

Communicated
to the Council.

C.346.1926.II

LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

Geneva, June 7th 1926.

Counterfeiting Currency.

Letter from M. Briand.

Note by the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General has the honour to circulate to the Council the following letter from M. Briand.

FRENCH REPUBLIC.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Political Department.

(Translation)

Paris, June 5th, 1926.

To the Secretary-General.

Sir,

The French Government's attention has been drawn to numerous cases during the past few years in which the national currency of various countries has been forged.

The circumstances attending these criminal acts have shown that the counterfeiting of the currency not only constitutes a danger to the credit of the injured country, but that, owing to the financial and economic solidarity which is springing up between States, the consequences of such action are in certain cases much more widespread. Though such crimes deal a blow in the first instance at the financial strength of the country whose currency is counterfeited, they are also capable, as a direct consequence, of

disturbing international public order.

It should also be noted that bank notes are usually forged and put into circulation outside the country whose national money they are. The reason for this is that the criminal considers that he is less closely watched abroad, and that it is easier for him to pass a note with which bankers and business men are less familiar.

Under these circumstances, it would seem to be the interest and duty of all States in order to strengthen the means of defence which they individually possess, and to enable them to assist each other, to consider jointly treaty stipulations by which they might more effectively repress the "international crime" of counterfeiting the currency.

This co-operation, the conditions and extent of which could be defined only after full investigation, might in the first place take the form of co-operation on the part of the Courts and the police of the various countries.

An important step forward would also be recorded if States agreed to amend their penal laws and to inflict on all persons guilty of counterfeiting foreign currencies penalties comparable with those imposed in the case of the counterfeiting of national currencies.

Finally, the creation of an international office, which would keep in close touch with the currency authorities in the various countries and would collect accurate information as to the origin of forged notes and the methods of forgers, would seem likely to furnish effective assistance to the judges and the police of the various countries.

In this form, or in whatever manner seemed the most expedient or effective, the international understanding which the Government of the Republic feels essential would in fact merely come within the scope of the agreements which have been successfully concluded for the purpose of dealing with crimes against the common law of nations, such as the agreements of 1904 and 1910 regarding the suppression of the white slave traffic and of obscene publications. Such an understanding would be in keeping with the noble idea of international solidarity which the Government of the Republic desires to see constantly extended.

The French Government has thought that the League of Nations, which has undertaken the development of this movement of international legislation designed to bring the various countries into closer relations and to spread justice, was the body specially qualified to find a solution for this problem.

I should therefore be grateful to you if you would submit to the Council of the League of Nations the proposal, which is made by the French Government, to entrust to a committee, specially selected from among competent persons to be appointed by the various States, the work of framing a draft convention for suppressing the crime of counterfeiting the currency.

(signed) ARISTIDE BRIAND.