

1926  
NEW ZEALAND.

# THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

REPORT OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DOMINION OF NEW ZEALAND ON THE  
EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, HELD  
AT GENEVA IN THE YEAR 1926.

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*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*

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## EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

New Zealand Government Offices,  
Strand, London W.C. 2, 19th April, 1926.

SIR,—

I have the honour to report that, in accordance with the decision of the Government, I represented New Zealand at the extraordinary session of the Assembly of the League of Nations, accompanied by my personal staff, Mr. C. Knowles and Miss E. Hannan.

The opening meeting was held on the 8th March, 1926, when the chair was taken by Viscount Ishii, the representative of Japan on the Council and the Acting-President. The first business was to set up a committee to consider the credentials of the candidates. After the committee had reported it was possible to proceed to the election of a President. This was done by ballot, with the result that His Excellency Dr. Affonso da Costa, the principal delegate for Portugal, was elected: he received thirty-six votes.

The Agenda was then examined. As you know, the special session was called in order to consider the application of Germany for admission as a member of the League (Document A. 4). This was the first item; but in consequence of the understanding which had been arrived at—that Germany should be given a permanent seat on the Council—it was necessary to include an item to cover her election under Article 4 of the Covenant. You will note that the Agenda, as adopted, made provision for “decisions of the Assembly on Council proposals, if any, in application of Article 4.” It was for the Council, therefore, to recommend Germany alone for a permanent seat, or other nations if the members of the Council thought it wise to do so. Occasion was taken to include two further questions, one relating to the Budget, and the other to the construction of the new assembly hall. The President proposed that the German request should be referred to a committee, and questions relating to the Supplementary Budget and new assembly hall to another committee. There was a possibility of a third committee being constituted to consider the second item of the Agenda—i.e., that relating to the application of Article 4 of the Covenant.

The delegations, having arranged which of their members should serve on the two committees, proceeded to elect their chairmen. Sir Austen Chamberlain was elected as chairman of Committee No. 1, to consider the German application, and Monsieur Loucheur, one of the French delegates, as chairman of Committee No. 2, to consider the Budgetary questions and the construction of the assembly hall. These elections were unanimous, and no vote was taken.

The Assembly then proceeded to elect their six Vice-Presidents, who, with the President and chairmen of committees, form the officers of the Assembly. The following delegates were elected: M. Scialoja (Italy), 45 votes; Viscount Ishii (Japan), 42 votes; Sir James Allen (New Zealand), 34 votes; M. Caballero (Paraguay), 32 votes; M. Titulesco (Roumania), 32 votes; M. Morales (San Dominica), 29 votes.

It will be noted that the Assembly did me the honour of electing me one of its Vice-Presidents.

I nominated myself to serve on both committees, but as New Zealand had only one delegate, and it would not be possible for me to be at meetings of both if held at the same time, I thought it advisable to nominate my Private Secretary, Mr. Knowles, as a substitute.

On the 13th March the Assembly paid a well-deserved tribute to the memory of M. Leon Bourgeois, who died last year at an advanced age. He had devoted a considerable part of his lifetime to the cause of peace, and as the principal representative of France had taken a prominent part in the early work of both Council and Assembly.

#### COMMITTEE No. 1.

##### APPLICATION OF GERMANY FOR ADMISSION.

Even prior to the historic meeting at Locarno it was known that Germany was willing to apply for admission to the League of Nations on certain conditions being fulfilled. One condition was the inclusion of Germany on the Council of the League with a permanent seat. I understand that she had communicated with all the Powers represented on the Council, and had received from all but one an assurance that her request would not only be considered, but be granted. The exception was Brazil, the Government of which replied in very conciliatory terms, but added that it was a matter for the League itself to determine.

A week or two before the Special Assembly met the position was changed by a proposal that, concurrent with the admission of Germany to the League, Poland should be given a seat on the Council—if possible, a permanent one—and it was then made known that both Spain and Brazil (and later China) had aspirations to permanent seats.

