

MINUTES of a MEETING

held in the Secretary General's Room on Wednesday,
September 24, 1919, at 4 o'clock.

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Present:

The Secretary General;
Dr. Nitobe;
Sir Herbert Ames;
Mr. Colban;
Monsieur Comert;
Dr. van Hamel;
Mr. Salter;
Captain Walters.

In a preliminary discussion, the question was raised as to the attitude of the Secretariat towards the proposal of the Union des Associations Internationales to hold a Congress of private international Associations in 1920. It was agreed that it would probably be better for this question to be raised in the Council by a member of the Council, rather than by the Secretariat; and that it should be raised in a form which would enable the Council to discuss whether Brussels, Geneva, or any other place was the most suitable locality.

The SECRETARY GENERAL spoke of his visit to Paris on September 14 - 17. The Supreme Council had passed a resolution that Mr. Polk should cable President Wilson, recommending that he should summon a meeting of the Council directly the Treaty came into force, in order to deal with questions necessitated by the Treaty of Peace. This phrasing leaves it open what exactly is to be regarded as included under such questions. But further discussion in Paris had led to general agreement that only the Saar Basin Delimitation Commission should be so regarded. A draft telegram was therefore drawn up, of which the last paragraph was as follows:-

"Inasmuch as Article 5 of the Treaty provides that the first meeting of the Council must be called by the President of the United States of America, I beg to suggest, in view of the urgency of the situation, that you do immediately convoke a meeting of the Council either in Paris or in London, otherwise, the definite stipulation of the Treaty regarding the frontier line of the Saar Basin cannot be carried out"

He believed that Monsieur Clemenceau had expressed approval of this

telegram; certainly Mr. Lloyd George had done so. Its terms, he thought, clearly implied that the meeting should deal only with the Delimitation Commission. This was all that was finally settled in Paris.

He had hoped to reach a decision as to when and where the second meeting of the Council should take place; but it had seemed necessary to wait until the American situation became clearer. There were two conflicting views on the matter:-

- (a) that it should be held in Europe immediately on the United States Senate ratifying the Treaty, and should deal with:-

The Saar Basin Governing Commission,
The High Commissioner of Danzig,
The Committee of International Jurists,
appointments, etc., in the Secretariat,

and perhaps some other questions, with a view to supplying an adequate agenda for the Assembly;

- (b) that it should be postponed until, say, ten days before the meeting of the Assembly, and then be held in Washington.

He thought the solution of the problem would have to wait until the first meeting was held.

The position in Switzerland likewise depended upon America's decision. The Federal Council had definitely postponed the Parliamentary discussion, and consequently the referendum, until the United States had ratified. Other neutrals would very likely do the same.

The date of the coming into force of the Treaty was also obscure. The French Senate had not yet begun to discuss it. He was not perfectly clear as to the position in regard to the British Dominions. The action of Italy was delayed by the Fiume affair; Japan seemed to be waiting the decision of the European Powers; so that the ratification by three Powers might be delayed nearly until the United States decision. So far as he could foresee the dates at the moment, they might be October 10th for the first event, and October 20 for the second.

The formal first meeting of the Council should be in Paris, to avoid too much publicity. If the United States sends a representative to later meetings, we might have some considerable

publicity, working up to a climax at the Assembly.

MR. SALTER said that his department was working on

1. the question referred to in Article 393 of the Treaty - viz: that of the eight countries of chief industrial importance.

This question led to considerable discussion, in which the following amongst other questions were raised:-

- (a) whether the Labour Conference Organising Committee had not gone outside its terms of reference in circulating a preliminary list and inviting protests from countries omitted therefrom;
 - (b) whether it would be possible for the Council to decide the question before the Labour Conference met.
Mr. Salter understood that they would be asked to do so.
 - (c) how the question would arise - i.e., would it be raised by the Labour Conference or by the Organisation Committee, or by the Governments of the countries concerned? Dr. van Hamel expressed the opinion that it would be for the latter to make it plain which the Council must settle.
 - (d) whether claimants would have the right, under Article 4, to sit as members of the Council when their claim was being considered.
2. The Economic Memorandum for the Council. The completest and most important part of this would be that dealing with currency questions.
 3. The memorandum on the use of the economic weapon.

Mr. Salter further enquired what action was being taken as regards Chapter XII of the Treaty of Peace.

The Secretary General said that the French Government had invited the Powers represented on the Ports, Waterways and Railways Commission in Paris to appoint a Commission to consider what action ought to be taken under the Treaty, including the drawing up of a ^{draft} Convention and the appointment of a permanent international body. It would probably be impossible for the question to be ready for the first meeting of the Assembly.

SIR HERBERT ALLES asked that Directors might be prepared to supply him next week with their views on what should be the basis of allocation. He himself was preparing a provisional scheme on this.

He further raised the question of payments made in connection with the Labour Conference. A first payment had been made to Mr. Butler, a second payment to Mr. Phelan and a third payment to Mr. Martin. How further small payments were being asked

for. What should be the authority for them? We were not proceeding with strict legality in making these payments; how were we to get the matter legalised? It came to this: that if the League of Nations goes through we assume responsibility for all expenses under the Labour Convention; if not, we must get the Organisation Committee to reimburse us under Article 399. Meanwhile, he proposed to write to Butler in Washington, asking for a formal assumption of responsibility for all payments so far made.

The SECRETARY GENERAL agreed to this course.

Sir H. Ames further enquired regarding the arrangements made by the Ministry of Shipping to supply transportation for persons going to Washington.

Mr. SALTER explained that this usually meant that the Ministry reserved the accommodation, payment being made direct to the Shipping Companies.

The SECRETARY GENERAL suggested that Mr. Martin should be instructed to find out and report all particulars.

Mr. COLBAN said that he had heard that the Norwegian Storting was postponing its discussion about entering the League until the decision of America was known.

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