

Official report of debates of the first session of the WEU Assembly (Strasbourg, 5 and 8 July 1955)

Caption: On 5 and 8 July 1955, in Strasbourg, the first session of the Assembly of Western European Union (WEU) is held in the Hemicycle of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, attended by the delegations of Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

Source: Proceedings. First session, II. Official report of debates. Strasbourg: Assembly of Western European Union, July 1955. 42 p.

National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>, Records of international organizations, DG. Copies of records of the Brussels Treaty Organisation and Western European Union. Brussels Treaty Organisations and Western European Union: Microfilm copies of files, DG 1.

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FIRST SITTING

Tuesday, 5th July, 1955

SUMMARY

- | | |
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<i>Speakers:</i> The President, M. Margue. 8. Message from the Council.
<i>Speakers:</i> M. Spaak (<i>Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, Chairman of the Council of Western European Union</i>), the President, M. van der Goes van Naters, M. de Menthon. 9. Preparation of the Rules of Procedure.
<i>Speakers:</i> The President, Sir Robert Boothby. |
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The Sitting was opened at 5 p.m., with M. Boggiano Pico, the oldest Representative present, in the Chair.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation). — The Sitting is open.

1. Opening of the Session

In pursuance of Article IX of the Brussels Treaty, modified and completed by the Protocol of 23rd October, 1954, and the decision taken by the Council of Western European Union during its meeting held in Paris on 7th May, 1955, I declare the first Session of the Assembly of Western European Union open.

2. Speech by the oldest Representative present

THE PRESIDENT (Translation). — Once again, my friends, the privilege of age brings me to the Chair this evening, conferring upon me the honour of presiding at the inauguration of the Assembly of Western European Union.

The majority of us, members of the Assembly of the Council of Europe, rejoice to find ourselves here after the long and sometimes sharp discussions which, in our respective parliaments, preceded the approval of the Paris Protocols.

We look back upon those discussions with the satisfaction of a man who, having just scaled the treacherous slope of a high mountain, realises what efforts he has put into that ascent and what dangers he has triumphantly overcome.

And so now, with that glance backward, on behalf of the nations whom we have the honour to represent here, we may justly congratulate one another on having kept faith with the aim we set before us, and, by giving our peoples a guarantee of security in an atmosphere of peace and well-being, on having reached the goal so dear to their hearts.

Let us recall our beginnings; they go back, I must confess, to one failure, to that abortive project—the constitution of a European Defence Community. It was feared for a while that, once the project of the European Defence Community had been rejected, relations between the free, democratic countries of Europe would become chaotic, faced as they were by countries living under a totalitarian regime. It was feared that this would be a considerable step backwards on the difficult road to liberty and democracy.

I remember, for instance, the feelings of anxiety, I might almost say of dread, experienced by that unforgettable champion of the European idea, Alcide De Gasperi, when towards the end of his days—and to some of his friends he confessed the fact, which haunted him like a fearful nightmare—he foresaw the failure of a programme, which, though not perhaps the ideal solution of the problem, was in his opinion the one to be desired.

Verily, good often emerges from evil, or, shall I say, something better from an imperfect and inadequate good.

The President (continued)

Ladies and Gentlemen, on 5th May, 1955, Western Europe was officially born—and born into the international community. On that very day the *Chargé d'affaires* of the German Federal Republic in Brussels, on behalf of his Government, deposited with the Belgian Government the instruments of ratification of the Paris Agreements, thus establishing Western European Union. Only a few minutes before, the representatives of France and the United Kingdom had carried out the same formality; the representatives of Belgium and Italy had done as much a few days before.

In this connection, we must remember that Western European Union associates the German Federal Republic and Italy with the signatory Powers of the Brussels Treaty (Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom), within a defensive alliance linked with N. A. T. O. and concerned, in particular, with the control of armaments of each of its members.

On 7th May, meeting in Paris under the chairmanship of Mr. Macmillan, Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, the representatives of these seven Powers established the Council of Western European Union and adopted a draft convention with regard to the status of the national representatives and international personnel of the organisation.

The Council also decided to create, among the organisations within the Union, a Standing Committee on Armaments consisting of national representatives and assisted by an international secretariat. I do not propose to waste your time by demonstrating the specific aims of this Committee and the concrete functions entrusted to it; you know all about them through the communiqués published by the press.

But I should like to add a few words on a subject which is of special concern to us all, namely the composition of this Assembly of Western European Union which we are inaugurating today.

The Council of the seven Ministers decided in the course of its meeting that the Assembly would consist of the Representatives of the Brussels Treaty countries to the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe, and fixed its seat in the House of Europe at Strasbourg.

The task before our Assembly is to define the authority, set up the particular organs, establish

the administrative framework, while keeping in mind the broad outlines which were decided on during the first meeting of the Council of Western European Union, held in Paris on 7th May. Such is our basic programme. Today we have to decide upon the specific character of our organisation and as far as possible put the finishing touches to our constitution.

It remains for us to perfect our organisation in accordance with these basic principles: first, by composing our Bureau, the structure of which might well be patterned upon that of the Assembly of the Council of Europe; then by fixing the number of committees, in accordance with what experience teaches us day by day. In this respect nothing can be categorically decided on in advance. Our aims and the idea which inspires our work must determine our policy.

Forewarned by the cruel experiences of the past, conscious of the inevitable disaster which fresh conflicts would bring upon us and the damage which new differences would inflict on our common civilisation, we have before us but one aim: that of ensuring peace.

All those countries involved in the war experienced its full horror and anguish while realising its utter uselessness. The conquerors' experience led to the profound conviction that the ancient Roman warning "*Vae victis*" might well be applied to the victors of modern wars: "*Vae victoribus*"!

It only remains for us to recall the felicitous phrase of our friend Paul-Henri Spaak, which sums up a whole programme and enshrines our aspirations: "The one sure approach to peace is the organisation of the West." (*Applause.*)

3. Composition of the Assembly

THE PRESIDENT (Translation). — Article IX of the Brussels Treaty amended and completed by the Protocol of 23rd October, 1954 lays down that the Assembly of Western European Union is

"composed of Representatives of the Brussels Treaty Powers to the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe".

I have received the following letter dated 5th July, 1955, from the President of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe:

The President (continued)

"Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe proceeded to the examination of credentials of its members during the Sitting held on Tuesday morning, 5th July.

The credentials of the Representatives and Substitutes of Member States of Western European Union to the Assembly of the Council of Europe have all been confirmed. The seat of one Representative and of one Substitute remain to be filled by France.

I remain, Sir, your obedient Servant,

Signed: Guy Mollet."

The list of the Representatives of the Member States of Western European Union in the Assembly of the Council of Europe and the list of their Substitutes have been published in a supplement to Notice No. I, which has been distributed to you.

Consequently, and in pursuance of the terms of the Treaty I have just read out, I declare that these Representatives and their Substitutes will take their seats as Representatives and Substitutes respectively in the Assembly of Western European Union.

