



THE RELATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC BUREAU TO THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

by

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The organisation of the League of Nations has had only a slight reaction on some of the 350 or more International Organisations which were in existence before the Covenant of the League was drawn up, but it has had a more decided influence on those which came into existence subsequent to the creation of the League, and particularly on the International Hydrographic Bureau. Many of these original International Organisations were created as a medium of exchange of information, of technical study, of collaboration in the assembly of data, of protecting the weak and for advancing the interests of religious sects and political agencies, and also of ethnical and economic classes. To analyse them under their names, the larger part call themselves Alliances, Associations, Bureaux, Committees, Commissions, Conferences, Congresses, Federations, Institutes, Leagues, Secretariats and Unions. As to the subjects, about five per cent deal with agriculture, commerce and industry; five per cent with communication and transport; thirteen per cent with labour; eight per cent with medicine and hygiene; five per cent with economics and finance; eight per cent with jurisprudence, rights, and forms of government; twenty per cent with arts and sciences; twenty per cent with humanitarianism, religions, morals and education; five per cent with sports and tourism; two per cent with feminist movements; one and a half per cent with proposed international languages; one per cent with armaments, *etc., etc.* As to geographical distribution, 71 have headquarters in Switzerland, 60 in Belgium and France each, 62 in Great Britain, 45 in Holland, 17 in the United States of America, 16 in Germany, 9 in Italy, 5 in Denmark, 2 in Sweden and the others scattered.

As to character, they may be divided into four classes. The first and largest, comprising about 65 % of the total, and made up as to membership of individuals who voluntarily join and subscribe to its maintenance. The next largest class, about 20 % of the total, is that of groups of individuals in various countries, such as the "INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND OF COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATIONS", which embraces some three hundred organisations; "THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF TRADES UNION COMMITTEES", etc. Some of this second class are "semi-public" in that Governments often appoint representatives to be present and participate in their meetings. The third class is composed of public international organisations created by collective treaties or covenants, or, like the International Hydrographic Bureau, created by the agreement of the countries concerned. To this class, representing about 5 % of the total, the States Members contribute from their budgets for maintenance or upkeep. There are, in fact, twenty eight of these organisations, of which the principal ones are :

CENTRAL BUREAU OF THE CHART OF THE WORLD (au millionième),
founded in 1913, headquarters at Southampton, England, in
which 41 States are represented.

THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF THE PERMANENT COURT OF ARBITRA-
TION,
founded in 1899, at the Hague - 42 States Members.

THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES,
founded in 1875, Paris - 29 States Members.

THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU FOR THE PUBLICATION OF CUSTOMS
TARIFFS,
founded in 1890, Brussels, with 55 States Members.

INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS,
founded in 1913, at Brussels - 29 States Members.

INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF THE UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION,
founded in 1874, at Berne, with 176 countries, colonies and ter-
ritories as members.

INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF THE TELEGRAPHIC UNION,
founded in 1868, Berne - 77 States Members.

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founded in 1885, Berne - 30 members.

INTERNATIONAL PRISON COMMISSION,

founded in 1880, Groningen, Holland - 21 States Members.

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE EXPLORATION OF THE SEA,

founded in 1902, Copenhagen - 9 States Members.

CENTRAL OFFICE INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY TRANSPORT,

founded in 1893, Berne - 18 members.

OFFICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL AMERICAN UNION FOR THE PROTECTION OF TRADEMARKS AND COMMERCE.

founded in 1917, Havana - 21 States Members.

UNION OF AMERICAN REPUBLICS,

founded in 1890, Washington, with all the North and South American countries, except Canada, as members.

There is a fourth class, some eighteen in all, recently created and growing out of the League of Nations, to distribute and organise the work of the League. Of these, eight are permanent, as follows :

CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION ON THE OPIUM TRAFFIC,

founded in 1921, Geneva - 10 States Members.

CONSULTATIVE AND TECHNICAL COMMISSION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSIT,

founded in 1921, Geneva - 16 States Members.

PERMANENT CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION ON THE WHITE SLAVE TRAFFIC,

founded in 1921, Geneva - 15 States Members.

COMMISSION OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE,

founded in 1920, Geneva - 24 States Members.

PERMANENT COMMISSION OF MANDATES,

founded in 1921, Geneva - 9 States Members.

