000 map² and the 1:200,000 map,³ published by the Geographical Bureau of the French Troops in the Levant — both show ruins at this spot bearing the name "Roumélane Keui". The new British maps, however, give different information: one, on the scale of 1:126,720 (edition of February 1927), makes no mention of Rumelan Keui, whereas the other, on a scale of 1:200,000 (edition of April 1932), shows a village marked as "Rumailan Koi".

In view of these differences in the maps and of the great importance of Rumelan Keui for the objective interpretation of the 1920 Convention, we conducted very full enquiries on the spot, the results of which are as follows:

There is now neither an inhabited village nor a ruined village in this region. The oldest nomads who frequent those parts do not remember ever having seen or heard tell of a village called Rumelan Keui. On the other hand, we discovered, about four kilometres north-west of the Tell Rumelan Kebir (*i.e.*, at the exact spot at which, according to the French 1:200,000 map,³ the ruins of "Roumélane Keui" are situated), indisputable traces of old permanent dwellings (worked stone, potsherds) and numerous recent traces of tent encampments. The tell in question, though not very high, covers a fairly large area, around which winds a wadi, flowing into the Wadi Rumelan. It is, in fact, just such a site as would be chosen in this country for establishing permanent or temporary dwellings. It would therefore seem legitimate to suppose that this is the actual site of the former village of Rumelan Keui. There is nothing extraordinary in the fact that the name should have outlived the village; moreover, in this part of the country the word "village" seems also to be used to denote places at which nomads are accustomed to pitch their tents at various seasons. We therefore believe that this is actually the Rumelan Keui referred to in the Convention.

It should further be noted that another Rumelan Keui, situated, according to the British 1:126,720 map, about five kilometres west of Mustapha Uieh, cannot possibly have been the village intended in the Convention of 1920. This latter place, which is not shown in any of the other maps, would be more than ten kilometres north of the boundary of the vilayets, and cannot therefore be considered.

(c) Sector from Rumelan Keui to the Euphrates.

"... thence (from Rumelan Keui) 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."

It is to be regretted that a section of the frontier about 300 kilometres in length has been accorded only so imprecise a description in the Convention. Admittedly, the vague and incomplete 1:1,000,000 map³ was not an instrument calculated to help the negotiators in expressing their thoughts; but it seems to us that that might have been regarded as a further reason for making the meaning as clear as possible.

The 1920 Convention refers on the one hand to the entire basin of the Kabur, and on the other to a straight line to the Euphrates at Albu Kemal. It does not, however, specify the point at which the frontier should leave the Kabur Basin to proceed in a straight line towards Albu Kemal.

¹ See Annex No. 1.

² See Annex No. 2.

³ See Annex No. 3.

The expression "basin", referring to a watercourse, is generally used to denote all those parts of territory which drain their waters naturally into the watercourse, the ground being supposed to be impermeable and evaporation non-existent. Every cross-section of a river therefore includes a basin of a certain size; the lower downstream the cross-section, the wider the basin.

As the negotiators had only the 1:1,000,000 map,¹ they could not form even an approximate idea of the extent of the Kabur Basin in this region. They noted, indeed, in this map that there were lines of drainage coming from the north and east like the ribs of a fan, all flowing into the Wadi-er-Radd, but they possessed no topographical information regarding the region lying between that wadi and the Jebel Sinjar. This area, about fifty kilometres wide, is a complete blank on the map. As far as the map goes, the boundary of the Kabur Basin might just as well run slightly south of the Radd as along the crest of the Jebel Sinjar itself. It was doubtless owing to this uncertainty that the negotiators refrained from fixing a frontier here by means of landmarks (to be indicated, for instance, by the co-ordinates). They preferred rather to adhere to what was certain and place the whole of the Kabur Basin, as nature made it, under French mandate, in contrast, doubtless, with the neighbouring basin of the Tigris, which was thus automatically placed under British mandate.

The fact that the negotiators first refer to the Kabur Basin, and then expressly mention a straight line, points to the presumption that they had in mind a frontier the first part of which would be curved, and which would then proceed in a straight line. If they had meant a single straight line from Rumelan Keui to Albu Kemal, they need not have mentioned the Kabur Basin at all, because such a line drawn on the 1:1,000,000 map would *ipso facto* leave the whole Kabur Basin under French mandate. On the other hand, they certainly did not intend to follow the contour of that basin to its end — *i.e.*, to the junction of the Kabur with the Euphrates — as no one has ever considered that that point should be a frontier point. All the evidence therefore tends to show that the negotiators meant to regard the Kabur Basin as a frontier solely in this unknown region north of the Sinjar and in the Sinjar itself, whereas, further south, they contemplated a single straight line as far as Albu Kemal.

The watershed between the Kabur and the Tigris — the boundary which, in our opinion, the 1920 Convention meant to indicate — is unfortunately very difficult to determine with any accuracy. The ground is extremely flat, and even the latest maps merely show the height of a few tells (the figures themselves often varying considerably as between the British and French maps!), while no heights at all are given for the plain. In these circumstances, the watershed cannot be determined with sufficiently approximate correctness on the maps at present at our disposal. It will therefore be necessary to make accurate measurements on the ground over a considerable area. It may, however, be assumed, on the basis of the equidistances shown in the latest French maps,² that this watershed will not be found to depart very far from the meridian of 42° E. or 46.666 grades. The boundary would thus correspond approximately with this meridian as far as the crest of the Jebel Sinjar, along which it would then proceed westwards.

We would further observe that, according to the new 1:200,000 maps² and our own observations, a wadi, which has no name on the map, and which acts as a collector for the various watercourses that come down from the highest *massif* of the Sinjar, continues as far as the Radd, into which it flows slightly west of the elbow which the Wadi Rumelan forms with the Radd. This fact makes all discussion concerning wadies coming from the Sinjar further to the west unnecessary. They all form part of the Kabur Basin.

One more error into which the negotiators were drawn by the 1:1,000,000 map needs correction. According to that map, they were justified in believing that Rumelan Keui was outside, or at any rate on the very edge of, the Kabur Basin. In point of fact, this is not so. According to the latest maps and our own observations on the ground, that point is actually situated a few kilometres inside the basin. It would therefore be impossible to draw through Rumelan Keui a line that would leave the whole of the Kabur Basin under French mandate. Nevertheless, the intention of the negotiators to maintain the unity of that basin is so clear that we need not dwell upon it; and it is therefore indispensable, if the intentions of the Convention are to be complied with, that the frontier should diverge from the former boundary between the vilayets of Mosul and Diarbekir before it reaches Rumelan Keui — *i.e.*, at the point where that boundary reaches the Kabur Basin — and that the frontier should then follow the contour of that basin southwards.

The effect of our interpretation of the expression "the entire basin of the Kabur" is that the straight line mentioned in the Convention should start immediately south of the crest of the Sinjar-Jeribeh chain, at a point at which the Kabur Basin abuts on the neighbouring basin of the salt-deposit region. Unfortunately, this point cannot be determined by the aid of the existing maps; for the same difficulties are met with here as north of the Sinjar — there are no adequate topographical indications. It may, however, be assumed, pending further details, that this point is situated about ten kilometres west of the summit of the Jebel Jeribeh (Point 903 on the French map). A straight line proceeding thence to the Euphrates at Albu Kemal passes near the Tell Sfug. According to the Convention, this straight line ought to cross the Euphrates at Albu Kemal. This text cannot, however, be applied literally, because Albu Kemal is not situated on the Euphrates itself but lies at a distance of one kilometre from the right bank. In these circumstances, we believe that the intentions of the negotiators would best be respected by providing that the frontier should cross the Euphrates at the spot nearest to Albu Kemal.

¹ See Annex No. 1.

² See Annex No. 3.

(d) *Sector to the South of the Euphrates.*

“ . . . thence a straight line to Imtar, to the south of Jabal Druse . . . ”

After crossing the Euphrates at Albu Kemal — at right angles to the axis of the river, according to general custom — and as far as the village of Intan to the south of Jebel Druse, the frontier will thus run in a straight line. This is the simplest possible arrangement, the interpretation of which calls for no discussion.

The frontier-line which thus results from our interpretation of Article 1 of the 1920 Convention is shown in Annex No. 1.

CHAPTER IV. — “DE FACTO” SITUATION AND PROPOSALS OF THE PARTIES.

I. “DE FACTO” SITUATION.

As stated in Chapter I, the proceedings of the Delimitation Commission provided for in Article 2 of the Convention of 1920 had led to no definite result in regard to the Iraqi-Syrian frontier.

There were also several factors that contributed to prolong the uncertainty as to the definitive course of the frontier.

In the first place, the final assignment of the vilayet of Mosul was still in suspense, and indeed was not settled until December 1925. Secondly, it was not until June 22nd, 1929, that the course of the frontier between Syria and Turkey was fixed by the Franco-Turkish Protocol. The effect of this latter circumstance was that the occupation by Syria of the territories eventually allotted to it in the “Bec de Canard” area near the Tigris was delayed until June 1930.

In view of this uncertainty as to the exact delimitation of the territories of the two parties, they naturally endeavoured to arrive at a *modus vivendi* on the basis of provisional agreements which would enable them to arrange for general administration, the collection of taxes, and the establishment of military or police posts in the zone on either side of the presumed frontier.

It should be noted that these agreements were concluded only subject to an express reservation by both parties as to the maintenance of the rights they derived from the Convention. The agreements were in no way to prejudice the eventual decision as to the final delimitation of the frontier.

These provisional arrangements brought about, however, a *de facto* situation which, though in many ways complicated and in some cases vague, was deserving of the Commission's careful attention, inasmuch as it represented a solution that the two parties found provisionally acceptable, having regard to local needs.

Sector from the Tigris to Rumelan Keui.

With regard to this northernmost sector of the frontier, it should be observed that it no longer starts from Jeziret-ibn-Omar, as stated in the Convention of 1920. The treaties finally settling the frontiers between Turkey and Syria and between Turkey and Iraq have shifted the starting-point to the junction of those two frontiers — *i.e.*, the confluence of the Tigris and the Eastern Kabur.

We have explained in the previous chapter the differences of opinion that arose as to the exact site of Rumelan Keui. A like uncertainty prevailed as to the authentic limits of the former vilayets of Diarbekir and Mosul, and consequently the contentions that arose in this sector and made agreement difficult were only to be anticipated.

While the assignment of the “Bec de Canard” zone was still in suspense and the area was administered by Turkey, the boundaries in this sector were fixed by a tacit agreement between the Iraqi and Turkish authorities as follows: From the Tigris, a line following the course of the Sufan Dere westward for about one mile, and thence the ridge of the Qara Chok Dag as far as the Wadi Rumelan.¹

When the “Bec de Canard” area was finally occupied by the French and Syrian troops, a correspondence ensued between M. Ponsot and Sir Francis Humphrys, the latter wishing to maintain the situation described above in that area.²

The High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria could not see his way to accept this view; on the contrary, he observed that any agreement between only two of the parties without the third being informed and giving its approval could not be binding on the third party. That being so, he could only take his stand on the actual terms of the Convention of 1920, whereby the territory extending to the boundary of the former vilayets belonged to Syria.²

¹ Letter No. 4094 of April 16th, 1930, from Sir Francis Humphrys, H.B.M. High Commissioner in Iraq, to M. Henri Ponsot, High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and the Lebanon.

² Statement of the *de facto* situation resulting from the frontier relations between Syria and Iraq — High Commission of the French Republic in Syria and the Lebanon, Beirut, March 19th, 1932, pages 11 and 12.



He added that the military requirements of the occupation would entail the establishment of temporary posts on the Little Qara Chok Dagħ, and possibly even the despatch of patrols to the southern slope of the Great Qara Chok.

The *de facto* situation to-day is as it was left at the close of this correspondence.

The Commission ascertained that there were Iraqi police posts at Christian Khanik (opposite Faish Kabur) and at Tell Khanzir el Kebir. There is a French detachment on the Killi Djelli.

Sector from Rumelan Kewi to the Euphrates.

We need not return here to the controversy regarding the exact position of Rumelan Keui; let us merely state that, as no satisfactory solution had ever been found for the question, the two parties agreed, following the occupation of Demir Kapu by the French and Syrian troops, to establish a conventional boundary in that area.

By a verbal agreement in 1927 between General Gamelin, Commandant supérieur of the troops in the Levant, and certain British officers, the Tell Rumelan Kebir was specified as the meeting-place of the police patrols coming from Iraq and Syria, and the Wadi Rumelan as marking the *de facto* frontier. The two parties agreed on concerted policing of the area between the Wadi Rumelan and the Wadi Demir Kapu.

As to the Jabal Sinjar, its administration had been undertaken by the Iraqi Government even before the signature of the Convention of 1920.

