

China, have informally indicated their readiness to establish a Legation. In many cases, it would merely involve turning their Consulate-General into a Legation, without much extra expense.

(b) As to our action, if we agree to the Belgian proposal, there are several courses open:

1. Do nothing. It seems that, strictly speaking, the right of legation, when it is exercised by a country, does not necessarily imply reciprocity on the part of the other country concerned, although it may be taken that cases are rare in which some measure of reciprocity, e.g. by appointment of a Consul General, does not take place. It may perhaps be added that a country which makes a formal proposal to establish a Legation, without previous consultation with the other country concerned, and which thereby places that other country in the position of having to accept that proposal, assumes the risk of finding that other country unprepared to reciprocate. Its proposal might, in such case, be considered regardless of its reciprocity aspect. It may be noted in this connection, that the letter from the Belgian Ambassador makes no reference to any question of reciprocity.

2. Appoint a Consul General in Belgium. The establishment of a consular service in close connection with our diplomatic service is a question which requires serious consideration, but it is not a decision which can be taken without careful review of all the factors involved. (Probably the best approach would be to give consular rank and duties to some members of our existing legations). It would not be advisable to make a premature start by an appointment in Brussels.

3. Make the Minister in Paris Minister also in Belgium and perhaps later in Holland, with a Chargé d'Affaires in actual charge, and a small staff. This is a very common practice particularly on the part of the smaller countries. For example, the South African Minister in the Netherlands acts as Minister in Belgium, and the Irish Free State Minister in Paris is also accredited to Belgium. Belgium, it may be noted, has only a Consul General in South Africa and in Ireland.

4. Appoint a full fledged Minister to Brussels—not a serious possibility—there are many other countries where there is more ground for such an appointment.

46.

*Le secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures au secrétaire aux Dominions*  
*Secretary of State for External Affairs to Dominions Secretary*

TELEGRAM 71

Ottawa, December 8, 1936

Your despatch No. 404 of 23rd October regarding Belgian proposal to establish a Legation at Ottawa.

Please advise Belgian Ambassador that His Majesty's Government in Canada are pleased to learn of proposal of Belgian Government to establish