LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Geneva, September 4th, 1924.

SAAR BASIN

THE FRENCH MILITARY FORCES IN THE SAAR TERRITORY.

Letter dated September 1st 1924 from the Governing Commission

Note by the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General has the honour to forward for the information of the Council and the Members of the League, copy of the letter dated September 1st 1924 from the Saar Basin Governing Commission containing observations on a petition from representatives of certain political groups in the Advisory Council of the Saar Territory entitled "The French military forces in the Saar Territory." (1)

I had the honour to forward to you in my letter No. 5023 August 19th two Memoranda, (C. 413. M. 152. 1924 I and C. 414. M. 153. 1.) from certain prominent persons in the Saar Territory. Governing Commission would wish to make the following observations on these memoranda:

With reference to its letter of July 15th, 1924, (C. 361. 1924) Governing Commission is of the opinion that the memorandum intitled, "The Abuses and Unnecessary Maintenance of the French Authority in the Saar" does not call for any particular action, except with regard to its two Annexes. The Commission observes that it has no information concerning events prior to assuming office on February 26th, 1920. In particular, the Commission has no details as to regrettable occurrences of October, when disorderly scenes took place involving fatal casualties both the troops and the civilian population. It has made full efforts to obtain pardons for a very large number of inmates of the Territory who, in connection with these disturbances, had been sentenced by the Courts-Martial of the forces at the time occupying the Territory under the Armistice terms.

The Commission regrets the only two incidents involving casualties which have occurred since February 26th, 1920; these are quoted in the Annex. Regarding the case of H. Jornowin, to recall the communication addressed on this matter to the Secretariat of the League of Nations on November 8th, 1922 (C. 744. 1922. 1). In the case of M. Müller and Meyer, two men were charged and tried by court-martial. They were
mitted by the court on the ground that they acted justifiably
self-defence.

As for the unfortunate accident which happened on June
1924, on the drill-ground at Freulautern, an enquiry has
revealed the facts that there were notices in German forbidding
access to the ground, that the grenades were German, and that the
French troops do not use either German or French grenades in the
Saar Territory. In all probability they were munitions of war
existing in the possession of individual persons, who got rid
of them by leaving them on a drill-ground. The military
authorities state that they would not have left grenades upon
ground where soldiers were constantly being drilled.

The Governing Commission has never known of nor authorised
the existence of a recruiting office for the Foreign Legion.
It has asked the military authorities for particulars. The
Colonel commanding the garrison informed the Commission on
21st, 1924, that there was no recruiting office for the
Foreign Legion at No. 42 Vorstadtstrasse, Saarbruck. If
enquiries were made under the Armistice régime, this practice
ceased when the Governing Commission took office. Whenever
individual inhabitants of the Saar enquire of members of the
garrison forces the procedure to be followed in order to enlist,
they are told that they must apply in the proper way to a
recruiting office in French territory.

(Signed) V. PAULIT.