Secretary's notes of a conference held
in Colonel House's rooms at the Hotel Crillon,
Paris, on Tuesday, February 4th, 1919
at 8:00 p.m. to draft a plan for the
League of Nations

PRESENT

United States of America
- President Wilson
  Colonel House
British Empire
- Lord Robert Cecil
  Lt. General Hon. J. C. Smuts
France
- M. Leon Bourgeois
  M. Larnaude
Italy
- M. Orlando
  M. Senator Scialoja
Japan
- M. Viscount Chinda
  M. Otchial
Belgium
- M. Hymans
Brazil
- M. Epitacio Pessoa
China
- Dr. H.E. Wellington Koo
Serbia
- M. Vesnitch
Portugal
- M. Jayme Batalha Reis

PRESIDENT WILSON suggested that the simplest way to proceed
was to take up each paragraph of the draft, a copy of which was be-
fore each of the members of the Commission, and discuss it. He
asked if there was any objections to taking up the Preamble. It
was as follows:

"In order to secure international peace and security by the
acceptance of obligations not to resort to the use of armed force,
by the prescription of open, just and honorable relations between
nations, by the firm establishment of the understandings of inter-
national law as the actual rule of conduct among governments, and
by the maintenance of justice and a scrupulous respect for all treaty
obligations in the dealings of organized peoples with one another,
and in order to promote international cooperation, the Powers
signatory to this Covenant adopt this constitution of the League
of Nations".

LORD ROBERT CECIL said it might be preferable to postpone
the consideration of the Preamble until the end of the Commissioner's
deliberations. In any case it is suggested that the words "And in
order to promote International cooperation" should be transferred
to the beginning of the Preamble as follows: In order to promote international
international cooperation and to secure international objects, etc."

He said that he would not press the matter if anyone objected.

M. LEON BOURGEOIS suggested examining the Articles before taking up the examination of the Preamble.

PRESIDENT WILSON asked whether M. Bourgeois appreciated the fact that the adoption of the Articles and of the Preamble at this state of the proceedings was only provisional.

M. PESSOA preferred calling the organization "League of States" or "Union of States" rather than "League of Nations".

LORD ROBERT CECIL said that he understood M. Pessoa's principle to be that he believed that the organization should be called the "League" or "Union of States" rather than of Nations.

M. LARNAUDE said that he understood that the word "Nations" was employed in the sense of "States". He approved of M. Pessoa's idea to use the word "Union" rather than "League" or "Society".

PRESIDENT WILSON stated that there was an objection to the use of the word "Union" as it would indicate that the Commission was going further than it really was going. "League of Nations" is the name to which everyone has become accustomed. If it is altered the people will be led to think that something new is being adopted.

M. BOURGEOIS thanked the President for using the word "Society" in his address to the Senate yesterday.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that he was using the word "Society" for a French audience, it having been understood that "Society" would be used in French and "League" in English.

M. FELT asked what the official language would be.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that this had not yet been decided. If there was any difference in significance in French and English it would
it would be decided by the "League of Nations".

M. HYMAN asked whether it would not be a good idea to have a
secretary to note the amendments.

PRESIDENT WILSON stated that this was being done.

M. HYMAN raised the point as to whether or not four additional members
should be added to the Commission.

PRESIDENT WILSON replied that the five great powers had asked that this
point be referred to the Commission for its decision, which was to be communi-
cated back to them. His own idea was that the larger the Commission was made
the slower the work would proceed. Inasmuch as it was the intention to call
in neutrals and small powers as progress was made, he thought this matter
would care for itself. It is not as though the Commission was settling the
fate of any nation. It is settling the fate of all. Hence he saw no point
in admitting four other powers.

M. BOURgeois desired that a vote be taken on the subject.

LORD ROBERT CECIL stated that the Commission was perfectly well
constituted whether the other four powers were added or not.

M. BOURgeois did not understand whether this was a Commission regularly
constituted or whether it was a certain number of men chosen by their
governments to exchange ideas.

M. LARNAUDE explained the way in which the Commission to assess damages
was organized. He stated that there was a secretary general to reduce a
proces verbal.

PRESIDENT WILSON showed that the Commission for assessing damages was
dealing with a different matter; that its proceedings were more like those
of a court. He stated that this Commission's proceedings would be incumbered
by a secretariat.

M. BOURgeois urged for a secretariat.

M. LARNAUDE said that it was necessary to have a proces verbal.

PRESIDENT WILSON opposed the idea. He stated that he wished to keep
his mind wide open, so that he could say the opposite of what he
what he had said before if he saw fit.

SIGNOR ORLANDO said that this was a Committee for study.

PRESIDENT WILSON suggested holding informal conversations until the document should be in shape and then having formal conversation to adopt it.

M. HYMANS explained this to M. Bourgeois and M. Iarnaude who agreed.

LORD ROBERT CECIL hoped that this would not mean that there should be two sets of discussions.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that the formal conversations would simply be for the purpose of adopting the convention.

