Conference of the Directors of Governmental Press Bureaux and Representatives of the Press. The Council hoped that it would be able to place before the next Assembly a report on the results of that Conference.

Acting on the instructions of my Government, I have the honour to forward to you the final document adopted at the Conference, together with the annexes attached thereto.

(Signed) William Borberg.

CONFERENCE OF GOVERNMENTAL PRESS BUREAUX AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRESS.

(Held at Copenhagen, January 11th to 14th, 1932.)

[Translation.]


During the twelfth Assembly of the League of Nations, the Danish Government had announced its intention of summoning a Press Conference at Copenhagen and the Assembly expressed itself warmly in favour of this scheme. On September 29th, the Council of the League of Nations noted the communication of the Danish Government, congratulated it on its useful initiative, and expressed the hope that the 1932 Assembly would receive a report from the Council on the results of the Conference.

* * *

The delegations to the Conference were composed as follows:

Argentina.
M. Hector Díaz Leguizamón, First Secretary of Legation.

Austria.
Dr. Erwin Wasserkäll, Press Adviser to the Austrian Legation, Berlin.

Belgium.
M. A. Ooms, Director of the Press Service at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Brazil.
M. Argeu de Segadas Machado Guimarães, Secretary of Legation.

China.
M. Kien-Wen Yu, Secretary of Legation.

Cuba.
M. S. Arduin, Consul.

Czecho-Slovakia.
M. Jan Hájek, Head of the Press Service of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Denmark.
M. A. J. Poulsen, Director of the Press Service at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
M. C. E. Aagaard, Press Adviser to the Danish Legation in London.

Dominican Republic.

Estonia.
M. Otto Arthur Grant, Chargé d'Affaires.

Finland.
M. E. Järnefelt, Counsellor of Legation, Assistant Director at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

France.
M. Garreau, of the Information and Press Service of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
Germany
Dr. Walter Zechlin, Director of the Information Bureau of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Great Britain.
Mr. J. H. S. Birch, Counsellor of Embassy

Greece
M. Cimon Diamantopoulos, Director of the Press Bureau at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Haiti
M. Constantin Mayard, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Paris.

Hungary
M. Nikolaus von Kozma, President of the Hungarian Telegraphic Agency (Observer).

Iceland
M. Svenn Bjoeransson, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary

Italy
M. Leonardo Vitetti, Chef of the League of Nations Section at the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
M. Luciano Mascia, Secretary of Legation.

Latvia.
Dr. A. Bielmans, Minister Plenipotentiary Head of the Official Press Bureau of Latvia.

Lithuania.
Mlle. Madeleine Avietenaite, Head of the Press Bureau at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Mexico
M. Fernando Matty, Charge d'Affaires.

Nicaragua.
M. Ditz Peschardy, Consul.

Netherlands
M. Plemp van Duiveland, Director of the Press Bureau of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Norway
M. J. L. Vidnes, Director of the Press Bureau of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Poland.
M. Wacław-Przesmycki, Head of the Press Section of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
M. Emil Ruecker, Member of the Press Section.
M. Jan Librach, Member of the Press Section.

Portugal
M. Lopo Simeao, First Secretary of Legation.

Roumania.
M. Eugene Filotti, Director of the Official Press Service of Roumania.

Spain
M. Eduardo Madariaga, Director of the Press Bureau at the Ministry of State.

Sweden.
M. Fritz Henriksson, Counsellor of Legation, Director of the Press Bureau at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Turkey
Ragip Rifat Bey Minister Plenipotentiary (Observer).

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
M. Constantin Oumansky, Director of the Press and Information Bureau of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs.

United States of America.

Yugoslavia.
Dr. Milorad Radojanovitch, Chief of Section at the Official Press Bureau of Yugoslavia.

* * *
League of Nations
M. Pierre Comert, Director of the Information Section of the League of Nations Secretariat.
M. F. Blondeel, Member of the Information Section of the League of Nations Secretariat.

* * *

Agence Havas
M. Andre Meynot, Director of the Havas Agency

International Association of Journalists accredited to the League of Nations
M. Carl Andersen, Editor-in-Chief of the Social-Demokraten, Copenhagen.

Central News
M. Holger R. Angelo, Editor-in-Chief.

Consolidated Press of America
M. Frederick Oeschner, Head of the Berlin Office.

Exchange Telegraph Company
Mr. Stuart M. Anderson, Brigadier-General.
M. A. Glarner, Director of the Paris Service.
M. H. Kelland, Correspondent at Copenhagen.