With regard to the Substitutes, I propose that the Assembly should provisionally adopt—without prejudice to the future provisions of its final rules of procedure—those provisions of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Council of Europe which are applicable to them, in particular Rules 37 and 38, as also Rule 25 relating to the Attendance Register.

Are there any comments? . . .

It is so decided.

4. Attendance Register

THE PRESIDENT (Translation).—In accordance with the terms of the Rules of Procedure which have just been adopted, I wish to inform the Assembly that the names of the Substitutes present at this Sitting have been posted on the board. An attendance list appears as an Appendix to the Minutes.

5. Election of the President

THE PRESIDENT (Translation). — The next item in the Order of the Day is the election of a President and Vice-Presidents of the Assembly of Western European Union.

In the absence of rules of procedure I propose that the Assembly should provisionally adopt, for the election of its President, the provisions of the Rules of Procedure of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe applicable to the election of the President of this Assembly.

The terms of Rules 9 and 34 are as follows:

"Rule 9

1. No Representative may stand as a candidate for the office of President . . . unless the proposal for his candidature has been sponsored in writing by three or more Representatives.

2. The President shall be elected by secret ballot; Two tellers chosen by lot shall count the votes cast.

3. The President shall first be elected. If, after two ballots, no candidate has obtained an absolute majority of the Representatives of the Assembly, the candidate who on the third ballot receives the greatest number of votes shall be declared elected. In the event of a tie, the candidate senior in age shall be elected.

4. As soon as the President has been elected, the oldest Representative shall thereupon leave the Chair."

Rule 34, paragraph 6, states:

"Candidates having been nominated, voting shall take place by secret ballot. Only those ballot papers bearing the names of persons who have been duly entered as candidates shall be taken into account for the purpose of calculating the number of votes cast."

I take it the Assembly will provisionally adopt these provisions?

Are there any comments? . . .

It is so decided.

In accordance with the provisions which have just been provisionally adopted, names of candidates for the office of President should be sponsored in writing by three or more Representatives. To allow time for candidates to be

The President (continued)

nominated and ballot papers to be prepared, the Sitting will now be suspended for a few minutes.

Nominations must be handed in to the Secretary-General of the Council of Western European Union, who is acting as Clerk of the Assembly during the present Session.

The Sitting is suspended.

(The Sitting was suspended at 5.20 p.m. and resumed at 5.35 p.m.)

THE PRESIDENT (Translation). — The Sitting is resumed.

I have only received one nomination, that of the Right Hon. John Maclay. This nomination was sponsored in the required manner.

An envelope has been distributed to you bearing the inscription: *Election of the President of the Assembly of Western European Union* as well as ballot papers bearing the name of Mr. Maclay.

Before voting, two tellers, who shall be responsible for counting the votes cast, must be chosen by lot.

We shall now proceed to draw lots.

(Lots were drawn.)

Miss Burton and M. Lützens were appointed tellers.

M. Guy MOLLET (*France*) (Translation). — May I have leave to speak, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT (Translation). — I call M. Guy Mollet.

M. Guy MOLLET (*France*) (Translation). — Mr. President, out of courtesy, because of the time-factor and, if I may say so, for the sake of uniformity, I suggest that you should adopt in this Assembly a method which has already been adopted in others: since there is only one candidate, he might be declared elected by acclamation—if the Assembly were in agreement. *(Applause.)*

THE PRESIDENT (Translation). — After this applause it only remains to declare Mr. Maclay elected by acclamation. I invite him to occupy the Presidential Chair.

(Mr. Maclay, greeted by applause, took the President's Chair and received the traditional embrace from M. Boggiano Pico, oldest Representative present.)

6. Address by the President

THE PRESIDENT. — I am deeply conscious of the very great honour which has been conferred upon me by you in electing me to this position of great importance as the first President of the new Assembly of Western European Union. I am deeply conscious of the confidence you are placing in me by so electing me, and I give you my assurance that I shall do my best in every possible way to justify that confidence.

I am all the more gratified by what has happened because I know well that in the last year I have been a by no means silent member of Committees, although perhaps not speaking so often in the Consultative Assembly, and that in these Committees I have often been in fairly strong argument with many of my colleagues. I feel very humbly gratified that, in spite of these arguments in which I have expressed views which were not always those of my colleagues, you have nevertheless seen fit unanimously to elect me as your President.

In all those discussions, I think my colleagues will agree, I have never varied in any way from any of them in their desire, and my desire, to move in the most effective way we can towards real unity in Europe. It is with that thought in mind that I will do my best to fulfil the responsibilities which you have placed upon me, and it is with that thought in mind that I will endeavour to conduct our proceedings. In the last year I have made many friends in Strasbourg and received much encouragement and help in the work I have been trying to do. I know that I can depend on that encouragement and help in the period that lies ahead. Thank you very much indeed. *(Applause.)*

7. Election of the Vice-Presidents

THE PRESIDENT. — The next task before the Assembly is the election of its Vice-Presidents. The first question to be decided is how many Vice-Presidents the Assembly shall have. I suggest, for the present Session and without prejudice to what may be decided when our Rules of Procedure are drawn up, that the Assembly shall have six Vice-Presidents.

Does any Representative object to that proposal? . . .

The proposal is agreed to.

I suggest to the Assembly that for the election of the Vice-Presidents we follow a similar pro-

The President (continued)

cedure to that used for the election of the President and adopt, provisionally and for this purpose only, those parts of Rules 9 and 34 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council of Europe which are applicable. I think it is my duty to read them out again. The relevant passages are as follows:

"Rule 9

1. No Representative may stand as a candidate for the offices of . . . Vice-President unless the proposal for his candidature has been sponsored in writing by three or more Representatives.

2. The [six] Vice-Presidents shall be elected by secret ballot. Two tellers chosen by lot shall count the votes cast.

. . .

5. The six Vice-Presidents shall . . . be elected on the same ballot paper. Those who on the first ballot obtain an absolute majority of the Representatives of the Assembly shall be declared elected. If the number of those elected is less than the number of vacancies to be filled, a second ballot for the candidates not elected shall be held, following the same procedure. If a third ballot is necessary those candidates who then receive the greatest number of votes cast shall be declared elected to the vacancies still to be filled. In the event of a tie, the candidates senior in age shall be declared elected.

6. The Vice-Presidents shall take precedence in accordance with the order in which they have been elected, and, in the event of a tie, by age."

"Rule 34

6. Candidates having been nominated, voting shall take place by secret ballot. Only those ballot papers bearing the names of persons who have been duly entered as candidates shall be taken into account for the purpose of calculating the number of votes cast."

Is it agreed that we follow that procedure? . . .

It is agreed.

Nominations should be handed in, in writing, at Room 74 to the Secretary-General of the Western European Union, who on this occasion will act as Clerk of the Assembly.

The Sitting will be suspended for about 30 minutes.

(The Sitting was suspended at 5.45 p.m. and resumed at 6.40 p.m.)