This situation appears to have been accepted by the successive French High Commissioners, but always subject to the final delimitation of the frontier on the basis of the Convention of 1920, and on condition that no permanent military establishment should be set up there.

This is made clear by all the correspondence exchanged in the last ten years or so between Beirut and Baghdad. For instance, in a telegram to the French Consul at Baghdad, dated April 17th, 1923, the High Commissioner of the French Republic expressed his attitude thus:¹

“It is understood that, pending the exact delimitation of the frontier in the Sinjar, the present *de facto* position there shall not be changed, but may not be appealed to against the rights we derive from our earlier Conventions.”

On October 1st, 1925, General Sarraill, replying to a memorandum from the British Consul at Beirut, defined the *de facto* situation as follows:²

“As is shown by the correspondence on the subject of the zone bounded on the east by the 1920 frontier and on the west by the line defined in Sir Henry Dobbs's letter No. 1643 of January 31st, 1923, the mandatory Power in Syria has always declared that it recognised the *de facto* situation existing in the Sinjar prior to the signature of the London Agreement of December 23rd, 1920. It accordingly accepts the British administration of that area, on condition that no permanent military establishment such as might modify its temporary character shall be set up there (letter No. 2189/KD of April 22nd, 1925). Orders were accordingly given a year ago to the Syrian administration to entrust to the Iraqi authorities in the Sinjar the search for any malefactors who might take refuge in that territory.”

The exact limits of the Sinjar proper gave rise, however, to differences of opinion. A dispute on this subject had already arisen in 1922, when the village of Khatuniya was occupied by a British post. This occupation led to a protest from General Gouraud to Sir Percy Cox, and the post was withdrawn.

Again, in the summer of 1925, Syrian patrols having pushed as far as the same village, a correspondence ensued between Sir Henry Dobbs and General Sarraill, as the outcome of which Khatuniya was evacuated.

When the Commission passed that way, it was able to ascertain that Khatuniya and the neighbouring village of El Hol were free from any military or police forces. The village of El Hol is under the Syrian administration, but no definite settlement seems to have been arrived at in regard to Khatuniya. It may be assumed, however, that the *de facto* frontier passes near the two villages.

To the north and south of the Sinjar are desert areas frequented by nomad tribes dependent some on Syria and some on Iraq.

By an agreement between the two parties, these tribes were to be supervised and parties using the tracks which serve this region were to be protected on either side of the presumed frontier of 1920 by the respective military authorities, who would also be entitled, after giving notice of their intention, to cross the boundary in order to get into touch with the tribes owing them allegiance.

A more recent temporary arrangement³ (March 24th, 1930) between Major Wilson, Administrative Inspector at Mosul, and Colonel Callais, Assistant Delegate of the High Commissioner of the French Republic at Deir-ez-Zor, fixed the boundary of the areas in which the two Governments were to provide for the administration of the Shammar tribes under their respective authorities and to collect the wadi tax.

¹ Statement of the *de facto* situation resulting from the frontier relations between Syria and Iraq — High Commission of the French Republic in Syria and the Lebanon, Beirut, March 19th, 1932, page 21.

² *Ibid.*, page 23.

³ “Descriptive Memorandum on the Frontier between Syria and Iraq.” Beirut, February 18th, 1932, page 67.

This line was fixed as follows (from north to south): Tell Rumelan, Wadi Rumelan, Tell Tash, Samukha Pass, Um el Dibban, Tell Markab, El Bidea, Mfallaga, confluence of the Wadi Ajij and the Wadi Tijarie, Tell Chebed, centre of the Buara salt deposits, Karakol of Buara, eastern edge of the cliff west of the Barguth salt deposits, western edge of the Chaabi salt deposits.

This Convention was also intended to decide which sections of the Shammar were to be regarded as belonging to Syria and which to Iraq.

We may therefore take it that this boundary was the *de facto* administrative frontier between the two countries, apart from the Sinjar, the whole of which, as we have already pointed out, was administered by Iraq.

According to the Convention of 1920, the frontier crosses the Euphrates at Albu Kemal itself. Even before the Convention was signed, however, an arrangement based on the provisions of the Sykes-Picot agreements of 1916 had been concluded between the British authorities in Mesopotamia and the Arab Government of Damascus. By this agreement, which was dated May 5th, 1920, and signed on the one side by Ali Jaudat Bey, Kaimakan of Albu Kemal, and Muzhar Aslan, Subordinate Military Governor of Deir-ez-Zor, and on the other by Colonel Leachman, of the British Army, it was stipulated that the frontier should pass between the villages of Heri and Hasseiba, on the right bank of the Euphrates, and between Baghuz and Rapt, on the left bank.¹

A boundary mark, which since that date has been called the Leachman Stone, beside the track that follows the Euphrates, eight kilometres below Albu Kemal, still marks the frontier according to the above-mentioned agreement.

In the course of the twelve years that have elapsed, the Governments of the two States have not thought it necessary to make any change in this situation. The frontier as then determined is still the *de facto* line.

Sector from the Euphrates to the Jebel Tenf.

This sector, which is absolute desert, is frequented only by nomad tribes at the times of their changes of pasture.

Large sections of Syrian tribes, including the Aniza Fid'an, the Sba, and the Ruwalla, regularly cross the frontier of the 1920 Convention on their way to the Gaara region, in Iraq, where the pastures and wells attract large concourses of nomads at certain periods.

Since 1920, the areas under the administration of the two States in these regions have been bounded by the *de jure* frontier, which is therefore also the *de facto* frontier.

2. PROPOSALS OF THE PARTIES.²

In a memorandum to the Council of the League of Nations, dated February 27th, 1932,³ the British Government made proposals for the revision of the frontier as defined in the Convention of 1920. The French Government, on the other hand, in its memorandum dated February 29th, 1932,⁴ made no specific proposals regarding the frontier-line.

Observations made on the ground during the enquiry, however, led the French and Syrian assessors to suggest a specific frontier-line. The British and Iraqi assessors also indicated on the ground, on account of local conditions, certain modifications of the line described in the above-mentioned memorandum from the British Government dated February 27th, 1932.

As we shall go exhaustively into the whole question in the chapters that follow, we need not comment at this point on the lines thus indicated by the parties. We need only refer the reader to the map (Annex No. 2), on which the frontier-lines proposed by the two parties and that suggested by the Commission are marked.

CHAPTER V. — INFORMATION AND MATERIAL COLLECTED.

I. GEOGRAPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

The frontier zone considered by the Commission extends from the junction of the Eastern Kabur and the Tigris in the north to the Jebel Tenf region in the south.

In an area about 600 kilometres wide it is natural to meet regions differing very considerably in geographical character. If, therefore, it is wished to form a complete idea of these regions, it is essential to begin by making a thorough study of their geographical aspects.

The northern sector, which includes the last spurs of the mountains of Kurdistan, is very uneven. The mountains become gradually lower until they merge into the plain near the Nisibin-Mosul road. A single massif, the Qara Chok Dagħ (*dagħ* is a Kurdish word meaning mountain), rising to 775 metres, stands considerably higher than the numerous hills and hillocks in the neighbourhood. It belongs to a chain of which the general direction is from west to east, and of which

¹ Statement on the *de facto* situation resulting from the frontier relations between Syria and Iraq — High Commission of the French Republic in Syria and the Lebanon, Beirut, March 19th, 1932, Annex No. 3.

² See Annex No. 2.

³ Document C.313.1932.VI.

⁴ Document C.317.1932.VI.

the continuation, the Jebel Bikhair, extends to the eastern bank of the Tigris. All this region — the northern part more than the southern — still shares the climatic conditions of Kurdistan. The rainfall is sufficient to grow crops and supply numerous wells.

North of the Qara Chok, in particular, stretches a relatively fertile region covered with cornfields and meadows. It is not surprising that men should have occupied this district for a great many years, and should still be cultivating the soil. Indeed, a considerable number of villages and hamlets, whose inhabitants are engaged in agriculture and stock-breeding, are scattered north of the Qara Chok range as far as the Tigris.

To the south of this massif, on the other hand, the soil becomes more and more arid and affords but few resources. Apart from a few villages on the Tigris and the military post of Demir Kapu, there are no permanent settlements. The meagre pasturages are used only by a few tribes on their way back to the north after the rainy season.

The most important line of communication is the road that leads from Nisibin to Mosul, skirting the southern edge of this region. This road is nowhere macadamised, but has been made practicable for motor vehicles, and is frequently used by traffic between Iraq and Syria. Parallel to it, a few kilometres to the south, runs the line of the old Baghdad railway. On this section, only the earthworks were completed, and the line is therefore impracticable for traffic in its present state.

A number of lateral tracks coming from the north of the Qara Chok, which they skirt at its western and eastern ends, join this great artery running from Mosul to Nisibin and Aleppo. Some of these tracks, such as that from Jeziret-ibn-Omar to Hasseche, are practicable for cars and lorries. As for the Tigris, it cannot be regarded as a means of communication in the sector with which we are concerned. Although it carries a very considerable volume of water at all seasons, its shifting channel makes it unnavigable for boats of deep draught. In its present state it can only be used by rafts carrying materials. The track along the right bank also does not seem to be much frequented. We may conclude that the traffic in this part of the Tigris valley is small.

The next sector consists of the wide plain that lies between the last hills of the mountainous region to the north and the chain of the Jebel Sinjar and its continuations. This region is characterised by a very great number of hillocks scattered about irregularly and rising abruptly out of the almost level plain to a height of twenty or thirty metres or even more. One is tempted at first sight to regard these as faults due to volcanic action, but recent excavations have revealed, inside these tells, traces of human occupation which suggest that these eminences, with their typical conical shape, are nothing but superimposed remains of ancient dwellings.

This desert region is situated on both sides of the watershed between the Tigris and the Kabur — which cannot be seen on the ground and is not marked on the map.

Two watercourses serve as collectors for the numerous drainage-lines which descend from the hills in the north and from the Jebel Sinjar in the south; these are the Wadi el Murr, which flows into the Tigris, and the Wadi er Radd, which flows into the Kabur. There is water in these wadis only intermittently, however, because the annual rainfall here is already much smaller than in the Qara Chok region, and is barely enough to provide a meagre pasturage on this plain in winter and spring. Consequently, there are no dwellings; only a few nomad tribes and their flocks and herds come there from the Sinjar in the spring. Lines of communication are almost totally lacking. Apart from the motor-track from Demir Kapu to Hasseche, there are only a few caravan-tracks crossing this deserted area. Except during the rainy season, however, this arid steppe can easily be used for motor traffic, provided always that one knows the difficult passages.

The Jebel Sinjar, whose steep slopes rise up out of the middle of this plain, is undoubtedly the most characteristic geographical feature of the whole frontier zone. It is probably a unique phenomenon in the world for a mountain chain of this size to rise so abruptly to a height of over 1,000 metres out of a flat plain. It can easily be understood that scientific expeditions have for a long time been attracted to this impressive mountain.

The Jebel Sinjar proper is about fifty kilometres long, and its greatest width is a little less than twenty kilometres. It is continued westward by the Jebel Jeribe and the Jebel Chembe, and eastward by the Jebel Gaulat. This chain, which, taken as a whole, runs almost exactly east and west, extends approximately from the banks of the Kabur to those of the Tigris. It is doubtless the result of the formation of an immense fold in the sedimentary strata of Upper Mesopotamia. Parallel to its southern base runs a line of small hills, the remains of a small secondary fold, which is divided into sections by a series of lateral clefts. These clefts drain the waters of the longitudinal valleys lying between the main chain and the secondary fold. On the northern slope, similar but much deeper depressions have been produced by erosion. It is doubtless the numerous springs in the valleys on either side of the main chain that have attracted men to this isolated range from the remotest times and caused them to settle there. Throughout the year, they have enough water for their families, their flocks and herds, their mills, and the irrigation of extensive lands which afford valuable resources.

This relative abundance of water, due to the fact that the rainfall is much greater in the Sinjar than in the surrounding plain, extends its beneficent effects to some distance from the mountains, so that grain can be cultivated. Beyond these agricultural regions begin the pasture-lands, which gradually fade off into the desert. The villages are naturally close to the springs. Most of them are therefore situated in the valleys described above, or at the mouths of these gorges.

There are also some, however, in the middle of the agricultural area, but only where there are wells.

At the southern foot of the highest massif of the chain is Beled Sinjar, a town of 4,000 inhabitants and the largest place in the district.

