

1932.
NEW ZEALAND.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

REPORT OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DOMINION OF NEW ZEALAND ON THE TWELFTH
ASSEMBLY OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, HELD AT GENEVA, IN THE YEAR 1931.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

TWELFTH ASSEMBLY OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

New Zealand Government Offices,
415 Strand, London W.C. 2, 10th December, 1931.

SIR,—

I have the honour to inform you that I arrived in Geneva on the 6th September in order to represent the Government at the Twelfth Assembly of the League of Nations, which was opened on the following day by M. Lerroux (representative of Spain), President of the Council.

OPENING OF PROCEEDINGS.

The first meeting was formal, and the business dealt with included the election of the President. The delegation chose for this high office M. Nicolas Titulesco, who filled the post in 1930. He was selected, however, by only a narrow margin, twenty-five votes having been recorded in his favour. Of the other candidates Count Apponyi, the Hungarian statesman, received twenty-one votes.

As usual, the Assembly set up six committees to deal with the various items of the agenda (Document A. 2 (1)), and I give below a list of these committees, together with the Chairman elected by the members of each:—

- No. 1. Constitutional and Legal Questions. Chairman: M. Scialoja (Italy).
- No. 2. Work of the Technical Organizations of the League. Chairman: M. Janson (Belgium).
- No. 3. Questions relating to the Reduction of Armaments. Chairman: Dr. Munch (Denmark).
- No. 4. Organization of the Secretariat, and Finances of the League. Chairman: M. Politis (Greece).
- No. 5. Humanitarian and Social Questions. Chairman: Khan Ala (Persia).
- No. 6. Political Questions. Chairman: M. Motta (Switzerland).

The Assembly also appointed an Agenda Committee to which could be referred any new items proposed during the session. At the opening meeting two new items were brought forward—*i.e.*, a motion by the British delegation expressing sympathy with China in the disasters which have overtaken certain provinces of that country (Document A. 42); and a proposal, submitted by several delegations, to invite Mexico to request its admission to the League (Document A. 43). Both motions were passed after a number of short speeches warmly supporting them had been made.

On the 10th September the Secretary-General received a telegram from the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs accepting the invitation to accede to the Covenant (Document A. 50). I draw your attention to the statement appended to the acceptance that Mexico has never accepted the regional understanding (the Monroe doctrine) mentioned in Article 21 of the Covenant.

On the 12th September the Assembly passed the following resolution:—

“The Assembly,—

“Having by its resolution of the 8th September, 1931, considered as an omission which should in justice be repaired, the fact that Mexico is not mentioned in the Annex of the Covenant enumerating the countries invited to accede thereto:

“Having unanimously decided to repair that omission and therefore to invite Mexico to accede to the Covenant and to lend its valuable support to the League as though it had been invited from the outset:

“Having by this exceptional invitation—which must not be regarded as establishing a precedent—formally indicated that it accepts as having been fulfilled from the outset in the case of Mexico the conditions governing the entry of States into the League as set forth in Article 1 of the Covenant:

“Noting the reply of the Government of Mexico dated the 10th September, 1931, by which it agrees without reservation to enter the League on the terms announced:

“Declares Mexico to have become a member of the League of Nations, and invites the representatives of Mexico to take part as soon as possible in the work of the present session of the Assembly.”

On the 22nd September the Mexican delegation took their seats in the Assembly.

At the second meeting held on the 8th September the Assembly elected the following delegates as Vice-Presidents: M. Briand (France), Viscount Cecil (Great Britain), M. Yoshizawa (Japan), Dr. Curtius (Germany), Count Apponyi (Hungary), Dr. Restrepo (Colombia).

The body known as the Bureau, consisting of the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Chairman of Committees, and the Chairman of the Agenda Committee, was then complete.

REPRESENTATION OF NEW ZEALAND.

As was the case last year, New Zealand sent only one delegate in the person of myself. As three committees usually sit at the same time, it was necessary for me to distribute amongst my staff some of the work to be done. I nominated myself to sit on all committees in order that I might attend personally when necessity arose, but, at the same time, arranged to be represented on the First, Third, and Fourth Committees by my Private Secretary, Mr. C. Knowles; on the Second and Fifth Committees by Mr. C. B. Burdekin, an officer of my Department; and on the Sixth Committee by Mr. Burdekin or by my personal assistant, Miss Hannam.

