



Noble and Greenough Model United Nations

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NGMUN VI

Sunday, April 21, 2024

Crisis Committee: Australian Emu War

Background Guide

Kate Wei, *Chair*

Lara Sahagun, *Co-Chair*



Sensitivity Statement

You are assuming the roles and responsibilities of diplomats, and therefore will be held to the ethical standards of the role. During NGMUN, we expect all delegate behavior to reflect the gravity and sensitivity of the international and individual impact of the topics being addressed, just as such topics would be addressed by professional diplomats. While the issues you debate are on the world stage and may seem distant from your lived experience, we ask that you approach debate with a high level of respect and sensitivity for others. Absolutely no racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, or any other forms of discrimination will be tolerated in or out of committee. This includes any such harmful rhetoric that can be attributed to the country or character you are representing. Any discriminatory language or ideas in speeches, resolutions, or at any other point in the conference is prohibited.



Letter from Chair & Co-Chair

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to The Australian Emu War at NGMUN VI! My name is Kate Wei, I'm currently a senior at Nobles, and I am thrilled to be your chair alongside my incredible co-chair Lara Sahagun. I love to play the piano and am learning how to play the guitar, which has been a struggle for my stubby, inflexible fingers. I am an avid runner, swimmer, and rower, and my complete lack of hand-eye coordination has pretty effectively kept me from achieving competence in any other sport. Some of my other hobbies include binge-reading dystopian books, doing crossword puzzles, and baking!

I attended my first Model UN conference in my freshman year and immediately fell in love with the action and excitement of committee. Since then, MUN has kept my critical thinking and public speaking skills sharp, and I have never tired of the thrill of collaborating with my fellow delegates to develop unique approaches to difficult issues. From discussing nuclear disarmament in a DISEC committee to engaging with the happenings of the Jedi Counsel, MUN teaches the importance of collaboration, creativity, and adaptability as delegates face dynamic, ever-changing situations. I am really excited to watch you all tackle these challenges together as a committee, and I look forward to seeing how the directives you pass may change the path of Australia and beyond.

This crisis committee will focus on the Great Emu War of 1932, an incredibly fascinating series of historical events. 20,000 massive, truly terrifying birds have descended upon Western Australia, terrorizing farmers and their crops, and further exacerbating the adverse economic impacts of the Great Depression. Delegates are expected to research carefully and must ensure that their contributions in debate are not harmful to others. Please be kind and respectful towards everyone! Also, as this is a historical committee, please make sure that you only reference events that have transpired prior to the point when the committee starts; in other words, nothing after 1932 should be discussed. With that being said, being creative and thinking outside of the box is strongly encouraged! Break the rules of science, rewrite history, do whatever your heart desires.

Lara and I are both really excited about this committee, and we can't wait to see what you all come up with! Please send your position papers to kwei24@nobles.edu, and if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out at that same email address.

Sincerely,

Kate Wei

kwei24@nobles.edu



Committee Overview and Pertinent Terminology

Committee Outline

Delegates are meeting on November 10, 1932 to discuss the future of the Great Emu War. At present, the Australian Minister of Defense, Sir George Pearce, has dispatched members of the Royal Australian Artillery to the Campion district of Western Australia. Armed with machine guns, these soldiers have waged a noble battle against the emus, but news reports have begun publicizing the failure of the “Emu War” due to the unimpressive number of emus killed. Thus, Pearce calls an emergency meeting of government officials, soldiers, wildlife experts, farmers, and scientists to decide the best course of action to address the crisis. All positions are real people or are based on real people who existed during this time period, with descriptions of each one being found at the end of this guide. While this committee is based on historical events, delegates are encouraged to use their imaginations to spur exciting developments and unexpected action. Through passing directives and other in-committee actions, they will attempt to resolve the developing conflict. Each delegate is expected to represent the personal and political values of their own individual to the fullest extent.

General Procedure

This crisis committee will follow standard MUN parliamentary procedure for the Security Council including the writing of directives, communiques, and press releases (see below for more specifics on these). The crisis committee will operate in a perpetual moderated caucus once debate is initiated, meaning delegates must motion for a moderated or unmoderated caucus. Otherwise, procedure will default to a moderated caucus as long as debate is open. In order to succeed, a delegate must be a leader in both the general flow of committee and in the backroom.

