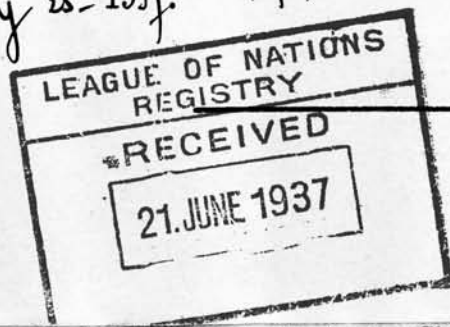


EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF THE ^{second} MEETING OF THE 97th SESSION OF THE COUNCIL,

May 25th 1937.



3892. Tribute to the Memory of the Late Sir Austen Chamberlain.

The PRESIDENT. — Before entering on the work of the present session, the Council will, I feel sure, wish to pay a tribute to the memory of one of its greatest figures, Sir Austen Chamberlain, who died on March 16th, 1937.

Sir Austen Chamberlain was Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom and representative of his country on the Council from 1924 to 1929. During that memorable and formative period in the history of the League, he played a leading part in moulding its development and shaping the course of European affairs. His name will always be associated, first and foremost, with the Locarno Pact of October 1925, for the conclusion of which he was largely responsible, and with the political appeasement—the fruit of intimate collaboration at Geneva between Briand, Stresemann and himself—that followed. The historic example of the personal collaboration of these three great statesmen has ever since been an inspiration to the Members of the Council, and never more so than to-day.

It is eight years since Sir Austen Chamberlain last sat at the Council table and six years since he retired from Ministerial office in his own country. Some—perhaps not many of us—have had the privilege of knowing him personally and of working with him either at Geneva or in London. But every one of us, I feel sure, has felt the influence of that devoted worker for peace and will wish to associate himself with this tribute to his memory. I would ask Mr. Eden to convey the sincere condolences of the Council to the Government of the United Kingdom and to Sir Austen Chamberlain's family.

M. DELBOS. — On behalf of the French Government, I desire to associate myself with the remarks made by the President. The death of Sir Austen Chamberlain leaves a very great gap at Geneva. Here he was one of the workers from the earliest moments. His name was connected with one international negotiation which opened up for Europe a wide and encouraging prospect. The spirit that he leaves behind must remain. We must devote the best of our efforts to maintaining that spirit. On behalf of the French Government, I emphatically declare that we are, and shall remain, faithful to the memory and example of that great worker for peace.

Mr. EDEN. — On behalf of the Government and the people of the United Kingdom, I thank you, Mr. President, and the representative of France and the Members of the Council for the tribute they have paid to the memory of Sir Austen Chamberlain. I will transmit to Sir Austen's family your message of condolence. I feel sure that Sir Austen Chamberlain himself would have taken pride in the tribute which has been paid to him to-day. He was himself always a convinced believer in the League of Nations. His conviction arose, not from a fervent idealistic faith in the conception of a League of Nations, but from practical experience of the working of that organisation. Indeed, it is probably true to say that, during the years of collaboration here between M. Briand, Dr. Stresemann and Sir Austen Chamberlain, the League came nearer to realising its true objectives than it has done at any time before or since.

Perhaps I may be allowed to add that I vividly recollect the first occasion on which I visited Geneva, at a time when I was Parliamentary Private Secretary to Sir Austen Chamberlain, and I remember well the advice he gave me on leaving London to observe closely events at that Council meeting. "Try", he said, "to divest yourself of all prejudice either for or against the League, and you will, I am sure, be convinced that that institution has an important part to play in modern international life".

At this time, when we are each of us conscious of the acute difficulties of the present international situation, we can, I am convinced, pay no sincerer tribute to Sir Austen's memory than to determine to strive, as he did, for the promotion of international collaboration through the machinery of the League and in the spirit of its Covenant.