

STATEMENT MADE BY MAJOR THOMSON IN THE MEETING HELD IN THE MUTASSARIF'S RESIDENCY, MOSUL, ON JULY 14TH, 1933.

(Vide *Al Ummal*, No. 144.)

Subject: Assyrian Settlement.

I have the pleasure to meet all the Assyrian chieftains. I had the opportunity of meeting some of them previously. I want to express myself fully. Should I fail to explain my settlement programme, I have certainly not discharged my duties satisfactorily. I wish all of you will be mindful and pay attention to the proceedings of this meeting.

Most of you, of course, understand what my duty is; the Government wants me to offer my services to help her, and that is in accordance with the pledge given by the Iraqi Government to the League of Nations. No doubt, you have heard of the final decision of the League through the Mutassarif. I want to remind you that prior to my departure from this country, whether settlement successful or otherwise, I shall write a diffused statement on this matter, and forward it through the Government to the League of Nations.

In my conversation with Mar Shimun at the beginning of June last, I discussed with him questions pertaining to settlement. In the course of my debate with him, he altogether refused discussing such matters, and also did not furnish me with names of some Assyrian notables whom I wanted to meet in Mosul or elsewhere. He refused to co-operate with me, with the sole excuse that he does not agree on the policy adopted by the Government in this respect, and forgot that I have been invited to help the Government in the settlement. I also pointed out to him that the Government quite agrees on my proposals. The next thing made him to refrain from co-operating with me was that the Government asked him not to interfere with the political affairs — and that he will enjoy no temporal rule and the Assyrians will be dealt with directly by the Government, as he is the only spiritual head in this country who enjoys such rules. I presume he does not understand the meaning of temporal rule. I should like to explain this clearly as far as possible.

The Government requested him not to interfere with these affairs and to leave the idea of obtaining an official post with the Iraqi Government, and to avoid further interference with the Assyrians. I do not believe that Mar Shimun still sticks to his uninvited claims. I explained to him that there is nobody who enjoys both temporal and spiritual rules. He afterwards sent me a letter promising to furnish me with details of his programme and his objections to the present settlement policy. It is over a month and still no such papers have been received, and no facilities made by him in the settlement. He still holds different ideas and does not agree with the Government in the capital regarding his personal claims.

I feel it my duty to tell you that if he fully understands the final decisions of the League, and if he really works for the benefit of his people, I should say that it would have been better for him to count the personal claims as a second matter, and to follow his followers.

The most important matter is that you were not confident and were suspicious of settling. In this case a great majority of you live simply on your capital, and no doubt that capital will some day or later exhaust. Had you settled for good some four or five years ago, you would have been certainly much happier and comfortable. In case you deem it advisable that Mar Shimun's presence is a necessity in the settlement, I should request you to advise him to agree on the Government's policy and to co-operate with us without further delay.

You must remember that my presence here is solely for your settlement and to give my directions for your own benefit and must tell you that this is the only chance of seeing me here under your disposal. You should understand that there is no Government in the world who can give such privileges as those given by the Iraqi Government. You have to enjoy them forthwith.

As regards settlement, I will strive as far as possible to settle families of any tribe in one village. Some time ago, the Government wished to be furnished with lists of families who wish to settle, in order that arrangements can be made for their settlement in the villages; up to date but a few registrations have been made. Naturally, those who have consented to settle, will be given the option to choose lands for settlements and those who delay will lose. I shall not hesitate to urge families who wish to settle in and cultivate lands to register their individuals as soon as possible. Those who are already settled in villages, but owing to material and other causes wish to evacuate them, will be dealt with later on. Certainly those who are in employment in Baghdad or elsewhere, and those who require to own lands for cultivations on large scale (*i.e.*, those who require to own lands and lease them to tenants) will also be dealt with after we have settled those who will cultivate the lands themselves.

These are the available lands for settlement — *viz.*, Dashta-Zai, Jentazi, Kizfaghar and some more lands in the vicinity of Mosul and other villages. I must tell you that

the Government sanctioned 13,000 dinars for your settlement, and that amount will be utilised for irrigation and housing purposes, I should be really delighted to see the Assyrians settle for good in these lands. I have personally made a tour on these lands, and can assure you that they are habitable, as regards land-owning rights, etc. (Government or private owned), some specimen contracts have been concluded previously, between the Government and tenants or landlords and tenants.

