

## CORRESPONDENCE

TO THE EDITORS-IN-CHIEF:

November 9, 1980

The recent death of Matthijs Herbert van Hoogstraten means the loss of a major contributor to the unification of private international law. He was a principal figure in the revival of the Hague Conference on Private International Law following World War II, a responsibility with which he was charged when, shortly after the liberation of Holland, he joined the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In 1947 he was named Secretary of the Netherlands Standing Government Committee for the codification of private international law and, in 1951, when the Hague Conference was reestablished, he was the unanimous choice for the post of Secretary General. During the next 27 years he ran a model international organization. With a small budget and a smaller staff, he directed the production of studies and organized the committee meetings which gave rise to a series of notable treaties in the fields of international judicial assistance and conflict of laws. The quadrennial plenary sessions of the Hague Conference, in the course of which these treaties were reviewed, revised, and adopted by the member states, were the best run conferences in the legal field and, perhaps, in any field of international interest.

Secretary General van Hoogstraten was an essential figure in the steps that led to abandonment by the United States of its long-standing, and stultifying, refusal to participate in the work of the major organizations devoted to the international unification of private law. The presence at the 1956 and 1960 sessions of the Hague Conference of observer delegations from the American Bar Association and the Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws owed much to his support. This informal participation paved the way for the adoption by Congress of the 1963 Act authorizing the United States to join the Conference. Members of the United States delegations to meetings of the Conference from 1964 onwards recall with gratitude the advice and assistance of Secretary General van Hoogstraten, which facilitated greatly the American entry upon what was, in many respects, terra incognita.

The honors which the Secretary General received are too numerous to recount, as is the list of his published works. It is enough to say that the world has lost an international scholar of high quality and the United States has lost a good friend.

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