GENERAL DISCUSSION ON THE REPORT OF THE WORK OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS SINCE THE LAST ASSEMBLY.

This discussion, which affords delegates an opportunity of dealing with any subject within the orbit of the League, began on the 8th September and continued to the 12th. A résumé of the debate will be found in the *Journal*, and to this I refer you; but it will probably assist you if I mention a few of the more important points which emerged during the discussion.

Naturally, the world economic crisis and disarmament were the principal subjects touched upon. The eyes of the greater part of the world are now fixed on Geneva, for, after long years of waiting, an attempt is imminent to reduce armaments, and it is felt that that attempt, if successful, may give impetus to the return of that confidence in international relations which is necessary to a solution of the economic crisis.

There is no doubt whatever about the attitude of many of the members of the League, particularly the smaller nations. Their hopes are based on the Covenant and the obligation it embodies to disarm to the lowest degree commensurate with national security.

The debate began with a speech by M. Grandi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and chief delegate of Italy. In the course of his speech he gave it as his opinion that the League should deal with the facts of the international situation, and not confine itself merely to declarations of principle or to developing its own constitutional law. He quoted, as an example of the latter, the proposed amendments to bring the Covenant into harmony with the Pact of Paris, a procedure on which he confessed he held conservative views. The Covenant was a comparatively recent development, and had not yet reached the limits of its practical possibilities. That he felt was reason enough for recommending prudence in the matter of amendments. The essential point was to consolidate the bases of the League of Nations, and if international relations were to form an organic part of the League system it was essential that the contractual principles on which this system rested should not be constantly revised.

Perhaps the most significant part of the speech was that dealing with disarmament. It contained a suggestion which became later the subject of eager discussion amongst the delegates, and was ultimately dealt with by the Third Committee. I cannot do better than quote what M. Grandi said:—

“I am, however, inclined to think that, during the actual period of preparation for the Disarmament Conference, States which have definitely undertaken to participate in the Conference might adopt provisional measures. The Council of the League, as you know, suggested preliminary discussions. Acting on that recommendation, we might do really useful work by adopting practical measures without delay. My own feeling is that we ought to try immediately to arrive at a really effective armaments truce, at least for the period of the Conference, and I should like to ask you seriously to consider my suggestion.”

On the morning of 10th September, Lord Cecil, the principal delegate of the United Kingdom, delivered a speech. His association with the framers of the Covenant and with the League since its

inception has clothed him with an authority which is possessed by few who regularly visit Geneva : consequently he is listened to with the closest attention. The speaker's earnestness and sincerity impressed all who heard him. He touched on the necessity for economy, on slavery, and on the settlement of refugees. He spoke at some length of Great Britain's financial crisis ; and he introduced a motion to request the Council to appoint a special committee to study the existing system of elections to the Council, and to report to a future session of the Assembly on any reforms which might appear desirable. I may say that the present system of election has not worked badly, but its application tends to give groups of Powers the prerogative of a seat and to prevent the election of some countries who deserve consideration, and whose occupancy of a seat would be of benefit to all concerned.

Although Lord Cecil disclaimed any intention of making a "disarmament" speech, much of it was in fact devoted to disarmament, and it was this part which aroused the enthusiasm of the majority of the Assembly. It was frank ; but, at any rate, it heartened the smaller nations ; and his statement that Great Britain would not countenance any proposal to postpone the Disarmament Conference was received by most listeners with the greatest satisfaction.

In view of the serious financial position of New Zealand and the necessity for economy, I took an early opportunity of addressing the Assembly, and I spoke on the afternoon of the 10th September. I made it clear that my criticism was not levelled at any suggested expenditure in connection with the forthcoming Disarmament Conference, but I did ask that steps should be taken to ascertain in what direction substantial savings might be made ; and I referred to the inadvisability of a too-wide dissipation of the League's activities, which tended to divert the League to some extent from its more important objects.

I made some reference to the question of slavery, and I suggested definite action by the Sixth Committee on the understanding that additional expenditure was not involved. In view of the appeal that had been made to me and of the action taken by the New Zealand delegation in 1922, I felt I must support Lord Cecil and others who have so much at heart the amelioration of the conditions of the slaves, if not their complete emancipation. There are various estimates of the number of slaves in the world ; it has been put at five millions, and even higher.

I touched upon the difficulties which the Government has experienced in not having adequate time within which to study proposals emanating from the League, and I pointed out that our situation so far from Europe made it necessary to give New Zealand and other countries distantly situated from Geneva special consideration. I concluded my speech with a reference to New Zealand's belief in arbitration for the settlement of international disputes.