International Federation of Journalists
M. Stephen Valey, Federal General Secretary
M. Karl J. Eskelung, Member of the Executive Committee.

International News Service and Universal Service
Mr. George Wheeler Hinman, Jr.

Reuter’s Agency
Mr. W. Murray, European General Manager.

Ritzau’s Bureau
M. L. Ritzau, Director of the Bureau.

Telegraphon-Union
M. Otto Mejer, Director.

International Court of Honour for Journalists
M. B. C. J. Loder, President of the Court of Honour.

International Union of Press Associations
M. Axel Otto Normann, Vice-President of the Union.

United Press Associations
Mr. Webb-Miller, European Manager of the United Press.

Wolff Büro
Dr. Hermann Diez, Director.

* * *

At its opening meeting; on January 11th, at 11 o’clock, the Conference heard a speech by the Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Munch, and elected its bureau.

M. Poulsen, Director of the Press Bureau of the Foreign Ministry was elected President, and M. Loder, President of the International Court of Honour for Journalists, Vice-President of the Conference. M. Pierre Comert and M. Blondeel, of the Information Section of the League of Nations Secretariat, were entrusted with the Secretariat of the Conference. M. Holger Besch was appointed Secretary of the Conference bureau.

The Conference approved the appointment of a Committee of Directors of Press Bureaux to prepare its next meeting. This Committee will be composed of the President of the Copenhagen Conference and M. Bielmann, M. Dania, M. Hajek and M. Zechlin.

At the conclusion of its work, the Conference adopted resolutions the text of which is given below. Certain reservations submitted when voting have been appended.
CHAPTER I. — RESOLUTIONS ON INACCURATE NEWS.

[Translation.]

The Conference of Directors of Official Press Bureaux and of Press Representatives,
Having examined at a plenary meeting the question of inaccurate news in all its aspects:
Decided to refer this problem, for study to three committees respectively composed of
the Directors of Official Press Bureaux, of representatives of news agencies, and of representatives
of three international journalists' organisations taking part in the Conference;
Which, severally adopted the annexed resolutions as the conclusion of their work.
In recording these resolutions, the Conference,
Is glad to note the entire agreement which exists between the representatives of the Official
Press Bureaux and the Press representatives (Resolutions A and B), and,
Recalls that the journalists themselves, acting in the same spirit, have instituted resort to the
jurisdiction of the International Court of Honour.


After examining, as a whole, the problem of inaccurate news, the dissemination of which may
disturb the maintenance of peace and the good understanding between the peoples,
The Committee of Heads of Official Press Bureaux believes it its duty to proclaim that the
campaign against the dissemination of inaccurate news is one of the necessities of international life,
and, as regards the methods of pursuing this campaign, to formulate the following observations:
One of the most effective means of combating inaccurate information is the rapid spread of
accurate and abundant information through the agency of the Press Bureaux. Should accurate
news not be forthcoming, there is the risk that the Press may show a tendency to seek its informa-
tion at other and less well-informed sources and to accept, without verifying it, information which
is often inaccurate and sometimes tendentious.
It further seems undeniable that free, prompt and abundant information is one of the most
active remedies against inaccurate news. In offering the international Press accurate and abundant
information, the Press Bureaux express the hope that journalists, for their part, will endeavour
to make the most ample use of it.
Should inaccurate news be in circulation, it would be desirable that the Press Bureaux should
lend each other assistance in securing the wide and prompt dissemination by all the means at their
disposal of accurate news intended to rectify such incomplete information.

Resolution B (Committee of Press Representatives).

The Committee,
Solemnly confirming to the Conference that the international Press, while maintaining its
integral right to a fully justified liberty intends to play its part as distributor of information
by propagating only news which, in good faith, it regards as accurate and truthful;
Considering that the most effective means of combating the dissemination of false or inaccurate
news is for the Official Press Bureaux, as far as their information is concerned, to furnish authentic
news as quickly as possible:
Requests the Directors of the Official Press Bureaux to forward to their Governments, with
a favourable opinion, the following recommendations of the Press representatives:

(a) Closer co-operation should be established between Official Press Bureaux and
the accredited representatives of the international Press;
(b) The said representatives should, in particular, be able, whenever necessary to have
easy access to the Official Press Bureaux and as complete and prompt information as possible;
accordingly wherever necessary the Official Press Bureaux should be adequately organised;
(c) The accredited representatives should be treated on an equal footing, both as regards
the communication of information and the telegraphic or other transmission of their news;
(d) Effect should be given to the resolution of the Press Experts Conference, held in
1927 in Geneva, concerning censorship in time of peace.

