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Distribution

Summary

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Date Aug 13 .

Sujet

Subject

Weekly Conferences in S.G.'s room.

Minutes of 1st Meeting Aug 13.
Subjects dealt with :— Move to
Switzerland, Council Meeting—
Organisation Committee—
Meeting Assembly— Adhesion
of Neutral States to L. of N.

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* 13 Aug 22

CONFIDENTIALT¹ MEETING IN THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S ROOMAugust 13, 1919, at 3.30 p.m.

PRESENT:- SECRETARY GENERAL, DR. I. NITOBE, MR. COLBAN, M. COMERT, MR. SALTER, M. VARLEZ, DR. PAWLEY BATE, CAPTAIN WALTERS.

The SECRETARY GENERAL said that the proposed weekly meeting would, he thought, be useful in keeping different sections in touch with the work that other sections were doing. It was hoped to arrange for a Weekly Summary to be circulated of all important papers received and sent out, but this meeting would be additional to that. He thought it might be useful if he explained in general terms the immediate prospects of the future of the League as he saw it.

1. The move to Switzerland. It would be for the Council to decide whether it was competent for Switzerland to join the League with the reservation that this decision must be confirmed by a popular vote. The Legal Section were of opinion that this would be in order. If, therefore, the Assembly were held in November the move would be made during or immediately after this time. If the Assembly were postponed to the spring he still thought it would be better to move during the winter, and he accordingly anticipated moving to Switzerland during the winter in any case.

2. The Meeting of the Council. This must take place as soon as the Treaty comes into force. There was

some question as to the legal status of the Council before all States represented on it had ratified. Our view is that it would be competent to make decisions. Meanwhile, M. TARDIEU'S Committee in Paris has made some recommendations based on an opposite view. S.G. had written privately about it and hoped this would be effective.

3. The Organisation Committee. It had been hoped to have a meeting a fortnight ago, but, chiefly owing to the position in America, it had been found necessary to postpone it. It would probably now not meet again. This was tiresome, but we must make the best of it.

4. Agenda for Council Meeting. Should this consist of s imply of immediate questions arising out of the Treaty, or should it be wider? It would probably have to be wider, e.g. the question of publicity must be considered. The early establishment of the Permanent Court was also very important. As to this, he hoped, if M. PICHON agreed, to obtain the consent of the Organisation Committee to the summoning of a preparatory Commission of experts by circulating to that Committee a list of persons he proposed to invite. Thirdly, the Military Commission must come into existence quickly, because it would have to advise on conditions of admission for e.g. Finland, Georgia, San Marino, etc. Some disarmament move was also urgently necessary for the sake of public opinion.

5. Adhesion of Neutral States. The Argentine Paraguay have formally declared their intention to adhere
Paraguay have formally declared their

adhere. Chile has shown signs of a similar intention. the Spanish Cortes have approved a proposal to adhere.

6. Date of the Meeting of the Assembly. This was a matter which the Council must decide. Some thought it was necessary to hold it as soon as possible, chiefly in order that the economic position of the world might be ^{publicly} discussed. There were important arguments on the other side, e.g., (I) danger that its meeting would be ineffective and merely a debate; (II) difficulty of getting the chief men soon after Paris breaks up, (III) plans for Permanent Court could not be ready; (IV) question of admission of Germany.

M. COMERT said that from a propaganda point of view there would be great difficulty in defending the admission of Germany as an act of the first Assembly. People would say "this is what you have been aiming at all the time". Even if Germany were admitted to the Labour Conference this would not immediately improve the situation as regards her admission to the League. He saw the danger that Germany might be driven to make common cause with Russia if she were denied admission to the League, but from the point of view of his section, he was bound to say his work would be ^{made} very difficult if her admission was allowed too soon.

M. VARLEZ gave a short account of the position arising out of the decision at the Trade Unions Congress at Amsterdam not to send delegates to the Washington Conference unless Germany were invited. The Germans at Amsterdam had shown no change from their old spirit of wanting to be at the head and did not make a very good impression.

MR. SALTER said that it would certainly be necessary for an International Conference on economic subjects

to be held this winter. The International Economic Council was to meet at Washington next month, and he hoped to be present at the meetings. It was likely that at those meetings the Germans would be asked to be present, not as members of the Council, but to take part in particular discussions. This would be something of a bridge towards their ultimate admission to international bodies. The Council, however, though it would include four neutrals, was based on the authority of the Allies.

Dealing with the present work of his Section, he mentioned the Statistical Meeting to be held at Sunderland House on August 14 and 15, and the collection of economic information on which eight governments had already sent the official information which he had asked for, and others had promised to do so. He had also begun the work of preparing Reports on the application of the economic sanction of Article XVI, but this was only the beginning of a very long drawn-out job.

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