Of the other speakers it is not necessary to mention more than two. M. Briand spoke at some length. When dealing with disarmament, he said that had it been possible to organize mutual assistance against the risk of war, the problem of the Disarmament Conference would have been greatly simplified.

The other speech, delivered by Dr. Curtius, the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, covered a great deal of ground. He dealt with the economic and financial crises, and the problem of international debts. He referred to the misgivings of certain countries outside Europe at the tendency of the League largely to concentrate its energies on European affairs ; and finally he drew attention to the discrimination against Germany under the Peace Treaties in the matter of armaments. He stated quite frankly that if the Disarmament Conference did not put an end to this state of affairs, Germany would not be able to sign any convention drawn up by the Conference.

ELECTION OF NON-PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.

The term of three non-permanent members of the Council—*i.e.*, Spain, Persia, and Venezuela, having expired, the Assembly met on the 14th September to elect three members to fill the vacant seats. Spain, having already been declared eligible for re-election, was duly elected by forty-three votes. The other countries elected were China, by forty-eight votes, and Panama, by forty-five votes.

Towards the end of the session the Council was much occupied with the Manchurian affair, and some of the meetings of that body were specifically devoted to questions arising out of the appeal lodged by the Chinese Government under Article II of the Covenant. There was, however, no formal motion before the Assembly, which was merely kept informed of the results of the discussion.

The Assembly rose on Tuesday, the 29th September.

FIRST COMMITTEE.

METHOD OF ELECTION TO THE COUNCIL.

The proposal of the British delegation that "The Assembly requests the Council to appoint a sub-committee to study the existing system of election to the Council and to report to a future session of the Assembly on any reforms which may appear desirable" was referred to the First Committee.

The Council originally consisted of nine members, but later the number was increased to fourteen. Even so, owing to a regional understanding, it is almost impossible for a number (placed as high as ten) of countries to secure a non-permanent seat. Last year a certain amount of disappointment manifested itself at the time of the election of members of the Council ; and early this year the Portuguese Government sent a letter to Governments members of the League drawing attention to the anomaly. The question is a complicated one, and during the debate in the committee some anxiety was shown by certain members lest a solution might be found in the increase of the number of the Council, an increase which it was thought would be most undesirable. Others, however, thought that the solution might well be on the lines of an increase of one or two members.

So far as New Zealand was concerned, I felt that we might very well offer no objection to the British Delegation's proposal.

The Committee agreed to the motion and the Assembly passed it on the 25th September (Document A. 56).

As the sum of 5,000 francs only was required for the purpose, and the appointment of the special committee was likely to give satisfaction to a number of countries, no movement was made in the Fourth Committee to criticize the expenditure, so the amount was voted.

PROPOSAL TO CONFER ON THE PERMANENT COURT OF INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE JURISDICTION AS A TRIBUNAL OF APPEAL IN RESPECT OF ARBITRAL TRIBUNALS ESTABLISHED BY STATES.

Under a resolution of the 1929 Assembly this question was examined by a small committee of Government legal advisers, but consideration of this special committee's report was postponed by last year's Assembly owing to lack of time. This document, which was laid before the First Committee, is numbered C. 338, M. 138.

It was not the intention of the Finnish Government, which raised the question, that there should be a general right of appeal, but only a right of appeal against an arbitral sentence on the ground that a tribunal had been incompetent to deal with the matter or had exceeded its powers. When considering these points the special committee added a third—the right of appeal in the case of an essential flaw in procedure. Owing to the diversified nature of arbitral tribunals, the special committee found some difficulty in suggesting a procedure which would be acceptable to States willing to permit appeals from arbitrators to the Permanent Court of International Justice, and it will be seen that it put forward three alternatives:—

- (1) A recommendation from the Assembly to members of the League to recognize the competence of the Permanent Court of International Justice and to insert the necessary provision in arbitration treaties. This may be called the bi-lateral method.
- (2) A resolution of the Assembly with protocol annexed. This may be called the method by general agreement.
- (3) A resolution declaring it to be the duty of a member of the League to propose to the other party the conclusion of a special agreement for reference of the arbitral award to the Permanent Court. This may be called the method devised to meet a particular case.