Directives

Directives are one of the most essential parts of the flow of debate as they address problems head-on. Delegates will work to pass many directives, with varying



themes that will follow the changing circumstances. Delegates are encouraged to work collaboratively on each directive. Unlike resolutions, directives are shorter and do not require preambulatory clauses. That being said, they should still be written in clause format. The committee as a whole will vote on directives, and for one to pass, a simple majority is required. The exact number of signatories, sponsors, and what a simple majority would pertain will be decided by the dais at the beginning of each session. Actions taken in a directive will appear in crisis updates.

Crisis Updates

Crisis updates will strongly influence the flow of debate, and they will often prompt the writing of directives. Crisis updates are influenced by the crisis notes that delegates themselves write, as well as outside factors decided by our Crisis Director and Crisis Staff.

Crisis Notes

Crisis notes are the heart and soul of the backroom, and they are instrumental in each delegate's crisis arc. While directives are designed to address the larger issue as a team, crisis notes should be utilized to accomplish a personal goal. Each crisis note should be formatted as a letter written from the point of view of a delegate. When writing crisis notes, make sure to be specific so that the crisis staff knows best how to execute your wishes. Additionally, crisis notes should employ each delegate's portfolio powers. These are powers that your character has based on their unique position or occupation. Moreover, joint crisis notes can be passed. Joint crisis notes are written by two or more delegates and should employ the portfolio powers of all parties.

Communiques

Communiques are a way for delegates to address institutions or entities not present in the committee. They can request special information, individual meetings with bodies outside of the committee room, or certain resources. These must be within the realm of a delegate's portfolio powers and written as a formal letter. Write them



with as much specificity as possible, otherwise the backroom will make up any detail that is not included.

Press Releases

Press releases allow the committee to express sentiments or inform the public, they are similar in procedure to directives. Keep in mind that they are not very impactful in the flow of committee.

Contextual History

World War I

On June 28, 1919, World War I officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. This “war to end all wars” radically changed the world, giving rise to new economic, political, and social orders, and sparking revolutions in military tactics and technologies. World War I was one of the great landmark conflicts of 20th-century geopolitical history, leading to the fall of four imperial dynasties, resulting in the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, instigating the destabilization of European society, and laying the groundwork for the outbreak of World War II.

The planning and conduct of the war were influenced by the development of new weapons in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The invention of the machine gun and rapid-fire field artillery gun gave rise to weapons whose rapid and sustained firepower could decimate any frontal assault.

The casualties of World War I by far dwarfed those of previous wars: over 8.5 million soldiers died as a result of wounds and/or disease. It is estimated that the number of civilian deaths that can be attributed to the war, largely caused by starvation, exposure, disease, massacres, and military encounters, lies around 13 million.

In Australia, the outbreak of World War I was initially welcomed with great enthusiasm. In 1914, the nation pledged its support to its mother country of Great Britain. Following Britain’s declaration of war on Germany, the Australian Imperial Force (AIF), an all volunteer military force, was formed, and soldiers were sent to fight in various different theaters, including in France, England, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and more. The war greatly impacted Australia in many ways, although not as profoundly as



it did the many European nations that were more directly involved. Over 60,000 Australians lost their lives and another 137,000 were wounded, contributing to a casualty rate of almost 65%. As for the economy, Australia's economy had been quite small and dependent largely upon agriculture, and most manufactured products were imported from overseas. During the war, Australia saw a rise in unemployment and cost of living, and the financial cost of the war to the government was over 188 million euros. Additionally, the effect on the nation's social and political landscapes were considerable and threatened to cause serious divides.

The Great Depression

The Great Depression was a severe worldwide economic downturn that began in 1929 and lasted until 1939. During the 1920s, a long period of stock market speculation, during which millions of Americans invested their savings or borrowed money to buy stocks, pushed stock prices to unsustainable levels. As a result, when prices began to gradually decline in October 1929, investors lost confidence and panic selling began on "Black Thursday," October 24, 1929. During the Great Depression, worldwide gross domestic product (GDP) fell by a staggering 15%. International trade fell by more than 50%, unemployment skyrocketed, and devastating effects were seen in both rich and poor countries.

In the late 1920s, the Australian economy suffered from falling wheat and wool prices, and competition from other commodity-producing countries. The United States, Canada, and Argentina began producing agricultural surpluses for market, creating a global oversupply of Australia's major exports.

Australia was also borrowing large sums of money, and when Wall Street crashed in 1929, the Australian economy collapsed. In 1932, unemployment reached a peak of 32% and national income declined by over a third. It would take almost a decade for Australia to recover from the Great Depression, and for families still recovering from the pain of World War I, these economic hardships were a cruel blow that left scars that would last for years to come.