THE PRESIDENT. — The Sitting is resumed.

Candidatures for the posts of Vice-Presidents have been presented in due form on behalf of the following Representatives: MM. Bichet, Boggiano Pico, Bohy, Fens, Lütken, and Schaus.

Since the number of candidates is the same as the number of Vice-Presidents to be appointed, perhaps the Assembly would be prepared to agree to their appointment without the taking of a vote. Does the Assembly agree to this proposal? . . .

It is so agreed.

I call M. Margue.

M. MARGUE (*Luxembourg*) (Translation). — Might I make a suggestion that the principle of age be applied for determining the seniority of the Vice-Presidents?

THE PRESIDENT. — If the Assembly agrees, I suggest that we accept the principle of age as determining seniority in the Vice-Presidents. . . .

It is so decided.

I declare the following elected Vice-Presidents of the Assembly: MM. Bichet, Boggiano Pico, Bohy, Fens, Lütken, and Schaus.

The Bureau of the Assembly of the Western European Union is now fully constituted.

8. Message from the Council

THE PRESIDENT. — The next item on the Orders of the Day is the Message from the Council. I call M. Spaak, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Western European Union, to deliver the Message.

M. SPAAK (*Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, President of the Council of Ministers of the Western European Union*) (Translation). — Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, as Chairman-in-office of the Council of the Western European Union, I have been entrusted by my colleagues with the honour of greeting you on the opening day of your Assembly, and wishing you all success in your work.

In view of the membership of this Assembly it would be almost insulting for me to remind you of the circumstances and events which gave rise to the Western European Union and to instruct you as to the part you are called upon to play in it. But I should like, in a few words, to emphasise its importance.

M. Spaak (continued)

The Council of the Western European Union will be submitting to you, each year, a report on its activities, which you will be called upon to discuss. The general aims which the Member States of the Union have set themselves are numerous and ambitious. They intend to pursue a policy of peace, to reinforce their security, to strive for unity, and to encourage the gradual integration of Europe, with closer co-operation among themselves and between them and the other European organisations.

This, as you will realise, offers a very wide field for activity and experiment, which you will be called upon to share—or, better still, to stimulate. The success of the undertaking depends to a great extent on your observations, the criticisms you may feel called upon to make, and perhaps even upon encouragement from you.

The basic texts of the Western European Union, let me say, suggest immense potentialities. It rests with the men who make up its institutions—the Ministers in the Council and the Representatives in the Assembly—to transform these into realities. But, in addition to these general tasks, whose scope time alone can reveal, the Council of the Union, and with it your Assembly, are already invested with two definite and highly important functions: the control of armaments, specified in the Treaty itself, and the control of the activities of the Commissioner for the Saar, undertaken by the Council in its Resolution of 11th May, 1955.

We are all, I think, convinced that any healthy international policy must be based on a controlled restriction of armaments. We shall strive to introduce such restrictions among ourselves, as members of the Union. In so doing we shall be setting an excellent example to the rest of the world. If we succeed, others will perhaps be inspired with the wish and determination to imitate us.

The Secretary of State of the United States said the other day, with reference to our undertaking, that the introduction of a similar system by the Eastern bloc would be a step towards reducing tension, as such methods provide groups of nations with sufficient weapons for defence, but not enough for attack.

The agency for the control of armaments has already been created, though it is still only in embryo. The tasks confronting it involve complex problems which it will have to solve in close co-

operation with the Council of the Union, the Governments concerned, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. You will, of course, be regularly informed of its activities, and it will be for you to assess the results achieved.

It is impossible, I think, to refer here to the question of the Saar without paying tribute to the valuable spadework accomplished in this connection by the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe. Without that spadework it is by no means certain that the Franco-German Agreement of 23rd October, 1954 would ever have been concluded. By the terms of that Agreement, as you are all aware, European status was conferred upon the Saar, within the framework of the Western European Union. On 11th May last, the Agreement was jointly submitted by France and Germany to the Council of the Union, which decided to approve such of its provisions as required the consent of the Council, and to accept the responsibilities, powers and duties devolving upon it in consequence thereof.

By 22nd June, the Commission which is to supervise the referendum in the Saar had already been set up, and it is now at work. One of its tasks is to ensure that the legislation of the Saar shall conform to the terms of the Franco-German Agreement of 23rd October, 1954.

The Commission and the Council itself, I need hardly say, if called upon to intervene, will carry out their duties with strict impartiality.

Before concluding this brief statement I feel I should make some reference to the delicate questions entailed in the organisation of your Assembly and of your working methods.

There are other European Assemblies, certain of whose functions are parallel with, and in some cases very similar to, your own. Our European construction has not always proceeded along rational lines. Events have obliged us to put up with some degree of confusion. Aware of this, we must do our utmost to avoid the unfortunate consequences to which it might lead.

The Council of the Union has not wished to force its views upon you. On the contrary, we have been determined to leave you the greatest possible freedom, relying upon your experience and your wisdom; but we feel justified in putting a few suggestions before you.

We consider that the organisation and working methods of the Assembly and the nature of its relations with other Assemblies are matters for its own decision, within the framework of the agree-

M. Spaak (continued)

ments setting up the Western European Union. We feel, however, that it may be useful to call the attention of the members of the Assembly, as a general indication, to the following points.

The Assembly of the Western European Union is to be independent of all other Assemblies, and will have its own Clerk. This principle being duly observed, by means of measures upon which the Assembly will decide, it will be desirable, in the interests of economy and convenience, for the Assembly to make the fullest possible use of the facilities provided by the Council of Europe.

The agreements concluded between the Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community and the Council of Europe may serve as a useful precedent in making provision for refunding to the latter organisation the expenses which it will incur by seconding technical staff to the Assembly of the Western European Union. The Assembly will no doubt also think it advisable to avoid the duplication of services when proceeding to set up its committees.

The Council suggests that the powers, organisation and working methods of the Assembly of the Western European Union shall, particularly in budgetary matters, be based on the same principles as those of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe. We do not consider, however, that the annual budget of the Western European Union should be submitted to the Assembly for its opinion before being finally adopted by the Council.

With regard to relations between the Assembly and the Council, the Council's annual report will naturally be presented to the Assembly by the Minister who is then holding the office of Chairman, or by one of the other members of the Council. The Council will supply the Assembly with all necessary information to enable it to study the reports presented and to reply to them in full knowledge of the facts. The Council does not consider, however, that it would be desirable for the officials of the Western European Union to be called before the Assembly for this purpose.

I am convinced, Ladies and Gentlemen, that on this basis it will be possible to establish profitable co-operation not only between your Assembly and the Council, but also between your Assembly and the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe.