The debates in the First Committee disclosed that the third method was not popular; but the first and second had their advocates. After the Committee had heard the views of various delegates, the proposal was made that the matter should be referred to a sub-committee for consideration and report, and this proposal was accepted.

In due course the sub-committee, consisting mostly of representatives of small States, produced a report which was subjected to somewhat severe criticism in the full committee. The solution proposed by the committee of five, and those suggested by the sub-committee of the First Committee, show how closely related the question is to the Covenant and the Statute of the Permanent Court. The possession by the Permanent Court of jurisdiction as a tribunal of appeal in such cases might be an incentive to a dissatisfied party to dispute the validity of an award and lead to useless and expensive litigation and considerable waste of time. As it was apparent that no progress would be made, the committee decided to recommend the Assembly to adjourn the question for examination at a later session, and the Assembly passed a resolution to this effect at its meeting on the 25th September (Document A. 82).

CODIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW.

As you know, the Conference on the Codification of International Law, held at The Hague in 1930, produced meagre results. The question of continuing the preparatory work with a view of a second Conference was before the Assembly last year, but consideration was adjourned. The First Committee had before it this year Documents A. 12, A. 12 (a), and A. 12 (b). These contain observations of various Governments in response to an invitation by last year's Assembly to comment on certain suggestions made by the Codification Conference. Either because of the poor results attained by the Conference, or in the interests of economy, no one ventured to propose a programme of definite work, and although most speakers affirmed their belief in the value of the Codification of International Law, their remarks were directed rather to matters of procedure.

PREPARATORY PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE CASE OF GENERAL CONVENTIONS TO BE NEGOTIATED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE LEAGUE.

The document considered by the First Committee is numbered A. 28. This contains a resolution on procedure passed by the Assembly last year and communicated to Governments for their observations. Some Governments have replied approving the procedure; some have stated that they have no comments to make; others have suggested changes; but the majority have not replied at all. Consideration of the matter did not long occupy the First Committee, and the document was referred to a small drafting committee. This committee drafted a motion which follows in the main the resolution passed by the Assembly in 1930, but varies the procedure (see the changes in paragraphs 3, 4, 5, and 7). The motion was accepted by the Assembly and passed as a resolution on the 25th September (Document A. 80).

NATIONALITY OF WOMEN.

In my report on the Eleventh Assembly I made brief reference to the question of nationality of women, which had been raised during the Codification Conference. In January last the Council of the League of Nations, on the motion of three members representatives of Latin American republics, resolved to place it on the agenda of the Assembly, and instructed the Secretary-General to prepare a report for submission to the Assembly after consultation with various women's organizations. Consultation took place, and the First Committee had before it a report by the Secretary-General (Document A. 19). As the report is dated 27th July, and Governments situate at a distance from the seat of the League of Nations have had no opportunity to examine it and instruct their delegates, the First Committee welcomed a motion proposed by the British delegate, that the report be transmitted to Governments for their observations with a view of the question being considered by the Thirteenth Assembly.

The question of the nationality of women has long occupied the attention of the various members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and all appreciate the desirability of unanimity in legislation, but the difficulty of achieving this is recognized.

On the 26th September a resolution providing for the transmission of papers to Governments for consideration and observations was passed by the Assembly (Document A. 84). The question will be placed on the agenda of the 13th Assembly.

REVISION OF THE STATUTE OF THE PERMANENT COURT OF INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE.

You will recollect that the Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice was revised by the Assembly in 1929. The protocol relating to this revision has not received the ratifications necessary to bring it into force, and on the 11th September a number of delegations joined in submitting to the Assembly the following motion:—

“The Assembly places on its agenda the examination of the situation as regards the entry into force of the protocol of 14th September, 1929, relating to the revision of the Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice. It refers this question to its First Committee.” (Document A. 37.)

The First Committee had before it not only this document, but another—A. 1/3—giving particulars of the present situation as regards ratifications. The Government of Cuba, when ratifying, made some reservations, particularly regarding the application of the new text of Article 23 of the statute. These reservations were communicated to members of the League for their observations, and their replies are summarized in A. 1/3. In the First Committee the Cuban representative made a statement to the effect that, although his Government had not changed its opinion, it would, if requested to withdraw its reservations, ask the Senate to assent to this. After listening to this statement, the Committee decided to draft a motion which would take note of the new situation as disclosed by the Cuban delegate. This motion was introduced into the Assembly on the 25th September, and passed.

AMENDMENTS TO THE COVENANT.

