

LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

Geneva, July 6th, 1923.

MINORITIES IN LITHUANIA.

COMMUNICATION FROM M. SALANDRA, PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL.

I have just received a Note, dated July 3rd, 1923, from the Polish Delegate accredited to the League of Nations. This Note deals with the question of Minorities in Lithuania, and with the situation arising out of the fact that, as the declaration relating to Minorities which was signed by Lithuania on May 12th, 1922, has not been ratified, it has not yet entered into force, and consequently, that the Minorities regime in that country is not subject to any international guarantee. The Polish Delegate asks whether there is any prospect of a satisfactory and final settlement of the question of the status of Minorities in Lithuania before the meeting of the Fourth Assembly, and if not, what action the Council proposes to take in the matter.

I beg to remind you that the Secretary-General, in a Memorandum communicated to the Members of the Council on April 13th, (Document C.268.1923) gave an account of the position of the question at that date. In this Memorandum mention was made, in particular, of the Resolution of the Council, dated May 15th, 1922, in accordance with which the Council requested the Lithuanian Government to notify the Secretary-General, as soon as possible, of the ratification of the Declaration regarding the protection of Minorities which was signed by M. Sidzikauskas, the Lithuanian representative, on May 12th, 1922. Mention was also made in the Memorandum of the declaration made by M. Sidzikauskas to the Council on February 1st, 1923, to the effect that the instrument of ratification would shortly be deposited with the Secretariat of the League of Nations, and, finally, of the letter from M. Sidzikauskas, dated April 9th,

1923, in which he informed the Secretariat that the Declaration has been laid upon the table of the Lithuanian Chamber for ratification; but that, as the Lithuanian Parliament had been dissolved, the ratification could not take place until after the meeting of the new Chamber, the elections for which had been fixed for May 12th and 13th. I am further informed by the Secretary-General that, having heard that the new Lithuanian Parliament had assembled on June 5th, he addressed a letter on June 15th, 1923, to the Lithuanian Minister for Foreign Affairs and requested the latter to inform him whether it would be possible to arrange for the deposit of the instrument of ratification at Geneva before the meeting of the Council, which was fixed for June 29th and the following days, so that he might then be able to inform the Council. As no reply to this letter had been received by the Secretariat when the Council met, the Secretary-General telegraphed on July 4th to the Lithuanian Minister for Foreign Affairs and requested the latter to inform him, for the information of the Council, of the actual position of the question.

I would propose that the Council should decide to place the question of the ratification of the Lithuanian Declaration of May 12th, 1922, regarding the protection of Minorities on the Agenda of its next Session, and that the Council should instruct the Secretary-General to inform the Lithuanian Government of its decision.

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