This fresh effort will carry us forward towards the more closely united Europe which we all regard as a great force in the service of peace and

as an organisation through which our peoples will be able to attain the living conditions to which they aspire. (*Applause.*)

THE PRESIDENT. — I am certain that you would wish me to thank M. Spaak most sincerely for delivering to us the Message from the Council of Ministers of Western European Union. We have listened with great attention to what he has said and I know that we shall want to think carefully about certainly the latter part of his speech, when he sketched briefly some of the tasks that we have to decide among ourselves in relation to organisation and procedure.

I would suggest that, since we have not yet any Rules of Procedure, we should postpone the debate upon the Message from the Council until a later meeting of the Assembly.

Does any Representative object to this proposal?

M. van der GOES van NATERS (*Netherlands*) (Translation). — May I speak?

THE PRESIDENT. — I call M. van der Goes van Naters.

M. van der GOES van NATERS (*Netherlands*) (Translation). — M. Spaak has just mentioned a subject which is of great interest at the moment—the fact that the Council of Ministers recognises our right to set up our own record-office and to appoint our own Clerk of the Assembly.

In my opinion, Mr. President, we should begin by publicly proclaiming this right, and by taking a decision, in principle, on the appointment of our Clerk of the Assembly. There is nothing in the agreement or in any other text to preclude recognition of this right, to which we have always laid claim—here I may remind you, Mr. President, of our work in the Committee on General Affairs of the Council of Europe. I would suggest that the Assembly, having once re-asserted this right, should entrust it to its Bureau—that is to say to you, Mr. President, and to the Vice-Presidents—which can then appoint our Clerk of the Assembly without delay.

THE PRESIDENT. — Does any other Representative wish to speak? . . .

Perhaps M. Spaak wishes to make some comments.

M. SPAAK (*Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, President of the Council of Ministers of the Western European Union*) (Translation). — That

M. Spaak (continued)

interpretation of my speech is correct, Mr. President. The Council of the Union does not feel called upon to take any part in the appointment of the Clerk of the Assembly. It leaves that to the discretion of the Assembly itself.

THE PRESIDENT. — I call M. de Menthon.

M. de MENTHON (*France*) (Translation). — Mr. President, since I have this opportunity of addressing the Assembly today, I should like to say, first of all, how very glad we are to have as our President the Rapporteur of the Committee on General Affairs of the Council of Europe for the question of links between the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe and the new Assembly of the Western European Union.

And now may I make a suggestion? As we shall all be at Strasbourg for the next few days, would it not be possible for our Bureau to draw up proposals for the appointment of our Clerk of the Assembly and for the possible establishment of an Organization Committee—which would prepare Rules of Procedure and set up committees—and submit these to us at a separate Sitting which could certainly be a brief one? If this could be done, we could meet again one evening this week to appoint our Clerk of the Assembly and take any necessary decisions concerning future activities.

THE PRESIDENT. — As President, I am, of course, in the hands of the Assembly, but I would suggest to M. van der Goes van Naters and to the Assembly that perhaps it would be wise for the Bureau to meet immediately after this Sitting and to consider what has been said, and, if we can possibly arrange it, to have another Sitting of the Assembly before the end of this week at which we shall give the results of our deliberations, which I hope we may be able to start this evening. Rather than to attempt to take a decision now on the lines suggested by M. van der Goes van Naters, I think that, as this is a new Assembly and we are searching for precedents, it might be wise if the Bureau were to meet before any formal motion is moved. Would that be agreeable to M. van der Goes van Naters?

M. van der GOES van NATERS (*Netherlands*) (Translation). — I only made my suggestion

because of lack of time; but if you think it will be possible to hold another Sitting in order to make the appointment, I shall be only too delighted.

THE PRESIDENT. — Does the Assembly agree? . . .

It is so decided.

9. Preparation of the Rules of Procedure

THE PRESIDENT. — I was going to propose—and I think it is probably in line with what M. van der Goes van Naters has said—that we should consider the preparation of the Rules of Procedure, which is the next item on the Orders of the Day. The proposal I would make is that the preparation of the Rules of Procedure is clearly a matter which must be entrusted to a Committee. Since this Assembly does not yet possess any rules under which such a Committee can be appointed, we shall have to take a decision this evening on the immediate procedure. Would it be acceptable to the Assembly if, following the broad precedent of the composition of Committees of the Consultative Assembly, we asked national delegations, within a reasonable limit of time, to put forward nominations for a Special Committee on organisation, which would include work on the Rules of Procedure? If the Assembly agrees to my proposal, I doubt whether it will be practicable for these nominations to be made this evening, for clearly consultation among delegations may be needed.

However, if this proposal is acceptable—I have had to work very quickly, because the time at my disposal has been very short—the structure of the Special Committee of seventeen members would be based on the formula used in the Consultative Assembly Committee, reasonably adjusted to meet our special numbers. The numbers on the Special Committee would be: Belgium, 2; France, 3; the German Federal Republic, 3; Italy, 3; Luxembourg, 1; the Netherlands, 2; the United Kingdom, 3.

Would it be acceptable to the Assembly that we should ask national delegations to submit names to the Secretary-General as soon as practicable? May I take it that this is agreed? . . .

It is so decided.

The President (continued)

Would it be acceptable to the Assembly to ask for nominations to this Committee by mid-day tomorrow? Would that give time for the necessary discussion? May I take that as agreed? . . .

This is agreed to.

May I ask the members of the Bureau to meet in Room 74 immediately after the adjournment of this Sitting? It will be a very short meeting to discuss the times of Sittings and other similar matters, including future meetings of the Assembly. I hope that the Assembly will be content to leave to the Bureau the decision on the date of the next Sitting. Does any Representative object to this proposal?

Sir Robert BOOTHBY (*United Kingdom*). — I should like to know whether the Sitting to which

you have referred, Mr. President, will take place during this Session of the Consultative Assembly, or not until October.

THE PRESIDENT. — I feel that if it is at all possible we shall need to have a very short Sitting before the end of the week in order to set up the Special Committee on organisation, but I do not think that we can contemplate a Sitting with full debates during this week.

Is the proposal that we proceed as I have described agreed? . . .

It is so decided.

Does anybody wish to speak? . . .

The Sitting is closed.

(*The Sitting was closed at 7.5 p.m.*)

SECOND SITTING

Friday, 8th July, 1955

SUMMARY

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adoption of the Minutes. 2. Attendance Register. 3. Composition of the Committee on Organisation.
<i>Speakers:</i> The President, M. Janssens, M. Bohy, Sir Robert Boothby. 4. Report of the Bureau of the Assembly on the appointment of the Clerk to the Assembly. | <p>Motion for an adjournment.
<i>Speakers:</i> The President, Mr. Morrison (<i>proposer of the motion for an adjournment</i>), M. Guy Mollet, M. Margue, M. Rolin, M. Montini.
Adoption of the motion for an adjournment.
<i>Speakers:</i> M. Margue, the President.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Date of the next Sitting.
<i>Speakers:</i> The President, M. Kopf, M. de Menthon, M. Guy Mollet. |
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The Sitting was opened at 11.55 a.m., with Mr. Maclay, President of the Assembly, in the Chair.

