

to vote credits equal to the sum of money offered by France if the Institute, the necessity of which he recognized, was established in Geneva. In the Assembly I felt that I ought to give the Australian delegate my support on the question of principle. I stated that the international character of an organization such as the Institute could not be sustained unless situated at the seat of the League and under the League's immediate control, and in advocating that the privileges of the Assembly should be safeguarded I questioned the propriety of the Council taking a decision on a matter coming within such privileges.

I have dealt at length on this subject because I feel that a departure from principle such as this, if repeated, may become a menace to the international solidarity of the League.

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE UNIFICATION OF PRIVATE LAW.

The decision of the Assembly to confirm the acceptance by the Council of the gift made by the French Government of an institute in Paris for intellectual co-operation was quickly followed by an offer from the Italian Government to found in Rome an International Institute for the Unification of Private Law, and to endow it with an annual income of 1,000,000 lira. The offer was referred to the Second Committee, and on its recommendation the Assembly has invited the Council to accept the gift, and to conclude with the Italian Government agreements containing safeguards similar to those proposed in the case of the Institute for Intellectual Co-operation (Document A. 134).

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF BIBLIOGRAPHY.

The original resolution of the Second Committee regarding the International Institute of Bibliography involved an annual subsidy of 1,000 francs. The Supervisory Committee, although sympathetic, rejected a subsidy as creating a dangerous precedent, and the Fourth Committee accepted a suggestion that an amount of 1,000 francs should be subscribed towards the publication of the *Index Bibliographicus*, without mentioning the name of the institute. This, together with the two further supplementary votes of 8,000 francs each, mentioned above, were passed by the Assembly.

COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSIT.

Document A. 8 (pages 65-67) furnishes an account of the second General Conference on Communications and Transit, held in Geneva towards the close of last year, at which four Conventions were adopted, referring to—(1) Convention on the International Regime of Railways; (2) Convention on the International Regime of Maritime Ports; (3) Convention on the Transmission in Transit of Electric Power; (4) Convention on the Development of Hydraulic Power.

As I have already advised you, these Conventions were signed by me on behalf of New Zealand and Western Samoa whilst I was in Geneva, and doubtless ratification will be proceeded with.

The Advisory and Technical Committee for Communications and Transit, which was constituted by the General Conference, met in March last and appointed a number of sub-committees to deal with a large variety of questions. These sub-committees have since met, or will do so shortly, and an account of the meetings already held will be found on pages 20-29 of Document A. 8 (a).

The Report of the Second Committee to the Assembly (Document A. 77) furnishes a useful summary of the work accomplished and the programme of work to be done. Of the resolutions (passed by the Assembly on the 20th September), with which the report concludes, I need draw attention to two only—that bearing on the urgency of revising the London Convention of 1912, in view of the great development of radio-telephony, and that suggesting that Esperanto should cease to be regarded as a code for telegraphy and radio-telegraphy purposes, but be given the status of a national language.

Much of the work of the Advisory Committee is of no practical interest to countries which, like New Zealand, have no land frontiers, but, on the other hand, the Dominion is concerned in such questions as, for instance, those covered by the Convention of the International Regime of Maritime Ports.

It will be noted that little progress has been made with the inquiry into the reform of the calendar.

FINANCIAL RECONSTRUCTION OF AUSTRIA.

This is not a matter in which the Assembly has taken any considerable part. The scheme now in operation was initiated under the auspices of the Council, and is amongst the most successful work being accomplished by the League. Recent information regarding the scheme will be found on pages 52-57 of Document A. 8, and pages 14-16 of Document A. 8 (a), and the Report of the Second Committee to the Assembly is numbered A. 90. It was presented on the 25th September, and is very encouraging. As to the ultimate success of the scheme for putting Austria on her feet it is difficult to prophesy. Some of the points on which the report touches are of considerable interest—*i.e.*, that only once has the Austrian Government had to make a request for funds (still available) to cover a deficit, and then only for a small amount; and that the establishment, now almost complete, of equilibrium between expenditure and receipts is being achieved through an unexpected increase of taxation rather than through the reduction of expenditure which it was hoped would ensue. This satisfactory position has been brought about in face of economic and financial crises to which Austria has been subject this year, and which are likely to affect the development of Austria for some time.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ORGANIZATION (ECONOMIC COMMITTEE).

The documents are A. 8 (pages 48-52), A. 8 (a) (page 14), A. 9, A. 52, and C. 453. A. 97 is the Report of the Second Committee to the Assembly, which considered it on the 25th September. All these documents furnish full information regarding the many activities of the Economic Committee.