Resolution C (Committee of International Organisations of Journalists).

The Committee considers that the measures that may be taken to avoid the dissemination of
inaccurate news should never affect the freedom of the Press, but that this freedom involves the
responsibility of journalists as its necessary corollary.
In this spirit, the Committee notes that the international federative organisations represented
at the Conference guarantee the intention of their national sections to enforce the observance of the
code of honour of journalism by their members and, in the event of serious infractions, to exclude
the guilty persons from the said associations and to deprive them momentarily of their status as members of these groups.

The Committee notes the existence of an International Court of Honour, founded by the International Federation of Journalists as a result of the joint initiative of that Federation and the International Association of Journalists accredited to the League of Nations.

It notes that the principles and methods of this institution constitute a complete response to the considerations put forward in the course of the debate.

That this institution, although recognized by twenty-two nations and twenty-five thousand journalists, has not yet been adhered to by all journalists and, therefore, has not yet universal authority.

It further decides:

That the international organisations of journalists represented at the Conference should organise systematic co-operation among themselves, with a view to the necessary steps for obtaining the adhesion of all journalists to the jurisdiction of the Court of Honour for Journalists;

That the International Federation of Journalists, in so far as it considers necessary and with such assistance as it sees fit to secure, should proceed to such amplification of the statute and code of procedure of the Court as may eventually appear desirable;

That it should bring the results obtained to the knowledge of M. Poulsen, President of the Conference, as soon as it regards them as sufficiently established.

CHAPTER II. — RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE ACTION TAKEN OR TO BE TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THE PRESS EXPERTS CONFERENCE (GENEVA, 1927).

[Translation.]

The Conference has noted the statements furnished by the Information Section of the Secretariat of the League of Nations on the action taken or to be taken as regards the various resolutions of the Press Experts Conference of 1927.

Without resuming the discussion of the problems in regard to which this Conference of 1927 has already expressed its opinion, and considering that the resolutions adopted by the Conference represent the desiderata of the Press, and that the examination of a technical character of which certain of them have been the object on the part of organs of the League of Nations or other bodies has sufficiently established in what measure it is at present possible to realise the desires of the Press, the Conference:

Recalls the body of resolutions voted by the Press Experts Conference of 1927 and invites all institutions or persons qualified to take action to bring their influence to bear in favour of fulfilling the desiderata thus defined.

It moreover draws attention to the following points:

1. Telegraph and Telephone Questions.

The next Conference for the periodical revision of the International Telegraphic Convention and the attached regulations, summoned to meet in Madrid in the autumn of 1932, will have to consider the various resolutions of the Press Experts Conference on telegraphic, telephone and wireless questions. It would be desirable that Directors of Press Bureaux should again draw their Governments' favourable attention to these problems, with a view to the instructions to be given to delegates to the Madrid Conference.

2. Newspaper Transport.

The Conference notes the efforts made to fulfill the desires expressed in 1927 by the Conference of Press Experts concerning newspaper transport. The Directors of Press Bureaux are requested to seek information as to whether the enforcement of the regulations for the transport of daily newspapers by rail in international traffic, as adopted by the International Railway Union, has taken place without difficulty in their respective countries.

3. Identity Cards for Journalists.

The Conference recommends that the identity cards for journalists, instituted as a result of a resolution of the Advisory and Technical Committee on Communications and Transit of the League of Nations (March 1929), should be recognized by the authorities of the various countries and should confer the same facilities as the cards issued by national associations of journalists. It considers it desirable that these cards should receive the visa of Directors of Press Bureaux.

CHAPTER III. — RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE CO-OPERATION OF OFFICIAL PRESS BUREAUX.

[Translation.]

The Directors of the Official Press Bureaux assembled at Copenhagen thank the Danish Government for its initiative in convening them.
They also thank the professional Press associations, the international news agencies and the Information Section of the Secretariat of the League of Nations for the assistance which these organisations have invariably afforded them.

Experience having shown the utility of the relations established between heads of Press services since the Geneva Conferences of 1926 and 1927, they express the hope that meetings may be summoned periodically in the interest of good international relations.

They consider that it would be desirable to exchange among themselves by the most direct channels any information that may be of use in the accomplishment of their mission, principally on journalistic subjects and with a view to assisting journalists travelling abroad in the exercise of their profession. By the intermediary of M. Poulsen, they will communicate to each other any suggestions that may be calculated to strengthen such co-operation.

