COMMISSION ON THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

SUB-COMMITTEE

TO CONSIDER A REPLY TO GERMAN COUNTER PROPOSALS

JUNE 7, 1919.

A committee of the Commission on the League of Nations composed of Lord Robert Cecil, M. Leon Bourgeois, Marchese Imperiali (for the Italian Delegation) and Colonel House met at 12 Noon, June 7th at the Hotel Ortillon to consider what reply should be made to the German proposals regarding the League of Nations.

Lord Robert Cecil submitted the following draft for the consideration of the committee:

"1. It has never been the intention of the Allied and Associated Powers that Germany should be indefinitely excluded from the League of Nations. On the contrary, it is their hope that the League will as soon as possible include all nations that can be trusted to carry out the obligations accepted by Members of the League. As soon as they are satisfied that Germany possesses a stable government which has given clear proofs of its pacific tendency by taking the necessary steps towards disarmament, the principal Allied and Associated Powers are prepared to support Germany's candidature for admission to the League, and they see no reason, provided these necessary steps are taken, why Germany should not become a Member of the League within a few months.

"2. The Allied and Associated Powers do not consider that an addition to the Covenant in the sense of the German proposals regarding economic questions is necessary. They would point out that the Covenant already provides that 'subject to and in accordance with the provisions of international conventions existing or hereafter to be agreed upon, the Members of the League......will make provision to secure and maintain freedom of communication and of transit, and equitable treatment for the commerce of all Members of the League', and that a General Convention with regard to Transit questions is now being prepared. So soon as Germany is admitted to the League, she will enjoy the benefits of these provisions."

Further, the Allied and Associated Powers agree that so soon as Germany is admitted to the League Parts IX, X and XII of the present Treaty shall be subject to revision by the Council, with a view to determining whether some, or all of the obligations thereby laid upon Germany shall no longer apply except on the basis
of reciprocity, provided that the special necessities of the regions devastated during the war of 1914-1918 shall be borne in mind.

"3. The Allied and Associated Powers have already pointed out to the German delegates that the Covenant of the League of Nations provides for "the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations". They recognise that the acceptance by Germany of the terms laid down for her own disarmament will facilitate and hasten the accomplishment of a general reduction of armaments; they intend to open negotiations immediately with a view to the eventual adoption of a scheme of such general reduction, and they hope that substantial progress will have been made when the Assembly of the League meets for the first time, as is intended, in October of the present year. In these negotiations the possibility of securing the general abolition of universal military service will be carefully considered. The actual execution of any scheme that may be adopted must depend largely on the satisfactory fulfilment by Germany of the disarmament terms of the present Treaty.

"4. The Allied and Associated Powers are prepared to accord to Germany guarantees, under the protection of the League of Nations, for the educational, religious, and cultural rights of German Minorities in territories hitherto forming part of the German Empire. They take note of the statement of the German delegates that Germany is determined to treat foreign minorities within her territory according to the same principles."

Colonel House thought it an admirable statement of the principles which should be expressed in the reply.

It was decided to discuss the reply Clause by Clause.

CLAUSE I.

M. Leon Bourgeois agreed in principle that Germany should be admitted to the League of Nations but was uncertain in his mind how soon this admission should take place.

Colonel House thought that Germany would be more dangerous outside of the League than within it and urged that she be admitted "within a few months".

Marchese Imperiali agreed with the point of view expressed by Colonel House.
M. Leon Bourgeois was doubtful as to the meaning of "a few months". He asked whether this phrase could properly be translated in French as "Quelques mois". When he had been assured that this was a correct translation, he accepted the provision.

M. Leon Bourgeois wished to have Germany's obligations to make reparations definitely stipulated as a point which would have to be fulfilled before her admission into the League.

Lord Robert Cecil was willing to amend the first clause by striking out the words, "pacific tendency by taking" and insert the words, "intention to observe its international obligations and to take".

M. Leon Bourgeois wished to insert after the word "obligations" in Lord Robert Cecil's new Araft the words, "including those arising out of the Treaty of Peace".

Lord Robert Cecil said that Germany's gloomy financial future would not be bettered by the insertion of the words suggested by M. Bourgeois. He further thought it very unwise to perpetuate the bitterness of the war by a specific reference to the harsh obligations imposed by the Treaty of Peace.

Colonel House assumed M. Bourgeois that, with Germany in the League of Nations, not only would the strength of the Allies insure the fulfillment by her of her obligations, but the strength of the League as well would insure their fulfillment.

M. Leon Bourgeois was willing to pass on to Clause II on the understanding that he reserved judgment on the question whether it was not necessary to include the words "including those arising out of the Treaty of Peace", after the word "obligations".
CLAUSE II.

M. Leon Bourgeois asked whether Parts IX, X and XII referred to in Clause II, included the reparations provisions which he thought ought not to be subject to review.

Lord Robert Cecil assured him that the reparations provisions were not included, whereupon the second clause was adopted.

CLAUSE III.

M. Leon Bourgeois took exception to the following sentence, "in these negotiations the possibility of securing the general abolition of universal military service will be carefully considered". He reminded the members of the committee of the arguments which had been advanced by the French Delegation before the League of Nations Commission, to the effect that France considered universal military service as an essential phase of democracy. He could not agree to the insertion of anything in the German reply which would compromise the French Government in the maintenance of this attitude.

Colonel House pointed out that Clause III only provided that this question would be "carefully considered".

M. Leon Bourgeois objected to what he considered to be its prejudicial wording.

Lord Robert Cecil said that the opinion of his country was as strongly in favor of the abolition of universal military service as the opinion of France was in favor of maintaining it. He would therefore have to insist upon making some mention of it in this Clause, though he was willing to strike out the words, "possibility of securing the general abolition" and insert the word "question!"

Marchese Imperiali was personally ready to accept this new the formula but preferred to reserve the point for consideration of
his Government.

M. Leon Bourgeois believed that the formula was satisfactory, but made the same reservation.

Lord Robert Cecil pointed out that this was merely a draft to be sent up for the consideration of the Council of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers and that the French and Italian Members of this Council could make any modifications in it which seemed necessary.

It was therefore agreed that the draft, as amended should go forward to the Council of the Allied and Associated Powers as the report of the committee, but that M. Leon Bourgeois and the Marchese Imperiali could make any observations they desired on the points which they had reserved to their representatives on this Council.

The meeting of the committee was adjourned at 1:15.

[Signature]
SECRETARY.