The region of the Lake of Khatouniye, a little north-west of the Jebel Jeribe, deserves special mention. This lake, which covers several square kilometres and drains a fairly extensive area, has no outlet but loses its water by evaporation, which makes it slightly brackish. This basin nevertheless clearly belongs to the Kabur Basin, by which it is surrounded on every side. Its lower parts are suitable for cultivation, while the rest are used as pasture-land. The very small population of this isolated region is concentrated in two villages of extreme poverty.

The most important lines of communication in the Sinjar are the tracks that run along the northern and southern sides of the mountain. They are linked together on the west by the Samukha Pass, which separates the Sinjar from the Jeribe, and on the east by the Gaulat Pass. This system, which, as it were, encloses the Sinjar, is practicable for motor-cars, though certain parts of it are difficult. It connects with the main track from Mosul to Deir-ez-Zor, which passes only fifteen kilometres south of Beled Sinjar. There is also another track, not so good as the former, which, passing through Hasseche to Raz-el-Ain, links it with the main northern transverse road from Mosul to Nisibin and Aleppo. Between the Samukha and Gaulat Passes, the Sinjar chain is crossed by no road fit for wheeled traffic; only mule-tracks and footpaths afford precarious communication between the two slopes of the mountain.

The frontier zone that extends from the Sinjar to the Euphrates valley is chiefly characterised by a series of large depressions, rightly or wrongly known as salt deposits. This region may therefore be called the salt-deposit sector.

The country south of the Sinjar is absolute desert. Its monotony would be complete were it not for the important valley of the Wadi Ajij, with its numerous ramifications, and further south the "salt-deposit" depressions. The Wadi Ajij, which serves as a collector for all the waters that come down from the southern slope of the Sinjar between Beled Sinjar and the Samukha Pass, has cut its bed 100 metres deep in the plain. Doubtless it formerly flowed into the Euphrates above Albu Kemal, but in these days it loses itself in the Roda depression, where the highly permeable subsoil does not favour the formation of any deposits and there is therefore no trace of salt. As for the other "salt deposits", all of which are fed by very small basins, only one, that of Buara, is properly entitled to the name; its impermeable subsoil prevents the infiltration of the water, which, being exposed only to evaporation, leaves after every rainy period a deposit of pure salt several centimetres thick. The other depressions in this region, which have been wrongly called salt deposits, contain only a mixture of salt and sand, which is quite unfit for use.

The only resources of this desert area are the meagre pasturages which in winter and spring cover the bottom and the slopes of the Wadi Ajij; these barely provide subsistence for a few flocks and herds.

In this immense region, which even the roads avoid, one would seek in vain for a single dwelling. The only track that crosses it — but a very important one — is that from Mosul to Deir-ez-Zor, by which the produce of Northern Iraq is sent to the markets of Aleppo and Europe; the other paths are used only by the rare caravans that cross this deserted region.

The Euphrates valley, narrow as it is, forms an absolutely distinct section of the frontier zone; the existence of a great river creates conditions of life entirely different from those in the neighbouring desert areas.

The Euphrates drains the greater part of the very mountainous regions of Armenia and Kurdistan, and also receives, chiefly through the Kabur, a large proportion of the waters of Upper Mesopotamia. Since it is thus fed in summer by the melting of the snows and in winter by the rains of a tropical climate, its volume is relatively constant, and this reduces the risk of flood.

Between the plateau of Mesopotamia and the Syrian desert, the Euphrates has cut itself a valley averaging some ten kilometres in width, the sides of which rise sometimes in a gentle slope and sometimes in steep cliffs, according to the degree of resistance of the soil to erosion. The very sinuous course of this river, which averages several hundred metres in width, favours the formation of islands, some of which are quite large. Its low banks and the level bottom of the valley make irrigation easy, but the natives carry it out by antiquated and inefficient methods. The soil, composed of very fine alluvia, has a high degree of natural fertility, which is further increased by the effect of the mud carried by the irrigation water.

These easy conditions of life have from time immemorial induced men to settle in this valley. Numerous villages are scattered on both banks of the river, and contain a large agricultural population, whose centre and market is Albu Kemal.

Owing to its shifting channel and its strong current, the Euphrates is not easily navigable, and is therefore used only by large flat-bottomed boats and rafts which can only float downstream. There is an important track, made practicable for motor vehicles coming from Aleppo and Deir-ez-Zor, which follows the right bank and leads to Anah and Baghdad. It is joined at Albu Kemal by the main artery from Damascus and Palmyra.

The last section, from the Euphrates valley to the Jebel Tenf, is the most uniform of all. It crosses the Syrian desert, where no eminence and no valley of any importance breaks the monotony. Only occasionally one finds a tell or a shallow "oued".

The complete barrenness of this desert area prevents any settled life. It is traversed only by nomad tribes, which cross it by rapid stages during the seasonal changes of pasture.

The only lines of communication are the tracks from Damascus to Baghdad and from Baghdad to Palmyra, the former of which also serves as a guide to the air service.

In this arid country, where the rainfall is negligible, vegetation is practically non-existent. Only one region, the Gaara depression, which is shallow but very extensive, affords abundant pasturage in winter. Situated about 110 kilometres south-south-west of Albu Kemal, this plain, whose fertility is in striking contrast with the steppe that surrounds it on every side, is clearly under the beneficent influence of a subterranean sheet of water in the immediate neighbourhood.

2. ETHNOGRAPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

The regions through which the frontier indicated in the 1920 Convention passes, and which accordingly form the subject of the Commission's enquiry, are inhabited chiefly by the Arab elements of the population of the two countries. There are also a certain number of Kurds, the Yezidi group in the Jebel Sinjar, and a few small communities of Christian refugees.

According to numerical importance and mode of life, this population can be divided into three classes: nomads, semi-settled and settled.

(a) *Nomads.*

The nomads, most of whom are Bedouin, are the most important section of the population. Living always in tents, they are associated in tribes, and travel about the desert in search of pasture for their large flocks of sheep and herds of camels.

The routes of their seasonal migrations — their regular movements between their summer and winter stations — have varied very little for centuries. The political changes which took place during and after the war, however, have to some extent affected this traditional regularity, and exceptional weather conditions may also sometimes compel these tribes to abandon their normal itinerary and go elsewhere in search of water and pasture.

The Bedouin belongs to an intelligent race, and it would be a mistake to regard him as a primitive or savage being. Very virile and robust in appearance, he combines with a perfect ease of manner a highly dignified aspect and a majestic form of speech. Taken out of his natural surroundings, he is perfectly capable of speedily assimilating the customs and mode of life of the West; but in the desert, a slave to his atavisms and to the kind of existence that nature imposes upon him, he seems to have remained stationary for centuries.

The Bedouin speaks a very rich and flexible Arabic; he attaches much importance to elegance of expression, and has a taste for poetry. He is a Moslem by religion, but troubles little about theological subtleties. Having no mosques or imams, he is almost always illiterate; his very sincere and earnest religious faith is reduced to its simplest expression. His mode of life — the desert, isolation and the bitter struggle for existence — has made him fatalistic, wild and rapacious.

The political and social organisation of the Bedouin is still tribal. Each tribe has a chief, called the sheik — “the elder” — elected by the whole tribe. The order of succession is not strictly hereditary, though, as a general rule, the sheik must belong to a family of chiefs. He has certain rights, and his authority is absolute; but more particularly he has duties.

In these days the sheik of a tribe has to be approved and confirmed, and often even appointed, by the Government, to which he is responsible for the conduct of his tribe. He is the intermediary between the authorities and his tribesmen, and carries out in the desert the orders he receives. It is his duty to collect the taxes from his tribe and pay them to the Treasury. He keeps part of them by way of remuneration, but is responsible to the administration for the amount due.

When disputes arise between tribes, the Government summons the respective sheiks, who, together with the “kaïmakam” (sub-prefect) or “mutessarif” (prefect) of the district, form a court of law to try the case. This court administers a special law known as the “law of the desert”, which is adapted to the traditional customs of the nomads.

The tribes are divided into sections, which usually bear a special name added to that of the tribe.

The more powerful tribes are often followed by lesser tribes, which are subject to them, and over which they exercise a kind of suzerainty. They also have under their protection groups which they defend if attacked, and which pay a tax in return.

The most important of the nomad tribes in the whole territory with which we are concerned is that of the Shammar; it has more than 5,000 tents, each tent representing a family. The Shammar are divided into three main groups: those of Iraq, those of Syria (otherwise known as the “Zor” Shammar), and the “Korsa” Shammar. Coming originally from Nejd, the Shammar succeeded, by their numbers and their warlike qualities, in imposing themselves on the other nomads of the desert, and are now scattered all over Mesopotamia and a large part of Syria. The Iraqi group winters in the regions to the south of Baghdad and Kerbala, and in the summer goes up round the eastern end of the Sinjar to the foothills of the mountains of Kurdistan. This is the only group that does not have to cross the frontier, as its route of migration is entirely in Iraq.

The Zor Shammar, who spend the summer in the upper Kabur region, move in the autumn to the area south of the Jebel Abdul Aziz, and, passing to the west of the Sinjar, reach the salt deposits.

As for the Korsa Shammar, they go in winter to the region between the Sinjar and the Euphrates, especially round the Wadi Ajij and the salt deposits, and in summer they move up to the southern slopes of the Qara Chok Dag.

According to the conditions of pasture, the Zor Shammar and the Korsa Shammar, both of whom are dependent on Syria, may have to go a long way into Iraqi territory in winter.

To the south-west of the Euphrates extends the vast desert of the Shamiya, the resources of which are not sufficient for the establishment of permanent settlements. It contains, however, very large areas of pasture-land which can be utilised at certain periods of the year. The Gaara depression, in Iraq, the largest of all, is in winter the meeting-place of numerous tribes, several of which are subject to the Syrian authorities. We shall only mention the most important, which are the Aniza Fid'an (3,000 to 4,000 tents), who in summer are to be found sometimes in the Aleppo district and sometimes in the northern part of the Euphrates valley; the Sba (3,000 tents), who winter to the east of the Jebel Aniza and advance as far as the Gaara region itself; and the Ruwalla (4,000 tents).

Among the tribes of Iraqi allegiance who utilise these same pastures, we may mention those of the Iraqi Aniza (Amarat), who in summer follow the Sba as far as Syria.

Although the limits of the present study do not allow us to deal at greater length with this problem of change of pasture, we hope that this short description will show the necessity in which the nomad tribes are placed of crossing the frontier and staying periodically in the territory of the neighbouring State.

The same applies to the north, where there is a predominance of Kurdish tribes, whose political and social organisation is similar to that of the Bedouin. The Kurds are an Indo-European race, closely related to the Persian people. They have their own language, which has so far been little studied. As a rule, they are of Moslem religion, but they also include small Christian tribes.

The Kurdish tribes which concern us are for the most part semi-settled. Mention should, however, be made of the Miran, an important nomad tribe of about 750 tents, whose migration extends from the areas south of Lake Van, where they spend the summer, to the district of the Wadi Sueidiyeh and Khanzir, where, of recent years, they have made some experiments in cultivation.

(b) *Semi-settled Population.*

The semi-settled population as a rule inhabits villages or permanent groups of tents, which they leave in autumn or winter to seek pasture for their flocks in the steppes. They do not return until the spring to engage in agricultural work.

Such are the Hassenan, of Kurdish race, who occupy villages on the Tigris from the Syro-Turkish frontier to the neighbourhood of Khanik and further west. The Alian, who are also Kurds, and whose villages are situated between the Lailak Dagħ and the Wadi Jerrahi, come down in winter with their flocks to the neighbourhood of Demir Kapu.

The Tai, an important Arab tribe, comprising about 2,000 families, are established on the banks of the Jaghjagh, a tributary of the Kabur, where they cultivate large areas of land. They are divided into numerous groups, one of which — that of the Duwalla — has remained predominantly nomad and, in autumn, traverses the region of the Wadi Rumelan, sometimes descending as far as the Sinjar, and even crossing it to reach the pastures of the Wadi Ajij.

The Juhaich, who are Arabs, possess about 450 houses in the neighbourhood of Tell Afar. They seek their pastures at very great distances, from the Wadi Sufan to the north as far as the salt deposits.

The Sherabiyin, Arabs, with their affiliated groups, have about 1,000 tents, and are regarded as being of inferior race by the other tribes, which they often accompany as shepherds, particularly between the Kabur and the Tigris.

Then we have the Jebburs, who are also Arabs, numbering about 3,000 tents, and whose villages are on the banks of the Kabur. They spend the winter in the steppes which extend to the north and south of the Jebel Sinjar, sometimes mixing with the Yezidis.