PERMANENT CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION ON MILITARY, NAVAL AND AERIAL QUESTIONS,

founded in 1920, Geneva - 52 States Members.

PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE OF HYGIENE,
founded in 1921, Geneva - 17 States Members.

PERMANENT COURT OF INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE, .
founded in 1920, the Hague - 46 States Members.

There are also ten temporary organisations, whose existence will cease when the work for which they were specially organised has been completed, as follows :

COMMISSION ON AMENDMENTS TO THE PACT,
founded in 1921 - 11 States Members.

COMMISSION OF CONTROL,
founded in 1921, Geneva - 58 States Members.

COMMISSION OF INTELLECTUAL CO-OPERATION.
founded in 1922, Geneva - 12 States Members.

COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY IN ALBANIA,
founded in 1921, Albania - 3 States Members.

COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY RELATIVE TO THE DEPORTATION OF WOMEN
AND CHILDREN IN ASIA MINOR.
founded in 1922, Constantinople - 2 States Members.

COMMISSION OF CONCILIATION,
founded in 1922, Geneva - 5 States Members.

COMMISSION ON ASSESSMENT OF EXPENSES,
founded in 1920, Geneva - 4 States Members.

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON BLOCKADES,
founded in 1921 - 4 States Members.

HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES, with Dr NANSEN as High Commissioner.
founded in 1921, Geneva - 10 States Members.

As most of the three classes of International organisations first named meet only at intervals of five or six years, or at the call of a small secretariat, a great many have a Permanent Committee which meets oftener than the full Conference, and which arranges for the meeting of the latter. For instance, there is a "semi-public" International Conference of Directors of Meteorological Institutes and Observatories

which meets every six years, called the "INTERNATIONAL METEOROLOGICAL COMMITTEE", of which the Directors in thirty States are members, and which itself meets every three years. This Committee has subdivided its work into twelve sub-committees called Commissions, dealing with special branches such as Maritime Meteorology, Agricultural Meteorology, Terrestrial Magnetism, Atmospheric Electricity, Aerial Navigation, Polar Meteorology, Solar Radiation, Meteorological Telegraphy, *etc.*

Of the three classes which have been mentioned, the International Hydrographic Bureau is the only one of all the international organisations which sits permanently and continuously except the Secretariat of the League of Nations. This Bureau is, therefore, so to speak, really the Permanent Committee of the International Conference of Hydrographers of twenty states, not counting colonies or political sub-divisions. The Bureau has its headquarters at Monaco, because (1) the late Prince Albert of MONACO was deeply interested in the closely allied science of Oceanography; (2) it is very central geographically with reference to all of the States Members; (3) it is on the sea; (4) Monaco is the seat of important Oceanographic Research; and (5) it has ample hotel accomodation and conference halls for the meetings of International Conferences. While other international organisations meet only at long intervals, pass resolutions and adjourn for five or six years, leaving a small secretariat to get out reports of the meetings, carry on a desultory correspondence and keep up interest in the work until the next conference without, however, being able to arrive at any definite results, this Bureau carries on constant correspondence with its States Members, conducts studies on all matters of hydrographic interest, publishes information, makes proposals, secures votes which may give the same definite conclusions as a Conference itself could give. It also finishes up the work of one Conference and prepares the Agenda for the next. This is very important because, as a rule, international conferences have not always the necessary information at their meetings to determine the relation of what they are proposing to do to that which other conferences have done, or their relations to existing practices in all countries of the world which they may be seriously upsetting by ill-considered changes. This is intended as a statement of fact and not as a criticism.

This Bureau is seeking to bring about, through the agreement of its States Members, uniformity in all matters relating to the characters and symbols used in charts and in other hydrographic publications; the colours and markings of buoys; characteristics of lights and lighted buoys; international signals for communication between shore and ships and between ships; signals to indicate distress, danger, lifesaving, storm