The Heads of the Press Bureaux of countries which have already concluded regional agreements, or whose Press has concluded such agreements, note that the relations established between these bureaux or between the Press organisations of these countries on the basis of these agreements have afforded excellent practical results; they consider that this experiment makes it possible to recommend wider relations between all the Press bureaux and the Press organisations of the various countries.

Appendix I.

DECLARATIONS RELATING TO CHAPTER I, C (INTERNATIONAL COURT OF HONOUR FOR JOURNALISTS).

(a) Declaration of Mr. R. Th. Pell, Press Adviser in the United States Embassy in Paris, with which M. Vitetti, Bureau Chief of the League of Nations Section of the Italian Foreign Ministry associated himself.

[Original Text.]

As the problem of co-operation between the Official Press Bureaux is uniquely in the domain of the Governments, conversely the proposal for a journalistic court of honour is, to my mind, exclusively a question for newspapermen.

Therefore, I shall abstain from expressing a view on this section of the resolution.


[Original Text.]

We abstain from voting on the resolution dealing with the tribunal of honour. We accept the preamble, with the exception of the final paragraph referring to the tribunal of honour. We desire merely to invite attention to its impracticability from the standpoint of American newspaper men. We can recognize only two duties. One is to our public which, as has already been pointed out by Mr. Pell, will inevitably punish in its own effective way any professional dereliction. The other is to operate under the laws of the countries in which we function. We can see no need, so far as we are concerned, for any extra-legal agency to deal with matters which already fall within existing jurisdictions. We have voted only resolution B concerning Press matters.

Appendix II.

DECLARATIONS RELATING TO REGIONAL PRESS AGREEMENTS.

(a) Declaration of M. Argeu de Segadas Machado Gumraes, Secretary of the Brazilian Legation.

[Translation.]

In spite of the fact that there are no regional agreements on official Press matters in South America, I must add to the preceding declarations that a Press service recently established on the occasion of the reorganisation of our Ministry for Foreign Affairs—a reorganisation which was carried out on the most modern lines—endeavours to ensure the connection between newspapers of the La Plata countries and our Press, in order to direct and inform more surely and accurately public opinion.

Speaking more generally I must emphasise the fact that the Brazilian Press has never published tendentious news which may be detrimental to the good harmony between nations, and, on the contrary that the Brazilian Press has always shown the greatest interest for the development of relations between friendly countries, invariably avoiding a partial attitude in the case of disputes between these countries.
(b) Declaration of Delegates of the Press Bureaux of Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Roumania, Sweden and Yugoslavia.

[Translation.]

In view of the opinions revealed in the course of the debate relating to regional agreements between the Press of various countries, the delegates of the above-mentioned countries desired to state that:

The regional Press agreements are not directed against any country and their object is to facilitate Press collaboration in the countries concerned to the utmost extent, and that, thus being the case, they constitute one of the best methods of constructive co-operation and moral appeasement, which meets one of the most pressing needs of the present hour.

Appendix III.

DECLARATION RELATING TO THE ORGANISATION OF THE NEXT CONFERENCE (CHAPTER III),
BY M. HAJEK, HEAD OF THE PRESS SERVICE IN THE MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AT PRAGUE.

[Translation.]

Before we disperse, I take the liberty of presenting two recommendations which, in my opinion, may be of some use for our future conferences.

(a) In view of the complexity of questions concerning the Press and the various factors which compose the Press world as a whole—namely professional journalists with their national and international associations, editors of newspapers, news agencies, and, finally, Official Press Bureaux—I am of opinion that the work of these conferences would be considerably facilitated if questions concerning a single group were first discussed by sections in the presence of members of that group only and, if, for the joint discussion of questions of a general scope and of concern to everyone, smaller delegations were appointed composed of members of the various groups.

(b) It would be desirable to appoint immediately three or four Directors of Press Bureaux, including the President of the present Conference and the Director of the country which has invited that Conference, who would be instructed to draw up the programme and procedure of our next conference with the assistance of the Information Section of the Secretariat of the League of Nations, and to fix, at least approximately its length.

Appendix IV

LETTERS (a) AND (b) FROM M. CONSTANTIN OUJANSKY DIRECTOR OF THE PRESS BUREAU OF THE PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIAT FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS EMBODYING DECLARATIONS RELATING TO VARIOUS POINTS.

(a)

[Translation.]

I take the liberty of requesting you to be so good as to annex to the acts of our Conference the following declarations and reservations, which I already had the honour to make in the morning and afternoon meetings of January 13th, and which concern the various documents adopted by the Conference on the first point of its agenda.

