

of the protocol, and thought that the time would come when it would become a part of international law. He, however, deprecated any suggestion to consider it in fragments, or to remove from it its most practical provision—*i.e.*, the sanctions which it embodies. It was evident that whilst his speech was in the main approved, his advice “to wait” was far from being acceptable to many of the smaller States.

Someone had to make an effort to bring together conflicting views, and it was apparently with this intention that the Polish delegate, on the 9th September, brought forward the following motion :—

“The Assembly—recognizing the solidarity which unites the community of nations; being inspired by a firm desire for the maintenance of general peace; being convinced that a war of aggression can never serve as a means of settling international disputes, and is in consequence an international crime; considering that a solemn renunciation of all wars of aggression would tend to create an atmosphere of general confidence calculated to facilitate the progress of the work undertaken with a view to disarmament—declares (1) that all wars of aggression are, and shall always be, prohibited; (2) that every pacific means must be employed to settle disputes, of every description, which may arise between States. The Assembly declares that the States members of the League are under an obligation to conform to these principles.”

What is a war of aggression? According to what principles is the aggressor to be determined? It is true that Article 10 of the protocol has a definition of an aggressor; but one has only to cast one's memory back to July, 1914, when great Powers in Europe were accusing one another of acts of aggression, of warlike acts, or to glance through the post-war flood of official publications, of books and pamphlets (which has not yet ceased), all intent on proving the aggressor of 1914, to realize the difficulties which must beset any body of men called together to determine such a question.

In spite of much that M. Briand said in the course of his fine oration on the 10th September, I cannot help coming to the conclusion that the Italian delegate, M. Scialoja, who had spoken the day before, was in the main on right lines. He wanted to know the reason for the obtrusion on the present Assembly of the protocol of 1924. Was it the failure of the Naval Conference? If so, he would point out that the League had not been present at that Conference; one of the parties thereto was not a member of the League, and the two other parties were not present as members. But, apart from that, was there anything to make people begin to despair of the peace of the world? Was it necessary every year to make a declaration, the principles of which were already embodied in the Covenant, with the possible consequence of a conflict of views between delegates to the Assembly and the States which they represented? He made a very happy reference to the time which had been required for the triumph of Christianity, and he inquired whether the main objects of the League were to be obtained in a few years. To my mind this is the essence of the matter. The signatures to the Peace Treaty were hardly dry before some nations expressed a desire to amend those articles of the Covenant designed to prevent war, with a view to making them not only more precise, but of strengthening several clauses of them. Will the Covenant work? Well, it has to be tried. The League must have time to grow and to acquire experience to enable it to determine whether the Covenant requires strengthening in this or that direction in order to make it effective as the greatest instrument for world peace which has ever been evolved from the brain of man.

Dr. Stresemann, the Foreign Secretary of Germany, in the course of a speech which he delivered in the Assembly on the 9th September, stated that he would, during the session, put his signature to the optional clause of the Permanent Court of International Justice at the Hague, for the policy of Germany was in every way in conformity with it, as was proved by the fact that it had concluded a whole series of arbitration treaties with a number of States. This was certainly a momentous declaration, which had a marked effect on the Assembly.

On the 23rd September the President of the Assembly announced that signature had been given in the following terms :—

“On behalf of the German Government, I recognize as compulsory *ipso facto* and without special agreement, in relation to any other member or State accepting the same obligation, the jurisdiction of the Court in conformity with Article 36, paragraph 2, of the Statute of the Court for a period of five years, in any disputes arising after the ratification of the present declaration with regard to situations or facts subsequent to this ratification, except in cases where the parties have agreed or shall agree to have recourse to another method of pacific settlement.”

On the other hand, Sir George Pearce, the chief delegate for Australia, spoke with some vigour against compulsory arbitration in the international sphere, claiming that compulsory arbitration in industrial disputes in Australia had not been an unqualified success, and that people were more and more turning to methods of conciliation.

But the British point of view had to be put with rather more definiteness, and this task Sir Austen Chamberlain took upon himself, in a speech which he made to the Assembly on the 10th September. If I dwell on this speech my excuse must be the seriousness of the occasion, and the necessity for saying in unequivocal terms that which had to be said if the position of the British Empire within the League was to be made clear. I recommend a close study of the speech, which was listened to with marked attention by the Assembly, on whom it had considerable effect. After replying in some detail to the criticism which had been levelled at the Council earlier in the debate, Sir Austen gave a welcome to the Polish motion referred to above, for it invited the Assembly solemnly to resolve “to pursue the ways of peace and to eschew the path of war.”

Coming to the questions of security and disarmament, which are interdependent, he touched first on the latter, and, after referring to the failure of the Conference on Naval Disarmament, which he