warning, conditions of ice, state of tides, position of wrecks, marking of fishing nets dangerous to navigation; coastal signals, and those in connection with the administration of ports. Decisions that are not arrived at by the votes of the States Members automatically go to the next Conference to be discussed and again acted upon by all of the delegates. The preparation of this data has naturally required the assembly of a considerable technical staff to assist the Directors and Secretary-General. The work of this Bureau is set out somewhat fully merely as a preliminary to discussing the functions of the Secretariat of the League of Nations, which also sits continuously while its Assembly and Council only meets at intervals. As this Bureau is under the direction of the League of Nations, and as this is the subject under discussion, it is important to understand the working of the League of Nations. The Secretariat of the League prepares the work for the meetings of the Assembly and Council, and deals with any matter within the sphere of action of the League or affecting the peace of the world. Subsidiary organisations of its staff to carry out this purpose consist of the following eleven sections. — (1) political; (2) legal; (3) mandates; (4) social; (5) transit; (6) economic and financial; (7) international bureaux; (8) administrative, commissions and minorities; (9) information; (10) health; and (11) disarmament. There is a Latin-American Liaison Office, and various administrative and technical sections actually to do the manual labour of the Secretariat. There is, however, no large technical staff which could carry on the work similar to that which this Bureau is doing. It is therefore a great help to the work of the Secretariat to have closely associated with it this Bureau which can do so much for the sea-faring interests of the world.

There exists in the League an International Labour Organisation, whose functions are very little understood generally. It was provided in Part XIII of the Treaty that the original States Members of the League of Nations should be the original members of this Organisation. The following are now States Members of the International Labour Organisation (October 1922):

(55 States)

ALBANIA	FRANCE	NORWAY
ARGENTINE	GERMANY	PANAMA
AUSTRALIA	GREAT BRITAIN	PARAGUAY
AUSTRIA	GREECE	PERSIA
BELGIUM	GUATEMALA	PERU
BOLIVIA	HAITI	POLAND
BRAZIL	HEDJAZ	PORTUGAL
BULGARIA	HONDURAS	ROUMANIA
CANADA	HUNGARY	SALVADOR
CHILE	INDIA	SERBS, CROATS AND SLO-
CHINA	ITALY	VENES (Kingdom of)
COLUMBIA	JAPAN	SIAM
COSTA RICA	LATVIA	SOUTH AFRICA
CUBA	LIBERIA	SPAIN
CZECHOSLOVAKIA	LITHUANIA	SWEDEN
DENMARK	LUXEMBURG	SWITZERLAND
ECUADOR	NETHERLANDS	URUGUAY
ESTONIA	NEW ZEALAND	VENEZUELA
FINLAND	NICARAGUA	

The permanent Organisation consists of :

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEMBERS
THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE.

The Assembly of 1922 established, for 1923, the following scale of expenses (fifth annual budget) amounting to 25, 673,508 gold francs, part of which was allotted as follows .

Secretariat.....	6,784,945
Special Committees	5,722,825
International Labour Organisation.....	8,200,462
Permanent Committee (Int. Justice).....	1,880,000
Sessions of the Assembly and Council.....	700,000

It will thus be seen that practically one-third of the total expenses of the League go to the maintenance of this Labour Organisation. Its representatives attend all meetings under the League, as did one of its representatives at the recent Conference on Buoyage and Port Signals which was held at Monaco under the auspices of the League of Nations in collaboration with representatives of this Bureau.

As this Bureau was organised subsequent to the Covenant of the League of Nations, it automatically came under the direction of the League as nearly all of its States Members were also members of the League of Nations, and the objections of any of those who were not could not avail.

The following is a copy of part of the correspondence which led to the Bureau coming under the League of Nations, describing what it entails.

LETTER FROM THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, GENEVA (13/13732/299)

dated 8th July 1921.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE DIRECTING COMMITTEE,
INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC BUREAU, MONACO.

“Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that, in accordance with the decision taken by the Council at their meeting in Paris on March 1st, 1921, with reference to the application of the provisions of Articles 24 of the Covenant, the question of the general principles to be observed when taking international bureaux under the direction of the League of Nations has been studied by the Secretariat, and a report presented by the French Representative on the subject was adopted by the Council at their meeting at Geneva on June 27th 1921.

I am requested therefore to communicate to you the conclusions of the Council with regard to the nature of the direction to be exercised by the League over international bureaux, and beg to enclose that part of the report which deals with the subject.”

C. 196. 1921.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES TO BE OBSERVED IN PLACING INTERNATIONAL BUREAUX UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

Report presented by M. HANOTAUX, French Representative, and adopted by the Council on June 27th 1921.

I. — Article 24 of the Covenant stipulates that all International Bureaux, which have been or shall be subsequently constituted by general treaties, shall be placed under the direction of the League of Nations, subject, however, to the consent of the Parties in the case of Bureaux created before the coming into force of the Covenant.

