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LEAGUE OF NATIONS

COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSIT ORGANISATION

Committee of Enquiry on Questions relating to Public Works and National Technical Equipment

REPORT ON THE THIRD SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE

[C. 646. 1932. VIII.]

I.

Following on its second session held in Paris from March 30th to April 2nd, 1932, the Committee of Enquiry on Questions relating to Public Works and National Technical Equipment submitted to the Council of the League a general report on its first two sessions¹. This report explained the general lines along which the Committee had worked in judging the plans of public works submitted to it, the main conditions which these public works should fulfil in order to warrant the Committee's recommendation, and, finally, its conclusions concerning the plans it had studied.

The Council, having examined this report at its meeting on May 10th, 1932, adopted the following resolution :

“ The Council,

“ (1) Having noted the report of the Committee of Enquiry on Questions relating to Public Works and National Technical Equipment on its first two sessions :

“ Thanks the Committee for the work done by it up to the present and requests it to continue the examination of the schemes which have already been submitted to it or which may subsequently be submitted to it, and to report to the Council ;

“ (2) Considering that, to take a decision on the effect to be given to the Committee's findings, it would be desirable to have before it a larger number of schemes retained by the Committee ;

“ Reserves its decision on the question, pending the receipt of the Committee's next report.”

Moreover, after considering certain suggestions submitted to it in a resolution adopted by the International Labour Conference regarding the present economic crisis—one of its suggestions being concerned with the question of public works on a large scale—the Council decided, at its meeting on May 21st, 1932, to refer the suggestions of the International Labour Conference to the Assembly and, at the same time, to request the Committee of Enquiry on Questions relating to Public Works and National Technical Equipment to accelerate its proceedings.

Following on these Council resolutions, the Secretary-General of the League informed the various Governments in a circular letter that the next session of the Committee would take place during the first days of September 1932, in order that the results of its work might be submitted to the Council at its autumn session, held during the Assembly period. He accordingly requested them to forward to him at a convenient date any schemes they might still be intending to submit for the consideration of the Committee at its next session, as well as the supplementary documentation which they had been asked to supply in connection with their previous proposals.

¹ Doc. C. 381. M. 214. 1932. VIII.

As a result of this circular letter, a considerable number of replies have reached the Secretary-General. These replies consist partly of additional information regarding plans previously submitted—the Committee in some cases having pointed out that the documentary material supplied was insufficient—and partly of new plans. With regard to all plans which were accompanied by sufficient documentary material, the Rapporteurs prepared preliminary memoranda for the Committee. Thus the latter, at its third session held at Geneva from September 7th to 10th, 1932, was able to give due consideration to the plans mentioned hereinafter in Part II of the present report. In so doing, the Committee has borne in mind the criteria and considerations set out in its last report. The Committee also points out that it has taken care to adhere strictly to its terms of reference and has not studied the possibility or means of financing these operations. It has only examined the schemes from the standpoint of their technical and economic value, though in some cases it has supplied certain information which can be utilised later when the financial aspect of the problem comes to be considered.

At the same time, the Committee has re-examined certain schemes on which it expressed an opinion at its second session but regarding which the Governments concerned have subsequently sent in further communications.

The Committee has, moreover, noted with interest the replies from certain Governments which, though they do not submit any actual schemes for examination, have informed the Committee of the efforts they have made in the form of public works to reduce unemployment in their territories, thus contributing to the international action contemplated under this head.

II.

Austria.

The Austrian Government has submitted the following schemes for works :

(a) *General programme for the modernisation of the whole system of Federal roads*, over a total length of 3,880 kilometres, the work to be carried out in three separate stages :

- (1) Long-distance routes (1,510 kilometres, of which 500 kilometres have already been reconstructed) ;
- (2) Heavy-traffic routes (1,790 kilometres) ;
- (3) Local-traffic routes (580 kilometres).

The Committee considered that the first part of this programme—long-distance routes—is to be recommended (probable cost, 95 million Swiss francs) and noted that, if difficulties were experienced in financing the work, it could be curtailed without serious inconvenience.

(b) *Scheme for hydro-electric plant on the Danube at Ybbs-Persenbeug* (estimated cost, 110 million Swiss francs).

The Committee recognises that this scheme has been well thought out and is interesting in itself, but feels that it cannot at present recommend its execution in view of economic conditions and the prevailing situation.

Bulgaria.

