

1937.

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 1937.

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

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

New Zealand Government Offices,  
415 Strand, London W.C. 2, 10th June, 1937.

Sir,—

In company with the Honourable H. T. Armstrong as co-delegate, and Dr. W. B. Sutch as substitute delegate, and Miss J. R. McKenzie as Secretary to the Delegation, I attended the Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the League of Nations convened for the purpose of considering the request of Egypt for admission to the League. The Assembly held its first meeting on Wednesday, 26th May, 1937, at 11 a.m. In the chair was M. Quevedo, delegate of Ecuador and President of the Council; later M. Rüstü Aras (Turkey) was elected President of the Assembly.

In his opening speech M. Quevedo expressed his personal views in regard to the admission of Egypt, because as a Member of the Council and as representative of an American State he was anxious to acclaim the important political event represented by the admission of a new State to the League, especially when that State was Egypt.

New Zealand was nominated for the Credentials Committee, its representative being appointed Vice-Chairman.

The matter coming before the committee was of a routine nature; Abyssinia not having sent a delegate, there were, of course, no credentials submitted to the Committee, and the question did not therefore come up for consideration. However, when the Chairman of the Credentials Committee reported back to the Council the Polish Representative, as had been anticipated, rose to put a point of view as follows:—

“The Credentials Committee, for reasons of which it is the only judge, has not thought it expedient to deal with the question left in suspense in the report of the Credentials Committee at the previous Assembly. If it is thought desirable that this question should not be mentioned at the present time, although the *de facto* situation allows no doubts to remain such as existed in September last, I desire to state that my Government, having no interest, either direct or indirect, in the part of the world in question, and being concerned exclusively with the future of international collaboration within the framework of the League of Nations—which must base its existence on realities—considers that this question is settled in so far as it is concerned.”

The position, that there should be no suggestion for the exclusion of the representative of a member from the League, was put by the representative for Mexico as follows:—

“It was with the greatest attention that I listened to the statement just made by the honourable representative of Poland. If I understand him aright, he makes no definite proposal. Nevertheless, as Mexico's silence might be misinterpreted, I desire to emphasize in the clearest possible manner our opposition to any suggestion whose object would be to prepare the way for the exclusion of the representatives of a State member of the League of Nations. As this question does not appear on the Agenda, I do not consider it necessary to develop the reasons on which the attitude of my Government is based.”

There was no further reference to the Abyssinian question, but it is assumed that this matter will again be discussed at greater length at the next meeting of the Assembly.

It had confidently been expected that M. Politis (Greece) would be elected to the office of President of the Extraordinary Session without opposition, and he had been approached to this effect. Having learned that another member was desirous of being President, M. Politis asked his colleagues to refrain from voting for him. M. Rüstü Aras (Turkey) was duly elected President by 46 votes to 4. Apparently the feeling was that the representative of a country contiguous to Egypt would offer greater satisfaction to the Moslem countries.

The election of the Nominations Committee was not deemed necessary at the Extraordinary Session of the Assembly as the Assembly had met mainly for the purpose of admitting Egypt as a member of the League, nor was it felt necessary, for the same reason, to elect Vice-Presidents.

The new President in his address referred to Egypt as "that great Mediterranean country" and said that the significance of the action in electing Turkey to the presidency would be fully appreciated both by the Egyptian and the Turkish people.

At the second meeting of the Assembly, the text of the resolution admitting Egypt to the League was circulated to members (Document A, Extra. 5, 1937, VII). It will be noted that the recommendation was for Egypt's contribution to the expenses of the League to be 12 units.

In welcoming Egypt, the President again referred to Egypt as "this highly important Mediterranean country" and added that "this young, independent, and sovereign State will become a new factor of equilibrium in the Mediterranean, where the basis of Turkish policy is the maintenance of the *status quo*, a policy that can only be effectively upheld by the firm determination for a sincere collaboration between States having shores on that sea."

The Prime Minister of Egypt, El-Nahas Pasha, in his reply said that the entry of Egypt into the League of Nations constituted for his country an act of faith. He added that foreigners as well as Egyptians would in the future, as in the past, find sympathetic protection in the liberal laws applied by a sincerely understanding authority. He expressed the thought that the happiness of no nation could be ensured unless tranquillity was general. He also referred to the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty by which there had been established between the great British people and the Egyptian people "solid and lasting links of friendship and of confidence."

The speeches of welcome of most of the delegates expressed the thought that the countries they represented had always been bound by the closest ties of friendship with Egypt; a substantial proportion also referred to Egypt's ancient art and civilization. Others also congratulated Egypt and the parties to the Agreement concerning capitulations which had recently been come to at Montreux.