Even before the Assembly met on the 8th March Powers who had been represented at Locarno and others represented on the Council of the League had begun conversations in the hope of bridging the gulf. Germany claimed that her application for admission to the League, which had been made on condition that she should be given a permanent seat on the Council, was the only matter, apart from a few questions of internal administration, which the Special Assembly had been called together to decide, and that to suggest a further alteration in the constitution of the Council, which was evidently desired by some Powers, was not a matter which should be dealt with until Germany was admitted to the League. Effort after effort was made to bring the opposing parties a little nearer, and suggestion after suggestion was put forward, only to be declined. At length, however, a proposal was made which met with the concurrence of all but one member of the Council. It was that Germany should be admitted to a permanent seat on the Council, and that Sweden and Czechoslovakia, both holders of non-permanent seats, should resign, both having offered to do so, and that other Powers should be chosen by the Assembly to fill those seats. It was intended that one of the new Powers was to be Poland, and the other one of the Scandinavian countries. Had this proposal been carried into effect the question of the alteration of the constitution of the Council, other than the admission of Germany to a permanent seat, would have been postponed pending the report of a Commission which might be set up to deal with it. Unfortunately, however, Brazil stood in the way, and unanimity in the Council was necessary even although a majority vote was sufficient in the Assembly. Brazil's representative had received instructions from his Government which made it impossible for him to compromise, and at 10 o'clock on the night of the 16th March the Powers which had been represented at Locarno issued to the Press a statement to the effect that agreement had been reached by them, and that it would be a matter of grave concern if, after all, the admission of Germany to the League during the session of the Special Assembly could not be effected.

On Wednesday, 17th March, the Assembly met at 10 o'clock in the morning, and Sir Austen Chamberlain, the Rapporteur of the First Committee, which had unanimously recommended the acceptance of Germany's application for admission (see Document A. 9), said that he would defer making his statement until the representative of Brazil had spoken. The Brazilian delegate then made a statement representing the views of his Government, the main point of which was that the question of the admission of Germany was one for the League itself to determine. Sir Austen Chamberlain, after expressing profound regret that the purpose for which the Special Assembly had been convened could not be achieved, and paying tribute to the generosity of the delegates of Sweden and Czechoslovakia for the offer to resign, moved that the Assembly should be adjourned. After speeches had been delivered by several other delegates, including the delegate of Japan, who proposed that the constitution of the Council should be referred to a Commission, the Assembly passed the following resolution and adjourned:—

“The Assembly regrets that the difficulties encountered have prevented the attainment of the purpose for which it was convened, and expresses the hope that between now and the ordinary September session of 1926 these difficulties may be surmounted so as to make it possible for Germany to enter the League of Nations on that occasion.”

The proposal to set up a committee to deal with the constitution of the Council was subsequently considered by the Council, and it was decided that the committee should consist of representatives of the members of the Council and of the Argentine Republic, China, Germany, Poland, and Switzerland.

Thus ended a period, approaching a fortnight, of anxiety and fruitless effort to achieve the object for which the Special Assembly had been called. In my opinion the attitude that Germany took up was reasonable. The League had been called together for the purpose of admitting her, but when an accommodation was arranged which was agreeable to the principal parties it was a

misfortune that one country should impose her will, even if only temporarily, to prevent so great a step in the improvement of the European situation and that of the world at large being taken.

There is one point in connection with the Brazilian attitude on which I think it necessary to touch. It has been stated that the action of Brazil was due to outside influences, but I do not think that any weight should be attached to this. I am inclined to believe that it was probably due to political conditions in Brazil itself.

I give you below a brief account of the work accomplished by the Second Committee. As Germany was not admitted, there could be no question of a Supplementary Budget. The Italian delegate, who had been nominated Rapporteur of the Second Committee before the Assembly, stated that the expenses occasioned by the special session would have to be met out of the item "Unforeseen expenditure" included in the last Budget.