In my report on last year's Assembly I devoted several pages to an account of the efforts made by the First Committee to frame a text, generally acceptable, of amendments to certain articles of the Covenant, in order to bring it into harmony with the Pact of Paris. These efforts were not completely successful, and the Assembly was unable to arrive at a definite decision. The delay, however, gave Governments an opportunity of giving careful consideration to the text drawn up last year and to make observations thereon. Several Governments made observations and these are contained in three documents bearing the number A. 11.

Almost till the time the Assembly opened, there was reason to believe that the objections made by several delegates last year would be withdrawn, that the text evolved during the course of the Eleventh Assembly would, with slight modifications of drafting, be accepted by this year's Assembly and that a protocol embodying the amendments would be opened for signature. However, it soon became apparent that the First Committee's task would not be an easy one. Indeed, at the first meeting at which the question was discussed one delegate ventured to express the opinion that it was unlikely the committee would arrive at a definite settlement this year, an opinion which, in the long-run, was justified.

After a general discussion the matter was adjourned to enable the Secretariat to prepare a précis of the observations presented by Governments since the last Assembly. This précis (A. 1/2) was subsequently presented to the First Committee.

When the discussion was resumed, the committee was still confronted with the problems on which so much time and thought had been spent last year, such, for example, as the reservations made by various Governments in the diplomatic correspondence which preceded signature to the Pact of Paris; the extension of sanctions; and the contention that there was no conflict between the two instruments, since, although the Pact of Paris condemned war as an instrument of national policy, the Covenant merely left certain wars unprohibited.

After a full exchange of views the question was remitted to a sub-committee specially constituted for the purpose of examining it. The sub-committee's report, which the First Committee

adopted with some amendments of drafting as its own report, was presented to the Assembly on the 25th September, when the following resolution was passed :—

“ The Assembly, taking note of the report approved by the First Committee,—

“ Reaffirms its intention of continuing the task of inserting in the Covenant of the League of Nations a general prohibition of recourse to war and the principle that the settlement of international disputes may only be sought by pacific methods ;

“ Decides to create a committee consisting of representatives of all the members of the League of Nations, which may meet during the Conference for the Reduction of Armaments for the purpose of seeking unanimous agreement on the bases indicated in the report and of drawing up a final text which may be voted by the Assembly at its next session ;

“ Requests the Council to convene the Committee for the date which it considers appropriate ;

“ Requests the Secretary-General to transmit the present resolution and the report to the Members of the League of Nations, in order that, if they consider it necessary, they may send to the Council their views as to the lines on which they think agreement could be attained.” (Document A. 86.)

This is not the place to examine the report, which is a comprehensive one and takes account of the different views expressed both in the First Committee and in the sub-committee.

Whether a committee of all members of the League of Nations will be able to achieve that measure of unanimity which small expert committees have not succeeded in attaining remains to be seen.

SECOND COMMITTEE.

The work of the communications and transit, health, and economic and financial organizations has changed considerably in character during the last few years, and is no longer concerned mainly with establishing general principles, but with the practical application of those principles in assisting individual States or groups of States to grapple more successfully with definite practical problems of various kinds.

In spite of the extension in the work mentioned in the foregoing paragraph, the Budget estimate for these three organizations during the coming year would have been less by some 300,000 gold francs than was the case last year, but for the special work undertaken to assist the Chinese Government, in various ways, to tackle the tremendous practical difficulties with which she is endeavouring to contend, in regard to matters of health, communications, public works (especially river-protection works), and economic and financial problems. The estimated cost of this special work (about 480,000 gold francs) more than offsets economies in other directions, but may well prove to have been a sound investment if an increase of world-trade with China is thereby facilitated, owing to the vast potential, but undeveloped, capacity of that great country to absorb the goods of other countries. Moreover, it may be hoped that recognition of the benefits she is receiving through her participation in the League may lead to a greater endeavour by China to pay off her arrears of contributions, which would materially lighten the amount required to be found by other members of the League in the near future.

China's requests for assistance were, of course, received with especial sympathy on account of the disastrous consequences of the recent unprecedented floods in the Yangtze Valley.

TRANSIT AND COMMUNICATIONS.

