

GENERAL
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ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

HEADQUARTERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

LEGAL MATTERS RELATING TO THE SITE

Progress Report by the Secretary-General

1. Legislation

The necessary legislation required under the conditions of Mr. Rockefeller's gift has been passed by both Federal and State Governments. On 26 February the President of the United States signed a bill providing for the exemption of the Rockefeller gift from the Federal gift tax. On 27 February the Governor of New York signed bills exempting the United Nations site from local real estate taxes, authorizing the City of New York to condemn and transfer property included within the boundaries of the site, and authorizing the Governor of New York to cede the jurisdiction over the site to the United Nations.

2. Acquisition of Webb and Knapp Properties

The Rockefeller gift relates to the properties owned by Webb and Knapp (which comprise the bulk of the land within the site). The United Nations option to purchase these properties had been extended to 28 February in order to allow sufficient time for the passage of the necessary legislation and the clearing of the title. Although the necessary legislation was passed by 28 February, the title company had not been able to complete the search and counsel for Mr. Rockefeller and the United Nations had not been able to give the title question the necessary consideration. Consequently Webb and Knapp has agreed to extend the option to 11 March 1947, at which date it is anticipated that the land will be conveyed to the United Nations.

/3. Management of the

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3. Management of the Properties

After the United Nations acquires the site it will be necessary to collect rent from present tenants and provide for the servicing of the buildings until demolition commences. Discussions are now under way with the City authorities who are considering undertaking these management services on a reimbursable basis.

4. Zoning

The New York City authorities have made considerable progress with regard to the zoning of the area surrounding the site, in order to protect it from undesirable uses. A plan drawn up by the City Planning Commission was objected to by the representatives of the Secretary-General and has since been revised in such a manner that it is now satisfactory. The basic elements of the plan are as follows.

The area immediately adjacent to the site, i.e., the block to the north, and the frontage on the blocks to the west of First Avenue, have been zoned as "Local Retail". This permits only the construction of residential buildings, with retail shops on the ground floor. The Planning Commission has stated that this zoning is only for purposes of interim protection, and that a definitive regulation will be issued with respect to these plots when plans for the development and the use of this property are definitely known. In a fairly large area beyond the immediately adjacent blocks the zoning has been raised from "Unrestricted" or "Manufacturing" to either "Residential", "Local Retail" or "Business". One relatively small area between First and Second Avenues has been zoned as "Manufacturing". This is due to the fact that this area is now occupied by several large skyscrapers, which are utilized mainly by the printing trades. The City felt itself unable to zone this area to a more restricted use, because of the high cost of the existing structures used for this purpose. It is the opinion of United Nations Officials who have considered the problem that the present uses of this small

area will not be objectionable to the United Nations site, and that the zoning plan as a whole is satisfactory.

In addition to the above action by the City, the State Legislature has passed a law giving the City of New York authority to regulate and limit signs, billboards and advertising devices, shows, exhibits, amusements and displays, in areas in Manhattan and Queens which surround or front upon the lands occupied by the United Nations. This legislation will enable the regulation of objectionable advertising signs on the River.