SIGNOR ORLANDO said that he understood that where there was an agreement nothing would be said but where there might be a disagreement this would appear in the formal report of the conversations.

M. LEON BOURGEOIS did not see how any agreement could be reached unless all the guarantees of discussion are had by recording the conversations.

SIGNOR SCIALOA suggested as a compromise that the text be adopted and if there were any objections they should be noted.

PRESIDENT WILSON recalled the discussion to the problem in regard to the admission of the four other members of the Commission.

M. HYMANS urged that Roumania, Greece, Poland and the Czecho-Slovaks be admitted.

PRESIDENT WILSON showed that these were mostly new nationalities and that it would be more natural to draw in older nations than the new ones. He said that he was a friend of the Czecho-Slovaks and Poles, but that he thought it better not to involve them.

LORD ROBERT CECIL said that the object of this Commission is to draw the best draft for a League of Nations so that no nation is favored. When it is drafted, the plan is to be submitted to the whole Peace Conference. The question involved was whether nineteen
nineteen Commissioners are better qualified to draft this plan than fifteen.

H. JAYANS seemed to think that it would be more fair to have the smaller nations represented.

M. LEON BOURGEOIS favored admitting the four extra nations.

M. VESNITZ thought that it would be a good thing to admit them as it would give them a very good impression.

IL. KOUS agreed.

LORD ROBERT GALLIL hoped that this would not involve going back on what had already been done.

It was stated that it would not.

PRESIDENT WILSON called for a vote.

By a vote of nine, it was agreed to report back to the Conference of the five powers that this Commission would take in the representatives of the four other powers.

PRESIDENT WILSON then proceeded to explain Article I of this draft and asked for any comments.

**Article 1**

"The action of the High Contracting Parties under the terms of this Covenant shall be effected through the instrumentality of meetings of Delegates representing the H.C.P., of meetings at more frequent intervals of an Executive Council representing the States more immediately concerned in the matters under discussion, and of a permanent international Secretariat to be established at the capital of the League."

M. LEON BOURGEOIS raised an objection to the Executive Council being composed of States more immediately concerned in the matters under discussion. He said that in the plan submitted, the Executive Council would not be sufficiently permanent.

PRESIDENT WILSON suggested striking out the words "representing the States more immediately concerned in the matters under discussion."

PRESIDENT WILSON then proceeded to the consideration of Article II. Paragraph One, which is as follows:

"Meetings of the Body of Delegates shall be held from time to time as occasion may require for the purpose of dealing with matters within the sphere of action of the League."
He asked for any amendments to Paragraph One.

M. LEON BOURGEOIS argued for having fixed meetings of the Board of Delegates.

PRESIDENT WILSON showed that it was purposed to give the League certain important and continuous functions; that the members would consist of diplomats at the capital chosen as the seat of the League. Those men would be in constant touch. He would not like to see the Delegates go home and work up something to discuss between meetings. The more normal and continuous the organization be made, the better.

M. LEON BOURGEOIS said that there was not such a great difference between his views and the PRESIDENT'S, but that he thought that the members of the League, whoever they might be, should have some regular times for meeting.

PRESIDENT WILSON suggested amending the Article so as to read "meetings of the Body of Delegates shall be hold at stated intervals and from time to time as occasion may require, etc".

SIGNOR ORLANDO called attention to the fact that this was a permanent Council that could meet when it wished to.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that it was most important that it should meet when it wished to.

Mr. LARNAUDE said that this was an institution which must have periodic meetings if it is to be effective.

LORD ROBERT CECIL saw no objection to having fixed meetings, but thought that the intervals should be long.

PRESIDENT WILSON believed that the intervals should not be stated.

LORD ROBERT CECIL agreed to this.

PRESIDENT WILSON read Paragraph Two, Article II and Paragraph Three of Article II.

"Meetings of the Body of Delegates shall be hold at the capital of the League or at such other place as may be found convenient and shall consist of not more than two representatives of each of the H.O.P."

"An Ambassador or Minister of one of the H.O.P. shall"
be competent to act as its representative."

LORD ROBERT CECIL suggested that for the words "not more than two representatives" down to the end of the third paragraph substitute the words "the ambassadors or ministers of the High Contracting Parties at unless other representatives are specially appointed for this purpose."

After the words "Body of Delegates" in the fourth paragraph of Article II, insert in each case the words "or the Executive Council". In consequence, this paragraph should be transferred to Article III as the fourth paragraph of that article.

For the words "those present" at the end of the same paragraph, substitute the words "the States represented". He also suggested striking out paragraph three entirely.

PRESIDENT WILSON thought that it would be a mistake to have a body of special representatives.

SIGNOR SCIALOJA, backed by Signor Orlando, thought it necessary that every member of the League should always have its representative present.

