Notes: League of Nations, Carnlynck

Tarbell, Ida M.
She is one of several translators famous in the League. The most extraordinary of them was the man who amazed the Peace Conference in Paris by his almost uncanny skill in translating on the spot the various speeches of delegates. Now the French into English — now the English into French — the two languages which have been used inter-changeably in the International Conferences since the War. This man, a Frenchman, Carmlynsk, by name, would rise on the floor of the Conference room and without a word of hesitation and with no notes, excepting words which he had made on a slip of paper, carried on the inside of his hand, as he listened to a speech — would put it without hesitation into the other tongue. Not only did Mr. Carmlynsk translate fluently and accurately, but he did it with a style, a sense of values which sometimes surpassed in its effectiveness the original speech. I think I have never seen a man throw himself into this thing he was doing, more completely than this man did into the translation of his speeches. He seemed to be aflame with the importance of the material, to be set on doing all that he could to interpret not many words, but the inner meaning, convey the importance of the thing that he was translating.
The performance was one of the most absorbing and amazing. Meeting Monsieur Carnlynck, after a session, I asked him how he could do it. His reply was that he had trained himself in concentration - that when he listened to a speech he siezed it all - that it was verbally his - that he was translating from a page written on his mind and written exactly. He confessed, however, that after one of these sessions, sessions which sometimes run into hours, his exhaustion was complete - that only absolute rest put him back into fitness.