## COMMITTEE No. 2.

### ERECTION OF NEW ASSEMBLY HALL.

The position which had been reached prior to the Special Assembly is clearly set forth in Documents A. 3 and A. 6. In my report on the Sixth Assembly, page 11, I stated that in the event of an offer being received to purchase the present Secretariat building there was a possibility of an alternative policy being adopted—i.e., the erection of a new Secretariat, as well as of an assembly hall, on a site not far from that which had been presented to the League for the erection of an assembly hall only. No offer was received for the present Secretariat building, and the Secretary-General would have proceeded to open an international competition for the erection of an assembly hall only had the Jury of Architects not strongly expressed the opinion that the alternative was preferable. Four plots of land are available for this alternative. They have a frontage to the lake and adjoin the new International Labour Office. The matter was referred by the Second Committee to a small subcommittee, whose report (Document A. 11) was accepted and presented to the Assembly, which passed it on the 13th March. The main difficulty which confronted the subcommittee was solved by the offer made by the principal Swiss delegate, on behalf of the Federal and the Geneva Cantonal Governments, to make good any deficiency between the price which the present Secretariat buildings fetched and a maximum of 4,000,000 Swiss francs, subject to the ratification of Parliament. Consequently the committee reported in favour of the lake site to the extent of the purchase of three plots, as it had been assured that the acquisition of that numbered 4 on the plan attached to Document A. 3 was not absolutely necessary for the purpose. Not to purchase this plot, however, would make a break between the League property and the International Labour Office, and, as there is a possibility that in the remote future further land might be required, the full committee charged the Secretary-General to endeavour to arrange with the proprietor, an English lady, Mrs. Barton, to give the League an option to purchase plot 4.

The total net estimate for the land and building is 12,968,000 francs, which includes a sum of 300,000 francs for the erection of a temporary annex to the present Secretariat buildings, an annex rendered necessary for the accommodation of an increase in the staff. The adoption of the alternative will mean an increased expenditure of about a million francs, but the increase is justified, as in my opinion the erection of entirely new buildings for both assembly and secretariat is the only satisfactory solution of the question.

### SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET.

The documents presented to the Second Committee are those numbered A. 1, A. 2, A. 7, and A. 8. There is no provision in the financial regulations for a Supplementary Budget, and the Supervisory Commission rightly refused to consider the new estimates without the instructions of the Special Assembly. A difference of opinion had arisen between the Supervisory Commission and the Secretary-General owing to the refusal of the former to put into operation an amendment to the rules as provided in Article 51, a decision with which I am thoroughly in accord, as I feel sure that the authority given by Article 51 was never meant to cover such an important question as the consideration of a Supplementary Budget.

When the Second Committee met it was hoped that the admission of Germany to the League would be accomplished within a very short period, and the committee was therefore anxious not to lose time, and, although it had not the authority of the Assembly, it asked the Supervisory Commission to proceed with the examination of the Supplementary Draft Budget, and expressed the opinion that no expenditure should be proposed which might properly and reasonably be postponed to the regular Budget of 1927. A resolution embodying this in the following terms was passed by the Assembly at its meeting on the 13th March:—

"The committee thanks the Supervisory Commission for its report, and recommends to the Assembly that the Supervisory Commission be authorized to consider the Supplementary Draft Budget for 1926, and be asked to present a report with the least possible delay. The committee is of opinion that no expenditure should be proposed in the Supplementary Budget which can properly and reasonably be postponed till the regular Budget of 1927 is examined."

Later in the same day the Second Committee had before it the report of the Supervisory Commission, and, after examining the details placed before it, decided to recommend the Assembly to pass a Supplementary Budget amounting to 597,777 Swiss francs. It was explained that the States members of the League would not be asked to provide any money additional to that required by the 1926 Budget, as it was expected that the increase referred to above would be more than covered by the contribution of Germany towards the expenses of the League for the current year.

The report to the Assembly is Document A. 13.

I have, &c.,  
J. ALLEN.

The Right Hon. the Prime Minister,  
Wellington, New Zealand.

(NOTE.—Copies of the documents referred to in the foregoing reports have been placed in the General Assembly Library for convenience of reference.)

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