I will continue to help the Assyrians, and will point out to them some difficult situations arising. In conclusion, I can assure you that the Iraqi Government is prepared to help you in any way. Colonel Stafford and myself are here, and we both wish you to be happy.

I ask you to grasp what we have said, and to understand that our sole intention is to direct the Assyrians and to help them as far as possible.

Baghdad West,
June 7th, 1933.

Your Beatitude,

I am writing to let you know that I am leaving Baghdad this evening on my return to Mosul.

My present intention is to leave Mosul for Amadia on Saturday next, and to visit the Assyrian villages, the Deshty-zer, and other possible areas for Assyrian settlement.

When we had our talk on Monday you will remember you promised to write me a letter setting out your appreciation of the present policy for Assyrian settlement, with your remarks thereon.

You also promised to send me a list of Assyrian notables whom you would like me to see and with whom I might talk over the general situation, and who would also be willing to act on the Assyrian Advisory Committee in Mosul.

Should any of these gentlemen like to accompany me on my present tour and those in the coming months I should welcome them gladly.

I am looking forward to having the pleasure of meeting you in Mosul in the near future and of further discussing the question of Assyrian settlement.

(Signed) D. B. THOMSON.

His Beatitude Eshai Shimun,
Assyrian Patriarch,
Baghdad.

Baghdad,
as from Assyrian Patriarchate,
at Mosul, June 7th, 1933.

Dear Major Thomson,

I hasten to reply to your urgent letter of June 7th informing me of your immediate departure for Mosul and district.

May I inform you that the statements you have recorded in this letter as from me are contrary to what I said.

I certainly did not inform you that I appreciated the Mosul policy towards the Assyrian settlement of the last months, which could be implied in your letter. I fully explained the importance of the need to change this policy.

I said if you wished I would gather together the people's appointed representatives to meet you at Mosul, or you should visit and interview the people themselves to enable you to view the situation rightly. I did not promise to write you a list of names.

I said that if you wished I would be glad to give you in writing my opinion on the present situation and this is now in the course of preparation.

I also informed you that I was awaiting an answer to my letter to His Excellency the Minister of Interior, regarding the Government's interpretation of the Patriarch's "temporal power" and its attitude towards me. My co-operation in the future naturally has to depend on that reply.

It would help me greatly if you could enlighten me as to exactly what your position is.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Mar SHIMUN,
Assyrian Patriarch.

Major D. B. Thomson,
The Expert for Assyrian Settlement,
Baghdad.

Baghdad, June 21st, 1933.
As from the Assyrian Patriarchate,
Mosul.

No. A/P/S/5.

Excellency,

As arranged with you this morning I am returning to Mosul to-morrow Wednesday, June 22nd. But I do not wish to leave Baghdad without expressing once more to Your Excellency my appreciation of your courtesy in receiving me, and of the patient hearing which you have given me.

While unfortunately there are several points in which we have not yet reached an understanding, nevertheless I wish to assure Your Excellency that the dominant desire of my heart is to see the Assyrian people content and happily settled in Iraq as loyal subjects to His Majesty the King and His Government.

Yours most respectfully.

Baghdad,
as from Assyrian Patriarchate,
Mosul, dated June 28th, 1933.

No. AP/S/40.

Excellency,

I have the honour to acknowledge your letter No.C/1239 dated June 18th, 1933, and in reply, I understand from my conversation with Major Edmonds, that the reference to history in my letter No. AP/S/35 of June 3rd, 1933, has created an impression different from that which I wished to convey. I was not, of course, claiming temporal power in the sense of "temporal power" delegated to me by the Governments named, but to the traditional customs of the Assyrians which I desire to see maintained if your Excellency agrees to this would you kindly instruct the authorities concerned.

As regards the work of Major Thomson, I am of course, anxious to see it crowned with success and will do my best to co-operate if the work of settlement is carried out in a manner which to my opinion promises satisfactory results.

My ideas on the subject are set forth in my letters addressed to Sir K. Cornwallis.

With renewed assurances of my loyalty to His Majesty the King and my respects to Your Excellency.

(Signed) Eshai SHIMUN,
By the Grace of God,
Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrians.