There are more than 30 International Bureaux. Among the most important may be mentioned: the INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE at Rome, the BUREAU FOR THE PROTECTION OF LITERARY AND INDUSTRIAL RIGHTS, the UNIVERSAL TELEGRAPHIC UNION AND THE UNIVERSAL WIRELESS UNION — the three last-named being at Berne, and the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES at St-Cloud, Paris. Some of the others are little known and have a very limited sphere of action, *e. g.* the INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SEISMOLOGY at Strasbourg, and the INTERNATIONAL GEODETIC ASSOCIATION at Potsdam.

As is pointed out in the Secretary-General's Memorandum, none of these Bureaux has yet expressed a desire to take advantage of the provisions of Article 24.

With regard to Bureaux already established, as a result of general Conventions, there is no doubt that they can only be placed under the direction of the League provided that the consent of all signatories of the general Convention which created them is obtained. The Covenant is absolutely definite on this point.

As regards the Bureaux which may be created as a result of new Conventions, without considering every possible eventuality, the Council has received certain requests submitted to it which we will proceed to examine.

In addition to these questions it appears desirable that the Council should consider the following general points:

The degree of authority to be exercised by the League of Nations, under the terms of Article 24, is not defined. Is it to be regarded as amounting to the absorption of the various Bureaux by the respective branches of the League and as implying the subordination of the Bureau to the League's own organisations?

Since the authors of the Covenant have made special provision for Bureaux established by Conventions concluded between States, it is to be presumed that they meant to allow such organisations to have a large measure of autonomy and not to be merged in the League's own organisations.

The conclusion is that the authority exercised by the League will, in reality, be confined to giving the Bureaux the moral support which attaches to official affiliation to the League, except in cases where abuses are revealed, such as, for instance, encroachment by an office upon the sphere of action of some other international organisation, or an unjustifiable refusal on the part of a Bureau to co-operate with other bodies, or in the event of an insufficient degree of activity.

The exercise of such authority should not be held to imply a right to interfere in the internal organisation of the Bureau (appointment of officials, use of funds, *etc.*), nor a right to insist upon amendments to the established organisation (change of headquarters, extension of sphere of action, *etc.*).

The League of Nations may, however, at any time suggest and recommend to the notice of an International Bureau, any improvement which might be made in its working, in the interests of all concerned.

It must be assumed that the Bureaux, on their side, will be ready to afford the League all possible assistance and information within their special spheres.

Article 24 of the Covenant of the League of Nations only refers to International Bureaux established by general agreements or treaties. Other International Offices are not, according to the Covenant, *ipso facto* placed under the direction of the League.

Nevertheless, certain offices of this kind have already asked for information with regard to the conditions to be complied with, in order to be placed under the direction of the League; some have gone so far as to submit a request to this effect. The Council will therefore have to deal with this question, and it might adopt a resolution in which the conditions to be fulfilled and the nature of the authority to be exercised by the League would be defined.

The following is a brief outline of the conditions which apply to any International Bureau coming under the direction of the League by its own request:

"In view of the fact that the Covenant makes no mention of these International Bureaux which are not created by a treaty or by a general

agreement, the Council decided, to allow a wider interpretation of Article 24, and to make it possible for the patronage of the League to be given to all International Bureaux; at the same time it confined the conditions to be fulfilled by the non-public bureaux and the extent of the direction to be exercised by the League over them as follows:

“Considering the great variety of bureaux already in existence or likely to be formed, it is impossible to lay down definite rules, but the Council might examine each request individually and consider whether or not it is advisable to extend its patronage to the Bureau.

“As regards the scope of the League’s authority over these bureaux, it appears that, as the request is in this case purely of an optional character, the authority ought to be greater than in the case of bureaux which are created by general treaty.

“The League might require these Bureaux to undertake a certain share of the work of the League within their sphere of action and it might satisfy itself that they are really fulfilling their object without duplicating the work of other organisations. It might, perhaps, even claim the right to supervise to some extent, the employment of their financial resources.”

“When an international Bureau is placed under the direction of the League of Nations, the Secretariat of the League may, when practicable, supply temporarily the staff required for the work of translation, shorthand-writing, *etc.* on the occasion of its meetings. When these meetings take place at the seat of the League, the Secretary-General may place rooms at the disposal of the Bureau, ensure communications with Governments, offer to the Bureau legal advice and facilities for publicities and generally give it assistance.

