

1936.
NEW ZEALAND.

REFORM OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

COPIES OF COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT IN NEW ZEALAND.

Laid on the Table of both Houses of the General Assembly by Leave.

MEMORANDUM FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND, DATED JULY 7TH, 1936.

"The Secretary-General of the League of Nations has the honour to draw the attention of Members of the League to the following recommendation adopted by the Assembly on July 4th, 1936:—

"The Assembly,

"1. Having met again on the initiative of the Government of the Argentine Republic, and in pursuance of the decision to adjourn its session taken on October 11th, 1935, in order to examine the situation arising out of the Italo-Ethiopian dispute;

"2. Taking note of the communications and declarations which have been made to it on this subject;

"3. Noting that various circumstances have prevented the full application of the Covenant of the League of Nations;

"4. Remaining firmly attached to the principles of the Covenant, which are also expressed in other diplomatic instruments such as the declaration of the American States dated August 3rd, 1932, excluding the settlement of territorial questions by force;

"5. Being desirous of strengthening the authority of the League of Nations by adapting the application of these principles to the lessons of experience;

"6. Being convinced that it is necessary to strengthen the real effectiveness of the guarantees of security which the League affords to its Members:

"Recommends that the Council—

"(a) Should invite the Governments of the Members of the League to send to the Secretary-General, so far as possible before September 1st, 1936, any proposals they may wish to make in order to improve, in the spirit or within the limits laid down above, the application of the principles of the Covenant;

"(b) Should instruct the Secretary-General to make a first examination and classification of these proposals;

"(c) Should report to the Assembly at its next meeting on the state of the question."

"On July 4th, 1936, the Council instructed the Secretary-General to give effect to the above recommendation.

"In order that he may carry out the first examination which he has been instructed to undertake under paragraph (b) of the recommendation, the Secretary-General would be grateful to the Government of New Zealand, if it would send to him, if possible before September 1st, 1936, any proposals which that Government might wish to make in conformity with paragraph (a) of the recommendation."

MEMORANDUM TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, GENEVA, FROM THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND, DATED 16TH JULY, 1936.

“ Prime Minister’s Office, Wellington, N.Z., 16th July, 1936.

“ SIR,—

“ In accordance with the resolution of the Assembly of the League on the 4th July, 1936, and anticipating the formal request from the Council (as is necessary in the circumstances of New Zealand if the proposals of the New Zealand Government are to be received by the Secretary-General before the 1st September next), I have the honour to forward herewith an expression of the views of the New Zealand Government on the Covenant of the League of Nations:—

“(1) We believe in the first place that there is no material fault in the existing provisions of the Covenant and that the difficulties that have arisen, and that may arise in the future, are due to the method and the extent of its operation.

“(2) We believe that the Covenant has never yet been fully applied and that it cannot be characterized as an ineffective instrument until it has been so applied.

“(3) We are prepared to reaffirm with the utmost solemnity our continued acceptance of the Covenant as it stands.

“(4) We believe, nevertheless, that the Covenant is capable of amendment, which should take the form of strengthening rather than weakening its provisions.

“(5) We are prepared to accept, in principle, the provisions proposed for the Geneva Protocol of 1924 as one method of strengthening the Covenant as it exists.

“(6) We are prepared to take our collective share in the application, against any future aggressor, of the full economic sanctions contemplated by Article 16, and we are prepared, to the extent of our power, to join in the collective application of force against any future aggressor.

“(7) We believe that the sanctions contemplated by the present Covenant will be ineffective in the future as they have been in the past—

“(1) Unless they are made immediate and automatic:

“(2) Unless economic sanctions take the form of the complete boycott contemplated by Article 16:

“(3) Unless any sanctions that may be applied are supported by the certainty that the Members of the League applying the sanctions are able and, if necessary, prepared to use force against force.

“(8) It is our belief that the Covenant as it is, or in a strengthened form, would in itself be sufficient to prevent war if the world realized that the nations undertaking to apply the Covenant actually would do so in fact.

“(9) We are prepared to agree to the institution of an international force under the control of the League or to the allocation to the League of a definite proportion of the armed forces of its Members to the extent, if desired, of the whole of those forces—land, sea, and air.

“(10) We consider that there can be no certainty of the complete and automatic operation of the Covenant unless the Governments of all Members of the League are supported, in their determination to apply it, by the declared approval of their peoples.

“(11) We propose, therefore, that all the Members of the League, and as many non-Members as may be persuaded to adopt this course, should hold immediately a national plebiscite with the object of taking the opinion of their peoples on the following points—

“(1) Whether they are prepared to join automatically and immediately in the sanctions contemplated by Article 16 of the Covenant against any aggressor nation nominated as such by the Council or the Assembly:

“(2) Whether in such case the armed forces of their country (or such proportion as may previously have been fixed by the League) should be immediately and automatically placed at the complete disposal of the League for that purpose.

“(12) We do not accept the desirability of regional pacts, but, if Members of the League generally approve of such pacts, we should be prepared to support a collective system in which all Members of the League, while accepting the immediate and universal application of the economic sanctions contemplated by Article 16, nevertheless, if they desired to do so, restricted to defined areas their undertaking to use force.

“(13) In such a case we consider that the question of the use of force in defined areas should also be made the subject of national plebiscites.

“(14) We believe it improper to enforce a system of preventing war without at the same time setting up adequate machinery for the ventilation and, if possible, rectification of international grievances, and we would support the establishment of an acceptable tribunal for that purpose.

- “(15) We believe that the Peace Treaties of the Great War carried within themselves the germs of future conflicts. We realize the enormous (but not insuperable) difficulties of reconsidering the status established by those Treaties and for our part we are prepared in the most genuine and broadminded spirit to join in such a reconsideration.
- “(16) As a first step we are prepared to agree to a proposal that the Covenant of the League should be separated from these Peace Treaties.
- “(17) For any general reconsideration of the Peace Treaties we should wish to see all the nations of the world, whether Members of the League or not, invited to take part.
- “(18) We should wish also to see all the nations of the world, whether Members of the League or not, invited to take part in the consideration of the terms and the application of the Covenant, or of any other universal method of collective security that may be proposed in its stead.
- “(19) We realize the important effect of economic conditions on the peace of the world and we should wish, also, that a world-wide survey of such conditions should be undertaken at the same time.
- “(20) We feel that the peoples of the world, as distinct from their Governments, should be afforded every possible facility for following the transactions of the League, and that all appropriate League discussions and decisions should accordingly be broadcast by short-wave radio.
- “(21) Finally, although we believe that a collective peace system that is not supported by all the nations of the world is better than no collective peace system at all, yet we are convinced that no such system can be entirely satisfactory until it is universal and that every proper effort should be made to that end.

“ I have the honour to be,

“ Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ M. J. SAVAGE, Prime Minister.”

When forwarding the above memorandum to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations it was stated in a further memorandum that if these proposals were not considered immediately practicable the New Zealand Government would not demur to consideration of progress by stages or to alternative proposals.

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