The Australian Government



Having only recently (1901) transitioned from a collection of colonies to a federated nation – with a constitutional monarchy and a federal parliamentary system – the Australian government was dominated by the Australian Labor Party; it prioritized economic reform and political initiatives. Its passing of the White Australian Policy, limiting non-European immigration and the creation of a Commonwealth Bank, are landmarks of its terms prior to. Due to World War I and the government's own political divisions, the nation's economic and political structures were vulnerable during this time.

The Campion District and Western Australia

Campion is a townsite in the Wheatbelt of Western Australia, where, after World War I, large numbers of discharged veterans were given land by the Australian government to take up farming in Australia. This region largely consists of desert, with tropical rainforests in the north-east, mountains south and east, and dust-bowl desert in the center. With the onset of the Great Depression in 1929, the government encouraged these farmers to grow more wheat crops by promising financial assistance in the form of subsidies. However, the government ultimately failed to deliver on this pledge, and wheat prices continued to fall.

This agricultural dilemma only worsened with the arrival of approximately 20,000 emus, which unfortunately found the cultivated lands of Western Australia to be a desirable swath of habitat. These enormous birds consumed and spoiled large portions of crops, leaving widespread destruction in their wake.

Emus

The emu is the second-tallest living bird in the world and is endemic to Australia. They are soft-feathered, brown, flightless birds with long necks and legs, and can reach up to 6 feet and 3 inches in height. Emus can travel great distances, and when necessary, can sprint at speeds up to 30 miles per hour. At the top of their food chain, their diet consists of a variety of plants and insects, but they can go weeks without eating and only need to drink infrequently.



Emus are diurnal birds and spend their days foraging, preening their plumage with their beak, dust bathing, and resting. They are generally social birds apart from the breeding season, and while some forage, others remain vigilant for their mutual benefit. These giant birds are somehow able to swim when necessary, although they rarely do so unless the situation requires it. Emus sleep during the night but not continuously, as they rouse themselves should they sense the need to. In the life of an emu, lasting up to 28 years, the bird will undergo breeding season in May and June, during which the emu populations migrate to shores and females lay multiple batches of eggs in a single season; following a hatching period of 8 weeks, after being raised by their fathers, young emus reach their full size in 6 months' time, but stay together until the next breeding season. Emus tend to migrate from coast to inland to follow this pattern – varying on the natural resources available – and pose a threat to crops standing in their way; however, without access to its necessary elements, emus tend to invade human territories to support themselves in search of sustenance.

Emus are extremely strong-legged, capable of tearing fences; while not being hostile to humans, they are immensely defensive of their young, and can attack when threatened. Seemingly impervious to bullets, these titanium raptors can absorb a dozen bullets with little to no immediate damage. In the human market, emus can be sold for meat and eggs, but are more popular in the production of oil.

Current Situation

The Great Emu War was an operation undertaken by the Australian military in 1932 that aimed to address public concern over the nuisances caused by the continent's large emu population. At present, in this committee, these large, flightless, and overall quite terrifying birds have been consuming and spoiling crops as well as destroying private property in the Wheatbelt of Western Australia, drawing the ire of frustrated farmers. In response, a collection of farmers requested the deployment of machine guns and involvement of the Australian military to resolve the emu crisis.

Australian Minister of Defense, Sir George Pearce, agreed to this request, provided that the guns were to be used by military personnel, troop transport was to be financed by the Western Australian government, and the farmers would provide food, accommodation, and payment for the ammunition. Pearce also supported this



deployment on the grounds that the birds would make good target practice, though it has been argued that some in the government may have undertaken the operation as a way to be seen as helping the Western Australian farmers, and also to stave off the brewing secession movement. Indeed, a cinematographer from Fox Movietone was enlisted to document the events that would take place.

Military involvement, under the command of Major Gwynydd Purves Wynne-Aubrey Meredith of the Royal Australian Artillery, was due to begin in October of 1932. However, a period of heavy rainfall delayed the operation, and also caused the emus to scatter over a wider area. Finally, on November 2, 1932,

A collection of discharged veterans turned soldiers is requesting the deployment of machine guns to resolve the emu crisis. Australian Minister of Defense, Sir George Pearce, calls an emergency meeting of government officials, soldiers, wildlife experts, farmers, and scientists to decide the best course of action to address the crisis.

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