The representative of Iraq, in welcoming Egypt as a fellow member of the League, mentioned that his country was the first new country to be admitted to the League since it was founded and that Egypt was the second. Iraq had, with Egypt, a community of aims, ideals, and interests. She was also close to Egypt geographically and was bound to her by ties of race, religion, and culture. Iraq welcomed Egypt as another representative of Arab civilization and culture in the League, and hoped that this development would be followed by the admission of "other representations of Arab civilization and culture." He expected that another country from the Mediterranean seaboard would soon take her place in the League—Syria.

The representative of the United Kingdom said that the destinies of Egypt during the past fifty years had been closely bound up with those of England. All the States assembled were indebted to the ancient civilization of Egypt. "Long before some of the nations we represent had emerged from their primeval forests, Egypt had endowed mankind with the gifts of science and letters, and above all, with treasures of her matchless art, which is still a source of awe and wonderment to this day . . . It has long been the aim of His Majesty's Government to assist Egypt to the realization of her full independence." Egypt's close relations with the outside world had grown even closer in recent times "when foreign capital and technical advice have been called upon to play so prominent a part in the making of modern Egypt." In this, Egypt "has played the part of a practised host."

One interesting feature of the speeches of welcome to Egypt was the fact that the Swedish representative spoke on behalf not only of Sweden, but of his colleagues from Denmark, Finland, and Norway, and the representative of Greece, M. Politis, spoke on behalf of the Balkan Entente. The representative of Czechoslovakia spoke on behalf of the Little Entente, and the Dominican representative on behalf of Haiti and Cuba.

The representative of Sweden said that Egypt, situated at the meeting-place of the great lines of communication between East and West, had a particularly important task to discharge in the work of peace and concord between the nations, and for that reason she was all the more welcome.

The representative of Iran also mentioned the close cultural bonds that Persia had with Egypt, and added that Islam made the cultural relations even more close. The accession of Egypt as a member came at a time "when the League of Nations has to make a fresh effort to regain the whole of its prestige."

The representative of France said that his country, which had very definite democratic traditions, for that reason alone approved of Egypt's admission to the League. Independence was a guarantee of international probity and solidity. France would guarantee "vigilant friendship." The liberty of Egypt was a contribution to the League. France welcomed another Moslem Power to the League as France had always been a friend of Arab thought and was in a position to appreciate the nobility and value of that thought.

The representative of Greece said that Egyptian independence was set forth in agreement which was remarkable for its elasticity and political sagacity, because not only had it consecrated the liberty and independence of Egypt, but it had raised Egypt to the "enviable rank of ally of the greatest power in the world." The Egyptians could look forward to collaborating with the Balkan Entente in the eastern Mediterranean with the object of stability and peace.

His Highness The Aga Khan of India, while welcoming Egypt's entry as a contribution to universality, said that India was too conscious of her own many millions to find satisfaction in the addition of numbers alone. The League was too representative of one civilization and of one creed to be able to claim universality in a truly catholic sense. The admission of Egypt would help to make up for this lack of balance. It was important to remember that Egypt was reassuming her full sovereignty sponsored by Great Britain, and with Great Britain's powerful support that was something no Indian with any foresight could witness wholly unmoved, least of all a Muslim like himself. Many Indians were bound not only by custom and habit, but by religious faith and friendship with Egypt.

The representative of Switzerland mentioned the "real, sincere, and deep friendship which had long existed" between his country and Egypt. He added that the League would never be fully effective unless it had among its members all States, including the Great Powers. The people of Switzerland were determined opponents of the policy of the formation of ideological blocs. While Switzerland was a democratic country founded upon the principles of liberty, yet that did not prevent them from living in "harmony, friendship, and collaboration with all States who do not illicitly interfere with our internal affairs, especially those whose institutions differ most from ours."

The representative of Chile said that his country was bound, and had been bound for years past, by the closest bonds of friendship with Egypt. The admission of Egypt was evidence that inequality of material power counted as nothing in the eyes of great democracies like Great Britain when an opportunity offered to consolidate the principles of freedom, equality, and fraternity which were proclaimed a century and a half ago by another great European power—France.

The representative of Portugal said that his country had from the outset been most interested in collaborating in the work of justice and equity which was to lead to the restoration of Egypt to her full sovereignty.

The Polish representative stated that Egypt's admission was a contribution to the ideal of universality, the importance of which had so frequently been stressed by the Polish Government.

The representative of China said that the Chinese people with their 48,000,000 Moslems were watching with sympathy and interest the aspirations of the Egyptians—a "great people hoary with tradition."

The Afghanistan representative stated that their joy in welcoming Egypt was accentuated by the fact that it had a King and a Government who were keen on bringing about the modernization of the country.

The representative of Belgium thought that the admission of Egypt was a first consolation for the difficult moments the League had experienced during the past year.

The South African representative said that his Government gave the warmest support and sincerest welcome to a sister State of that vast African continent "on which our common destiny lies." The peaceful means by which the change in Egyptian status had been effected had rightly earned the felicitous tributes which had been offered to Egypt.