THE PRESIDENT. — The Sitting is open.

1. Adoption of the Minutes

THE PRESIDENT. — The Minutes of Proceedings of the previous Sitting have been distributed. Are there any comments on those Minutes? . . .

The Minutes are adopted.

2. Attendance Register

THE PRESIDENT. — The names of Substitutes present at this Sitting have been posted on the board, and the attendance list will appear as an Appendix to the Minutes.

3. Constitution of the Committee on Organisation

THE PRESIDENT. — The first item on the Orders of the Day is the constitution of the Committee on Organisation. The list of Representatives proposed as members of the Committee on Organisation is distributed.

Are there any objections to this list?

M. JANSSENS (*Belgium*) (Translation). — May I speak?

THE PRESIDENT. — I call M. Janssens.

M. JANSSENS (*Belgium*) (Translation). — Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am sorry to say that I do not entirely approve the procedure followed in appointing the members of the Bureau and of the Committee on Organisation of the Assembly of Western European Union. In saying this I am not speaking for myself alone, but for the majority of the Liberal group in our Assembly, whose disappointment, not to say dissatisfaction, I shall now try to make clear.

What is the present position? Merely for the sake of avoiding a ballot, for which, incidentally, no Rules of Procedure have as yet been laid down, appointments have so far been made as a result of discussions and negotiations which have often looked much like bargaining. Even assuming that we are bound to submit to this unparliamentary and undemocratic method, I consider that the skilfully-calculated mixtures to which we have been treated should have been prepared with an eye not only to the relative size of the various nations represented in the Assembly, but also to the respective influence of the different political groups. This would have corrected an error which has been made in the past and which, it seems to me, it would be dangerous to perpetuate.

As you will see if you give some thought to the composition of the Bureau of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe and that of the Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel

M. Janssens (continued)

Community, experience shows that in both those organisations the influence of the Christian Democrats is already marked, if not excessive, and I can safely say that the Socialists have almost as much reason as the Liberals to complain of the proportion allotted to them in those bodies.

As I see it, the election of the Bureau of the Assembly of the Western European Union offered an excellent opportunity of restoring a better balance between the main political trends represented in our Assembly. But what has actually happened? We find that the Bureau of our Assembly consists—in addition to the President, who, of course, enjoys the confidence of the entire Assembly, irrespective of political considerations—of three Christian Democrats, two Socialists and only one Liberal. Comment on these figures is, I think, superfluous.

Let us now consider the Committee on Organisation, whose political importance is undeniable, since it will be called upon to draft the Rules of Procedure for the Assembly of the W. E. U. The original suggestion was to appoint twenty-four members, which would have made it possible to give the Liberals and related groups the number of representatives they demand and to which they are entitled.

For it must not be forgotten, Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, that of the 89 members of the Assembly at least twenty—that is, almost a quarter—are Liberals. If the Committee on Organisation had had twenty-four members, the Liberals could easily have secured five nominations, which would have satisfied them; but it has been decided—I do not know how or by whom—to restrict the number of members to seventeen. That being so, the Liberals should logically and naturally have had at least three representatives. But the nominations put forward are divided, politically speaking, as follows: seven Socialists, six Christian Democrats, two British Conservatives and two Liberals.

This glaringly inadequate Liberal representation is due, of course, to the fact that the national delegations presented the nominations, without consulting the political groups.

This points, I suggest, to the following conclusion. It cannot, I think, be denied that the Bureau and the Committee on Organisation have been elected by hastily-improvised methods, which have entirely upset the natural proportional representation of the various political groups. I quite realise that it is difficult, if not impossible, to put matters right now that we are confronted with a *fait accompli*. But you will no doubt understand that for the reasons I have given, I shall not take part in the vote which is about to take place.

My abstention will also enable me—and this brings me to the conclusion of my speech—to put forward a recommendation and to table here and now the following draft of Rules of Procedure for the W. E. U. Assembly.

“1. *The Bureau.* — The Bureau of the Assembly shall be composed of a President and six Vice-Presidents. The Bureau shall be elected after examination of the credentials of the Representatives and Substitutes. The Chairmen of the political groups in the Assembly may, at the invitation of the President, attend the meetings of the Bureau.

2. *The Standing Committee.* — The Standing Committee shall consist of the President, the six Vice-Presidents, and the Chairmen on the general Committees, who shall be members *ex officio*, and of a number of members to be decided by the Assembly. The allocation of seats and the appointment of members shall be governed by the provisions of Rule 40 below.

The Chairmen of the political groups in the Assembly may, at the invitation of the President, attend meetings of the Standing Committee.

3. *Candidatures for membership of the Committees* shall be addressed to the Bureau, which shall submit to the Assembly proposals for their composition. These proposals shall allow of equitable representation of Member States and of political opinions.

Should disagreement arise concerning one or more seats on a committee, the Assembly shall decide the matter by secret ballot.

M. Janssens (continued)

4. *Groups.* — Representatives shall be entitled to form groups in accordance with their political affinities. Such groups shall be considered established when the President of the Assembly has received a declaration to this effect including the title of the group, hearing the signatures of its members, and indicating the composition of its Bureau.

This declaration shall be notified to the Assembly during the Sitting following its receipt.

No member may appear on the list of more than one group. The minimum number of members required to establish a group shall be ten."

THE PRESIDENT. — Before I call the next speaker, may I, as President, suggest—I am working without rules of procedure before me, because we have none as yet, except those we make during the Sitting—that M. Janssens has opened a subject of great width, and I am sure that it would not be the wish of the Assembly to go into a very long debate on the subject of his remarks. I should like to remind him how the Committee came to be set up. As President, I proposed at our last meeting that the broad principles followed in the setting up of the Committees of the Council of Europe should be followed. These are the words I used:

"However, if this proposal is acceptable . . . the structure of the Special Committee of seventeen members would be based on the formula used in the Consultative Assembly Committees, reasonably adjusted to meet our special numbers."

That was intended to mean the reduced number of countries. The Assembly agreed to that proposal. I am merely explaining to M. Janssens how these figures came to be used. He will appreciate that neither the President nor the Bureau had been able to give any consideration to this kind of matter, because they had been constituted only a few minutes before. I wish to make that clear before calling any further speakers.

I put it to the Assembly that, as I am sure we

do not wish to go into a wide discussion on what seems to me at first hearing to be the very broad principle contained in M. Janssens's proposal, the discussion should be confined to possibly one reply to the speech that has been made.

Is that a reasonable procedure to propose? May I take it that there is to be only one speech in reply? . . .

It is agreed.

I call M. Bohy.

M. BOHY (*Belgium*) (Translation). — Mr. President, I agree with you that this discussion should not be allowed to extend, at any rate in time. But M. Janssens's apposite question cannot be left without an answer.

