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Summary

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Dec. 17

Suiet

Subject

Weekly Meeting of Secy. Genl.
& Directors. Minutes of 15th
Meeting. Dec. 17.

Subjects discussed:-

1) The coming into force of the Treaty.

2) Seat of the League.

3) Transit Commission

4) System of cataloguing for the library.

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A classer. *no*

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Mr. Brown

SOCIÉTÉ DES NATIONS.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

40

Disbn.No. 19/10/5.

M I N U T E S

2495

of a Meeting held in the Secretary-General's Room
on Wednesday, 17th December, 1919, at 4 o'clock, p.m.

Present:-

The Secretary-General.
Dr. Nitobe.
Monsieur Colban.
Monsieur Comert.
Mr. Salter.
Dr. van Hamel.
Captain Gilchrist.
Captain Walters.

**ACTION
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1. The Secretary-General said that the coming into force of the Peace Treaty seemed at last to be in sight, and would probably take place before or on January 1. President Wilson would probably call the first meeting of the Council for about seven days later. M Comert said that this notice would enable his section to make all necessary arrangements.
2. The United States situation. Sweetser had telegraphed on the 13th in a fairly hopeful tone. That, however, was before the announcement from the White House that the President was not prepared to compromise.
3. The question of whether the Secretariat should go temporarily to Brussels was much affected by the decision of the United States. If the U.S. were going to join whole-heartedly in the League and make the Council its channel for dealing with international affairs, it would be safe to go straight to Geneva, because the cooperation of the United States was so necessary to European countries that their leaders would go to whatever place they would find a plenipotentiary of the United States. If, however, she did not join, or joined only in name, the League would have to rely mainly on the Western Powers. A meeting such as that which had just taken place between Mr. Lloyd George and Monsieur Clemenceau in London could hardly be hoped for at Geneva. If the League were there, it would probably be ignored, and the Prime Ministers would meet in Paris or London. They would, however, he thought, be willing to go to Brussels. The matter, therefore, /

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therefore, could not be settled until the decision of the United States was known. Colonel House was very strongly opposed to a temporary headquarters at Brussels. A factor which might make an early settlement necessary was that of the Labour Organisation. He had not had an opportunity of discussing with anyone returned from Washington which place would be the better from their point of view. The British Trades Union people seemed to be strongly in favour of Brussels.

4.. The Assistant Librarian, Miss Wilson, had now arrived. There was some question as to what system of cataloguing should be adopted. Miss Wilson was strongly in favour of the "Congress" system, but the greater part of the big European Libraries have adopted the "Dewey" system. If we finally decided to treat the Institut International de Bibliographie at Brussels as the general cataloguing organisation of the League and to pay a subvention to it accordingly, we might perhaps find that we ought to adhere to the same method which they used. Miss Wilson was now about to visit that Institute at Brussels and also the Law Library at the Hague.

5. Dr. van Hamel raised a general principle in connection with the plans for the Transit Commission. The scheme for this organisation, as for that on health and perhaps the future economic organisation etc., were all more or less copies of the Labour part of the Treaty, with a permanent body and periodical conferences. He questioned whether this was not a somewhat top-heavy arrangement in the case of institutions whose subject-matter was comparatively unimportant from a political point of view. He did not like the idea of large Conferences on technical subjects voting on the provisions of draft conventions submitted to them.

Mr. Salter said that the idea had occurred to him also. There were two aspects in particular that ought to be considered:-

1. In the case of the Institute of Agriculture there was a permanent Committee residing away from its own country and detached from the Governmental Departments dealing with the same subject-matter, while its members were well-known experts and had not enough to do. This was a bad example.

In/

In parallel cases some arrangement should be made by which members of the permanent Committee would serve part of their time at home.

2. Was it necessary to call an assembly of all nations for work such as the Transit Commission would be dealing with? Could not a sufficient universality of representation be got:

- (a) by changing the members of the permanent Committee;
- (b) by convening ad hoc Conferences on the initiative either of the permanent Committee or of a certain proportion of its members.

The Secretary-General said that he agreed with much that had been said. One could not treat all these proposed institutions on the same lines. For instance, while the proposed Health Organisation followed the Labour plan fairly closely, with regard to Transit an important difference was contemplated - viz: that the Secretariat of the Transit Commission would be actually members of the International Secretariat of the League. He mentioned in this connection that the Labour officials were thinking of using the services of the general sections of the International Secretariat - e.g., those dealing with law, finance, information. His view in general was that it was best to let such organisations develop autonomously but keep in relationship more or less close with the Secretariat.

6. Mr. Salter said that the greatest danger which the League had to face was, that when the Council began to meet, they would fail to hold real discussions such as those recently held in London. He had heard reports of a proposed development of the Versailles Secretariat as the Secretariat of further meetings of the same kind. He hoped that these reports were based on a misapprehension of the proposals to extend the existence of the Versailles Military Council.

7. The question was discussed as to whether it might be desirable, when the Treaty had come into force, for representatives of the League to go to America (on the invitation of the Senate) to present the case from the point of view of Europe. Some such idea was supported by Dr. van Hamel and Sir Herbert Ames, and was opposed by the

Secretary-General/

Secretary-General, Mr. Colban and Captain Gilchrist.

8. Sir Herbert Ames said that he would very soon need some more money.

It was decided that, if any new event of importance occurred, such as the fixing of the date of the coming into force of the Treaty, the next meeting should be held on Monday, December 22. Otherwise, it should be postponed until the following week.

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

18th December, 1919.

Préface de l'auteur, cette feuille en blanc.

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1919.