ELECTION OF MONSIEUR LÉON BOURGEOIS AS PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH SENATE.

40/2754/2754.

Despatch, dated 15. 1. 20, from British Ambassador, Paris, transmitted 20.1.20 by British Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

No. 96.

British Embassy
Paris,

My Lord,

I have the honour to report that Monsieur Léon Bourgeois was yesterday elected President of the Senate by a majority of 22 out of 275 votes cast.

Throughout the last 14 years Monsieur Antonin Dubost has been regularly elected as President of the Senate, and at the first vote yesterday he received 103 votes as against 122 for Monsieur Bourgeois, a few votes being cast also for Monsieur de Selves and Monsieur Paul Doumer. At the second vote the figures were 73 for Monsieur Dubost, 103 for Monsieur Bourgeois and 50 for Monsieur de Selves; at the final vote, Monsieur de Selves having withdrawn his candidature, the figures were 147 for Monsieur Bourgeois and 125 for Monsieur Dubost.

I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of the speech delivered by Monsieur Bourgeois, thanking the Senate for his election. Your Lordship will observe that Monsieur Bourgeois interpreted the vote as indicating a desire to confer greater strength and authority on the Senate.
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I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of the speech delivered by Monsieur Bourgeois, thanking the Senate for his election. Your Lordship will observe that Monsieur Bourgeois interpreted the vote as indicating a desire to confer greater strength and authority on the representative of France on the Council of the League of Nations; and that he advocated an exact and rigorous execution of the Treaty of Peace with Germany, assuring the payment of the debts of France, the disarmament of the enemy, and, with the aid of the political, military and financial alliances of France within the framework of the League of Nations, the security of France and the peace of the world.

The part played by Monsieur Bourgeois, as the chief French Delegate on the Commission of the Peace Conference dealing with the creation of the League of Nations, is doubtless well known to Your Lordship. In that capacity he advocated vigorously the creation of a military organisation within the League, of the nature of a general staff; the rejection of this proposal?

The Right Honourable,
Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G.
&c. &c. &c.
proposal by the Commission gave rise at the time to a considerable out-burst in the French press, directed especially against President Wilson. Monsieur Bourgeois in this matter doubtless voiced not merely French military opinion, but the feelings of the great mass of French public opinion.

Monsieur Bourgeois enjoys almost more than any other Frenchman the universal esteem and confidence of his countrymen. He occupies at the present time in France somewhat the same position as that held by an elder Statesman in Japan. He was born in 1851 and was at one time Prefect of Police. He began his Parliamentary career as a Deputy in 1886 and has been a Senator since 1905. He has held many Ministerial posts and was President of the Council and Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1895-96. For two years (1902-4) he was President of the Chamber of Deputies. During the war he was a member of Monsieur Briand's Cabinet of 1915 without a portfolio and of Monsieur Ribot's as Minister of Labour. He was also one of the 4 members of the War Committee in Monsieur Painleve's Cabinet in 1917.

It is generally believed that Monsieur Bourgeois could have been elected President of the Republic in 1913 had he not declined on the grounds of ill-health to allow his name to be put forward as a candidate for that high office.

I have the honour to be with great truth and respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient
humble Servant,

(Sgd). DERBY.