My own calculations have not entirely convinced me that what he says about the Bureau is quite justified; for, while it is possible that the inclusion of only one member of the Liberal Party may be somewhat meagre, it seems to me that two members would be too much. (*Laughter.*)

Obviously, the problem is very difficult to solve when we are dealing with a small number of members. But I think what he says is perfectly correct when we come to the composition of the Committee on Organisation. This shows that nomination by the national delegations alone is not a satisfactory method.

In the case of the Belgian delegation, which was to furnish only two members, the Assembly will understand that neither of the two parties, both appreciably larger than the third not inconsiderable party, could withdraw one of their nominees for the benefit of that third party. We have tried to settle the difficulty by appointing a Substitute from the ranks of that third party. But I quite understand that this solution cannot in every case be acceptable to the Liberal Party, which is fully entitled to active representation.

In these circumstances I would ask the Assembly to adopt a practical attitude. We have to get down to business. Our Committee must be appointed today, so that it may take the first steps to ensure that useful work will be accomplished before the October Session. I am well aware that in the usual way a Committee is appointed for a year.

M. Bohy (continued)

We want the Liberals to realise that we have no intention of ignoring grievances which we regard as justified, and that we wish to meet their views as quickly as possible. In order to do so we are prepared to set aside this one-year rule.

Furthermore, the Committee on Organisation will make it its first task to decide procedure for appointing committees, so that, from the very start, the new rules we shall draft to facilitate our work will be available for reference, not only in appointing the organising Committee, but in appointing any other committee which may be set up.

Although no procedure has yet been laid down for the transmission of texts such as that which M. Janssens read out just now, I suggest that his text shall be transmitted—whether officially or unofficially—to the Organisation Committee.

I think this will convince our Liberal colleagues that we are most anxious to remove their just grievances, and to do so in a way which would not delay our work in the very least.

I should therefore like to put the following definite proposal before the Assembly:

First, that, in the interest of going ahead with our work, we accept the present Committee for the time being;

Secondly, that we depart from the principle that a committee is constituted for a year, and decide, when we meet again in October, to make a thorough review of the whole procedure in the light of the rules to be drafted by the Organisation Committee for the final appointment of a committee or committees.

I hope our Liberal colleagues will appreciate that this is our only possible course, and look upon this gesture of goodwill as an assurance for the future.

THE PRESIDENT. — I call M. Janssens.

M. JANSSENS (*Belgium*) (Translation). — Speaking for myself, I think I can accept M. Bohy's suggestion. It seems to me reasonable, and I think that the great majority, if not all the members of this Assembly will agree to this.

THE PRESIDENT. — It was my intention, in the light of the speeches made by M. Janssens and M. Bohy, to propose that the only practical way of dealing with the question that has been raised was to refer it to the Committee on Organisation for consideration. The questions of principle raised are obviously very great indeed, and should be given the most mature and careful deliberation. The only body that will be available to do that will be the Committee on Organisation when it is set up.

In that case, do I understand that M. Janssens will accept the motion that I shall now put to the Assembly, that the list of Representatives proposed as members of the Committee on Organisation is as appended to the Orders of the Day? . . .

Are there any objections to that list? . . .

The list is agreed, and the Committee is so constituted.

Might I suggest to the members of that Committee that, in order to expedite the work, which is very desirable indeed, as we are very near to the end of the week, the Committee should meet at 2.45 p.m. in a room the number of which will be announced later?

I would remind the members of the Committee that there is to be an important debate in the Assembly of the Council of Europe this afternoon, and that arrangements will be made so that they are informed of its commencement in case members of the Committee, who are also automatically Representatives to the Consultative Assembly, wish to be present. I feel that, while we are working under this rather difficult procedure of having virtually simultaneous meetings of the Committee and of the Consultative Assembly, we must watch very carefully that no one by mistake fails to know of a debate in another part of the building.

I call Sir Robert Boothby.

Sir Robert BOOTHBY (*United Kingdom*). — Mr. President, arising out of what you have just said, might I point out that an important debate is to take place in the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe at 3 o'clock, and some of us will certainly wish to be there. In the circumstances, it seems to me not a very good idea

Sir Robert Boothby (continued)

that the Committee on Organisation should meet at 2.45 p.m. If any of us are a little late, it will give us about five minutes in the Committee before we have to go to the Assembly. In the circumstances, I suggest that the Committee on Organisation should meet at, say, 3.30 p.m. or 3.45 p.m. I do not see the point of going to a room, sitting down, and then immediately getting up again to go to the Assembly.

THE PRESIDENT. — Unless any other member of the Committee on Organisation, the list of which is fully known, has any comment to make, I suggest that the Committee meet at 3.30 p.m.

Is that agreed? . . .

It is agreed.

4. Report of the Bureau of the Assembly on the appointment of a Clerk of the Assembly

THE PRESIDENT. — The next item on the Orders of the Day is the Report of the Bureau of the Assembly on the appointment of a Clerk of the Assembly.

At its last Sitting, the Assembly instructed the Bureau to submit to it, at a meeting to be held before the end of this week, proposals for the appointment of a Clerk. The Assembly will, I am certain, realise that both the Assembly and the Bureau are working under conditions possibly without precedent. Our Assembly came into existence less than 72 hours ago. If we are to be prepared for a Session later this year, it is imperative that before Representatives depart from Strasbourg the work of the Committee on Organisation should start. That Committee has now been constituted, but it cannot start work, as the Assembly has expressed the wish that it should do, until a Clerk has been appointed, whether temporary or permanent, to make the necessary arrangements. That had been my understanding and that of the Bureau of the will of the Assembly after the Sitting last Tuesday.

Since then a motion has been presented, a very short time ago, of which I believe all Representatives have copies, which proposes that the Assembly should postpone its decision upon the appointment of a Clerk until the next Session, and should for the present continue to work under temporary arrangements. This suggestion represents a difference of principle which, to my mind, must clearly be decided first.

In my view, this motion is a dilatory motion of the kind referred to in Rule 32 of the Rules of Procedure of the Consultative Assembly. I therefore propose that the Assembly should apply to its discussion the relevant provisions of that Rule, which I shall read to the Assembly. My reason for making that proposal is that I know of no other sensible precedent to suggest to the Assembly.

I shall now read Rule 32 of the Rules of Procedure of the Consultative Assembly:

"Procedural Motions

1. A Representative shall have prior right to speak if he asks leave:

. . .

(b) to move the previous question or a dilatory motion.

. . .

2. The above matters shall take precedence over the main question, the discussion of which shall be suspended while they are being considered.

3. In debate on the above matters the following only shall be heard: the proposer of the motion, one speaker against the motion, the rapporteur or Chairman of the Committee concerned."

That is the Rule as it applies to Council of Europe proceedings. It then says:

"4. The Assembly shall vote on any such questions by sitting and standing."

Rule 35 of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe provides that a decision in this type of discussion should be by simple majority.

Does any Representative object to this method of proceeding on this motion? . . .

I take it that it is agreed that we proceed on that basis.

I call Mr. Morrison, the proposer of the motion.