As from the Assyrian Patriarchate, Mosul.
Baghdad, June 29th, 1933.

To His Excellency
The Minister of the Interior,
Baghdad.

Your Excellency,

I beg to state that the action of the Government now confirmed by your letter No. S.1273 of June 24th, 1933, detaining me in Baghdad against my will for no just cause is illegal, and that any responsibility of what may happen when the news reaches my people rests with the Government.

I also wish to point out that the methods adopted by the local officials in dealing with the Assyrians on the Settlement Policy, is contrary to the "Fundamental Law" or the guarantees given by the Iraqi Government to the League of Nations on May 30th, 1932. Therefore I am arranging to place the documentary evidence before the proper authorities.

I am quite prepared to suffer any further injustice that the Government may put on me, but in no way will I submit to the methods which have been used to make me sign documents which betray my people into accepting an unreal fulfilment of the promises and recommendations of the League of Nations.

Finally I again repeat, as per my previous correspondence with Your Excellency, and also through your British Advisers :

(a) I am willing to assist in the Settlement of the Assyrians in Iraq ;

(b) After settlement I will give the required promises in writing to do my utmost to make my Assyrian people as one of the most loyal and law-abiding subjects of His Majesty and His Government ;

(c) I will then make preparations in accordance with the Canons of my Church, for drafting of a law according to Your Excellency's suggestion and conformable to Article VI of the Fundamental Law.

If this is not agreeable to the Government, I claim the right to ask the League of Nations for the Alternative Settlement Scheme.

(Signed) Eshai SHIMUN,
By the Grace of God,
Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrians.

Copies sent to the Diplomatic Representatives of :

Britain	Turkey	Belgium
America	Holland	Norway
Italy	France	Czechoslovakia
Poland	Germany	Persia.

P.S. — May I draw Your Excellency's attention to the inflammatory speech of an honorary deputy, recorded and broadcasted in *Al-Istoclat* of June 29th, and other local papers inciting hatred towards the Assyrians.

STATEMENT MADE BY KAHLIL AZMI BEG, MUTASSARIF, MOSUL LIWA,
IN THE MEETING WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY NEARLY HUNDRED ASSYRIAN CHIEFTAINS.
(This was held in the Mutassarif's Residency, Mosul, July 10th, 1933.)

The cause of our meeting is the true desire of the Government to cut off the imaginations recently bred among the Assyrians and to cut off ideas which differ in form from the present situation. These were sown in the minds of some by those who began unwise activities.

(1) Not coming into touch with the Government officials has affected mostly, if we investigate the case we will find that the foundations of these misunderstandings were assumed as imitations (*sic*). The Assyrians are the most blameworthy in this matter. For, every one knows that until recently they pretended to be living in a foreign country, and not coming into touch with Government officials, and we learn that they were uncertain in their friendly invitation, or their remaining in this country (they still are in the habit of distinguishing themselves) and are looking forward to acquire a special status, and still dream of autonomy. This, of course, cannot be attained.

As regards the decision of the League of Nations (copy of which will be given to you) and as regards the three neighbouring countries, and their attitude towards you, it was expected that something would have been done by these, but owing to the present financial difficulty, they are not in a position to do anything in your case. (You will also hear to-day the policy of these three regarding your sojourn to their countries.)

(2) You must be certain that the Iraqi Government under the auspices of His Majesty King Feisal the First, are planning your future and will not hesitate in assuring your future prosperity and security. The Government are aware of the benefit she derives of your settling in the country, and have determined to treat you as she treats the inhabitants of which the country is composed, and has undertaken to look upon you with equality, and expects you to obey the laws.

(3) The Iraqi Government understands the petition of the Mar Shimun to the League of Nations, and the Government opposed such petitions as soon as she learned that these were inconsistent with her policy. The result was that the League refused such claims, and here, we are in possession of a copy of the League's decision. It will be distributed to you (by Kasha Yoseph) in Assyriac. You will observe that the League refused these claims especially in the case of autonomy, and was bound by treaty given by Iraq, to the effect that she will strive to settle all the landless who desire to settle and will not put any obstacle in the way of those who desire to leave the country. She also promised to employ those persons who are fit for Government posts as she employs Arabs and Kurds, but in some cases they cannot get these posts as they are in ignorance of either Kurdish or Arabic.

