

LÉGATION DE SUISSE.

32, QUEEN ANNE STREET,
LONDON, W.1.

London, October 25th 1920.

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Appuntamenti
(Presidenza)

CBF

My dear Sir Eric,

I spent a few days last week in Switzerland and on the occasion of an audience I had with him, the President of the Confederation, Monsieur Motta, asked me to speak to you, should an opportunity arise, about the question of protocols in connection with the opening of the Assembly of the League. As you are going straight from Brussels to Geneva, allow me to write to you about it. M. Motta is a Member of the Swiss Delegation to the Assembly in his capacity of Chef du Département Politique, that is Minister for Foreign Affairs, but as you know, he is at the same time President of the Confederation and, as such, desirous to welcome the Assembly on their first meeting on Swiss soil. Now I think it is generally admitted that an allocution de bienvenue by the Head of the State or the Prime Minister of the country in which the Assembly takes place is entirely in accordance with the practice of the League.

The Honorable Sir Eric DRUMMOND,
Secretary General of the League of Nations,

etc., etc., etc.,

Brussels.



cordance with the international usages followed on such occasions. The question is at what moment would

M. Motta have to deliver his speech. He is himself of

the opinion that his address should be the very first act

of the Assembly and he should therefore rise to speak

as soon as the Representatives of the various States

have taken their seats in the Salle de la Réformation.

After having delivered his speech he would himself take

his seat in the Assembly and the chair would then be taken

by the provisional President who would immediately

proceed with the business of the day as arranged by the

Secretary General. The point of view that the Swiss Pre-

sident's speech should be placed at the head of the

Ordre du jour of the first sitting is generally shared

at the Palais Fédéral in Berne and in our conversation,

M. Motta expressed the hope that matters could be arranged

accordingly without inconvenience to the preparations

already made or to be made for the opening ceremony. The

reason why he directed me to speak to you about it is

that he is anxious to be informed in due time before the

meeting that arrangements in the sense of his wishes

could be agreed upon; this in order to avoid any possible

discussion of formalities at the last hour. Would

you be so kind as to write or to speak to M. Dinichert in this matter on your arrival in Switzerland and settle it with him.

M. Motta in the course of the conversation also alluded to the election of the President of the Assembly. He seemed to be somewhat surprised by the idea that certain currents might originate amongst the Assembly in ~~the~~ favour of the one or the other delegate as a candidate to the Presidency. Divergencies of view on this question at such a meeting seemed to him to be not altogether unlikely and it may quite be within possibility that certain competitions might lead to an election contest somewhat inconsistent with the spirit of the League itself. M. Motta personally, in the very interest of this first Assembly, would regret it if in this respect their first vote would give the impression of something like disunion. He thinks that such a contest would be an unfortunate presage in the eyes of public opinion and that therefore it would be no doubt in the general interest of the League if by a previous entente of some sort the ground could be prepared for a smooth solution of the presidential election. I asked M. Motta his views in

case the Assembly would consider the election of
~~the~~ delegate from one of the countries ^{is} not represented
in the Council for instance our own. He said that the
Assembly who is of course entirely free to choose its
own President might have reasons to recur to such
a solution. But in that case, he would certainly
more than ever deplore it if the election should be
complicated by competitions. It would certainly make
an unfavourable impression in Switzerland, should its
President be drawn into what might appear to be a
struggle, quite a part from the subsequent result. He
was very emphatic about it, that in any case, i.e.
whether he should be elected or not, his person should
not be drawn into a discussion likely to be unpleasant
by the very fact that it arises. Although M. Motta's utte-
rances in this respect were personal and confidential,
I have obtained permission to mention them privately
to you for your ~~the~~ information.

Believe me,
Dear Sir Eric,

Yours very sincerely,

(sig) G. Paravicini.