Mr. MORRISON (*United Kingdom*). — Mr. President, I think that every Representative will sympathise with you and your colleagues of the Bureau in the task which we set you the other day, and I hope very much that the motion (Document 1)¹ that I am moving will not cause you any inconvenience. However, I feel that we went at things a little bit quickly and perhaps without

1. See below page 39.

Mr. Morrison (continued)

adequate consideration the other day, and that we ought to take a little more time in making this important appointment of Clerk of the Western European Union Assembly. It is important that we should get the best person that we can. We want the ablest person we can get, and no extraneous considerations should influence our minds when we make the appointment.

What we are after is an efficient Clerk who will carry out his duties and his orders fairly, efficiently and impartially; but it seems to me that it is a mistake to constitute the Assembly of Western European Union on a Tuesday, to refer the matter to the Bureau and then to expect out of the void—out of the blue, as we say—to make an appointment of an important officer on the Thursday.

We do not know the persons who are effectively available for consideration. There has not been an opportunity for people from a wide enough field to apply. There is the question whether the post should be advertised or not. I do not know what the usual procedure is, but it seems to me that it would be fortuitous, somewhat accidental, for this Assembly of considerable size to proceed to make an appointment at its Sitting today when we had our first formal Sitting only on Tuesday.

We have no rules of procedure, no standing orders governing appointments, and no recognised and proper procedure for making these decisions. It is possible that if we went ahead today we might be making a mistake. Even if the appointment were a temporary one for a limited period, there is the point that, having made a temporary appointment, it is not always easy to undo it when the temporary period has expired.

Therefore, I submit to the Assembly that there has not been proper time for consideration before making the appointment. There has been no working out, as far as I know—and I do not see how there could have been—of the conditions of the appointment, the salary to be paid, the expenses, if any, to be allowed, the general conditions under which the officer should work, and a whole number of other matters of detail which ought to be considered and elaborated in connection with the appointment, not only in fairness

to the Assembly, but in fairness to applicants for this position which has to be filled.

Therefore, I think that a little more time should be allowed for consideration of the matter and that, while affirming that the appointment is to be made in due course by the Assembly itself—that principle is set out in my motion—we should postpone the actual appointment until the next Session, which I believe will be in October. The President, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee on Organisation, should be enabled to make temporary arrangements about the secretarial services for the Assembly, which, obviously, must be carried on in the meantime. I think that the Assembly could properly entrust that responsibility to you, Mr. President, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee on Organisation.

In the meantime, consideration can be given, presumably by the Committee on Organisation, to the conditions of appointment and the procedure which should be adopted. We can get along, meantime, quite effectively, but I feel—and I know that a good many other Representatives feel the same—that it would be wrong and contrary to sound public practice to rush into an appointment today when it is quite clear that we have been unable to give adequate consideration to a matter which is of great importance. Indeed, it is clear that the Bureau has not found it possible to give it adequate consideration, through no fault of its own; if there be any fault, it is ours.

I hope that the motion will commend itself to my colleagues in the Assembly.

THE PRESIDENT. — As President of this Assembly I am anxious, above all, to make certain that full opportunity is given for consideration of any matter of great importance, and that there shall not be any unfairness to any section of thought.

Mr. Morrison has said that we made a very quick decision—it was necessary to do so—on the previous occasion. As the motion was circulated only a very short time ago, I would not wish anyone to feel that, by proceeding to the second speech, which is all that is permitted under the rules of procedure which you have endorsed, we are going too quickly. I would not wish to go too quickly into that second speech if there were a feeling that a little thought was

The President (continued)

necessary. I can only ask for guidance whether the Assembly feels that it would be fair and proper to have a short adjournment of not more than ten minutes before calling a speaker against the motion. Does the Assembly desire any form of adjournment?

I call M. Guy Mollet.

M. Guy MOLLET (*France*) (Translation). — Mr. President, that seems to me to be a difficult matter. At your request we have just accepted a provisional decision on procedure, to the effect that there is to be one speaker for the motion and one against, after which voting will take place without further discussion. If the Sitting is suspended when we have heard the speaker supporting the motion and before we hear the speaker who is to oppose it, there will be a lot of talk outside the Assembly Hall, and this is entirely incompatible with the rules you have persuaded us to adopt.

THE PRESIDENT. — I understand that point of view. I was merely doing what I believed to be my duty, which is to try to make certain that I have the Assembly with me in the procedure as we go along. I understand that M. Margue wishes to speak against the motion.

I call M. Margue.

M. MARGUE (*Luxembourg*) (Translation). — If you will allow me to speak, I shall tell you what I think about it.

THE PRESIDENT. — Does any Representative wish to speak against the motion? You must excuse me, because we are working under difficulties, but I understood that it was my duty to ask whether any Representative wishes to speak against the motion.

M. Margue, do you wish to speak against the Motion?

M. MARGUE (*Luxembourg*) (Translation). — I do not know whether any of our colleagues wishes to oppose the motion, but I cannot say that I myself intend to do so. But I should like to have some amplification of its meaning, and I should like certain points to be made clear before we adjourn. If, in these circumstances, you consider that the rules should be strictly applied, you will have to refuse to let me speak; but, if you feel that

anybody should be allowed to express an opinion, even if it is not definitely for or against, then I should like to tell you what I think about the problem before us.

So if you agree, I shall go on saying what I meant to say.

THE PRESIDENT. — I am afraid, M. Margue, that I am advised that under any interpretation of the rule which we have adopted I can allow you to continue speaking only if you are speaking against the motion. Perhaps you will decide whether you are speaking against the motion.

M. MARGUE (*Luxembourg*) (Translation). — I agree to your proposal, Mr. President, provided I am not preventing anyone else from speaking. I have no wish to take any other speaker's place. If you like I shall undertake to oppose the motion, but marking some slight differences and making certain points clear. (*Laughter.*)

M. ROLIN (*Belgium*) (Translation). — I should like to speak on a point of order.

THE PRESIDENT. — I call M. Rolin on a point of order.

M. ROLIN (*Belgium*) (Translation). — When no speaker is one hundred per cent opposed to a motion, anyone who makes reservations must be regarded as being furthest from supporting it, and be allowed to express his opinion. As no one is asking to oppose the motion completely, M. Margue should be allowed to express his views. (*Laughter.*)

M. Guy MOLLET (*France*) (Translation). — May I speak?

THE PRESIDENT. — I call M. Guy Mollet.

M. Guy MOLLET (*France*) (Translation). — Mr. President, I only wish to speak on a point of order, not for or against the motion.

I hope the Assembly will not be too quick to agree to M. Rolin's suggestion. A decision taken on an occasion like this may create a precedent, and we should not be rash. Suppose that during a discussion of this kind on some other occasion, a dilatory motion were to be tabled. One speaker would defend it. After that there can be only one more speaker, and he must oppose it. It would be dangerous to allow someone who, save

M. Guy Mollet (continued)

for certain reservations, was in favour of the motion to speak and thus prevent someone entirely opposed to it from giving his opinion.

