

Section.

GENERAL.

11569

Expéditeur.

Writer.

Date

League of Nations.

Oct. 8

Sujet

Subject

Weekly Conference in Secretary-General's Room.

Minutes of 8th Meeting.

Subjects discussed:-

- 1) Ratification of the Treaty by Italy
- 2) Italy & perhaps Belgium & British Dominions to be approached for share of expenditure in h. of h.
- 3) Invitation to ex-enemy delegates for labour Conference etc.

REGISTRY.

Section No.

40.

Document No.

1401

Dossier No.

854

Document précédent, No.

1329

Document suivant, No.

1919

(Suite donnée.)

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Index B. ✓

Distribution

Summary

Print

Réponses, &c. (Out Letter Book) :-

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Capt. Walters

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Oct. 13

M I N U T E S

of a Meeting held in the Secretary General's Room on
Wednesday, 8th October 1919, at 3.30 p.m.

1401

Present:

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

The Secretary General said that the question of ratification of the Treaty had taken a new turn today, through the action of Italy. He understood that Colonel House, before he left France, had come to an agreement with the French Government that the Treaty should not come into force until the United States had ratified it; but in reaching this decision he thought that Monsieur Clemenceau and Colonel House had acted on the assumption that Italy would take no action until her Parliament met, about December 3rd, and they therefore expected that it would be ratification by France, Great Britain and the United States which would bring the Treaty into force, and that the Council could thus meet with full representation. There had still existed differences of opinion as to the proper agenda for the Council, and the number and place of its meetings.

Since then, Italy had announced her definite ratification. He could not tell for certain how this fact would affect the situation. He had telegraphed to Paris to find out what the French Government intended, and had also asked His Majesty's Government the same question. It appeared that we should be back in the position anticipated a few weeks ago, and would have to return to the scheme of a single formal meeting in Paris to appoint the Saar Basin Delimitation Commission. We ought to be ready to deal with this a fortnight hence.

17/1394/61
Mr. Colban said that Monsieur Venizelos had asked when the Council meeting was likely to be, as he was very anxious to be present.

The Secretary General said that he could not say yet, but would let him know the moment anything was settled.

If the above assumption was realised, no section would be required in Paris except Mr. Colban's. Its agenda could not include such matters as confirmation of appointments and approval of the Secretariat budget until the United States member was present. His own strong opinion was, that as soon as the American Senate ratified, there should be three or four meetings of the Council to consider these and other matters.

Meanwhile, he thought we might well ask Italy to pay her share. Sir Herbert Ames said that he did not think the expenditure would exceed about £200,000 before March 31st, though it might be wise to budget for another £50,000. Our demand on Great Britain had been at the rate of an expenditure of nearly half a million. It was agreed that it might be well to ask Italy for a somewhat smaller sum - say £15,000 - with the proviso that her eventual share might be more or might be less. What was needed by the Secretariat was to get some money quickly. There was some advantage in putting our first demands rather low.

The Secretary General said that we should consider whether Belgium and the British Dominions should not be approached at the same time.

Labour Conference.

Since the last meeting an important event had happened - viz: the decision of the Supreme Council to put no obstacle in the way of ex-enemy delegates going to Washington, in the expectation of being invited by the Conference itself to attend its meetings as members and that this decision should be conveyed to the German and Austrian Governments by the American Delegation, had at a recent meeting at Amsterdam been accepted as satisfactory by the Union des Syndicats Internationale. They had advised their federated Trade Unions in all countries to send delegates and it was now therefore fairly certain that the Labour Conference would have full Labour representation.

He asked those Directors who had not already done so to

send in their estimates of the necessary representation of their sections at the meeting of the Assembly at Washington.

He asked the opinion of the meeting, and particularly of those who were nationals of States formerly neutral, as to the advisability or otherwise of holding in Paris the meeting of the Council which would deal with matters not arising out of the Treaty of Peace. He personally was afraid that this might give the impression that the Council was in the nature of a continuation of the Peace Conference, and thought that London, or possibly Brussels, would be a better place to hold them.

Mr. Colban and Dr. Van Hamel both thought that the neutrals as such would have no objection to the meetings being in Paris, though Mr. Colban thought the political atmosphere of Paris, and in a lesser degree of London also, to be not altogether favourable to the discussion of the particular questions with which his section was concerned. Dr. Van Hamel drew attention to the opinion that the League was subject in too great a measure to Anglo-Saxon control. Council meetings in London followed by the Assembly meeting in Washington would give strength to this criticism. Both agreed that Brussels would be suitable, although it was pointed out that a belief was not uncommon that Geneva had been given up as the seat of the League, and precautions must be taken to prevent any colour being given to this mistake, as a result of holding Council meetings in Brussels. It was generally agreed that the best solution would be the first formal meeting in Paris, four or five meetings in Brussels, any further meetings in London until the Assembly meeting in Washington. It was suggested that there should also be a meeting at Washington shortly before the meeting of the Assembly, and this was agreed to, if found necessary.

As regards purchases of books now being made by the various sections, Mr. Salter said that Miss Day in his section would keep a list of books purchased by various sections, and would be willing to advise them so far as this information

reached her of any cases of overlapping. The Secretary General pointed out that an Assistant Librarian, Miss Wilson, had been appointed, and would be able to take over this duty on her arrival.

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