Further to the south, on the two banks of the Euphrates, we find the semi-settled tribe of the Ogueidat, owing allegiance to Syria. Their villages extend from a point situated forty kilometres north of Deir-ez-Zor to below Albu Kemal. Together they number about 10,000 families. Those whose villages are situated on the eastern bank of the Euphrates go in winter with their flocks to the region of the salt deposits, while the sections to the west of the Euphrates go to pasture in the Syrian desert as far as the Gaara. This tribe has for many years been living in a state of hostility with its neighbours, the Iraqi Dulem, who cultivate the banks of the river from the neighbourhood of the Leachman boundary stone (eight kilometres below Albu Kemal) as far as Falluja. At the place where the zones of habitation of the Ogueidat and the Dulem touch, their villages are mixed together. Thus, certain sections of the Ogueidat seem to have pushed on as far as the neighbourhood of El Kaim, while the Dulem and the small tribe of the Jeraifa, which is affiliated to them, possess cultivated land quite close to Albu Kemal.

We consider that the tendency towards permanent settlement which is gaining ground in these two tribes will probably help to reduce the causes of friction between them.

Certain of the Yezidi tribes of the Jebel Sinjar and neighbourhood, who leave their villages in winter in search of pasture, may also be regarded as semi-settled. We confine ourselves to mentioning them here, and will deal with their characteristics in greater detail in the next chapter.

(c) *Settled Population.*

The settled population consists of the Yezidi, Moslem and Christian inhabitants of Beled Sinjar (3,800) and those of the majority of the villages of the Jebel Sinjar.

The total population of this mountain consists of about 24,000 souls, and is divided into 91 villages, of which 51 are almost entirely Yezidi, the remainder being inhabited by a mixed

population of Kurds, Arabs, Turcomans, Christians and Yezidis. From the religious point of view, the population is divided approximately as follows:

Yezidis	14,300
Moslems	8,900
Christians	800
Total	24,000

The origin and history of the Yezidis — a rough mountain people, united not only by race but still more by religion and the isolation in which they have always lived — are obscure. One theory is that the Yezidis are of Kurdish race. Apart from their common language, however, it is difficult to establish any certain relationship between the two races. According to another hypothesis, they come from the province of Yazd, in Persia, but no proof seems to have been adduced in support of this contention, apart from a certain resemblance of name. The theory that they are of Arab origin could only be founded on the fact that their theological literature is written in Arabic. Their liturgical language, however, is Kurdish. It seems more likely that, for lack of a means of expression in writing (Kurdish being then only a spoken language), the Yezidis were obliged to resort to Arabic for their theological works.

Whatever its origins, we find to-day that this race, thanks to the very strict rules of its religion, which dominate its social organisation and its very existence, has remained free from any admixture.

It is impossible to become a Yezidi; one can only be a Yezidi by birth. Union with other races is forbidden. They conform to special rules as regards food, certain vegetables being forbidden, and even their clothing is subject to very strict regulations, which, for example, forbid them to wear blue.

They have a special code of honour, which they faithfully observe. They are very hospitable, and have at all times offered an asylum to the oppressed who took refuge with them.

The Yezidis' religion seems to owe its origins to Oriental pagan beliefs, mixed with Jewish, Christian and Islamic influences.

Their theogony is based on two principles: that of Good — God —, whom they call "Yazdan", and that of Evil, whom they name "Melek Taus", and the symbol of which is a bronze peacock. "Melek Taus", who is the creator of the earth, is almighty, and they worship him. This is no doubt why the Yezidis have been commonly described as "devil-worshippers". They believe that man's soul transmigrates into other living beings — men or animals — but only as a punishment for an impious life. They venerate Jesus Christ under the name of "Issa", as also Mahomet.

Their religious worship is very simple. Their morning prayer at sunrise, far from the eyes of any infidel, is a relic of the Zoroastrian religion.

The dead must always be buried with a little earth in their mouths from the vicinity of the tomb of Sheik Adi, their prophet.

Sheik Adi, an historical personage, was born in the eleventh century in the neighbourhood of Aleppo. His tomb, which has remained a sacred shrine for all the Yezidis, is at Sheikhan, north of Mosul. Every year, in September, a great number of pilgrims go thither to pay their devotions and bring their offerings to the "Mir". All good Yezidis must go there at least once in their lives.

The Yezidis have a strong religious organisation, but their dispersion in districts at a great distance from one another makes the authority of the supreme chief more nominal than real. The Yezidi hierarchy comprises several degrees. A preponderating and unique position is enjoyed by the "Mir", "Emir", or "Beg", who is the supreme pontiff of all believers and a political and religious chief with almost unlimited powers. Although elected by all the faithful, he must always belong to the same family. His pecuniary resources are derived from voluntary gifts from the community, collected during the tours, made in all places inhabited by Yezidis, by the "Sanjaks" — a Turkish word meaning standard, applied to a sort of candelabrum surmounted by a bronze peacock. The "Sanjaks", of which the "Mir" is the guardian, are sent out once a year among the faithful, who prostrate themselves before them and bring them offerings.

Next to the "Mir", with a more specially religious character, is the "Sheik", a sort of patriarch and chief of a superior priestly caste constituted by the members of the only five families descended from the disciples of Sheik Adi. Then come the "Pir", priests of a lower category than the Sheik, but also belonging to families whose origin is considered divine. The "fakirs" may be compared to Christian monks, although they may marry and own property. They may be recognised by their costume, made entirely of black wool with the exception of trousers of white linen and cloaks of any colour except blue. The "fakirs" are under the authority of a chief who lives in the neighbourhood of Aleppo.

Of lower rank are the "kawal", a kind of chorister, the "chawich", who attend the tomb of Sheik Adi, and the "ferach", who acts as sacristan at the tomb.

Outside the Jebel Sinjar and the district of Sheikhan there are several groups of Yezidis, the chief of which are those at Aleppo and Amuda, in Syria, in the Jebel Tor, in Turkey, and at Tiflis, in the Caucasus.

There can be no doubt, however, that the Yezidis of the Sinjar, protected by the inaccessible approaches of their mountain, form at the present day the most homogeneous ethnical and religious group of this interesting race.

The Commission appointed in 1925 by the Council of the League of Nations to study the question of the frontier between Turkey and Iraq seems to have come to a similar conclusion.

In its report of July 16th, 1925,¹ it states that the Yezidis form “an entirely distinct element of the population, and are a united organism”.

In conclusion, we may mention among the settled population the inhabitants of the small town of Albu Kemal (2,000), who are referred to elsewhere.

3. ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS.

(a) *General Survey.*

The arid nature of the steppes, the unfavourable climatic conditions, and the backward state of the population, make the areas under consideration of very small economic value. Economic activity is confined to pasturage and, in a few rare and privileged places, a rudimentary form of agriculture. When the winter rains have been sufficiently abundant, the steppes become covered in spring with a rich and varied flora. Numerous live-stock, consisting of large flocks of sheep of a race peculiar to the East, dromedaries, goats, cattle, buffaloes and horses, find sufficient nourishment on their passage or for a whole season.

The Bedouin, who is the principal inhabitant of the desert, shares the use of these pastures with the Kurdish shepherd. From time immemorial, he has left industry and commerce to the settled population or to other races.

The Governments concerned have endeavoured in the last few years to encourage the settlement of the nomads in districts lending themselves to cultivation. Modern means of communication have rendered more frequent the contact of these nomads with the cultivated centres, where conditions of life seem to them less difficult. Moreover, the growing depreciation in the value of the animals they breed, particularly camels and horses, is leading them to seek a more stable income. Nevertheless, this passage from the nomad to the sedentary state will take a long time, owing to the very slow evolution of these races, with their atavisms dating back thousands of years.

Hence it is clear, even if the possibilities of the future are taken into account, that the economic value of this district is, and will always remain, very small. Its meagre resources can only suffice in the most precarious conditions for a sparse population.

The present chapter only contains a few figures, statistics or details concerning the production and trade of the regions under consideration, for sources of reliable information are rare. The data we were able to obtain on the spot are not really reliable, even when they were supplied to us in good faith. The nomad and the other peoples of the desert, who are still in a primitive stage of civilisation, too often replace accuracy by exaggeration or mistrust, according to whether they wish to give themselves importance or to evade taxation. The extreme ignorance of these men, and the fact that they are scattered over the vast spaces of the desert, made it impossible for the Commission to check their statements to any serious extent.

In these circumstances, the figures contained in the official statistics are all the more interesting. We therefore think it useful to reproduce in the first place the data concerning the total trade between Syria and Iraq which were communicated to us at our request by the two parties.

¹ Document C.400.M.147.1925.VII, page 49.

TRADE OF SYRIA (INCLUDING THE LEBANON) WITH IRAQ.

A. According to the Statistics of the Syrian Authorities.

I. Imports from Iraq to Syria.

(a) IN VALUE.

	1929	1930	1931
	Lebano-Syrian piastres		
Imports for consumption	218,308,241	216,087,443	183,765,071
Imports in transit			34,869,798
Total	218,308,241	216,087,443	218,634,869

(b) IN WEIGHT.

	1929	1930	1931
	Kilogrammes		
Imports for consumption	2,089,826	1,212,571	1,905,048
Imports in transit			741,576
Total	2,089,826	1,212,571	2,646,624

(c) PRINCIPAL GOODS IMPORTED FROM IRAQ IN 1931.

1. For Consumption in Syria.

Nature of goods	Value in thousands of Lebano-Syrian piastres
Live animals	159,000
Milk, dairy produce, eggs	6,000
Edible fruits	7,000
Clothing and made-up articles	6,000
Hides and skins	3,000

2. In Transit.

Nature of goods	Value in thousands of Lebano-Syrian piastres
Eggs, butter, salted entrails	20,000
Hides, skins, and furs	10,000

II. Exports from Syria to Iraq.

(a) IN VALUE.

	1929	1930	1931
	Lebano-Syrian piastres		
Exports	44,077,536	33,170,906	35,761,980
Re-exports	82,437,852	59,008,626	31,783,580
Outgoing transit	86,691,170	70,785,360	77,480,707
Total	213,206,558	162,964,892	145,026,267

(b) IN WEIGHT.

	1929	1930	1931
	Kilogrammes		
Exports	1,532,012	1,374,794	1,222,004
Re-exports	564,455	420,208	345,718
Outgoing transit	716,715	510,788	792,936
Total	2,813,182	2,305,790	2,360,658

(c) PRINCIPAL GOODS EXPORTED AND RE-EXPORTED FROM SYRIA TO IRAQ IN 1931.

Nature of goods	Value in thousands of Lebano-Syrian piastres
Cotton fabrics	7,000
Silks	7,000
Soap	6,000
Clothing and underclothing	2,000
Dyestuffs	2,000
Raw materials for dyeing and tanning	1,500
Rope and string	1,500

(d) PRINCIPAL GOODS PASSING THROUGH SYRIA AND LEBANON IN TRANSIT FOR IRAQ IN 1931.

Nature of goods	Value in thousands of Lebano-Syrian piastres
Silks	15,000
Cotton goods	15,000
Motor-cars	25,000
Woollen goods, clothing, underclothing	10,000

III. Balance of Trade.

Year	Tonnage (in kilogrammes)	Value in Lebano-Syrian piastres
1929:		
Imports	2,089,826	218,308,241
Exports	2,813,182	213,206,558
Balance	+ 723,356	— 5,101,683
1930:		
Imports	1,212,571	216,087,443
Exports	2,305,790	162,964,892
Balance	+ 1,093,219	— 53,122,551
1931:		
Imports	2,646,624	218,634,869
Exports	2,360,658	145,026,267
Balance	— 285,966	— 73,608,602

B. According to the Statistics of the Iraqi Authorities.

(The financial year is from April 1st to March 31st.)

	Year 1928-29	Year 1929-30	Year 1930-31	Year 1931-32 (11 months)
	Iraqi rupees			
Imports to Iraq	4,608,077	3,316,842	2,650,921	2,622,495
Exports from Iraq	2,313,464	2,520,101	1,751,212	1,699,270
Balance	— 2,294,613	— 796,741	— 899,709	— 923,225

A comparison of these statistics at once reveals considerable inconsistencies. Not only are the figures of the Syrian statistics almost double those of the Iraq statistics, but the balance of trade of each of these two countries in relation to the other shows a large deficit.

There is one certain fact revealed by these statistics, however, and that is that Iraq supplies Syria principally with local products. These products are live animals, which constitute more than half Iraq's exports, and then dates, hides, butter, fat and wool. On the other hand, Syria chiefly exports to Iraq manufactured products such as clothing, dyes, soap and textiles. For the most part, however, the latter only pass through Syria in transit.

For the purpose of our enquiry we must, however, devote our special attention to the trade between Syria and the Liwa of Mosul. In this connection, we reproduce below extracts from the tables supplied to us by Mr. Ringrow, Deputy Collector of Customs at Mosul.

TRADE OF THE LIWA OF MOSUL WITH SYRIA (Extract).