We shall leave this and turn back to the settlement question. The Government promised to employ a foreign expert to help her in settling these people, and she did this. Major Thompson has been here for more than a month. He will explain to you the very thing you and I wish to know.

Government's line. This is what the Government can do so far as settlement is concerned. The Assyrians ought to obey the rules of the country, and the Government will not tolerate, in their capacity as an independent State, to see any one in the country ignoring the laws and order, under which all the subjects are bound. But the patience extended by the Government toward the Assyrians, and the kind treatment they met with are specially due to the humane and kind attitude of a kind Government toward the refugees

in her lands. But I do not mean that these shall continue for ever, for those who cannot be loyal subjects try to do worse, and do not deserve those privileges. This cannot be tolerated by any limited nation. The Government has treated the Assyrians as she treats the Arabs and Kurds through the village headmen. But the landlords are Arab shaikhs or Kurdish aghas, their title is not official, the Government do not think of the Arabs in the south who call themselves shaikhs (as a matter of fact every member in the shaikh family is entitled to be addressed as shaikh), but the Government will not appoint any shaikhs.

Recently the police authorities complained of a sudden decrease in the registration of Assyrians rifle for passes. It has been decided to decrease the number of rifles possessed by the various tribes in Iraq and to carry on this, the Assyrians must hand over some of their rifles, when the Kurds and Arabs have done the same. It must be understood that the Government is pursuing its policy like many civilised Governments and do not seek any bloodshed, but will take every possible step to solve this amicably.

Last month, the Government wished to take necessary steps against Malik Yacub and his followers as they refused to comply with the Government orders — *i.e.*, when he was summoned by the Dohuk authority, he did not come. These would have been as drastic as those taken against shaikh Ahmad of Barzan, had he not settled his question amicably. He must understand that he is not allowed to repeat such actions.

Those who agree to abide with the decision of the Government — *i.e.*, those who desire to settle in Iraq — are entitled to naturalisation certificates, but the Government will not grant her lands to those who do not mix with the Iraqis, and who are trying to get their personal ambitions.

Mar Shimun asked the authorities at Baghdad in May last, to let him have the programme as regards the settlement, when he discovered that something was mentioned regarding spiritual and temporal rules, and his stay in Baghdad for some time; he apparently does not run after his fruitless imaginations. You must understand the Government's clear policy is to recognise Mar Shimun as a spiritual head of the Nestorian Church. He will be treated as we treat the other heads of Churches in Iraq, and the Government desires to substitute a special law for the Assyrian people, as those in force for the Chaldean, Armenian and Jews, and that which comes into effect to the Yezedis, these will not permit them to carry on according to their traditions

The Government do not agree to grant Mar Shimun temporal rule for she is not in the habit of granting such rule to any of the religious heads in Iraq, and there is no reason why we should make any exception to Mar Shimun. Before the world war, he was recognised as spiritual and temporal head of the Assyrians: this was due to the lax of the Turkish regime. Yes, there were in Iraq persons who enjoyed such rules — *e.g.*, Dijali family of Mosul, Baban family of Kurdistan, and Al Sadon family (of) Basra, and many Arabs in the south. But by the declining of the Turkish regime, this rule was abolished, and reasonably that of Mar Shimun also was abolished, and has no influence whatever. Since the British occupation of Baghdad, they have conferred a temporal rule upon Mar Shimun in order to facilitate the recruiting business but this is not in accordance with the Iraqi Government and henceforth will be abolished. Any individual will be treated distinctly by Government and not through the heads who consider the peasants as their slaves, and master the results of their toil, to live easy life. We therefore repeat our word to make you understand that it is not reasonable to confer temporal rule on Mar Shimun.

It would be better for Mar Shimun to think about spiritual matters, he is an expert either in temporal or spiritual. You, who are present, and who are older than he should advise him to submit to the Government. All the Assyrians will be considered as happy sons of the country, let them go back to their work together with their brothers — the Iraqi. In the meantime I should point out that this must be taken as an advice and do not miss this opportunity. Those who like to leave this line and follow their imaginations and spend their time in idleness, will move illegal movement, let them blame nobody but themselves because they have deceived the simple-minded without paying any regard to the results. This date will be registered against those who caused this uneasiness. In any case God is above as a witness. I shall gladly answer any questions directed to me by any of you, and would like to hear something from the Administrative Inspector and Major Thomson.