The Committee examined the following schemes for works submitted by the Bulgarian Government :

(a) *Programme of drainage and river correction and for the supply of drinking-water in rural districts.*

The Committee retained, in principle, for further consideration, the scheme of drainage and river-correction work. Among the schemes submitted, it recommends unreservedly those referring to Kara-Boaze, Messemvria and Mandra-Yakezli (estimated cost, 1.3 million Swiss francs). It cannot give a final opinion regarding the Vidin and Provadia schemes (estimated cost, 2.9 million Swiss francs) until it has received further information. The Committee did not consider the documentation supplied concerning the Maritza regulation scheme (estimate, 5.6 million Swiss francs) to be sufficient to allow it to reach a conclusion; the Bulgarian Government is therefore invited to supply all such further data as may be necessary.

The Committee did not feel that it had sufficient information regarding the proposal for the supply of drinking-water in rural districts (estimate, 11.5 million Swiss francs). In this case, also, it requested the Bulgarian Government to furnish more detailed information regarding the direct or indirect productiveness of the proposed works.

(b) *Programme of road and bridge construction* (estimated cost, 37 million Swiss francs).

The Committee retained for further consideration the programme of road and bridge construction submitted by the Bulgarian Government. It notes that the programme includes two appreciably different categories of undertakings and prefers the two roads running from

west to east—one of which would connect Sofia with the Yugoslav frontier on the one hand and the Turkish frontier on the other, and the other further to the south, running parallel to the Greek frontier,—these two roads being more markedly international in character than the other roads proposed. (Probable cost of these two roads: 20 million Swiss francs).

Before reaching a final decision, however, the Committee feels that the Bulgarian Government should be asked to supply additional information concerning the effect which the execution of these works might have on unemployment.

(c) *Scheme for improvements in the telephone service of the Post, Telegraph and Telephone Administration* (estimate, 26 million Swiss francs).

The Committee will not be able to give an opinion on this scheme until it has received the additional data which it has already asked the Bulgarian Government to supply.

Estonia.

The Estonian Government has submitted a *programme of road and bridge construction* (estimated total cost, 4.9 million Swiss francs).

The Committee considers that the programme submitted by the Estonian Government does not fulfil all the conditions required in order to enable the Committee to retain it for further examination. The Committee could only modify this opinion if it were convinced that unemployment in Estonia is greater than is indicated in the documents laid before it.

Greece.

The Greek Government has submitted to the Committee an additional memorandum on the *programme of hydraulic works to be carried out in the plains of Salonika and Seres*, the schemes for which were examined by the Committee at its second session. At the same time, the Greek Government expresses a hope that the Committee will find in this memorandum all the additional information it requires.

The Committee, after examining the memorandum, is of opinion that, in the interests of the success of the undertaking, it is essential that the scheme be studied on the spot.

Hungary.

The Hungarian Government has submitted the following plans :

(a) *Scheme for a navigation canal connecting the Danube and Tisza* (estimate, 94.5 million Swiss francs).

The Committee could only retain this scheme for further consideration if it were proved that it would be productive, it being remembered that the question of the repayment of capital outlay has to be taken into account.

(b) *Programme for the reconstruction of national roads.*

The Hungarian Government has submitted to the Committee a financial programme for the reconstruction of the national roads in ten years, accompanied by very brief comments (estimate, 125 million Swiss francs); also another very limited programme (estimated cost, 9 million Swiss francs) which the Hungarian Government had originally intended to carry out in 1932. The Government now suggests that this scheme might be spread over a period of three years.

The Committee feels that the limited programme can be recommended. If the Hungarian Government desires to carry out works on a large scale, it should supply the Committee with additional information.

(c) *Programme of expenditure on improvements in the State railway system* (estimated cost, 71 million Swiss francs).

The Committee regarded the programme submitted by the Hungarian Government as interesting, but the particulars available were quite inadequate. It accordingly requested the Hungarian Government to supply further information.

Latvia.

The Committee examined the *proposals for the construction of railway-lines from Riga to Rujiena and from Riga to Karsawa*, submitted by the Latvian Government (estimated cost, 38.5 million Swiss francs).

The Committee found that the information furnished by the Latvian Government was not adequate enough to enable it to form an opinion on the proposals. It accordingly decided to ask the Latvian Government to supply particulars as to the productivity of the proposed works and the amount of material that other countries would be asked to provide.

Poland.

The Committee examined the following schemes for works submitted by the Polish Government :

(a) *Scheme for extending the Warsaw water-supply and sewerage systems* (estimated cost of the first section, to be executed in five years : 31 million Swiss francs).

