

The Final Act of the Conference of October and November, 1927, contains the following:—

“ Recommends the Council of the League of Nations to undertake with as little delay as possible, and in the manner which appears to it most expedient, the necessary investigations, consultations, and inquiries with a view to summoning a Conference or Conferences of experts, with special knowledge of all questions relating to the prevention of diseases of animals and plants, which should be invited to propose to the various Governments joint action that would be effective against the evils that all these Governments desire to combat, and at the same time would have due regard to the sovereign rights of States and the interests of international trade.” This recommendation was referred by the Council to the Economic Organization, which appointed a Sub-committee of Experts.

The Economic Organization has now embarked on an extensive study of the position of the coal and sugar industries, and it continues to make progress on the subject of the unification of Customs nomenclature and other tariff problems. Further, the Council has requested the Financial and Economic Committees to study the tendencies in financial and economic policies as they may affect the problem of peace.

Draft conventions on subjects on which the organization has been working for some years have been submitted to Governments, and International Conferences are in contemplation. Indeed, a Conference of Official Statisticians to discuss the Draft Convention relating to Economic Statistics (Document C. 340, M. 98) was called for November, 1928. The other draft conventions refer to the treatment of foreigners (Document C. 174, M. 53); to bills of exchange and to cheques (Document C. 175, M. 54).

On the 17th September, acting on the instructions of the Government, I signed on behalf of New Zealand and Western Samoa the Convention on the Execution of Foreign Arbitral Awards, which was approved by the Assembly of 1927.

The presentation to the Assembly of the Second Committee's report (Document A. 66) on the 21st September was followed by a debate which occupied the whole sitting. As points of importance were touched upon, I refer you to the account given in the official *Journal* the following day. The report concludes with a number of resolutions which were passed by the Assembly without amendment.

QUESTION OF ALCOHOLISM.

Consideration of measures to be taken on an international scale to prevent smuggling into countries where prohibition is in force appeared on the agenda of the Assembly of 1927. The matter was discussed in the Second Committee, and as a result of the debate the proposal was withdrawn on the understanding that it would be presented in another form. Document A. 34, containing the following draft resolution, was sent to the Second Committee at this Assembly:—

“ Whereas it is desirable to co-ordinate the work which the League of Nations has undertaken or will be called upon to undertake on the question of alcoholism; the Assembly requests the Council (1) to appoint a Committee of Experts on alcoholism; (2) to instruct this committee to study the aspects of the question of alcoholism which come within the competence of the League of Nations, and which might be made the subject of scientific or practical work.”

Before the meeting at which it was down for debate, however, many States affected discussed the question and arrived at a compromise. The debate was therefore short, and, although new suggestions were made in the course of it, the result was the passing of a resolution, proposed by the Finnish delegate, based on such compromise (Document A. 72). This was submitted to and passed by the Assembly at its meeting on the 24th September. It read as follows:—

“ The Assembly, having had a draft resolution on the subject of alcoholism submitted to it by the Finnish, Swedish, and Polish delegations, decides to ask the Council to request the Health Organization of the League of Nations to collect full statistical information regarding alcoholism, considered as a consequence of the abuse of alcohol, giving prominence, *inter alia*, according to the data available, to the deleterious effects of the bad quality of the alcohols consumed; and, considering that, while it is for the Governments to put a stop to the contraband trade carried on in violation of the conventions in force between them, it may nevertheless be useful to examine the terms in which such conventions or agreements might be drawn up, for the prevention of smuggling in general and that of alcohol in particular, decides to ask the Council to request the Economic Committee to carry out this investigation and to submit any proposals to the Council arising out of its conclusions. It is understood that this resolution does not refer to wine, beer, or cider.”

COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSIT.

An account of the work of the Advisory Committee for Communications and Transit (one of the permanent organs of the League set up in accordance with the provisions of the Covenant) done since the Eighth Assembly is given in Documents A. 6 and A. 6 (a). Whilst much of the work of the committee is of interest only to countries with land frontiers, there are subjects undergoing inquiry which are of world importance. There was not a general Conference last year, but the Advisory Committee had in view an International Conference on the Buoyage and Lighting of Coasts, and a European Conference for the Unification of Private Law in Inland Navigation. During the discussion in the Second Committee of the Rapporteur's report (Document A. 73) the Roumanian delegate introduced a motion requesting Governments to make every possible effort to prevent broadcasting of information which might prove harmful to the good relations between States. After a short debate it was conceded that this was a political question, with which the Advisory Committee could not deal, but that, on the other hand, the committee could usefully employ itself in an inquiry into certain aspects of wireless—such, for instance, as the possibility of completing agreements of a technical nature, more particularly concerning the use of certain wave-lengths, so that radio-telegraphic