Ref. to *Al Ammal*, No. 144.

SPEECH OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE INSPECTOR (COL. STAFFORD) MOSUL REGARDING THE ASSYRIANS, IN A MEETING HELD AT MOSUL, WHEN THE MUTASSARIF DECLARED THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT POLICY AND INTENTIONS REGARDING THE ASSYRIANS.

It appears to me that the Acting Mutassarif has said everything necessary regarding this case. I have a few remarks which I should like to make. I joined this liwa less than two months ago, as I was previously working in south of Iraq where very little is heard about the Assyrians. Since my arrival at Mosul I had always to deal with this case. My attention has been attracted mostly by the absence of communications between the Assyrians and the Government which resulted in misunderstanding and doubt. I am obliged to agree with the Acting Mutassarif that this is due to the Assyrians own fault. It appears that until recently they considered themselves as strangers living in a foreign country, and therefore they took to the belief that it would be better for them if they do not come in touch with the Government. Certainly this position has created ill feeling of the Government officials.

I want you all heads of the Assyrians present here to understand finally that this condition of affairs is unbearable and should end forthwith. Either the Assyrians should admit that they are Iraqi subjects, enjoying the same rights and subjected to the same laws as the other natives of the country, whether Kurds, Arabs, Mohammedans, Christians or Jews, or they should be prepared to leave the country. There is no other alternative. Major Thomson will explain to you briefly the particulars about the lands where you are supposed to live, therefore I need not say anything on this subject, but I strongly corroborate the statement that this is the last opportunity which will be given to the Assyrians who have not settled yet to get lands or rights for cultivation in this country. Everybody who instigates the Assyrians not to apply for settlement will inflict an irrevocable damage on them.

As regards the second alternative which I mentioned — viz., leaving Iraq — I don't think all the Assyrians understand the situation. The Iraqi Government has undertaken to give all possible facilities to those who wish to leave the country — *i.e.*, anybody who wishes to go will not be prevented from doing so — but the Iraqi Government is not at all responsible to find a place for them outside Iraq and naturally she cannot do this.

In the meantime the League of Nations on their part did not promise to give them lands other than in Iraq. It is for the Assyrians themselves to arrange to get the sanction of the country where they would like to settle and to find their transport expenses. Until now no agreement of another Government was obtained for their settlement, nor is it likely that any neighbouring Government will agree to the emigration of the Assyrians in great numbers.

(1) *Turkey.* — There is no hope whatever that Turkey will change her position with regard to the Assyrians. Turkey refuses them. It is natural that the Assyrians are anxious to return to their own country but it should be clearly understood that this is out of the scope of our subject.

(2) *Persia.* — The Persian Government has intimated that she accepts a few of the Assyrians under very difficult conditions: (a) All firearms should be handed over; (b) settlement will not be in one place but in very widely separated places; (c) they will have no rights in the land given them; (d) they will not be given financial assistance.

(3) *Syria.* — As you are aware the French authorities in Syria are dealing with the Armenian emigrants, hence they have no lands which could be allotted to the Assyrians. It is true that the Assyrian young men could get employment in the Colonial French Army but such service is very difficult and has no prospects whatever. Naturally once they go the Iraqi Government will not allow them to return. This is the position regarding the neighbouring countries. If you want to be sure you can enquire here from the French and Persian consuls respectively.

In view of the present economic position of the world, no country will accept the Assyrians or any sort of immigration.

I think what I said is enough to explain that the prospects of the Assyrians is actually in Iraq. I know that the Iraqi Government is very keen to solve the Assyrian problem for the mutual benefit of both. I know that all responsible Iraqis whether Ministers or officials wish to see the Assyrians living as Iraqis. It is therefore the duty of the Assyrians to participate in this feeling. If you do this I guarantee good feeling and assistance towards you, but first of all you should throw away the spirit of separating yourselves from the Iraqis. Had your children in the past learned the Arabic or Kurdish languages various employments would have been open for them.

Everybody feels and is sorry for the troubles and pains the Assyrians sustained and the Government which is not at all responsible for them means to make everything possible to relieve and help them. Don't forget that the Iraqi Government was not established long ago and Iraq did not reach a wealthy stage as yet.

