LEAGUE OF NATIONS

COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY FOR EUROPEAN UNION

MINUTES OF THE FIRST SESSION

Held at Geneva on Tuesday, September 23rd, 1930.

Election of the Chairman.

Sir Eric Drummond said he thought it would not be necessary to read the Assembly resolution which set up the Commission; they might consider the meeting opened and proceed immediately to elect a Chairman.

Mr. Henderson (British Empire) was sure he was expressing the general feeling of the meeting in proposing M. Briand as Chairman for all their deliberations until the time when a report would be submitted to the next Assembly. (Unanimous approval.)

Sir Eric Drummond observed that the applause meant that M. Briand was elected Chairman. (M. Briand took the Chair.)

M. Briand (Chairman) said he was sincerely grateful for the honour which the meeting had done him in appointing him Chairman of the Commission until the next Assembly. He was fully aware of the extent of his task and he hoped to discharge his duties so that members would have no serious reason to regret their choice.

He would begin by expressing the wish that this first meeting should mark an auspicious date in the continuous efforts made towards the establishment of peace. He was convinced, that, if they properly appreciated the advantages of the rapprochement brought about between them under the auspices of the League, they could accomplish useful and important work, without having at any moment or in any way to dissociate themselves from the League, of which they were a part, which they loved, and in which they had increasing confidence.

Their task at present was a somewhat limited one. He thought that they must go forward with circumspection in the work to be accomplished. At their first meeting, therefore, he would not propose any heroic undertakings, but simply that they should proceed to appoint their Bureau, as was appropriate for any newly established commission. He realised that it would be difficult to set up the whole Bureau that day, and he was going to suggest, therefore, that, for the moment, they should confine themselves to a small Bureau composed, for instance, of the Chairman and a Secretary.

Appointment of a Secretary.

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If no other proposals were made, it would be understood that the Commission would be composed in that way.

_It was so decided._

**Material for Discussion.**

The **Chairman** said that he would not read the resolution adopted by the Assembly, with which they were all familiar. It was the first document in their records. It stated very clearly that the Commission would first of all consider the Memorandum of the French Government and the replies of all the Governments which were consulted. These documents would be handed over to the Secretary-General. They would have to be supplemented. He would suggest that, between then and the next meeting, which might take place, if there were no objections, in January, at the same time as the next session of the Council of the League of Nations, the Secretary-General might collect all useful information; and this, added to the material which they had already, would enable them to estimate the task ahead of them with a better prospect of achieving satisfactory results. That would give members of the Commission an opportunity for careful consideration and enable them to submit definite proposals. At the next meeting, accordingly, they would have the data for a useful discussion. The Bureau should also be definitely constituted at that time.

Meanwhile, each member of the Commission would have time to consult his Government as to the nature of the Bureau and its composition. After that, they would be able to discuss the questions placed on their agenda. For instance, before the January meeting, a Conference of Governments would have met to deal with economic problems, which were uppermost in their thoughts. That Conference would be of great importance. The Secretary-General would be required to follow its proceedings very closely. If difficulties happened to arise at this Conference, their Secretary could draw attention to them and they could be discussed at the next meeting of the Commission.

It was clear, then, that there would be no lack of subjects for discussion, apart from the other problems submitted by the Secretary-General. The material for discussion would be forwarded by their Secretary to all Governments represented on the Commission, so that they might have time for reflection and to send in communications themselves. The latter would be transmitted through him (the Chairman) to the Commission and placed on the agenda.

In the resolution which it adopted, the Assembly indicated that the Commission was, naturally, open to all Members of the League; he noticed that a number of their non-European colleagues—who were indeed welcome—were present at the meeting. Another question, however, arose. The Assembly had thought that the Commission should, when it considered this desirable, appeal to States not belonging to the League. That question might be placed on the agenda of the first meetings of the Commission. He thought it was too early to settle it there and then. The question would necessarily be raised and ought to be raised. He was ready to welcome any suggestions on this subject.

**Name of the Commission.**

There was still one formality with which they could scarcely dispense: they would have to give themselves a name. The Secretary-General would be very much embarrassed unless their Commission was given a proper civil status. He thought they might choose the name of "Commission of European Union" or "Commission of Enquiry for European Union".

M. Scialoja (Italy) said that the latter was preferable. _Approval._

The **Chairman** stated that that would be the name of the Commission. Though a modest name, it perhaps pointed to many hopes, which he trusted would be realised.