

Lithuanian, White Russian and Jewish elements of the population had not taken part in the elections of January 8th. These populations would, no doubt, suffer for having so abstained. The Council would desire to take steps to protect the Lithuanians, White Russians and Jews resident in Vilna territory who, according to pre-war statistics, constituted 90 % of the population.

M. ASKENAZY protested against the assertions of the Lithuanian delegate and stated that it was not true to say that White Russians and Jews had not taken part in the last elections. He added that the minorities question resolved itself into two parts

(1) The Council had been informed some time ago of a series of despairing appeals from more than 200,000 Poles resident in the State of Kovno, who had been persecuted first of all because they were Poles, and then because they were landowners, established on that soil for five centuries. These complaints had been supported many times by the Polish Government. This important question had last been raised by the Polish delegate in the Sixth Committee of the Assembly of the League on September 20th, 1921, when Lithuania was admitted to the League.

(2) The Lithuanian Government, in order to divert attention and prevent notice being taken of the intolerable situation of these 200,000 Poles, had made two complaints dated October 28th and November 28th, 1921. These complaints concerned the alleged persecution of Lithuanians in Vilna and the alleged denationalisation of 20,000 Lithuanians resident in Poland. Concerning the alleged denationalisation, the Secretary-General had, on December 13th, replied to the Lithuanian Government to the effect that Poland, having undertaken engagements contained in the Minorities Treaty of June 28th, 1919, any Member of the League had the right to make observations on the particular case if it considered that these engagements had not been kept. Poland obviously could not reply to vague and uncalled-for accusations.

The Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs had already answered, in his letter of December 10th, 1921, the accusation of alleged persecutions of Lithuanians in Vilna. With reference to this letter, he would only mention recent issues of Lithuanian papers, particularly the newspaper edited by the Lithuanian Minister in that town. An extract from this paper was enough to show that the Lithuanian element enjoyed full liberty in Vilna, and was able to attack the local as well as the Polish Government.

M. Askenazy read a letter addressed to the President of the Council containing proposals of the Polish Government concerning the rights of Polish minorities in Lithuania. (Annex 295c.)

The Council decided that these proposals should be examined by M. de Cunha Rapporteur on the minorities questions in Lithuania.

On the proposal of M. Hanolaux, the Council decided to ask the President to prepare draft recommendations dealing with the questions upon which it had heard the two parties' views.

SIXTH MEETING (PUBLIC)

held on Thursday, January 12th, 1922, at 3.30 p.m.

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

M. Askenazy, representative of Poland, M. Salm, representative of the Free City, and General Haking, High Commissioner for the League at Danzig, took their seats at the Council table.

546. Danzig Control and Administration of the Vistula in the Territory of the Free City

Viscount ISHII read a report (Annex 296), which concluded with the following resolution

“ The representatives of the Polish and Danzig Governments are requested to talk over the question of the control and administration

of the Vistula river and to inform the Secretary-General before the end of the session whether a solution of this question can be expected by direct negotiation."

M. SAHM said he was ready to negotiate, but observed that the principle at issue had already been determined by the Treaty of November 9th, 1920, and also by the decisions of the Harbour Board and the High Commissioner.

M. ASKENAZY said that it was a question of interpreting an article of the Treaty, and, moreover, that another article of this Treaty laid down that its stipulations could be altered by an agreement between the two parties. He accepted the resolution which had been proposed. The method of direct negotiation recommended to the two parties by the Council in June had already given excellent results. The most important was the Polish-Danzig Agreement of October 24th, as a result of which the customs frontier between Danzig and Poland had been suppressed on the previous night, January 10th-11th, which promised well for the economic development of Danzig. Numerous factories, especially chemical factories, were already springing up in Danzig, which assured to that city great advantages over the Polish market. These and many similar results had been obtained owing to the spirit of conciliation shown by Poland. It was desirable that the Government of Danzig should show evidence of a similar spirit. He would remind the representative of Danzig that the sole reason for the existence of the Free City, and the sole object for which it had been established, was to assure to Poland free access to the sea. If this had not been the case, Danzig might perhaps have been left to Germany.

M. SAHM said that the Free City had given proofs of its conciliatory spirit and that it did not lose sight of the right of Poland to free access to the sea. There were, however, important questions involving the sovereignty of the Free City which could not be settled by compromise, and for this reason provision had been made for resort to a decision of the High Commissioner and, if necessary, to the Council.

The resolution moved by Viscount Ishii was adopted.

547 Danzig Acquisition and loss of Nationality

Viscount ISHII read a report (Annex 297), which concluded with the following resolution

"(1) It is decided that the principles of the draft law concerning the acquisition and loss of nationality in the Free City of Danzig, which was forwarded to the High Commissioner by the President of the Danzig Senate on November 26th, 1921, do not necessitate the formulation of any objection on the part of the Council of the League of Nations.

"(2) Any modification of principle in the stipulations set forth in this draft law must be approved by the Council before enactment into law"

The resolution was adopted.

548. Danzig Provisional Commercial and Consular Agreement between Poland and Danzig on the one part and Norway on the other part.

Viscount ISHII read a report (Annex 298), which concluded with the following resolution

"The Secretary-General is requested to authorise the High Commissioner of the League of Nations in Danzig to inform the Polish Government that he will not exercise any veto under Article 6 of the Treaty of November 9th, 1920, with regard to the Agreement concerning the provisional regulation of commercial and consular relations between Poland and the Free City of Danzig on the one part and Norway on the other, and the additional protocol to this Agreement, in the form in which these documents were notified in writing to the High Commissioner on October 25th, 1921."

The resolution was adopted.