I. Without objecting to the declaration drawn up by the Committee of Heads of Official Press Bureaux regarding the measures to be taken by these bureaux to combat inaccurate news, the dissemination of which may disturb the maintenance of peace and the good understanding between peoples, I must state that, in my opinion, which I entirely maintain, the draft resolution which I had the honour to submit to the Conference at its meeting of January 12th provides much more effective methods for the campaign of the Press Bureaux against false news, in particular from the two following points of view (a) This resolution defines the task of the Official Press Bureaux and states that it is their duty to make use of all the means at their disposal for combating false news; (b) the resolution establishes a certain category of false or inaccurate news which, in the opinion of the Press bureau which I represent, is most dangerous for the cause of peace and disarmament, and which is also, unfortunately the most widespread—that is to say false news or other Press statements the dissemination of which is intended to incite to acts of aggression, intervention, the rupture of diplomatic or commercial relations, economic blockade or boycott directed against a country or group of countries.

I also wish to emphasise that this draft resolution, without having been thoroughly discussed at a plenary meeting, encountered in the First Sub-Committee only one objection—namely that the Official Press Bureaux could neither establish a discrimination between the political tendencies of false news nor give undertakings that might be contrary to the instructions of their respective Governments which might, in given circumstances, consider

1 Note of the President of the Conference. — This draft resolution was not adopted by the Conference.
it necessary to resort to some form of aggression against a State. In view of the fact that, when depositing my draft resolution, I allowed myself to be guided by the supposition that any form of aggression should be excluded from the instructions given to Official Press Bureaux, any discussion of my draft resolution became, in fact, futile.

2. I wish to place on record that I have voted against the adjournment to the next Conference of my amendment (modified by M. Meynot in a form which gave me satisfaction) to the above-mentioned declaration and which aimed at including, in addition to "inaccurate news" "forged documents" against which measures were recommended in my draft resolution.

3. I wish to place on record that I have abstained from taking part in the vote on the resolution adopted by the Committee of International Journalists' Organisations and have raised objections to the final paragraph of the preamble concerning the Court of Honour of The Hague, in view of the fact that the professional organisations of journalists of my country are not included among the international organisations of journalists represented at our Conference, so that I can neither express desires nor associate myself with the recommendations concerning the activity of these organisations.

(Signed) Const. Oumansky.

(b)

I beg to request you to be so good as to annex to the acts of our Conference the following declarations and reservations which I had the honour to make in the morning meeting of January 14th, and which concerned the two resolutions voted by the Conference on the second and third points of its agenda.

1. I wish to recall that I proposed that the final paragraph of the resolution concerning co-operation between Official Press Bureaux should be deleted. This paragraph, to my mind, contains a favourable opinion with regard to the principle of regional agreements between Official Press Bureaux and the Press, a principle which was neither included in our agenda nor thoroughly discussed. I declare that I must maintain my reservation with regard to this paragraph for the reasons which I had the honour to explain to the Conference, and which are based on the firm conviction that regional Press or Press Bureaux agreements are, as a general rule, merely a corollary of political agreements between the different countries; that such regional Press or Press Bureaux agreements have a political object and that they amount, in several cases, to discrimination against the Press of other countries. For this reason, these regional agreements are, in my opinion, as I have had the honour to state to the Conference, incompatible with the very principles upon which the work of the Official Press Bureaux should be based. The declarations of those of my colleagues who endeavoured to reassure me with regard to the non-political character of these regional Press agreements have not convinced me. On that occasion I drew the attention of the Conference to a document, published at Bucharest in 1925, entitled "The Little Entente of the Press, Constitutive Conference held at Sinaia on August 15th, 1925" which contains numerous declarations by representatives of the Press Bureaux of the respective Governments, of a purely and exclusively political character, and which shows the question of the political propaganda and objects of this Press entente as figuring in the agenda of this conference.

2. I wish to state that, since the Press Bureau which I represent participated neither in the Conference of Official Press Bureaux held at Geneva in 1926 nor in the Conference of Press Experts held at Geneva in 1927 nor had sufficient time to study the documents prepared at those meetings, I cannot at present take part in the vote on the resolution regarding the action to be taken on the decisions of the Conference of Press Experts of 1927. At the same time, I desire to submit for study by the competent organs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics the practical conclusions of the said resolution, at all events as far as paragraphs 1 and 2 of these conclusions are concerned.

I take this opportunity of thanking you, Sir, for your invariable kindness and amiability towards the delegate of the Press Bureau of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

(Signed) Const. Oumansky.