I. Imports of the Liwa of Mosul from Syria.

Nature of goods	In rupees		
Live animals	1,530	—	—
Clothing (except footwear)			
Footwear	46,473	32,226	29,930
Dyestuffs	38,593	57,696	78,966
Cereals, pulses, flour:			
(a) Pulses	—	—	1,173
(b) Rice	—	—	29
(c) Other kinds	—	2,645	—
Gums and resins	387	45	301
Goat-hair	87	7	556
Hides and skins	6,038	596	3,039
Perfumery and toilet accessories	1,434	147	98
Soap	129,795	119,914	154,928
Textiles:			
(a) Raw cotton	47	—	—
(b) Cords and threads	5,010	4,770	4,455
(c) Grey fabric, unbleached	2,493	1,236	2,297
(d) White fabric	2,251	2,072	1,308
(e) Dyed fabric in pieces	124,902	79,346	69,982
(f) Dyed thread fabric	84,561	141,753	242,292
(g) Printed fabric	35,914	27,558	11,745
(h) Other kinds	78,034	53,623	21,665
(i) Sewing thread	859	424	224
(j) Other kinds	—	—	1,508
(a) Raw silk	1,704	—	—
(b) Silk fabric	5,637	6,025	2,148
(c) Silk threads	—	103	—
(d) Other kinds	421	289	13,973
Artificial silk:			
(a) Cords and threads	5,455	2,959	564
(b) Fabrics	254,995	211,143	231,102
(c) Other kinds	121,376	87,406	37,493
(a) Raw wool	28,616	3,400	10
(b) Threads and knitted wares	3,402	1,318	5,251
(c) Fabrics	49,770	31,248	48,806
(d) Other kinds	11,275	8,815	40
Grand total of imports of the Liwa of Mosul from Syria	1,360,606	1,066,743	1,260,634

II. Exports from the Liwa of Mosul to Syria.

Nature of goods	1929	1930	1931
	In rupees		
Live animals	1,015,864	772,417	1,221,269
Clothing (except footwear)	8,150	2,833	6,808
Footwear	226	8	334
Fruits and vegetables:			
(a) Almonds and nuts	20	22	1,712
(b) Dates	10,603	3,854	11,651
Gums and resins	1,742	2,002	6,151
Cereals:			
(a) Barley	51,424	—	1,590
(b) Flour	—	—	66
(c) Wheat	127,329	198	8,669
(d) Rice	57	41	20
(e) Other cereals and flour	2,695	12	40
Goat-hair	1,992	489	5,377
Hides and skins	67,415	32,007	85,027
Groceries and preserves	2,482	4,499	129,074
Textiles:			
(a) Raw cotton	—	—	133
(b) Fabrics	1,938	1,615	3,172
Raw silk and other	1,908	3,358	469
(a) Raw wool	20	1,000	124,154
(b) Thread and knitted wares	—	—	—
(c) Fabrics	—	176	—
(d) Other kinds	787	264	3,199
Grand total of exports from the Liwa of Mosul to Syria	1,435,527	906,007	1,690,325

From these Iraqi statistics, it will be seen that the Liwa of Mosul alone provides about half the exports from the whole of Iraq to Syria. On the other hand, it absorbs less than half the imports of Syria to Iraq. The predominance of local products is here still more marked. Live animals alone account for approximately three-quarters of all exports. From year to year, the average of imports and exports seems approximately the same.

After these general remarks concerning Syro-Iraqi trade, we shall now study the economic conditions of the different sectors.

(b) *Examination of the Different Sectors.*

A. *Northern Sector.* — The mountainous region which extends from the Tigris to the last slopes of the Qara Chok Dagħ, enjoying more abundant rainfall, serves as pasturage to various tribes, generally Kurdish, such as the Miran. Other tribes, particularly the Sherabiyin, engage in the breeding of cattle and buffaloes, which are somewhat rare in these districts, where sheep and goats constitute the greater part of the flocks.

These tribes, having their habitat in a zone administered in practice by Iraq, sell part of the cattle and of their produce to the merchants of Mosul, through agents who travel in this region. The trade does not seem to amount to very much, however. The highest figure given to us was from 4,000 to 6,000 head per annum, part of which appears to be consumed in Mosul and the remainder exported.

The crops are very scanty, and seem to be insufficient even for a very small and frugal population, since the latter is often obliged to buy corn elsewhere.

B. *Jebel Sinjar Sector.* — This region, whose other characteristics have been examined elsewhere, is the most important economic centre of the territories we have studied.

Until quite recently, its inhabitants seem to have lived completely isolated on their mountain — a kind of island in the midst of the desert — and to have had no relations with the outside world. Towards the second half of the last century, however, the Yezidis, having been obliged by force to submit to the authority of the Sublime Porte, which they had hitherto disregarded, and taking advantage of the growing state of security, extended their cultivation to an increasing extent in the plain on either side of the mountain. At present, the zone of cultivation extends in places to a width of as much as sixteen kilometres.

The greater part of the population of the Sinjar is engaged in agriculture, which covers a considerable area. The farmer, however, works under extremely primitive conditions, and does not yet know how to avail himself of the spring water at his disposal. He has succeeded, however, in obtaining crops of some variety, and it may be anticipated that, in a comparatively short space of time, the Jebel will not only be able to provide for its own needs, but become a very important centre of production.

The present production of the Kaza of the Sinjar in cereals, according to the data supplied to us, amounts to only 20,000 or 25,000 tons. These cereals are chiefly barley and sorghum, wheat being cultivated only to a small extent. This figure seems, however, high in relation to the population (about one ton per head); but when it is compared to the area sown it does not appear excessive. It may therefore be concluded that, in normal years, the cereal crop not only amply satisfies the needs of the population, but provides a large surplus for sale outside the Sinjar. In years of food shortage, on the other hand, the Yezidis supplement their crops by buying from all quarters.

The Yezidis produce in their valleys an abundance of figs, of which they consume great quantities and export the surplus. On the mountain they also cultivate the vine and eat fresh or dried grapes. They extract therefrom a thick syrup which constitutes one of their articles of food. They also eat vegetables, lentils, chick-peas, and rice, of which they produce a small quantity in marshy places. They plant a little tobacco for their own use as well as cotton of inferior quality (a few dozen tons).

Among the Yezidis, as in all the surrounding country, sheep-raising is the principal means of livelihood. The flocks go to pasture on the mountain or at the foot of its slopes, and only leave it in winter and spring. They then go as far as the Radd, to the north, near the Lake of Khatouniya and Tell Sfug, and sometimes as far as El Bidea to the south.

Their live-stock consists, according to the data we have been able to obtain, of from 200,000 to 300,000 sheep and goats, the latter representing, however, only a proportion of 10 per cent. All their flocks do not seem to be their own property, and they apparently act sometimes as shepherds for others in return for payment in kind. They also possess a certain number of cows, dromedaries, horses and donkeys.

Mutton, wool, butter, cereals and fruit are probably the most important factors in the economic life of this area.

Industry, properly speaking, does not exist in the Sinjar, although one occasionally finds mills of an obsolete type and a few household looms. The inhabitants also produce charcoal and *cheriass* — glue obtained from the ground roots of a plant of the Jebel, used in the footwear industry. The production of this glue amounts to about 100 tons a year.

In addition to their surplus cereals, the Yezidis sell dried figs, charcoal, sheep and goats, wool, butter and the glue mentioned above. In exchange, they buy foodstuffs such as dates, *dibiss* (a very thick date syrup), rice, coffee, sugar and spirits, articles of clothing, cotton stuffs, European fabrics and cloth, footwear, silk scarves, soap, perfumery, cigarette-paper, tobacco and manufactured products.

Not being traders themselves, the Yezidis sell their products through Moslem or Christian middlemen. The latter visit the villages of the Jebel for this purpose or take up a permanent residence there, particularly in the small town of Beled-Sinjar. These merchants are usually agents or commissionaires of traders at Mosul, towards which town the greater part of the regular trade is at present directed. There are also commercial relations with the new Syrian towns of Hassecheh and Kamechlieh. This, however, is chiefly illicit contraband trade. The rapid development of these small towns would be difficult to explain but for the large profits which generally accrue from the irregular trade in certain goods subject to very high Customs duties.

According to the information we obtained, the annual trade of the Sinjar (purchases and sales) with the outside world amounts to about £100,000, corresponding to an average of about 400 to 500 French francs per inhabitant. In view of the simplicity and primitive mode of life of the Yezidis, this figure must be derived exclusively from the trade in products intended for consumption (food, clothing, etc.).

We also enquired as to the extent of the trade carried on by the Sinjar alone with Syria. Mr. Ringrow supplied us with the following figures in this connection:

Customs Duties derived from the External Trade of the Sinjar.

1930	Rupees	1931	Rupees
Import duties	1,713	Import duties	1,354 11
Export duties	120 14	Export duties	956 14

These figures imply a movement of trade — under Iraq's control — of only a few tens of thousands of rupees.

On the other hand, the Customs duties levied at Hassecheh on goods from the Sinjar amounted, between January 1st and May 1st, 1932, to 181,580 Lebano-Syrian piastres, or 36,316 French francs. The average rate of the Syrian Customs tariff being 15 per cent *ad valorem* (11 per cent on animals and wool, 25 per cent on butter and figs), it may be concluded that imports into Syria from the Sinjar amount to about 100,000 rupees per annum. Here again we find a wide discrepancy between the Iraqi and Syrian statistics, in the same direction as in the statistics of the aggregate trade between the two countries.

We were told that smuggling was very active in this region. This is not only possible, but very probable, in view of the extremely high Customs duties levied by the two States. There can be no doubt, however, that the total trade between the Sinjar and Syria, including contraband, cannot represent more than a fraction of the total trade of the whole of the Sinjar. The condition of the tracks and the intensity of the traffic are significant in this connection. We did not meet with any caravans or lorries between the Sinjar and Hassecheh, and the track between these two points is in very bad repair. On the other hand, that which leads from Beled Sinjar to the main artery Mosul-Deir-ez-Zor is visibly used by a constant stream of traffic.¹

Moreover, what interest would Syria have in allowing considerable Customs revenue to escape when the surveillance of smuggling is so greatly facilitated by geographical conditions in these regions?²

Transport is usually effected by camels, and as a rule is undertaken by the Bedouin. Apparently it is also they who engage in smuggling operations. The cattle are sent by stages through the desert, and find their pasture on the way. Recently use has begun to be made of motor vehicles for the transport of goods and even of cattle. On the other hand, the railway line from Nisibin to Aleppo cannot be utilised, its terminus being too distant and its charges much too high.

The two principal tracks, Mosul-Tell Afar-Deir-ez-Zor-Aleppo and Mosul-Bir Uгла-Kamechlieh-Aleppo, are the only ones considered to be normal trade routes, and are both under the protection of police forces. Goods taking the direct track from the Sinjar to Hassecheh are cleared through the Customs near the latter place.

The Yezidi has the reputation of being particularly honest in business. He scrupulously observes his obligations, although these are always verbal, the Yezidis being all illiterate. Transactions are settled sometimes in cash, but more often in kind. They buy what they need on credit from the Moslem or Christian merchants, and even arrange for the latter to pay their taxes. Immediately after the sheep-shearing and the end of the harvests they pay their debts in kind.

¹ Note by M. Marrades. — The evidence of the witnesses seems to indicate, in my opinion, that the contraband traffic is much greater than is implied in the wording of these two paragraphs. I gained the impression that the Anglo-Iraqi and Franco-Syrian assessors shared this view, and I found it confirmed in a Turkish newspaper article produced by the Anglo-Iraqi assessors.

In my view, however, the trade of the Sinjar is now undoubtedly carried on for the most part with Iraq. This appears to me so natural in present circumstances that I consider it superfluous to seek confirmation in the state of the tracks and the volume of traffic over them. Moreover, in my view, the state of the tracks can hardly constitute proof, since even to-day it is exceptional for tracks to be kept in repair, and, according to the nature of the soil, the fact that a track was in bad condition might even prove that there was a heavy volume of traffic over it. As regards the traffic found to exist on a certain sector, it would be necessary, before drawing conclusions, to know the origin and destination of the goods transported, and these facts are not in our possession.

² Note by M. Marrades. — In my opinion, the smuggling is amply explained by the profits it yields. It is quite clear that neither Syria nor Iraq has any interest in it. Moreover, there seems to be much more smuggling from Syria into Iraq than from Iraq into Syria, and the articles which form the principal subject of that traffic — liquors, perfumery, manufactured goods, etc. — are more suitable for the purpose than the live-stock, cereals, butter and wool which are exported from Iraq into Syria.

