

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION

Held at Hunter College, New York on Friday

3 May 1946, at 10:30 a.m.

Present: Mr. Rice (Chairman)  
Mr. Campson  
Mr. Mahalanobis  
Mr. Sauvy

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. and reported to the Commission on a conversation with Mr. Kameniv, (Assistant to Mr. Gromyko of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Delegation to the United Nations). According to Mr. Kameniv, a Mr. Chernikov whom he described as a distinguished economist, left Moscow on 21 April and is now en route to this country, presumably to serve as a member of the Statistical Commission.

The Chairman reviewed briefly progress on consideration of agenda items and proposed that the Commission strive to complete discussion by Thursday, 9 May. If this goal is achieved, it was suggested that the Commission might recess until Tuesday, 14 May and then meet again to consider a draft of the Commission's report which would have been prepared during the recess. The Commission concurred in the suggested schedule and agreed also to recess at the close of the morning meeting today and to meet again at 10:30 a.m. Monday, 6 May.

The Commission then turned to the consideration of statistical activities of the League of Nations. The "Working Paper on the Statistical and Research Activities of the League of Nations", prepared by Mr. A. Rosenberg (E/STAT/W.2 - 26 April 1946) was introduced, and Mr. Rosenberg was asked to report orally to the Commission on some

aspects of the present status of the organization and work of the Economic, Financial and Transit Department of the League. Mr. Rosenberg referred to the following documents which had been distributed to members of the Commission:

1. League of Nations, International Conference Relating to Economic Statistics (26 November to 14 December 1928).
2. League of Nations, Report on the Work of the League During the War, submitted to the Assembly by the Acting Secretary-General (Geneva, October 1945).
3. The Economic and Financial Organization of the League of Nations - A Survey of Twenty-five Years' Experience - by Martin Hill (CONFIDENTIAL) (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, 1945).
4. League of Nations, Studies and Reports on Statistical Methods, Nos. 1-6.
5. League of Nations, Committee of Statistical Experts; Reports to the Council on the Work of the First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Sessions.
6. League of Nations, Committee of Statistical Experts, Report of the Sub-Committee on National Income Statistics - Princeton, New Jersey, April 1946.
7. League of Nations, Committee of Statistical Experts, Sub-Committee on Banking Statistics, Draft Report - Princeton, New Jersey, March 1946.
8. League of Nations, Committee of Statistical Experts, Sub-Committee on Balance of Payments Statistics, Note on Balance of Payments Statistics - Princeton, New Jersey, December 1945.
9. Memorandum on the League of Nations Committee of Statistical Experts, by E. Dana Durand, 25 April 1946.
10. United Kingdom Delegation to the United Nations, paper on Composition of the Commission of the Economic and Social Council (E/COMMISSIONS/2 - 30 April 1946).

Mr. Rosenberg's remarks were directed principally to provisions of the International Convention Relating to Economic Statistics and the Final Act of the International Conference Relating to Economic Statistics (the English and French texts of which are contained in the first of the documents listed above).

In response to a question on the present status of the Committee of Statistical Experts, Mr. Rosenberg replied that the League Council, by a resolution adopted on the outbreak of the war, had provided for continuation of this and other committees "until further notice".

Mr. Rosenberg suggested that it would be unnecessary to amend the International Convention Relating to Economic Statistics in substance, but that the Statistical Commission might wish to draw the situation to the attention of the Economic and Social Council and make recommendations as to interpretation or modification of the Convention, with particular reference to Article 8, which is in part obsolete.

Considerable discussion was devoted to the legal status of the Convention. It was the consensus of this discussion that if no action is taken the Convention will continue in operation to the extent that it is now operative; and that the particular means of accomplishing any modification or re-negotiation, whether by individual amendment or over-~~all~~ enabling act, would have to be considered by legal experts.

The Commission discussed the relative advantages of seeking amendment or re-negotiation of the Convention and of allowing it to become inoperative and be replaced during the course of time by other instruments which will be developed through the United Nations. Subsequently during the meeting it was agreed that, since no legal action is needed to continue the Convention in operation to the extent that it is now operative, the Commission would not include a recommendation on this point in its report to Economic and Social Council. This conclusion was based on the assumption that the Commission, when it is established as a permanent body, would consider and formulate recommendations on the Convention and the Annexes thereto.

Some discussion was devoted also to the Annexes to the Convention. A question was raised as to the extent to which the material contained in the Annexes is in need of review. Mr. Rosenberg pointed out that the Articles of the Convention provided only for "general acceptance of the principles underlying" the Annexes.

When the discussion turned to the consideration of the work of the League's Committee of Statistical Experts, Mr. Rosenberg was requested to inform the Commission of the status and present membership of the Committee. Mr. Rosenberg replied that the following members of the Committee are still alive: C. Bruscheiler (Switzerland); R.H. Coats (Canada); E. Cohn (Denmark); Dana Durand (United States); M. Huber (France); G. Jahn (Norway); C. Morgenstern (Austria); E. Szturm de Sztrem (Poland). The vacancy arising from the death of Sir Alfred Flux (United Kingdom) has not been filled, as the League Council has not met since early in the war. Mr. Rosenberg repeated that the Committee has indefinite tenure, since the last action of the League Council, which provided for its continuation until further notice, has not been revoked and the Council is no longer in existence. The view was expressed that the excellent work and experience of this Committee should not be allowed to lapse entirely. The Commission agreed to include in its report to the Economic and Social Council a recommendation that the Statistical Commission take over as soon as possible the functions of the Committee of Statistical Experts. It was agreed further that some provision should be made for continuing the statistical work and publications of the League of Nations. Formulation of a recommendation on this point, however, was deferred to a later meeting, as it was deemed desirable for the Commission to complete its study of documents covering this subject and to hear further from Mr. Rosenberg.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:33 p.m., until 10:30 a.m.,  
Monday, 6 May.