

ELECTION OF OFFICERS OF THE ASSEMBLY.

On the 7th September the committees met to elect their chairmen. The result, not unexpected, of the elections was as follows: Chairman of Committee No. 1—M. Motta (Switzerland); Chairman of Committee No. 2—Mr. Fitzgerald (Irish Free State); Chairman of Committee No. 3—M. Villegas (Chile); Chairman of Committee No. 4—M. Titulesco (Roumania); Chairman of Committee No. 5—Count Mensdorff (Austria); Chairman of Committee No. 6—M. Brouckère (Belgium).

Immediately after these elections the full Assembly met in order to elect the six Vice-Presidents provided for in the rules of procedure, who, with the chairmen of committees, form the Bureau of the Assembly. The Vice-Presidents elected were: Sir Austen Chamberlain (Great Britain), M. Briand (France), M. Scialoja (Italy), Viscount Ishii (Japan), M. Figueroa (Guatemala), Baron Rodolphe Lehman (Liberia).

With one exception, it had been expected that these delegates would be elected Vice-Presidents. The exception was the last-mentioned, and he obtained twenty-four votes.

THE ADMISSION OF GERMANY TO MEMBERSHIP OF THE LEAGUE WITH A PERMANENT SEAT ON THE COUNCIL AND THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF NON-PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.

On the 8th September there came before the Assembly for consideration the application of Germany for admission to membership of the League, with a permanent seat on the Council—a decision on which had been postponed by the Extraordinary Assembly in March last—and the question of increasing the number of non-permanent members of the Council, a question indissolubly bound up with Germany's application.

It will be remembered that, owing to the veto of Brazil, unanimity of the Council was impossible in March, and therefore Germany was not elected; and that, pending a decision by the Seventh Assembly, it was decided to set up a special committee to make a study of problems connected with the composition of the Council, and the principle and method of election of its members. This committee held two sessions—one in May, and the other at the end of August and beginning of September—and the final report to the Council (see Annexe B to Document A 48) recommends that the non-permanent members be increased to nine in number, and makes other recommendations regarding tenure of office and method of election. This report was considered by the Council on the 4th September, when a resolution was passed approving of it, and recommending the Assembly to approve (1) the appointment of Germany as a permanent member of the Council upon her entry into the League of Nations, and (2) the increase in the number of non-permanent seats to nine, and commending to the favourable consideration of the Assembly the proposals made in the report regarding the method of election and the tenure of the non-permanent seats.

It was, no doubt, a wise proceeding on the part of the officers of the Seventh Assembly to obtain the Assembly's opinion at the earliest possible date, and thus to settle questions which were not only pressing for settlement, but which, without immediate settlement, might give rise to further considerable difficulties. A suspension of the rule of procedure providing that the Assembly should not decide on an item of the agenda until a report of one of its committees upon that item was before it was suggested in so far as the application for admission by Germany and her nomination as a permanent member of the Council, and the increase of the number of non-permanent seats, were concerned. It will be remembered that the application for admission by Germany on condition that she was elected to permanent membership of the Council—a matter quite simple in itself—gave birth to many complications, for no sooner had the application been made than other States, some holding non-permanent seats and others with aspirations to seats, gave voice to their claims to permanent membership of that body. We refer particularly to Spain and Brazil, but also to Poland and China. The Spanish member of the Committee on the Composition of the Council abstained from voting when that committee's report was under consideration, and Brazil, having given notice of her intention to withdraw from the League, was not represented on the Council during the September session; whilst the recommendations of the committee, together with other circumstances, were apparently sufficient to convince the Poles and the Chinese that the time was not suitable to press the claim for *permanent* seats.

The question of admitting Germany to membership of the League was, of course, left to free decision by the Assembly, but that of her permanent membership of the Council was brought before the Assembly in such a way that it could not be divorced from the proposed increase to nine of the non-permanent seats. Dr. Nansen, first delegate of Norway, was amongst those who protested against this method of introduction. Whilst he did not follow his protest by a proposal to amend the resolution, or by a threat to vote against it, he did question whether Article 4 of the Covenant had not been violated by the method of presentation, and he was very anxious lest a precedent should be created. The first delegate of the Netherlands took the opportunity of pointing out that the Dutch Delegation in 1922 had protested against the increase of the non-permanent members from four to six—a protest which was based on the fear that further increases would be proposed. The delegates as a whole, however, were probably of the opinion that the advantages of accepting the Council's suggestions outweighed any disadvantages there might be in the method of presenting those suggestions, and consequently the Assembly unanimously voted (1) the admission of Germany as a member of the League, (2) the nomination of Germany as a permanent member of the Council, and (3) the increase to nine of the number of non-permanent seats on the Council. Germany was therefore admitted a full member of the League, with a permanent seat on the Council, on the 8th September.

The suspension of the rule of procedure referred to above was not applied to the consideration of the proposals made by the Committee on the Composition of the Council regarding the method of election and the tenure of the non-permanent seats. That question was therefore referred to the First Committee, with a direction that a report on the subject be presented to the full Assembly at the earliest possible date. (See Documents A. 21, A. 48, A. 49, A. 50, and A 51.)