In the Sinjar there are numerous lands belonging to citizens of Mosul, to the nomad tribes, or to Yezidis who have emigrated to Amuda. The owners do not cultivate them, but lease them to the Yezidis. As between cultivators, the fields are drawn by lot, by means of stones. The cultivators thus designated undertake cultivation for a whole year and hand over to the owner a percentage of the crop obtained.

To the north-west of the Jebel Jeriba, the western extension of the Jebel Sinjar, there are two small villages with a settled Arab population which, although not of very great importance, must be mentioned here. These are Khatouniya and El Hol.

The inhabitants of Khatouniya cultivate cereals round the lake of that name. Their production, however, is not always sufficient for their needs, and they then buy wheat in the Jebel Sinjar. On the other hand, they procure sugar, coffee, cloth and footwear from Hassecheh.

The small population of El Hol is in much the same position. When the crop is insufficient, they go and buy the cereals they need in the Jebel or at Hassecheh — wherever the price is best — and have it ground on the spot.

Both have sheep which they entrust to the care of the Yezidis of the Jebel in exchange for half the produce. They are peoples living in great poverty, who are condemned by their isolation and their small numbers to lead an extremely precarious existence. Their cultivations are, however, capable of greater development.

C. *Salt-deposit Sector.* — Apart from its value on account of its pastures, this region is also of considerable importance as a great reservoir of salt. As we have already seen, it is only the Buara depression that offers the advantages of a good salt deposit. While certain other depressions, such as those of Seba and Sneseleh, although having a much thinner and less pure layer of salt, seem to have been or to be still exploited to a certain extent, their importance is negligible compared with that of the Buara deposit. We therefore feel justified in confining ourselves to the examination of the latter.

The Buara salt deposit, like that of Seba indeed, was subject at a certain period of the Ottoman Empire to a State monopoly established for the benefit of the Ottoman Public Debt. The purpose of this enterprise was no doubt less to make profits than to prevent the free exploitation of these salt deposits by the nomads, and thus eliminate competition with another salt deposit situated in the neighbourhood of Aleppo, and belonging to the State, which was being run at a loss. Ruined buildings on the borders of the Buara still bear witness to this official exploitation, which, as might be expected, showed considerable losses.

When the Turkish regime came to an end, both Iraq and Syria claimed the right to use the Buara deposit. Syria, which at present exercises no control, permits the population to supply itself freely. Iraq, on the other hand, which has instituted a salt monopoly, has for several years leased to private persons its share of this salt deposit, while exempting the nomads from the legal tax. In the last two years, however, no lessee seems to have come forward. The use of the salt deposit has consequently been entirely left to the nomads on the Iraqi side.

The annual exploitation of this salt deposit begins at the end of spring — *i.e.*, when the waters which covered it have evaporated — and terminates with the first rains of winter. The methods used are very simple. They consist in breaking the layer of salt and drying the pieces in the sun for a few hours: they are then placed in sacks, which are loaded on camels. The quantities thus extracted seem to amount on the Syrian side to about 400 tons a year, which is sufficient for the needs of the Jezira and even part of Anatolia — *i.e.*, about 200,000 persons.

The annual production on the Iraqi side was estimated during the years of leasehold at 200 to 500 tons, a quantity sufficient for the needs of about a third of the population of the liwa of Mosul.

It may therefore be said without exaggeration that the Buara salt deposit plays a part of considerable importance in the economic life of the two countries.

D. *Euphrates Sector.* — In the fertile and populous valley of the Euphrates, a particularly active commercial life is in process of development. From Deir-ez-Zor to Anah and beyond, a zone of cultivation of variable width extends along the two banks of the river, especially on the right bank. Here several important fractions of Bedouin tribes have settled more or less permanently.

The most important centre of this region is the small town of Albu Kemal. Well constructed and of recent creation — it was founded in 1895 by Kaimakam Hussein Rafat — it attracted within its walls chiefly traders from Anah, an important locality situated further east and renowned for the industrious and commercial character of its population.

Albu Kemal, which to-day has 2,000 inhabitants, is showing an increasing tendency to grow. It is the market of all the producers and consumers of the valley. According to the information given to us by the President of the Municipality, the volume of business done by the town amounts to from £4,000 to £10,000 (gold) per annum, or from 450,000 to 1,100,000 French francs. Moreover, according to a statement made by the French and Syrian assessors of the Commission, Albu Kemal during the first six months of the year sold to the populations to the east of the *de facto* frontier £2,500 (gold) of goods, chiefly cereals, sugar, coffee, skins, spirits, perfumery, firewood and fruit. According to other particulars from the same source, the Syrian Customs Service collected, during the year 1931, a sum of about 1,850,000 Lebano-Syrian piastres, or 370,000 French francs.

These sums were derived chiefly from the import duties on the manufactured wool and silks of Anah, and on sheep from the whole valley of the Euphrates.

Albu Kemal also possesses a certain agricultural importance. Its inhabitants own considerable cultivations in the neighbourhood of the town. Among other crops, they produce for their own consumption wheat, barley, sorghum, and fruit of all kinds.

We consider that the importance of Albu Kemal cannot but increase, owing to its position on the main line of communication along the Euphrates from Baghdad to Aleppo through Deir-*ez-Zor* or *Palmyra*.

The other territories traversed by the frontier on its way from the Euphrates to the *Jebel Tenf* are desert, and hence of no economic importance. Mention should, however, be made of the pastures of the *Gaara*, and of the main artery which connects Baghdad with Damascus, and which has already been dealt with elsewhere.

4. MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS.

(a) *General Observations.*

If we examine the military problems that may arise in the frontier zone, a first glance at the map will show that we must consider two distinct sectors. The northern sector, up to and including the *Jebel Sinjar*, presents numerous and complex military problems, while south of the *Sinjar*, as far as the frontier of Transjordan, military considerations recede into the background. In this second sector, the very uniform character of the country, the almost total lack of resources, the precariousness of the lines of communication, the absence of any important objective situated at an accessible distance, and, last but not least, the racial affinities of the neighbouring peoples, make it unlikely, if not impossible, that military operations on any considerable scale should be undertaken in this vast desert zone. From this point of view, it is more or less a matter of indifference whether the frontier in this region passes a few kilometres to this side or that. Accordingly, the two parties quite rightly refrained from putting forward military reasons in favour of any particular line. Even in the valley of the Euphrates — the only transversal passage in the zone in question and an important line of communication — no marked preference from the military point of view can be given to one frontier rather than to another, conditions varying very little throughout the country for long distances above and below Albu Kemal.

We therefore feel justified in passing over the military aspects of the vast region between the *Jebel Sinjar* and the *Jebel Tenf*, and concentrating our attention on the northern sector of the frontier zone.

(b) *Military Value of the Ground.*

A general geographical description of this region has been given already. It will be recalled that the region in question is composed, from north to south, first of a relatively hilly sector, then of a plain about fifty kilometres in breadth, studied with tells, and then of the very long rocky chain of the *Jebel Sinjar*, rising to a height of 1,000 metres above this plain.

The northern sector is dominated at approximately its central point by the *Qara Chok Dagħ*. This chain is the prolongation of that of the *Jebel Bikhair*, situated on the eastern bank of the *Tigris*. One is therefore tempted to attach to these two groups, separated by the broad valley of the *Tigris*, an equal military importance on either bank of the river, as an obstacle to an attack coming from the north or south. A closer examination reveals, however, material differences. To the east of the *Tigris*, the precipitous and rocky chain of the *Jebel Bikhair* forms a very serious and uninterrupted natural obstacle, which would permit of easy defence. This is not the case as regards the *Qara Chok* chain, to the west of the *Tigris*. Although several of its summits bear the name *Dagħ* (mountain), it has a much less mountainous character than the *Jebel Bikhair*, to the east of the *Tigris*; only the massif of the *Qara Chok Dagħ*, which falls perpendicularly on the south-east side, is practically unassailable, while the rest of the range is only a series of hills and plateaux which can be crossed almost anywhere. The massif of the *Qara Chok Dagħ*, which is only about five kilometres long, can therefore be turned on the west and east. It thus constitutes less an obstacle than a good observation-point. On the other hand, it must be recognised that the chain of the *Qara Chok Dagħ* possesses the natural advantages of a defensive zone offered by any region where the relief of the watershed is sufficiently pronounced. It is probable that anyone having to defend this region towards the north or south, apart from any political consideration, would preferably base his defence on the chain of the *Qara Chok*.

In the plain situated between this northern sector and the *Jebel Sinjar*, there is no zone or line offering special interest from the military point of view.

The chain of the *Jebel Sinjar*, on the other hand, with its extensions, forms an extremely powerful natural defence system. Its complete isolation and its numerous valleys and ravines make it possible to conceal any movement of troops from the view of the enemy. Its excellent observation-points and the lack of any cover in the neighbouring region would greatly facilitate its defence. And even if an assailant gained a footing there, he would find it difficult to make any progress, for the ground lends itself admirably to guerrilla warfare.

(c) *Strategical Considerations.*

The frontiers fixed by the Syro-Turkish agreements or laid down by the 1920 Convention are not natural frontiers, except along a small part of the course of the *Tigris*. They take no account of geographical and still less of military considerations. Chance has given this corner

of Syrian territory a very singular shape, which has led to the name of the "Bec de Canard". It is a trapezoidal wedge, about forty kilometres long, and twenty kilometres wide at its base and thirty wide at its summit. The Qara Chok range, situated close to the southern frontier of this salient, and thus deprived of any outlet to the south, cannot constitute an effective position of defence towards the north.

If, simply from the standpoint of the present enquiry and leaving aside the eventuality of a conflict between Iraq and Syria, we suppose an attack against Syria from the north, it would certainly not be directed against such an outlying region as the "Bec de Canard", but against more vital parts of Syria. A movement carried out in the region of the Tigris, therefore, would be aimed not at Syria but at Iraq. For such an enterprise, the zone of concentration would no doubt be Mardin-Diarbekir-Bitlis, and its first main objective would certainly be Mosul. In view of the serious obstacle provided on the left bank of the Tigris by the Jebel Bikhair range, it may be anticipated that the attack would take place chiefly on the right bank of the Tigris and along the road and railway track from Nisibin to Mosul. Would Syria attempt, and would she be able, to resist such an attempt to cross the "Bec de Canard"? This is doubtful, in view of the complete lack of outlets and the distance of this region from the military centres of the country. Syria could, however, exert an effective action against the rear of such an attack from the Hassecheh region.

In case of an evacuation of the "Bec de Canard" by Syria, Iraq would therefore find herself alone in face of the aggressor. Her defence would no doubt be facilitated by the powerful flank position constituted by the Jebel Sinjar.

5. POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATIONS.

The Ottoman Empire was divided, from the administrative point of view, into vilayets, sandjaks, etc. In the sparsely-populated and arid zone with which we are dealing, the desert constitutes a natural division. For this reason, the central administration, which was generally ignorant of the details of local conditions, had drawn a few rough lines on the map to mark the administrative boundaries across the desert. The nomad, however, who was the only inhabitant of these vast regions, was ignorant of the existence both of the administration and of the boundaries fixed by it. For centuries, since before the Hegira, he had but one law, that of the desert, and he never acknowledged any other. He had his social organisation, his policy of mutual assistance and alliances, and his mode of living, which nothing could change. The imperial authority had implicitly recognised itself to be incapable of exercising more than nominal dominion over this immense area.

The Kurds, Turcomans and Circassians on the one hand and the Arabs on the other were, in practice, masters of their own existence. They were free to take their herds where they could find pasture, to attack ill-defended caravans, or to plunder a weaker tribe that refused to pay tribute.

When, last century, the Sultans wished to enforce the collection of taxes in the desert and in Northern Mesopotamia, they established a network of police posts capable at least of protecting the lines of communication between the important centres. This system having given poor results, it was endeavoured to make the chiefs of the tribes themselves responsible for the supervision. But experience showed that, as long as the nature of the inhabitants was not changed by a new mode of living, any attempt to establish security and order in the desert was foredoomed to failure. Hence the nomads were encouraged to settle in the region of the Tigris, along the Kabur, and on the banks of the Euphrates. A school was even founded at Constantinople to endeavour — though without much success — to exercise a softening influence on the wild customs of the children of the Bedouin chiefs.

Nevertheless, as a result of this policy of settlement, a certain number of villages were founded. But for lack of effective protection they were obliged to have recourse to the support of the only true masters of the desert. Victims in turn of the enemies of their protectors and of their protectors themselves, these villages were soon destroyed, and the numerous ruins which we encountered on our journey still bear witness to those melancholy times.

