

Meantime, but at different hours, the Plenary Conference has heard general opening statements by the leaders of the twenty-one member States⁽¹⁾ at six meetings between 29 July and 3 August, and stood adjourned until the Procedural Committee's report was received. This report was then discussed and finally adopted on 12 August⁽²⁾.

At the invitation of the Conference, Italy stated her case on 10 August, Roumania on 13 August, Bulgaria and Hungary on 14 August, and Finland on 15 August⁽³⁾. Each statement was followed by a general discussion by members of the Conference, after which the relevant Commission was constituted. Work in the Commissions, however, did not commence in earnest until 26 August in view of the delay in receiving and distributing the amendments to the draft treaties put forward by various delegations.

At its meeting on 12 August the Plenary Conference decided to invite certain of the United Nations who had applied unsuccessfully for full membership of the Conference to state their views at plenary meetings and in Commissions concerned with drafting those sections of the Italian treaty in which they were specially interested. The States concerned were Albania, Mexico, Cuba, and Egypt. On 17 August the Conference decided to invite Iran to state its views on the treaties, and to invite Austria to comment on the section of the Italian treaty which specially concerned her. Long debate took place before it was decided to issue the invitations to Albania and Austria; Austria's case for a hearing was advocated by the so-called Western group, Albania's by the Eastern⁽⁴⁾.

Representatives of Albania, Mexico, Egypt, Cuba, and Austria spoke before the Plenary Conference on 21 August. The following two days were occupied with debate on these speeches. A representative of Iran spoke briefly on 21 August, but the main comments of that country upon the draft treaties were made on 30 August.

On 30 August the Plenary Conference approved the application of the Government of Iraq to be admitted to the Peace Conference in order to state its views upon the treaty with Italy, and a representative of that country spoke on 6 September.

In order to give some direction to the Conference, which had no steering committee and was making little progress, the four Foreign Ministers (of the United Kingdom, United States, Soviet Union, and France) met on 29 August and instructed their deputies to go through the various amendments to the draft treaties put forward not only by members of the Conference, but also by allied and ex-enemy States in order to discover which, if any, should command their general support.

⁽¹⁾ The speech of the Leader of the New Zealand delegation (Hon. H. G. R. Mason) is attached as Appendix I.

⁽²⁾ See Sections II and III of this introduction for a discussion of the procedure of the Conference.

⁽³⁾ The proceedings of all plenary sessions were recorded verbatim.

⁽⁴⁾ The voting in the former case was the figure of 15 to 6, which characterized the Conference.