“Direction by the League may involve the obligation on the part of the Bureau to accept the admission of all States Members of the League of Nations, while not excluding from it those States which are not members of the League.”

Up to the present, only four international bureaux, out of the total of over 350, have been placed under the direction of the League:

THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF ASSISTANCE, from June 27th 1921 ;
THE INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC BUREAU, from October 2nd 1921 ;
THE CENTRAL INTERNATIONAL OFFICE FOR THE CONTROL OF THE LIQUOR
TRAFFIC IN AFRICA, from January 11th 1922 ;
and THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON AIR NAVIGATION.

As to the three organisations, other than this Bureau, which have come under the direction of the League, the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF INFORMATION AND STUDY FOR ASSISTANCE TO STRANGERS was organised in Paris, in 1907, and has for its purpose, firstly, the propaganda in favour of international treaties for reciprocal assistance to its nationals, and, secondly, mutual co-operation of the Governments to assist in the execution of the treaties. As all of its States Members were also members of the League, it voluntarily came under its direction. The CENTRAL INTERNATIONAL BUREAU FOR THE CONTROL OF COMMERCE IN SPIRITS IN AFRICA was organised in Brussels, in 1919, and has five States Members, and the INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF AERIAL NAVIGATION was founded in Paris in 1922, and has ten States Members. Under the terms of the Covenant of the League, they, with this Bureau, automatically came under the direction of the League.

The advantages to an International Organisation of being under the direction of the League have been fully set forth in the foregoing discussion of the conditions under which they must, or may, avail themselves of them. Either there is a general unwillingness to accept, or a failure to appreciate these advantages ; or, it may be that most organisations are so constituted that only at their periodical conferences which take place at such long intervals, can any discussion occur, or, at any rate, decision be taken.

On the other hand, the League of Nations, being desirous of preventing the duplication of international activities, must, in the initial stages of the development of its own activities, unavoidably encroach upon the dormant activities of so many sluggish international organisations, that there must at first be considerable duplication of effort. For instance, the ADVISORY AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSIT (N^o 5 in the list of eleven Committees given) embraces in its scope a great many activities on both land and sea which are included in the purposes of many other international organisations. It has, from the start, found it necessary to subdivide itself more and more into technical sub-divisions, and thus more and more came into contact with and encroached upon the purposes and work (in some cases very inconsiderable) of other international organisations. It is assumed that there is

no question of absorption by the League of such organisations as those with which this process brings them into contact and competition. This Bureau has found, in its compilation of data as to all forms of aids to navigation in "rendering navigation easier and safer in all the seas of the world", that it also comes in contact with the work and purposes of international organisations which have for one of their numerous objects some matter vitally affecting maritime interests, such as: Visual Storm Warning Signals as a side issue in Meteorology, or Buoyage and Buoy Lighting as one of the many interests of the Congress of Navigation, but this Bureau has always been careful to consult such Organisations and secure their approval before initiating any steps to obtain international action. On the other hand, this Bureau has always been ready to co-operate with other international organisations in their work where it concerns any question of safety at sea, and no other organisation is so well-equipped as this Bureau to tabulate and publish the necessary data on all questions which concern information of vital interest to mariners. The defect of the League of Nations in this respect, as previously pointed out, is its lack of technical staff to prepare adequate data to justify its taking up the solution of the problem with which this Bureau is charged, and the result is, not so much a duplication of work, as a duplication of effort, because in the end it is only the Governments of the countries themselves that pass upon any proposals which may be made by either this Bureau or the COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSIT, unless the Council and Assembly of the League actually take over the settlement of other than political matters.

Recently the COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSIT called a meeting in Paris on the subject of "Livesaving at Sea". This Bureau has tabulated much data on this important question, but no invitation was extended to it nor was it invited to submit these data or to participate in the conference in any way.

The Directing Committee is of opinion that the best results of the efforts of the League of Nations would be obtained by having present at any international conference a delegate who would merely call its attention to any attempted duplication or compilation of proposals and agreements already made by other organisations, and who would keep a record of all proposals and decisions of international conferences of all kinds. The League is the custodian of all treaties and should at least keep a record of international agreements arrived at by the numerous international organisations; in case existing organisations are neglectful of their mission, the League would have just grounds for the initiation of efforts to accomplish the work which they had undertaken and failed to do.