



14/9887/2385 U11

TWENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE COUNCIL.

ACTION
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Record by the Secretary-General of the Secret Meeting held on
February 3rd 1923.

At the end of the business in secret session this morning, M. BRANTING raised the question of Reparations. He produced a draft resolution (attached) on the subject, which he said he wished to submit to his colleagues for consideration.

M. Branting said that he thought it was very difficult for the Council to disperse without making some mention of the general problem. It will be seen that the Resolution proposed by M. Branting was based on and cited the Assembly Resolution on this subject.

M. VIVIANI took up the position that the Assembly Resolution, which he read, formally stated that the League could only usefully assist in the solution of the problems referred to if requested to do so by the Governments interested. He interpreted this to mean by all the Governments concerned, and said that as none of the Governments concerned had approached the League the Council could not be seized of the matter under the Assembly Resolution. He announced that he would be compelled to vote against the Resolution if the matter were pressed to such a point.

M. HYMANS stated that, personally, he believed that the question would very probably ultimately come before the League, and he thought that it would only do harm to the League's prestige if, before the question came to it through the request of the Governments, it gave evidence that it was anxious to deal with it. The League must not appear as begging for questions to be referred to it. He therefore, in the name of his Government, supported the attitude taken up by M. Viviani.

M. BRANTING replied that as two Members of the Council had already expressed their intention of opposing his Resolution it could not obtain unanimity, and in the circumstances, although he had not changed his original view, he thought it best to withdraw it.

It was suggested that, from the point of view of the League, it would be well if some explanation were given as to why the League had not found it possible to take the matter up, and M. Hymans and M. Branting might perhaps give a joint interview to the Press on the subject.

M. HYMANS declared that it was not possible for him to do this, and that each Member of the Council must give out such information to the Press as he thought wise. It was agreed that no Press communiqué should be issued and M. VIVIANI, in a statement in which he expressed his gratitude for the kindnesses which he had received in the past at M. Branting's hands, reminded him that while he of course had the right, if he so desired, to bring the question before the League under Article 11, this had not been done and therefore he maintained his previous attitude that it was not in order to discuss the matter further. This finished the discussion.

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COMMENTAIRES. MINUTES.

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copy sent to M. Monnet
1 copy given to Major Burton

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NOTE BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL:

The Memorandum announcing Monsieur Monnet's resignation and the nomination of Monsieur Avenol in his place was submitted to the Council in secret session on Friday afternoon.

The Secretary General expressed his great regret at Monsieur Monnet's departure, and then read the Memorandum and the letter from Monsieur Bourgeois to which it referred.

Monsieur Viviani made a short speech associating himself with the sentiments felt by the Secretary General eulogizing Monsieur Monnet's work on behalf of the League and the general services which he had rendered to France, not only during the period of office as Under Secretary General, but also during the war. He felt sure that all his colleagues would agree with him in wishing ^{the Secretary General} to convey to Monsieur Monnet an expression of their great gratitude for his services to the League and deep regret at his departure.

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He then passed to the question of the successor, and said he had little, if anything, to add to the Memorandum which the Secretary General had read. He explained that Monsieur Avenol had great competence in League affairs, and that he was fully worthy of the position which he had been selected to fill.

Monsieur Salandra regretted that he could not agree with the proposal of the Secretary General. In his view, Monsieur Monnet's term of appointment came to an end when he personally left, and it could not be held that the fact that that term had an unexpired period

period of two years necessitated the appointment of a French citizen to the post for that unexpired period. He stated that if the Secretary General assured him that neither of the two present Under Secretaries General were fitted for the post of Deputy Secretary General, he would say no more, but he would like a definite answer to this question. Unless the Secretary General said this, he thought that it was ~~improper~~ and unfair that one of the two present Under Secretaries General had not been promoted to take Monsieur Monnet's place. Italy was not altogether adequately represented in League organisation. He reminded the Council, in this connection, of the case of the Danzig High Commissioner, and he thought that it was only fair to his country that Professor Attolico should have the post which had become vacant. He stated that he raised the matter, not as a personal question in any way but purely as one of principle.

Monsieur Afatci said that he supported Signor Salandra's opinion. He thought that it was only fair that if a post became vacant, it should be filled by seniority, for choice by those Members of the Secretariat immediately below; otherwise a slight was put on these Members and a great incentive to good work was lost.

Monsieur Viviani replied that in his view when the Secretary General made a proposition of an administrative character to the Council it ought to receive full support from the Members, as otherwise the Secretary General's position would be very seriously weakened. He alluded to the fact that France having been led to expect that one of her nationals would be appointed Deputy Secretary General for five years, had the right to believe that this arrangement would be fulfilled.

Lord Balfour stated that he was not much impressed

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by the argument ~~that~~ as to possible lack of confidence in the Secretary General if the Council chose not to approve the proposal which the Secretary General had laid before them. After all, it was within the right of the Council, according to the Covenant, to refuse or reject any nomination. At the same time, he was much struck by Monsieur Viviani's argument that France had been practically given an engagement that one of her citizens should hold the post of Deputy Secretary General for five years. He, therefore, supported the proposal in the memorandum.

Signor Salandra said that his objection to what was proposed was in no way due to lack of confidence in the Secretary General, and the question must not be placed on this ground. He repeated the argument he had used before and the question which he had addressed to the Secretary General.

Monsieur Hymans confirmed Lord Balfour's recollection of the engagement given to France and said that when the Secretary General was appointed, it was understood that the post of Deputy Secretary General should be held for a given period by a French citizen. This was, therefore, the intention of those who had framed the Covenant. He particularly pointed out that the term of Monsieur Avenol's appointment was for two years. He added that he did not think that the question of seniority could be taken strictly into consideration in filling the very highest posts in the Secretariat.

The Secretary General said that he too had no desire whatever to make the matter a personal issue or to enter into a comparison of the qualifications of the candidates now under discussion. Both of them were

were his personal friends; both of them possessed the qualifications necessary for the post of Under Secretary General. He would be quite happy whichever way the Council decision went. In his view, the claim made by Monsieur Bourgeois in the letter which he had read seemed to him to be fair and he had acted on this opinion. He should have included in speaking of the candidates the name of Dr. Nitobe. He hoped that he had given a clear answer to the question which Signor Salandra had addressed to him on this point.

Signor Salandra thanked the Secretary General and said that he was glad to receive this reply. He felt, however, that it was impossible for him to recede from his original position, particularly in view of the public feeling in Italy that they did not occupy in the League a position altogether equal to certain other Great Powers.

Monsieur Viviani said that he recognised this, and hoped that it might be remedied in due course.

Signor Salandra thanked Monsieur Viviani for this, but felt that even this hope would not justify his withdrawing his proposal on the main question now under discussion.

Monsieur Viviani suggested that the matter should ~~be~~ be put to the vote.

Signor Salandra said that he feared that this would be necessary as it would clearly mark the position of his Government. After a little consideration, he declared, however, that if the question were put as to whether the Memorandum of the Secretary General was approved, he would abstain from voting.

This proposal was accepted and the Memorandum was approved, Signor Salandra abstaining.

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Draft resolution proposed by
M. BRANTING.

Le Conseil

ayant reçu un certain nombre de demandes exprimant le désir de le voir se saisir du problème des réparations, déclare qu'il donne à ce problème une attention constante

et affirme, conformément à la résolution adoptée par l'Assemblée dans sa séance du 27 septembre 1922, qu'il est prêt à contribuer à la solution du dit problème dès que les Gouvernements intéressés le désireront.