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April 14th, 1947

ORIGINAL : ENGLISH

CONFERENCE ON PASSPORTS AND FRONTIER FORMALITIES

FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva on Monday,
14th April, 1947 at 3 p.m.

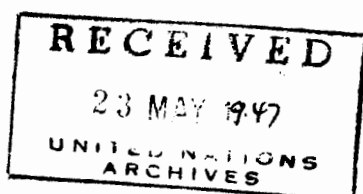
Temporary Chairman: Mr. DAVID OWEN (Assistant Secretary-
General).

1. OPENING ADDRESS

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN opened the meeting by welcoming those present on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

He pointed out that the problem of passports and frontier formalities was one of the first submitted by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations for examination by a meeting of Government experts so that it might be settled on an international basis.

Mr. Owen traced the history of the difficulties surrounding the crossing of frontiers and mentioned the various international conferences which had been held in an effort to solve these difficulties. He noted that the situation at present was much the same as that in 1920 when the first Passport Conference had been held. Mr. Owen added that the report of the Transport and Communications Commission in its recent Session expressed the view that it would be useful



if the present Conference might present its conclusions in the form of recommendations which might be circulated to Governments.

The problem which was before the meeting had been studied by various international organizations and the Temporary Chairman was happy to welcome representatives of these organizations at this meeting. Much of the preliminary work achieved by these organizations in the study of these problems were contained in documents at present before the representative Mr. Owen hoped that these documents would assist representatives in framing their recommendations and would facilitate their work

He concluded by extending his best wishes for the result of the meeting.

Mr. MODEROW (Director of the European Office of the United Nations) said that he was happy to welcome the Government expert to Geneva and hoped that everything which had been done by the Secretariat would help towards the success of the Conference. He added that should any difficulties arise he would always be ready to help.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN

Mr. TAIT (United States of America) proposed Mr. Robinson, Head of the United Kingdom Delegation. This proposal was seconded by the representatives of Australia, Ethiopia, France and the Netherlands.

Decision: Mr. Robinson (United Kingdom) was unanimously elected Chairman of the Conference.

The CHAIRMAN said that he appreciated the honour which had

been done to him, and through him to his country, by his election as Chairman.

He asked for nominations for Vice-Chairmen.

Mr. COUMOUNDOUROS (Greece) proposed Mr. VILLA MICHEL (Mexico). This proposal was seconded by the representative of Colombia.

The representative of POLAND proposed Mr. Pospisil (Czechoslovakia). This proposal was seconded by Mr. Wu Nan-ju (China).

The CHAIRMAN said that as two representatives had been proposed for the Vice-Chairmanship he thought it might meet with the wishes of the meeting if two Vice-Chairmen were elected.

Decision: Mr. Villa Michel (Mexico) and Mr. Pospisil (Czechoslovakia) were elected Vice-Chairmen of the Conference.

3. ADOPTION OF PROVISIONAL RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. LUKAC (Executive Secretary) said that it was customary for bodies of the Economic and Social Council to adopt the rules of procedure of that Council. He suggested, therefore, that the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council (document E/33/Rev.1) should be adopted as the Provisional rules of Procedure.

Decision: The rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council were adopted as the provisional rules of procedure of the Conference.

4. ADOPTION OF PROVISIONAL AGENDA

The CHAIRMAN said that the Provisional agenda had been circulated (document E/Conf/Pass/PC/1) and asked the Executive Secretary to explain its drafting.

Mr. LUKAC (Executive Secretary) stated that the draft agenda was based on the discussions and resolutions of the Economic and Social Council and outlined the various points contained in the agenda.

Mr. PETERS (Australia) proposed that the draft agenda as submitted by the Secretariat should be adopted as a basis for the work of the Conference. This proposal was seconded by Mr. Tait (United States of America).

Decision: The draft agenda was adopted unanimously as the working agenda for the Conference.

5. CONFERENCE DOCUMENTATION

Mr. LUKAC (Executive Secretary) gave a summary of the main points and items referred to in the documents before the meeting.

He suggested that document PC/4 might be used as a basis for discussion as it conformed with the points of the agenda and would thus be of a suitable character.

He also alluded to document PC/2 which was a resumé of the situation with which the Conference would be faced and on which it would have to pronounce itself.

The Executive Secretary concluded by mentioning document PC/3 and said that he had just received replies to the questionnaire mentioned in this document from the Governments of Turkey and the United Kingdom.

THE CHAIRMAN said that, speaking as a representative of the United Kingdom, he wished to express his appreciation of the careful documentation prepared by the Secretariat, and suggested that these documents and procedure, as proposed by the Executive Secretary, should be adopted.

Mr. TAIT (United States of America) asked whether the documents submitted by delegations would also be included and the CHAIRMAN confirmed that this would be so.

Mr. CANLIYANGIL (Turkey) made reference to a report which his Government had submitted regarding provisions in force in Turkey on transit to and from the country.

He was glad to say that most of the views put forward in the memorandum (document PC/2) had already been put into effect in Turkey.

Taking into consideration the present world situation the Turkish Government felt that instead of studying the possibility of establishing absolute freedom of travel, it might be preferable, and more practical, to try and fix essential principles acceptable to all States.

He concluded by emphasising his Government's desire to adhere to all resolutions made by the Conference, provided that these did not contain implications inimical to security regulations. His Government hoped for the success of the Conference.

Mr. COUMOUNDOUROS (Greece), speaking on the same subject, said that his country would view most favourably all attempts

made to simplify the formalities of travel. However, he wished to point out that the abnormal situation which existed on Greece's northern frontier obliged her to maintain temporarily, and only temporarily, certain formalities and rules.

He thought it might be useful to draw the attention of the meeting to the following question which, as far as he could see, did not appear in the memorandum or agenda:

Certain countries required from foreigners entering these countries a fairly large sum of money for obtaining their entrance visas. Business men were not even excepted from these measures. The deposit required was so large in practice as to render nugatory the grant of a visa, thus making travelling a privilege reserved for a small class of wealthy people. It would therefore be desirable to give consideration to the whole matter so that the system could be abolished, or, if possible, made more flexible.

The CHAIRMAN stated that the proposal submitted by the Greek representative would be included in the conference documents.

6. TIMING OF MEETINGS

The CHAIRMAN suggested that before a general discussion took place it might be preferable to adjourn the meeting. However, before doing this it was necessary to arrange the timings for forthcoming meetings. After various suggestions had been made by the representatives of France, the Netherlands and the United States of America, it was agreed that the following times should be adopted provisionally, subject to later alteration if necessary:

Morning meeting -	1030	-	1245
Afternoon "	- 1445	-	1745

The meeting rose at 1631.