

E 2001 (B) 14/5

La Légation de Suisse à Londres au Foreign Office

AM

Londres, le 21 décembre 1920

On the 27th October last, the Département Politique Fédéral, Berne, received from the British Legation at Berne, an aide-mémoire marked «Most Confidential», on the subject of the question of the Rhine.¹

Mr. Paravicini has been instructed by his Government to inform H. M. Foreign Office that the most careful consideration has been devoted by His Government's Political Department, to the various points therein stated.

He desires, however, to point out that there appear to be certain views embodied in the above aide-mémoire which his Government consider desirable to specially raise, in-as-much as the point of view of the Federal Council does not entirely coincide with that of H. M. Government.

1. The Federal Council express their entire accord with the view of the British Government that Article 46 of the Mannheim Convention is still in force.

They desire however, to especially emphasize that in their view the provisions of the Mannheim Convention should equally apply and be in force as regards the provisions of Article 358 of the Treaty of Versailles, and that no reasonable ground appears, in their view, to exist, that any exception should be made in the

1. Cf. DDS 7/2, n° 426 annexe.

case of Article 358, which should, with its other articles, be equally governed by Article 46 of the Mannheim Convention.

2. There is no objection on the part of Switzerland to the submission for due consideration to the Central Commission on the Rhine, of the projects for canalisation which may be indicated by France², but they desire most emphatically to point out that in regard to the question of the possibilities of Navigation on the Rhine, as compared with the capabilities in this direction of the canal, the actual factor of comparison must in no case be the condition of the Rhine as it exists today, but the condition of the Rhine as it would be on the completion of the various works undertaken, and to be undertaken, with the object of rendering it fully navigable.

3. The Federal Council is happy to share entirely the opinion stated by H. B. M's. Government, that the interests of both Governments are identical in regard to this question of the Navigation of the Rhine. They must, however, put forward their considered opinion that such navigability can only be fully effected by utilization of the Rhine itself as above indicated.

4. Whatever may be the ultimate issue of the French plans for canalisation, Switzerland finds itself compelled to insist on the necessary works for the regularisation of the Rhine itself, being put in hand at the earliest possible moment.

5. The Federal Council have taken due note of the remarks of the British Legation in Berne³, regarding the representation of Switzerland on the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine, and every effort is now being made by the Swiss Government to effect such participation at the earliest possible moment.⁴

2. Cf. DDS 7/2, nos 137, 152 et 186.

3. *Par note du 10 décembre 1920, le Foreign office demandait: [...] In view of the fact that the interests of Switzerland and Great Britain in the matter are largely identical, I would take this opportunity to express the hope that the Swiss Government will see their way to send their delegates to the next session of the Commission in order to put forward the arguments expressed in your memorandum (E 2001 (B) 14/5).*

4. *Par lettre du 1er janvier 1921, le Foreign office remerciait pour l'envoi de l'aide-mémoire en précisant: [...] that you may rest assured that the British delegate on the Commission will not fail to bear the Swiss point of view in mind.*

In the meantime I should like to emphasize the suggestion, which we have already made officially, that the Swiss Government should in their own interests decide to participate in the work of the Commission as soon as possible (E 2001 (B) 14/10).