It was not until the application of the system of mandates which were entrusted to the European Powers by the League of Nations that the aim vainly pursued by the Ottoman Empire began to be gradually realised, although at the cost of great sacrifices. Thanks to the strictest armed supervision, some measure of security was gradually established in these regions, and even in the midst of the desert, thus facilitating the Governments' far-seeing policy of settling the nomads. The success of this policy depends, however, on the guarantee that it will be possible to give to the populations attracted to agriculture that they will not be deprived of the fruits of their labours. The nomad must find great advantages in settling on the soil before he decides to abandon the life of absolute freedom, inherited from his ancestors, to which he is so much attached.

But the present uncertainty regarding the position of the frontier has hitherto prevented any lasting action by the two States to ensure the security and prosperity of the territories under consideration. This remark particularly applies to the northern sector, the present configuration of which is so unfavourable.

If it is further considered that Syria has been in possession of this sector for only two years, it is natural that she should first of all have endeavoured to safeguard her military positions. But the final settlement of the frontier will no doubt permit her to devote herself to the economic development of this part of the country. The establishment of lines of communication and of a

water-supply, as well as the introduction of irrigation, will be likely speedily to induce the population to settle on the soil and ensure the prosperity of the region. But, we repeat, this economic development is directly dependent on the problem of security.

The political and administrative system of the Sinjar seems to be already in process of stabilisation. Once the frontier has been fixed and the work of economic improvement carried out, a new era of tranquillity and progress may be expected to open.

In the valley of the Euphrates, political conditions are dominated by the feud which has for generations divided the tribes of the Ogueidat and the Dulem. By the agreement of May 5th, 1920, a first attempt was made by the Governments concerned to separate these two hostile elements. The solution adopted on that occasion has proved effective, and the hostility between these tribes seems to be on the wane.

The delimitation of the frontier and the regrouping of the population which will follow are likely, in our opinion, to stabilise this state of affairs finally.

CHAPTER VI. — CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

I. CONCERNING THE FRONTIER ZONE AS A WHOLE.

In the chapter on the population, we have pointed out that numerous nomad or semi-settled tribes, in the course of their annual changes of pasture, stay in the frontier zone or cross it. This movement generally takes the direction N.W.-S.E. and, on the return, the direction S.E.-N.W. Nevertheless, the paths taken by these different tribes frequently cross each other, particularly at the two ends of the Jebel Sinjar, round which the flocks are obliged to pass. Furthermore, owing to their effect on pastures and sources of water-supply, climatic variations affect the regularity of these changes of pasture.

Climatic conditions in these regions vary to an extent which is unknown in temperate climates — the rainfall in certain parts of Mesopotamia was only one-sixth of normal last winter — and may oblige the nomads, as was the case this year, to prolong, shorten or change completely their usual itinerary. In these circumstances, we have acquired the conviction that it is practically impossible to draw a frontier which does not cut the route of migration of at least some of these tribes. The *de facto* frontier possesses the same drawbacks, which are an inevitable consequence of nomadism. The present system of migrations, however, will have to be safeguarded, and as few obstacles as possible placed in its way.

Both parties, to justify their claims to a particular locality, have repeatedly pleaded the absolute necessity of being able to use certain wells.

There can be no doubt that full use of a pasture cannot be made without a good water-supply. We would point out, however, that the drilling and maintenance of the wells are at present left to the nomads. Each tribe, possessing only very rudimentary equipment, at present does no more than what is strictly necessary, and that in the most primitive way, to provide for its water-supply for a short period ahead.

We consider that the question of wells calls for the closest attention on the part of the authorities, for we are convinced that, at small expense, the present system of wells could be improved and supplemented, and that, by thus enhancing the value of certain pastures, the resources of several tribes could be increased.

We therefore consider that the present distribution of wells and springs should not be allowed to influence the position of the frontier. This distribution, which is capable of considerable improvement in the future, can then be adapted to any frontier.

We suggest that the question of changes of pasture should be settled by special agreements between the States themselves. In this connection, it may be worth while to recall the instance of an Intergovernmental Commission which worked for years in the north of Scandinavia.¹ The proceedings of that Commission might provide a useful example in seeking a satisfactory permanent regulation of changes of pasture involving the crossing of a frontier. Its experience might furnish useful suggestions in spite of the difference between the conditions of life of the Laps and their reindeer and the Arabs and their flocks.

This Commission solved the problem of nomadism in the countries of the north by means of conventions originating in a text named "First Codicil of the Frontier Convention of October 6th to 18th, 1751", which is still in force to-day, and appears to have been founded on an agreement dating from 1658. The "Codicil" and the Conventions of 1905 and 1919, which are based thereon, determine the rights and obligations of the nomads in time of peace and war; they stipulate, *inter alia*, that, according to custom, the nomads may cross the frontiers and make free use of the land and water-supply for themselves and their herds.

2. CONCERNING THE DIFFERENT SECTORS.

(a) *Tigris-Jebel Sinjar Sector.* — The uniformity of this sector from the geographical point of view is evident. There is here no natural line which could usefully serve as frontier. The Qara Chok chain itself is not suitable for this purpose, even irrespective of its oblique position in relation to the frontier.

¹ On this subject, the Commission received a communication kindly sent by His Excellency M. Marks von Würtemberg, former Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs, and M. Lennart Berglöf, Secretary of the Norwegian-Swedish Frontier Commission.

It desires to express to them its sincere thanks.

The "Bec de Canard" is inhabited by a settled and semi-settled population of different races and religions. As a result of gradual immigration, chiefly from the north, this population is continually increasing, and a settled mode of life is extending gradually to the east and south.

The economic importance of this sector is at present negligible. In the absence of any industry, the population lives exclusively on the products of the soil, selling the surplus to provide for its other needs. This trade at present takes place preferably with Mosul. There is no transit trade except that along the Mosul-Nisibin road, which, however, does not affect the inhabitants of this area.

The strategic situation of this region, as constituted by the 1920 Convention, is most precarious. Anyone wishing to enter Iraq from the north would always choose the west bank of the Tigris for the purpose, this route being shorter and less difficult than the east bank. It seems unlikely that Syria would endeavour to offer strong resistance to a movement of this kind, which would necessarily take place across the "Bec de Canard", for the very reason of its present shape, particularly as she would obviously be defending Iraq's interests much more than her own. In view of the manifest risk of failure, it is probable that Syria would be more inclined to evacuate the "Bec" than to defend it.

It will readily be understood that these unpromising military prospects dominate all political and administrative considerations. How could a Government be expected to take a whole-hearted interest in a district at such a distance from the centre of the country when it was sure to have to abandon it at the first approach of an enemy? How could it in such circumstances justify expenditure on its economic development and administrative equipment? We consider that this unfavourable situation inherent in the unfortunate configuration of the "Bec de Canard" must discourage any Government from undertaking a programme of development.

To sum up, the district of the "Bec de Canard", which, owing to the richness of its soil, is capable of genuine development, cannot command the interest which it deserves in the eyes of a Government as long as its configuration does not enable that Government to provide for its security in all circumstances. We have no hesitation in stating that, in our opinion, only two solutions are possible: either to abolish the "Bec de Canard" by assigning it to Iraq, or to enlarge it to the extent necessary for its continued existence.

To abolish the "Bec de Canard", however, would be to cut off Syria from the Tigris, which was certainly not the intention of the negotiators of 1920. On the contrary, they expressly designated the Tigris as the frontier over a long distance, thus making plain their desire to give Syria free access to that river. It is not for us to enquire into the reasons which led the negotiators to take this decision. But there is nothing to prevent their intentions from being respected, by the exclusion of any idea of abolishing the "Bec de Canard".

We are thus led to suggest a considerable enlargement of the "Bec de Canard", in order "to eliminate its character of an almost undesirable "appendix". It could then become a district of a certain importance, capable of developing more easily, and more readily defensible. We believe that, if it saw the importance of this distant region increased, the Syrian Government would certainly be inclined to take more interest in it and to give it a stimulus in every way.

Thus corrected, the "Bec de Canard" could play an important part as an instrument of peace: it would bar the natural route of access from the north of Iraq and thus make any military movement in that direction much less likely. If such a movement were directed solely against Iraq, it would be confined to the eastern bank of the Tigris, which is very unfavourable for such a purpose, or it would cross the "Bec de Canard", thus violating Syrian territory and antagonising both the Iraqi and the Syrians; an enterprise of that kind would become the more hazardous the more the resisting capacity of the "Bec de Canard" were increased.

It is therefore in Iraq's interest too that there should be a strong "Bec de Canard", since in this district its destinies are to some extent linked with those of Syria.

(b) *Jebel Sinjar Sector.* — The geographical unity of the Jebel Sinjar is manifest, both on the map and on the ground. To cut across in any direction a mountain chain of such importance and such uniformity, rising steeply from an almost unbroken plain, would be, as it were, a violation of nature. Orographically it forms an indivisible whole, with its geographical affinities definitely on the eastern side. A wide cultivated zone — the region of Tell Afar — joins the Sinjar to the Mosul basin, while, on the west, the Sinjar is separated from the valley of the Kabur by a desert area. From the hydrographic point of view, the Sinjar forms part of the basins of the Tigris, Kabur, and Wadi Ajij.

The population of the Jebel Sinjar gives the same impression of unity. Although decimated in the course of the last centuries, the Yezidis still constitute approximately two-thirds of the population, so that the whole region bears the preponderating imprint of their habits and customs. They are a primitive and sober people, proud of their age-long liberties, chivalrous towards the oppressed, and their strongest tie is undoubtedly their religion. The Yezidis are well aware that unity alone can secure their existence and their religious independence. Hence, they urgently begged of us that they should not be divided by a frontier. They are a people worthy of all sympathetic treatment, and deserving to be supported in their efforts to rise again, or at least to maintain themselves.

The district of the Sinjar, without any export industry and without revenue derived from the transit of goods, lives solely on the produce of its soil and its flocks. What is not consumed locally is used to pay for outside purchases. The greater part of this trade is undoubtedly directed towards Mosul, a great consuming and trading centre, while a small part goes to Syria, chiefly, it is true, in the form of contraband. In addition, nomad tribes come to the Sinjar to obtain their supplies.

The producing possibilities of the Sinjar are still capable of considerable development.

We have already mentioned the part which the Sinjar might be called upon to play from the military point of view; we repeat that it represents a very strong flank position against any movement west of the Tigris proceeding from the north or north-west.

The present political and administrative system of the Jebel Sinjar seems to give full satisfaction to the population. The Yezidis, after many years of troubled and precarious existence, now enjoy complete security, which they much appreciate. They are able to practise their own religion without apprehension, and have recourse to an impartial justice. Accordingly, this little people unanimously desires the maintenance of order and the uninterrupted development of a policy of consolidation.

To sum up, we may say that the Jebel Sinjar, a fertile and very populous island in the midst of a desert crossed only by nomads, forms from every point of view a block of remarkable unity. It cannot be divided by a frontier without harming its present prosperity and depriving the Yezidis of the great moral support which union constitutes for this long-suffering and attractive people. The Jebel Sinjar therefore cannot, and, in our unanimous opinion, should not, be divided, but must be assigned as a whole to one or other of the parties.

The majority of the Commission — the President and M. Petersén — do not hesitate to suggest the incorporation of the whole of the Jebel Sinjar in Iraq. This suggestion is based on the geographical, economic and religious ties which, in the opinion of the majority, undoubtedly unite the Sinjar to Iraq, and to a certain extent also on military considerations.

As regards the assignment of the Jebel Sinjar, M. Marrades did not agree with the majority's suggestion, and drew up a minority proposal which he sets forth in a note reproduced at the end of the present chapter.

(c) *Salt-deposit Sector.* — The characteristic of this district from the geographical point of view is the aspect of an elongated trough presented by the valley of the Wadi Ajij and the salt deposits. The depressions are more difficult to cross than the plateaux on either side to east and west, especially in winter, when they are flooded; and they therefore to some extent form a natural frontier.

This region is totally devoid of permanent dwellings, and is only temporarily and partially occupied by nomads.

It derives its economic value exclusively from the pastures and the salt deposits of Buara, utilised chiefly by the nomad tribes.

To sum up, this district is one of minor importance from every point of view. In order to take into due account the present conditions of exploitation of this area, we propose that the frontier should divide both the valley of the Wadi Ajij and the Buara salt deposit. To the south of the latter the general line of the depressions seems to us to be the natural boundary between the two countries.

(d) *Euphrates Valley Sector.* — Here no line offers obvious geographical advantages as a frontier; but we think it necessary to take into account, on the one hand, the ethnographical conditions and, on the other hand, necessities of an economic nature.

As stated in the chapter on population, this is the region of contact between the important tribes of the Dulem and the Ogueidat. Their villages seem to be intermingled, and inhabited also by other sections affiliated to one or other of the principal tribes. In this particular case, therefore, they seem to be rather a zone of contact than a line of contact.