The Commission passed to the discussion of Paragraph Four of Article II, which reads as follows:

"All matters of procedure at meetings of the Body of Delegates, including the appointment of committees to investigate particular matters, shall be regulated by the Body of Delegates, and may be decided by a majority of those present at the meetings."

LORD ROBERT CECIL suggested adding the words "and the Executive Council" after the words "By the Body of Delegates". The purpose of this being to allow the Executive Council to decide its own matters of procedure.

He also suggested changing the phrase
the phrase "and may be decided by a majority of those present at the meeting" to "and may be decided by a majority of the States present at the meeting". He said that the word "those" instead of "the States" appeared to have been a slip.

PRESIDENT WILSON stated that the commission had now come to the question as to how the Executive Council should be constituted. He showed that the chief physical burdens of the League will fall on the great powers whether those burdens are military or economic. He said that the adoption of the League will depend upon whether it can be done without making the powers too uneasy. It is desirable to make the plan acceptable, that the great powers should be in the Executive Council. Then it should be considered what other elements, if any, there should be to it. The General idea is that the Executive Council will consist of those other powers whose interests are affected. The scheme is to have the Executive Council consist of the interested parties. The great powers are always interested. He called attention to the fact that it was allowed to any party interested to draw the matter away from the Executive Council back into the group of delegates where no group of powers can impose their will.

M. VESNITOH spoke for giving the smaller parties the opportunity of being represented in the Executive Council. This idea was provided for in the first American plan, and in the Italian plan.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that the difficulty of making a satisfactory choice from among the smaller powers led to the elimination of this plan.

LORD ROBERT CECIL said that the drafters of the plan had started with the idea that the council should be small. The problem was therefore how is should be constituted. If M. Vesnitch's idea that all the powers are equal were adopted the Council will have to be elected by all the members of the League. This might lead to some of the greater powers being voted down
by the smaller powers. Such a scheme would never be acceptable to the greater powers.

A second objection is that at present it is planned that the Council shall act by unanimity. If the number be increased the element of voting will be introduced. This might lead to having a greater power dragged along by the smaller powers. The plan as presented goes as far as possible because the matter in discussion may be brought finally into the full body of delegations. He admitted that much was to be said for the idea of the equality of the powers but did not see how a plan for it could be worked out.

M. VESNITCHEV stated that if the article is retained the smaller powers would be dissatisfied.

M. HYMANS said that he would go farther than M. Vesnitch and would say that the smaller powers would not accept the scheme as it exists. He admitted the need of a council which should be small and be able to act quickly but he said that there was something even more important which was that the council must inspire confidence. There will be a danger unless the smaller powers are represented. If a small power had difficulty with a great power it would be at a disadvantage. He preferred the former American plan.

He criticized paragraph 2 which provided that invitations will be sent to any power whose interests are directly affected on the ground that he did not understand who was to judge when the interests were affected.

PRESIDENT WILSON asked him what system he preferred.

M. HYMANS replied that he preferred the French or American system.

DR. H. E. WELLINGTON KOO did not entirely indorse the views of M. Vesnitch and M. Hymans. He did not object to the standing representation of the great powers but he did ask for the representation of the smaller powers. He said that what the Commission is now trying to do is to draw up a League of Nations that will operate successfully and that the smaller nations must not be
made to feel that there is a gulf between the great powers and the
smaller ones. It is impossible to get a world-wide opinion unless
the small nations are heard. He preferred the American plan.

M. FERSSON objected to the scheme on the ground that it is
not a League of Nations because only the five great powers are
represented. He also approved of the first American plan.

M. REIS also preferred the first American plan with the
exception that he did not like the classification of the smaller
powers into two groups.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that this was not essential.

M. LEON BOURGEOIS feared that if too much power is given
to the great powers that they will act rather for peace than for
peace founded on justice.

PRESIDENT WILSON asked whether the French Government would
be agreeable to the American scheme.

M. LEON BOURGEOIS replied that he believed his government
would agree to any plan that was arrived at unanimously by the
Commission.

SIGNOR ORLANDO said that since the action of the executive
committee must be unanimous he did not understand Lord Robert
Cecil's objection to increasing the representation.

LORD ROBERT CECIL objected to any proposal which might lead
to an opposition of interests between the great powers and the
small powers. He showed that there never had been a division
between the great powers as such and the small powers as such and
feared that this opposition of interests might be engendered.
However, he saw that there was such opposition to his proposal
that the Article would have to be redrafted.

PRESIDENT WILSON stated that he understood that there would
be no objection to a scheme which comprises membership of the
five great powers and a minority to be elected by the smaller
powers.

M. ETAINS agreed to this.

LORD ROBERT CECIL asked whether the action of the council
should be by unanimity or by a majority vote. He disliked the
idea of introducing the majority vote.

No decision was reached on this question.

The meeting adjourned until February 5th at 8:30 P.M.

at the same place.