After studying the additional information received with regard to these works, which at its previous session it retained, in principle, for further consideration, the Committee decided in favour of the scheme, which it was informed was urgently required.

(b) *Programme of development of the long-distance telephone cable system* (estimated cost, 78 million Swiss francs).

After examining the proposals, the Committee found no objection to them, and considered that they were to be recommended.

(c) *Programme of electrification works for Poland.*

In general, the Committee regarded with favour the proposals submitted by the Polish Government, but made a distinction between Part A and Part B of the scheme, giving preference to Part A. In Part A itself (the cost of which is estimated at 93 million Swiss francs) a further distinction must be made. Priority should be given to the execution of a first stage consisting of the Porabka-Roznow-Moscice-Cracow group (estimated cost, 59 million Swiss francs), while the subsequent stages should only be carried out as and when they are proved to be necessary and remunerative.

With regard to Part B (estimated cost, 73.6 million Swiss francs), the Committee was not in possession of sufficient information to decide whether it could be carried out by stages, and the Polish Government is requested to furnish all particulars necessary to enable the Committee to come to a conclusion on the point.

It should therefore be with this object in view that the Polish Government should reconsider the proposals submitted and lay the results before the Committee.

(d) *Scheme for the supply of gas in the Polish coal-fields* (estimated cost, 29.5 million Swiss francs).

The Committee was of opinion that the scheme should, in principle, be retained for further examination. The particulars supplied by the Polish Government did not, however, enable it to recommend at present more than the following sections : Wolfgang-Katowice-Dabrowa-Gornicza-Czestochowa coke-works and Emma-Rybnik-Paruczwice coke-works (estimated cost, about 12 million Swiss francs). With regard to the other sections of the scheme, there is some doubt whether they will pay, and more careful study is required.

(e) Further, the Polish Government, not satisfied with the Committee's decision regarding the road and railway schemes submitted by it and considered by the Committee at its second session, produced certain additional observations regarding the roads from Stanislawow to Cracow and from Stanislawow to Lublin, and the Kamien-Koszyrski-Wolkowysk and Kozlow-Kiwerce railway lines.

The Committee considered this communication and noted, with reference to the roads, that the Polish Government agreed not to recondition the Stanislawów-Cracow road. As regards the Stanislawów-Lublin road, which over a considerable distance duplicates a railway, the Committee still thinks that there is no reason to depart from its previous conclusions, and it still favours the execution of 2,000 kilometres of road out of the total distance proposed.

With regard to the railways, the Committee is of opinion that the Kamien-Koszyrski-Wolkowysk line, which is justified by the necessity of serving areas which the Government is proposing to drain, is part of the scheme for improvement works in those areas, and that, that being so, it would not be proper to come to a decision on that part taken separately. As regards the Kozlow-Kiwerce line, which it is proposed to construct in order to relieve the congestion on other parallel lines, the Committee, before reaching a decision, would like to have some information as to the volume of traffic on these parallel lines.

Roumania.

The Roumanian Government submitted a *scheme for the improvement of the railway system, the building of new lines and the rebuilding of bridges* (estimated cost, 730 million Swiss francs).

The Committee regarded the principle of this operation with favour. It found, however, that the material supplied was insufficient to enable it to give a definite opinion. The Roumanian Government is therefore requested to send the necessary additional particulars.

Moreover, in view of the very considerable amount of the estimate, it might be desirable to divide the scheme into a number of parts and to carry out the work by stages if the cost of the entire scheme seems too heavy. The Roumanian Government is requested to state its views on this point.

Yugoslavia.

The Committee examined the following proposals submitted by the Yugoslav Government :

(a) *Scheme for the improvement of the port of Belgrade on the Save and of the winter port at Cukarica* (estimated cost, 10.2 million Swiss francs).

The Committee approves the scheme for the improvement of the port of Belgrade and the winter port at Cukarica, but observes that the plant should be erected by stages in accordance with the requirements of traffic.

(b) *Programme for the improvement of the State railways* (estimated cost, 180 million Swiss francs).

The Committee regards with favour the principle of this scheme, which it feels is particularly to be recommended owing to its beneficial influence on unemployment both in the country and abroad.

It will still be necessary, however, to consider how the service of the loan can be provided for, regard being paid more particularly to the possible influence of the works on traffic.

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In accordance with the Assembly's resolution of September 24th, 1931, and the Council's resolution of May 10th, 1932, the Committee, having concluded its third session, submits to the Council the present progress report, which is to be regarded as supplementary to its previous report.