Furthermore, we consider that, in practice, there can be no question of drawing the frontier through Albu Kemal or in its immediate neighbourhood, as the 1920 Convention does, and that for economic reasons the frontier should be at some distance. Moreover, a frontier situated in the immediate approaches to the town would present serious drawbacks for both parties from the administrative and particularly from the Customs point of view.

Albu Kemal, which is the chief town of a "kaza", and which is more and more asserting itself as the centre of this region, must be given the possibility of extending, and must be surrounded by a wide zone of arable land belonging to it.

Taking these considerations into account, we suggest that the frontier should be fixed on the borders of the villages of Heri and Qseba, and should pass through the Leachman boundary-stone. This line coincides with the present *de facto* frontier, which seems to have proved equitable and practical.

(e) *Euphrates-Jebel Tenf Sector.* — This region, owing to its arid nature and the fact that it is not permanently inhabited, is certainly the least important part of the frontier zone from the point of view of the present enquiry. The question of changes of pasture is the only one which comes into consideration. As we have already explained, it can be settled in practice only by means of special agreements.

In these circumstances, we consider that the simplest boundary — *i.e.*, a straight line — would be the best. This indeed is the solution which had already been provided for in the 1920 Convention. We consider, however, that account should be taken of the new situation created by the agreement of October 31st, 1931, which replaced the straight line starting from Albu Kemal in the direction of Imtan by a line, also straight, starting from Albu Kemal and proceeding to a point situated 3.2 kilometres to the north of Tell Romah.

We therefore suggest that the frontier should proceed from the Leachman boundary-stone in a straight line to a point situated 30 kilometres from the minaret of Albu Kemal, on the line

Albu Kemal—point 3.2 kilometres north of Tell Romah. From here, the frontier would follow the line in the direction of the point 3.2 kilometres north of Tell Romah as far as the intersection of this line with the frontier between Transjordan and Iraq. This solution would present the advantage of avoiding two changes of direction in a region equally devoid of importance for both parties.

3. NOTE SUBMITTED BY M. MARRADES, MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY,
STATING HIS PROPOSAL REGARDING THE FRONTIER IN THE JEBEL SINJAR SECTOR.

The undersigned member of the Commission regrets that he is obliged to differ from his colleagues as regards the appreciation of, and the inferences to be drawn from, the economic information obtained in connection with the Jebel Sinjar.

The 1920 Convention, which, as a rule, is so uncategorical, is nevertheless categorical on one point — the allocation of the whole of the Kabur basin to Syria. To justify a departure from a provision so definitely claimed by one side and accepted by the other in the course of the negotiations, there should, in my opinion, be a reason so convincing that legal considerations must be waived in face of an incontestable reality. It did not appear to me, however, that so grave a conclusion could be drawn from the economic facts of the case.

The question of the Jebel Sinjar appears to the dissenting member in the following light from the economic point of view:

We do not know what were the commercial relations of the Jebel under the Ottoman administration. The latter kept no trade statistics of the different provinces of the empire among themselves.¹ It seems impossible to find authentic data of any real value dating from the period previous to the British occupation. In his two works,² Baron Oppenheim gives us no more than indications; he says that the Yezidis maintained particularly friendly relations with the Christians of Mosul, Mardin, and other towns of the north, and mentions the case of a caravan of Yezidis coming from Mardin, where they had obtained supplies for the winter.

As regards the present economic relations of the Sinjar, I consider that our knowledge of them is only fragmentary and incomplete. As a rule, the witnesses I had occasion to hear proved very little by trying to prove too much. Our only serious source of information was the official figures, which we reproduce elsewhere.

These figures establish in an imperfect manner the fact, which seems likely enough, that the Sinjar's commercial relations with Mosul are more important than those with Syria. We have no information as to the trade carried on by the Sinjar with Deir-ez-Zor, Kamechlia, Raz-el-Ain and the nomad tribes; we do not know — although there is reason to regard it as very considerable — the volume of transactions which take place without going through the Customs. One fact, however, remains established after the study of these statistics, taken in conjunction with the economic considerations outlined in the report: the produce of the Jebel Sinjar forms a very important part of Mosul's exports to Syria, and the goods imported by Mosul from Syria include some of the most important purchased by the Sinjar.

The Sinjar's commercial movement towards the east is easily explained. The Yezidis do not engage in trade. It is on the spot that they buy from and sell to the commissioners or agents of outside traders and the traders established in their own country. These traders are protected by a *de facto* frontier, a Customs line, and a strict passport system. The Mosul business man clearly enjoys all the facilities he can desire for visiting the Jebel or settling there. It is none the less true, however, that close to this frontier, in spite of all the obstacles created by the *de facto* situation, there have arisen two or three towns without agricultural resources, connected with the Sinjar by bad and unprotected tracks, and nevertheless subsisting on trade alone. These towns, the oldest of which dates back only five or six years, are peopled mostly by Christians from the other side of the Turko-Syrian frontier, the very region which Baron Oppenheim spoke of thirty years ago.

The Jebel Sinjar seems to me to be attached economically to Mosul only by accidental circumstances that should not be given too much weight in seeking the most favourable conditions for drawing a permanent frontier which is to play a decisive part in the development of a people. In my opinion, Mosul only plays, in relation to the Sinjar, the part of an expensive and unnecessary intermediary. It buys and sends on to Syria practically all the sheep and goats exported from that region, as well as camels, large quantities of butter, wool and cereals, and other goods in which the country is rich and which Syria does not produce in sufficient quantities. These goods count among those which the Sinjar produces in the greatest quantities, but this production, sold in the Jebel itself, by people entirely ignorant of trade and isolated from the outside world, is purchased by the merchants of a country which is a large producer of the same commodities. The prices which the Yezidis receive are thus necessarily small. They are further reduced by the commissions of the agents, the profits of the middlemen — both in the Sinjar and in Mosul — and the double cost of transport, first to the east and then to the west, which involves an additional 300 kilometres and an increase in the risks of loss and damage. If, on the other hand, the goods were sent direct to the consuming country, the Sinjar producer would receive their normal value.

The part played by Mosul in relation to the Sinjar's trade could still be justified, so long as the new Sinjar towns did not yet exist and the insecurity of the desert demanded the formation of large protected caravans. What was a drawback from the strictly economic point of view could

¹ *Question of the Frontier between Turkey and Iraq*, League of Nations document C.400.M.147.1925.VII; reply to the second question, pages 64 *et seq.*

² *Vom Mittelmeer zum Persischen Golf*, Berlin, 1900, Vol. II, page 152, and *Der Tell Halaf*, Leipzig, 1931, page 21.

then really be counterbalanced by the security — even if only relative — of transport from the Jebel to Aleppo, though the time taken was one or two months. But present-day circumstances are different. Rapid transport, tracks kept under supervision, and the establishment of authority in the desert make the Jebel entirely independent of Mosul from the economic point of view, and open the door to direct communication with its natural markets.

The considerations briefly outlined above on the one hand, and, on the other, the fact that the Commission's investigations did not reveal any other conclusive reasons, seem to me to provide arguments insufficient to justify overruling the intentions of the 1920 Convention.

In my opinion, the intentions of the 1920 negotiators still remain the most important factor.

The textual application of the Convention, however, runs counter to the unanimous recommendation of the Commission that the Yezidi population of the Jebel Sinjar should not be divided by a frontier. In my opinion, the only possible solution is one which, while respecting as far as possible the intentions of the negotiators, would safeguard the unity of this ethnical and religious group.

The northern slope of the Sinjar, according to the interpretation placed upon the Convention by the Commission in Chapter III of the present report, belongs to the Kabur basin, and consequently must be allotted to Syria. On the other hand, although the Convention does not expressly mention it, the southern slope, which does not form part of that basin, should be allotted to Iraq. The majority of the Yezidi population, whose unity we aim at maintaining, lives on this southern slope. In these circumstances, it seems to me that the party assuming the administration and watching over the development of the majority of this population should have a preferential right to the administration of the whole.

This would mean, on the part of Syria, the renunciation of a right which that country holds under the Convention, but such a renunciation of a right must, like all such, be interpreted in a wholly restrictive sense. In other words, it must not extend beyond what is indispensable for the maintenance of the unity of the Yezidi population, while at the same time taking due account of the requirements of a good frontier. In my opinion, the line that would best satisfy these conditions would be a line starting from Tell Sfug, proceeding in a straight line to Tell Yussuf Beg, thence entering the defile giving access to the pass named Bab-ech-Chilu on the map, thence through that pass to point 562, and thence in a straight line to Tell Rhuli, where it would rejoin the line proposed by the majority.

This line would have the advantage of separating from the Yezidi group no more than the few houses of Jafar, a village which, according to the particulars given by the British and Iraqi assessors, has only seventy-five inhabitants. Arrangements would then have to be made for the transfer of these to the other side of the frontier, and agreements would have to be concluded between the parties establishing the system of pasturages, as the Commission has suggested elsewhere.

(Signed) Pedro MARRADES.

CHAPTER VII. — DESCRIPTION OF THE SUGGESTED FRONTIER.

(See Annexes Nos. 2, 3*a* and 3*b*.)

The Commission of Enquiry has been asked by the Council of the League of Nations to make suggestions such as may assist it in arriving at a decision. These suggestions in their main outlines are stated in Chapter VI. Nevertheless, the very careful examination of local conditions which we undertook has induced us to give definite form to our conclusions by indicating a specific line which, in our opinion, might form both an equitable and a practical frontier.

This line, the course of which we describe below, is reproduced in detail in Annexes Nos. 2 (map 1: 500,000) and 3*a* and 3*b* (maps 1: 200,000). It is composed — except where the frontier follows the course of a river — of a series of straight lines connecting points which are clearly defined both on the map and on the ground.

These points should constitute the fixed points of the frontier. The actual line between these fixed points should, however, be determined on the spot by a delimitation commission in accordance with local necessities. This latter remark applies more particularly to the long straight line from the Tigris to the north of the Sinjar. The absence, in this sector, of any indication of trigonometrical points on the maps — even the most recent ones — seems to show that some inaccuracies may exist in the latter. Accordingly we have thought it preferable not to define more closely our proposals in this region.

The line suggested is the following:

1. *Tigris-Sinjar Sector.*

From the confluence of the Eastern Kabur and the Tigris, the thalweg of the Tigris to about one kilometre below Pesh Kabur; thence a straight line to Tell Dahraya (point 384); thence a straight line as far as Tell Khoda-ed-Deir (point 391).

2. *Sinjar Sector.*

(a) *Majority Proposal.* — From Tell Khoda-ed-Deir (point 391), a straight line to Tell Rhuli (trigonometrical point 402); thence to trig. pt. 645; thence to trig. pt. 573; thence to trig. pt. 395, and terminating at Tell Sfug (trig. pt. 332).

(b) *Proposal by M. Marrades.* — From Tell Khoda ed Deir (point 391) a straight line to Tell Rhuli (trig. pt. 402); thence a straight line to point 562; thence through the pass called on the map Bab-ech-Chilu in the defile issuing in the plain on the south; thence to Tell Yusuf Beg, thence in a straight line to Tell Sfug, where it rejoins the line proposed by the majority.

3. *Salt-deposit Sector.*

From Tell Sfug (trig. pt. 332) in a straight line to trigonometrical point 331; thence to trig. pt. 280; thence to trig. pt. 259; thence to trig. pt. 276; thence to trig. pt. 230; thence to trig. pt. 236; thence to trig. pt. 231; thence to the ruins of the small military post on the border of the Buara salt deposit (point 164, 3.6 kilometres W.N.W. of trig. pt. 172); thence to trig. pt. 167; thence to El Gara (trig. pt. 193); thence to trig. pt. 174; thence to the Jebel Baghuz (trig. pt. L.S.29, not indicated on the map).

4. *Euphrates Sector.*

From the Jebel Baghuz (trig. pt. L.S.29, not indicated on the map), a straight line towards the thalweg of the Euphrates, which it reaches near the north-eastern extremity of the island of Baghuz; thence the thalweg of the Euphrates up-stream as far as the boundary of the territories of the villages of Heri and Qseba; thence in a straight line to the Leachman boundary-stone (point 169).

5. *Euphrates-Jebel Tenf Sector.*

From the Leachman boundary-stone in a straight line to the point situated 30 kilometres from the minaret of Albu Kemal on the straight line joining that minaret to the point situated 3.2 kilometres north of Tell Romah; thence this latter line as far as its intersection with the frontier between Iraq and Transjordan.

(Signed) Pedro MARRADES. (Signed) Fr. ISELIN. (Signed) Carl PETERSÉN.