I should therefore ask the Assembly, and the President in particular, to allow only an opponent of the motion to speak now, unless it be on a point of procedure.

M. MARGUE (*Luxembourg*) (Translation). — Mr. President, I should like to speak on a point of procedure. (*Laughter.*)

THE PRESIDENT. — I gather that M. Margue wishes to speak on a point of order.

M. MARGUE (*Luxembourg*) (Translation). — As I have just said, Mr. President, I have no wish at all to prevent anyone from speaking against the motion. So far, if I have correctly understood M. Rolin, no one has asked to speak completely against it.

I hope we can come to an agreement as to procedure, but I cannot alter the trend of my speech and tell you that I am going to oppose the motion, for, afterwards, you might say that I had not done so.

I repeat, I do not mean to prevent anyone from speaking against the motion, but I should like to know first of all whether anybody really wishes to do so.

THE PRESIDENT. — I call M. Montini.

M. MONTINI (*Italy*) (Translation). — Mr. President, I think that even a lost cause needs an advocate. I should like to play the part of barrister in this lost cause, and say that we have before us a motion for adjournment. Well, such a motion shows that there must have been a concrete proposal—which means that the Bureau of the Assembly had a solution of its own and must have found a way of proposing one or several names to the Assembly. In its proceedings the Bureau of the Assembly must have foreseen the difficulties which might arise and which, moreover, were so clearly explained by Mr. Morrison. The real difficulty is to appoint anybody before the work of the Assembly has been clearly defined.

Of course, we ourselves took no part in the work of the Bureau; all the same, we owe it our confidence because it is composed of people whom we have elected and to whom we have given a certain mandate. On the strength of this mandate, the Bureau decided to make a choice. If the choice has been made and if a candidate has been proposed, let us be told. I think we ought to know the name so that we in turn may decide whether or not there is good reason for adjourning this affair.

However that may be, as I have assumed the rôle of defender *ex officio* and since my chief argument is that we must vote on a name, I reserve the right to put forward a secondary proposal to the effect that the solution should in no way reflect upon the candidate proposed by the Bureau. I should be failing in my duty as Counsel for the Defence if I omitted to say that the proposal for adjournment—if it were to give rise to difficulties in the election of the candidate—would be a very serious move.

THE PRESIDENT. — Since there is no committee concerned with this matter, the debate on the motion is closed. I shall ask the Assembly to vote on the motion by the method of sitting and standing.

(*A vote was taken by sitting and standing.*)

THE PRESIDENT. — 48 Representatives have voted in favour of the motion, 1 against, and there are 14 abstentions.

The motion is agreed to.

I call M. Margue.

M. MARGUE (*Luxembourg*) (Translation). — Mr. President, now that the motion has been adopted and the Bureau instructed to apply it, may I put a question as to its contents and the manner of implementing it?

THE PRESIDENT. — I must ask for guidance from the Assembly on whether that is a proper procedure, because my understanding of the rule which we have applied is that there can be no further debate after the vote has been taken. Is that the view of the Assembly? Does anyone dissent from that view? . . .

I am afraid, M. Margue, that, with the utmost

The President (continued)

desire to hear you speak, the decision of the Assembly, interpreted by me as President, is that I cannot allow you to speak on the substance of the matter which has just been concluded.

M. MARGUE (*Luxembourg*) (Translation). — I am not blaming you, Mr. President. It is the Assembly, it seems, which is refusing the right of free speech (*Protests*) . . . or else it is the Rules of Procedure!

THE PRESIDENT. — I feel, M. Margue, that it would be most regrettable if at this, our second Sitting, a reflection of that kind were allowed to stand. What the Assembly has been doing is trying to work to a rule which it has itself adopted, and under that rule I feel that the Assembly could not have taken any other action than it did. I hope that M. Margue will withdraw his remark.

M. MARGUE (Translation). — I agree to withdraw what I said.

THE PRESIDENT. — M. Margue has withdrawn his remark.

5. Date of the next Meeting

THE PRESIDENT. — I hope that the Assembly will again be prepared to leave to the Bureau the decision on the date of our next meeting. Does any Representative object to this proposal? . . .

It is so agreed.

I call M. Kopf.

M. KOPF (*German Federal Republic*) (Translation from German). — Mr. President, I think it would be right to give M. Margue the chance to say what he wanted to say. I should like to draw your attention to the following: it was not that I had any objection to Article 32 of the Statute of the Council of Europe having been applied. But I doubt very much that we have applied this position rightly. The application of this provision has prevented certain opinions which are important from being express-

ed. Among these opinions is that of M. Margue. I also think that I may assume that M. Margue wanted to express this opinion not only in his own name, but at the same time in the name of the Christian-Democrat Group.

I therefore request that M. Margue be given a chance of a hearing.

THE PRESIDENT. — I am afraid that I cannot go back on a decision that has been taken by the Assembly. It is not my decision; it is the decision of the Assembly, and I cannot possibly go back on it. Again, as this is the very early stage of our procedure, I ask whether the Assembly agrees with that version of my ruling. (*Agreed.*)

M. de MENTHON (*France*) (Translation). — May I speak?

THE PRESIDENT. — I call M. de Menthon.

M. de MENTHON (*France*) (Translation). — Mr. President, this first session of the Assembly of the Western European Union cannot be concluded, I feel, without the adoption of the Minutes. That might provide an opportunity for M. Margue to make some very valuable remarks. (*Laughter.*)

THE PRESIDENT. — I should, of course, point out that we adopt the Minutes at our next meeting and not at today's meeting.

M. Guy MOLLET (*France*) (Translation). — May I speak?

THE PRESIDENT. — I call M. Guy Mollet.

M. Guy MOLLET (Translation). — I am speaking more particularly to you, my dear colleagues, as Members of the Assembly, when I say that I think we should reflect that we are putting the Bureau, and especially the President, in a very difficult position.

The chief task of a President is to ensure respect for the Rules of Procedure. But we are asking our President to ensure respect for Rules of Procedure which we have not yet adopted.

I think, therefore, that except in regard to the items appearing on our Agenda, we should now leave it to the Organisation Committee to make proposals to us for Rules of Procedure, and for

M. Guy Mollet (continued)

the method of appointing the Standing Committee, the choice of a Clerk of the Assembly, and the nature of his duties. We can then accept these proposals at our next session before proceeding with the appointments. The Bureau and the President will thus be in a position to enforce correct procedure. As matters now stand, there is a danger that the discussion may become extremely confused, simply because we are obliged to fall back on the Rules of Procedure of another

Assembly, whereas, if we now confine ourselves strictly to our Agenda, we shall avoid incidents of this kind.

THE PRESIDENT. — As President, I feel that I must accept that as guidance. Unless anybody wishes to challenge that statement on a point of procedure, I rule that the Assembly now stands adjourned.

(The Sitting was closed at 12.45 p.m.)