The Hungarian representative felt that his people had affinities with Egypt because both countries were essentially agrarian, and that the exchange of products between Egyptian seaports and the Danube ports was supplementing "the ever intenser exchange of cultural goods."

The representative of Mexico considered that the Egyptian Government, by accepting all the rules which the covenant imposes on members of the League of Nations, had shown the only real way which must lead to universality.

The Irish representative briefly welcomed Egypt to the League.

The Argentine representative regarded it as very important that the position as between differently constituted organic entities should be safeguarded and should be a juridical principle.

The Spanish representative said that Spain's voice could not remain unheard in welcoming Egypt as a new member to the League. Spain welcomed the Egyptian delegation for active work in the spirit of the Covenant.

The Egyptian delegate in reply stated that Egypt was proud of the demonstration of esteem and friendship of which she had been the centre. They were deeply touched, and felt that their best method of responding to the confidence which had been reposed in them was by working to ensure the progress of the cause of peace.

The resolution (referred to on page 2 of this report) recommending that Egypt's contribution to the expenses of the League be 12 units, was adopted.

#### ELECTION OF A JUDGE TO THE PERMANENT COURT OF INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE.

The Council and the Assembly sat simultaneously for the purpose of electing a Judge to the Permanent Court to replace the late Baron Rolin-Jaequemyns. Since the representatives of States non-members of the League, but parties to the Statute of the Court, were to take part in the election in the Assembly, the Credentials Committee had to examine the credentials of the representatives of Brazil and Japan.

Brazil communicated full powers issued by His Excellency the President of the Republic of the United States of Brazil to the effect that His Excellency M. Jose Francisco de Barros Pimentel, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States of Brazil accredited to the Swiss Federal Council, was appointed to take part in the Council of the League in the election of a member to the Court, and M. João Carlos Muniz, Consul-General of the United States of Brazil at Geneva, to take part in the vote in the Assembly. The Credentials Committee was of the opinion that the above representatives were duly accredited.

With reference to the message sent by wireless from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan to M. Masayuki Yokoyama and Yoshitane Kiuchi authorizing them to participate as representatives of the Japanese Government in the elections in the Council and in the Assembly respectively, while

the Committee proposed that the Assembly accept these powers as sufficient it considered that it would be useful to draw the attention of States called upon to participate in the election of a Judge to the Permanent Court to the necessity of providing their representatives with full powers in accordance with Article 5 of the Assembly Rules of Procedure. If this were not done a very unwise precedent would be created.

As both the Assembly and the Council elected M. Charles de Visscher by a substantial majority there was no need to proceed further, and M. Visscher was declared elected.

New Zealand was represented at the Council by Mr. W. J. Jordan and by the Honourable H. T. Armstrong at the Assembly during the election of the Judge to the Permanent Court of International Justice.

#### DATE OF OPENING OF THE EIGHTEENTH ASSEMBLY.

The President stated that certain delegations had suggested a postponement of the date of opening of the next ordinary session and after consulting with them found that the majority would like to have the opening date, which was fixed by the Rules of Procedure for September 6th, postponed to the 27th.

The Representative of Norway regretted the suggestion. However, if it were a case of *force majeure*, the Norwegian delegation would of course defer and vote for the proposal. The Representative of Denmark inquired as to the reasons for the proposed change of date and stated that if strong evidence were forthcoming in favour of postponement the Danish delegation would be prepared to agree to the request. If, however, the reasons were not weighty he would endorse the remarks of the Norwegian delegate. The Danish Parliament was meeting at the beginning of October, and an Assembly convened at the end of September would not suit the Danish delegation.

The President of the Assembly in reply said that the date of September 27th had been suggested because several delegates were anxious to have a postponement because of the fact that August being still part of the holidays, they wished to have some time at their disposal at the beginning of September in order to contact with one another and thus make the work of the Assembly more effective. As a compromise he suggested September 20th.

On the proposal of the Representative of Denmark, the Assembly decided that its next ordinary session would open on the 13th September, 1937.

The President in closing the extraordinary session of the Assembly expressed his gratitude for the honour paid him in being elected to the office. He also stated that his gratitude was all the more keen in that he had been happy to act as President on the occasion of the admission into the League of Nations of Egypt. The speeches which had been delivered welcoming Egypt were sufficient proof of the significance of the entry into the League of a new Member. It also was regarded as a mark of confidence in the future destinies of the League of Nations and of hope for a better future in which its universality would be achieved.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

W. J. JORDAN,

High Commissioner for New Zealand.

The Right Hon. M. J. Savage, P.C., M.P.,  
Prime Minister of New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand.

*Approximate Cost of Paper.*—Preparation, not given; printing (440 copies), £4.

By Authority: E. V. PAUL, Acting Government Printer, Wellington.—1937.

Price 3d.]