

FIRST MEETING (PRIVATE)

Held at Paris on Monday, December 10th, 1923, at 11 a.m.

Present All the representatives of the Members of the Council and the Secretary-General.

1098. Adoption of the Agenda.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL read a letter from the Hungarian delegation requesting the withdrawal from the agenda of the present session of the question of the "Arad Csanad Railway" This request was made in agreement with the Roumanian Government.

The Council decided to delete the question from the agenda of the session.

The PRESIDENT informed the Council that he had received a telegram from the High Commissioner at Danzig stating that the question regarding Polish diplomatic personnel in Danzig had been settled by mutual agreement between the parties concerned.

The Council expressed its satisfaction at the settlement of this question.

The Council adopted the agenda.

1099. Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations Application of the Greco-Turkish Convention.

Viscount ISHII made the following statement

"The agenda of the present session having now been adopted, I request the permission of my colleagues to lay before them a question which is not upon the agenda, but regarding which they received several documents during November, and with which I was concerned when Acting President of the Council.

"On November 8th, 1923, Ismet Pasha, Prime Minister of Turkey forwarded to Geneva, for communication to the Members of the Council, a copy of a note sent by his Government to the representatives at Constantinople of the Powers signatory to the Treaty of Lausanne. This document was a complaint against the Greek authorities, who were accused of taking measures against persons of Mohammedan faith covered by the provisions of the Greco-Turkish Convention for the Exchange of Populations. The note alleged that these measures had been taken before the decisions of the Mixed Commission entrusted with settling this exchange had been made known. Three members of this Commission had been appointed, as you are doubtless aware, by the Council. Ismet Pasha requested, at the same time, in a letter addressed to the Secretary-General, that the question should be laid before the Council because of the possible danger to peace in the Near East.

"This communication was followed by one from the Greek Government dated November 16th, 1923. The Greek Government, however, simply forwarded a copy of the note which it had addressed to the Powers in reply to the accusations brought against it, in which it complained in its turn of the measures taken by the Turkish authorities contrary to the Convention, in particular those which concerned the able-bodied men of Greek race retained in Asia Minor.

"Greece did not ask that the question should be laid before the Council, nor could it be laid before it by Turkey since she was not at present a Member of the League. It should be remembered that the Council, in accepting responsibility for appointing three members of the Mixed Commission, has assumed no responsibility for the execution of the Convention regarding the exchange of populations. The duty of the Acting President was, however, to examine under what procedure the communications thus received should be placed on the agenda of the Council should any danger to peace arise.

"I examined the question with care, after taking the advice of several of my colleagues. While engaged upon this examination we received from the Mixed Commission a telegram dated November 22nd forwarding an extract from its Minutes, from which it appeared that, at its meeting on November 21st, the Greek and Turkish delegates had made, on the instructions of their respective Governments, identical declarations expressing their confidence in the Mixed Commission and their conviction that it would overcome all the difficulties involved in its important task.

"After this communication, it was evident that the situation had fortunately ceased to cause anxiety as regarded international relations, and that it would be useless to seek further for a solution of the question of procedure which I had been examining. My colleagues will doubtless be as happy as I am to learn that the Mixed Commission is carrying on its work under conditions which promise success."

The Council decided to forward to the Turkish and Greek Governments and to the Chairman of the Mixed Commission a copy of the Minutes containing the above statement.