

*Copie*

*Geneva, June 24th, 1920*

Dear Colonel House,

Your letter of June 20th written on board the Lapland, has just reached me and I hasten to reply. As you do not mention any addresses, I take it for granted that I may get in touch with you, thanks to the kindness of the American Embassy.

I am deeply grateful to you for the continued interest you are good enough to show in the question of the seat of the League of Nations. We have naturally all shared your concern about the movement for substituting Brussels or some other place for Geneva, but I have the impression that the most critical moment in the discussion is now over. This is, briefly stated, the situation as I see it:

The Belgians have naturally not been able to get over their disappointment, but on the whole I have reason to believe that the real and most effective influences that are still working against Geneva emanate from Paris rather than from Brussels. The French Government has repeatedly assured ours that it did not intend to suggest a change in the provisions of the Covenant, but our mutual experiences in Paris have made us very cautious in this respect. I think, therefore, that we will always have to count on the hidden but none the less very persistent opposition of France.

The Italian Government seems sincerely favorable to Geneva, which the general opposition to France and geographical considerations combine in making entirely plausible. As for the other Governments, I believe that they view the matter with comparative indifference. Our friend, Lord Robert Cecil is more convinced than ever that Geneva should be the seat of the League. In fact he told me a fortnight ago, that, in view of all the reasons which seemed to favor Geneva a year ago, he thought that today the matter should not even be raised in as much as it would imply something like a «breach of faith» towards the Swiss people who had devoted on the assumption that they would have the seat of the League of Nations. As you know however, Cecil is no longer a member of the Government and is in fact perhaps its most dangerous foe. From all I can gather, Balfour is [*mildly*] in favor of Geneva, but does not seem ready to fight for it if a serious conflict should arise over the question. As for the Prime Minister, I do not believe that he has ever expressed an opinion on the question.

---

4. *Non retrouvée.*

