

Section.

GENERAL.

A1564

REGISTRY.

Section No.

40.

Document No.

2696

Dossier No.

854

Document précédent, No. 2604

Document suivant, No. 2862

(Suite donnée.)

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Distribution

Summary

Print

Réponses, &c. (Out Letter Book) :—

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A classer.

Expéditeur. }

Writer. }

Capt. Walters.

Date

Jan 8.

Sujet

Subject

Weekly Meeting of Secretary -
General and Directors.
Minutes of 17th Meeting - Jan. 8

Subjects discussed:-

Economic Side of American
Situation.

League of Nations Gazette.

Financial Situation of the
League etc. etc.

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Mr. Brown

SOCIÉTÉ DES NATIONS.

Confidential.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

Disbn.No. 20/10/2.

M I N U T E S

of a Meeting held in the Secretary-General's
room on Thursday January 8th, 1920.

2696

Present:-

The Secretary-General.
Sir Herbert Ames.
Mr. Colban.
Monsieur Comert.
Monsieur Monnet.
Mr. Salter.
Dr. Van Hamel.
Monsieur Varlez.
Captain Walters.

The Secretary-General said that he hoped that the coming into force of the Treaty had at last been definitely fixed for Saturday or Monday next. Information received after the Meeting confirmed this.

On the point of publicity he thought we ought to be a little careful that the attention of the Press and public should not fall too much on the Secretariat, which might, to some extent, be expected to be the object of jealousy on the part of Government Departments. This could not be true of the Council, and it was on the Council that publicity should mainly fall. In particular the members of the Secretariat would be wiser not to express any opinion in conversation with newspaper men etc., on the subject of the Seat of the League. It would be best to take the line that Geneva was named in the Covenant and that we had no knowledge respecting any alteration in this.

Mr. Salter said that the American situation on its economic side had recently taken a serious turn for the worse. The United States Secretary to the Treasury had, about a fortnight ago put forward excellent proposals about the extension of credits to Europe. Since then the Hearst Press had been writing with great hostility about Europe's desire to borrow, and some very unfortunate speeches had been made by Sir George Paish who had used very exaggerated figures and by his statement had strengthened the case for the Hearst Press and had/

and had pushed Mr. Hoover into a more critical attitude than he would naturally have taken.

A part of his Section's work on currency questions was now in the Press; it was being printed both in French and English.

Monsieur Comert in reply to a question, said he did not contemplate publishing the first number of the Official Gazette immediately, but waiting until about a month before the first Assembly. He thought the first number would have to give some account of the Secretariat and of events up to the first Council Meeting, and it would be difficult to publish this before the Council had confirmed the Secretary-General's appointments and before it was known whether America was in the League or not. This had been the plan agreed on by the small Committee which had discussed the question in August last. The Secretary-General said he had thought that the first number would consist merely of a record of the first Meeting of the Council. Another number could come out if it became necessary to publish a Treaty.

Dr. Van Hamel thought it would be better to publish Treaties separately, perhaps in a special supplement to the Gazette.

Monsieur Monnet, said it must be decided whether the Gazette was to be merely the official record of the Acts of the League or should aim at being a production of interest in itself. He thought it should be the former and should contain the authentic text of all documents regarding Official Acts of the League. If this view were right, it should be published at once after the Council met and contain the official record of the decisions of the Meeting; when later on the Council considered the appointments to the Secretariat, the Gazette would automatically contain all information on that subject.

The Secretary-General said he thought this was the right view, but that in that case we must abandon any idea of its helping from the point of view of publicity; it would not appeal to the general public.

After some further discussion, it was generally agreed that the first number ought to come out immediately after the first

Meeting/

Meeting of the Council; and that Treaties could be published in a specially numbered series of the Gazette.

It was thought that the first number might contain the Covenant, list of the States which had already ratified or acceded and a formal record of the first Council Meeting.

The further question was raised whether only official documents should be published or whether articles of international interest might come in as well, as, for instance, in the Board of Trade Journal, which exists primarily to convey official information, but also contains various articles on commercial subjects. There was much matter of international interest which ought to be published in a more authoritative manner than could be done by inserting it in the ordinary Press. It was also suggested that documents circulated to the Council for their information and not for their decision thereby became official and could be published as such. The Secretary-General said he was clear that we should begin by publishing official documents only and perhaps proceed to produce a semi-official Journal a little later on.

Sir Herbert Ames handed round a statement of the financial situation of the Secretariat, the conclusion from which was, that we must have some more money. Our over-draft now amounted to £19,000; by the end of January it would be £25,000, and our limit was £35,000. Our payment for the Labour Conference amounted to £18,000. Monsieur Monnet said he hopes soon to get a further contribution from the French Government.

Sir Herbert Ames said that the Budgetary period was arranged last September to end on March 31st in order to square with the financial year of the British Government. He now questioned whether it would not be wiser to make our financial year agree with that in use on the Continent, i.e. the calendar year. We might perhaps make our first period go on to the end of June next and regard it as a half year. Those ten States to which letters have been sent asking for contributions based on the former calculations, could be informed that owing to the delay in the coming into force of the Treaty, the amount calculated to last up to March 31st would not be expended before/

before June 30th. The Secretary-General thought it would be less open to criticism to hold to our present calculation and to make our next financial period one of nine months, i.e. up to December 31st, 1920.

Sunderland House,
Curzon Street,
LONDON, W. 1.

9th January, 1920.

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