The first subject considered by the committee was the report on the work of the organization for communications and transit (see Documents A. 6 and A. 6 (a), Extract 4). This report does not contain much of special interest to New Zealand. One of the principal matters dealt with during the year was the question of unification of buoyage and lighting of coasts, regarding which an International Conference took place at Lisbon in October, 1930. As you are already aware, that Conference reached agreement on certain points with regard to maritime signals, lightships, &c., but was unable to secure sufficient agreement to admit of a convention being drawn up with regard to unification of buoyage characteristics. A proposal that the Conference should be called together again “ at an early date ” to consider further the subject of buoyage, met with considerable opposition, very frank opinions being expressed by various delegates upon the multiplication of Conferences on subjects which were either not vital or upon which it had not first been ascertained, by preliminary inquiries addressed to Governments, that there was a strong probability of general agreement. The Norwegian delegate pointed out that a time when so much of the world's shipping was laid up was not an appropriate one for drafting conventions, the carrying-out of which would be likely to involve considerable expense to Governments and harbour authorities in many countries. The matter eventually dropped after it had been made clear that there would be no question, in any case, of calling a further Conference on the subject *during 1932*.

CALENDAR REFORM.

A point of some interest in the report is that the General Conference on Communications and Transit, which is to meet this year (it meets regularly once every four years), is to consider, among other matters, the question of what economic advantages would accrue from the reform of the calendar and fixing of movable feasts.

The Committee's report on Communications and Transit (Document A. 76) was adopted by the Assembly on 24th September.

HEALTH ORGANIZATION.

The outstanding feature of the work of this organization (Documents A. 7, A. 6, and A. 6 (a), Extract No. 1) is the growth of the system of sending deputations of experts on health questions to advise various Governments on problems of sanitation, rural hygiene, treatment of various diseases, and with regard to organization of their health services. Very full particulars are contained in the documents mentioned above. I would specially refer to the sending of a deputation, at the request of the Australian Government, to study the question of malaria and other diseases in the islands of the South Pacific and New Guinea. The investigations covered such diseases as yaws and hookworm, in addition to malaria.

FAR EASTERN BUREAU AT SINGAPORE.

There is perhaps no field of the League's work in which overseas countries have received greater attention than in the work of the health organization. I might specially mention in this connection the Far Eastern Bureau established by the League at Singapore, which does work in the transmission of notifications of infectious disease and, in addition to acting as a centre for epidemiological intelligence, is becoming to an increasing degree the general agent in the East for the health work of the League. From this bureau help is being sent to China with a view to checking the outbreak of epidemics consequent on the great floods, and practical help (in the shape of medical stores, &c.) is also being afforded for this purpose by France, Denmark, and other countries, through the medium of the League.

The report to the Assembly (Document A. 60) was adopted on the 24th September.

WHALING.

The question of whaling was dealt with by the committee at its meeting on 16th September. My representative made a statement as to the views of the New Zealand Government. The following summary of the statement will appear in the Minutes of the Committee.

Mr. Burdekin (New Zealand) said that his Government was impressed with the necessity for international regulation of whaling, and was therefore prepared to sign the draft convention provided the text finally adopted did not differ materially from that drawn up by the Economic Committee in 1930. The New Zealand Government would have preferred to see the convention go further in several important respects, but recognized that the present proposals represented at least a first step. His Government had some doubts as to how far the proposed convention would prove effective. He emphasized that this would depend very largely upon the convention being ratified by *all* Powers, and not merely by those at present directly interested in whaling. If this were not done, the restrictions imposed upon themselves by a limited number of Powers signing the convention might quite probably lead the nationals of Powers not at present interested in whaling, and which had not therefore signed the convention, to take up whaling, and there would also be a danger of flag-transference by owners of whaling-vessels if the convention was not accepted generally. His Government regarded the proposed convention as defective, inasmuch as it imposed no limitation as to the total number of whales which might be killed in any one year, although it was recognized that it would perhaps have been premature to attempt to fix such a figure until more complete statistical information with regard to whaling was available. His Government also regretted what it regarded as a weakening of the original proposals for requiring all whaling-vessels to be licensed by their Governments. The provision which permitted mere notification as an alternative to obtaining a license would mean that not only would there be no restriction on the number of whales which might be killed, but not even any power to limit the number of vessels which might engage in whaling. He pointed out that limitation of the number of whales which might be captured was in the interests of the whaling industry itself. The New Zealand Government was inclined to favour a close season for whales, as its experience had been that whales captured early in the season were usually in poor condition and that therefore their killing at such a time was a wasteful procedure. The period of the close season would, of course, require to be varied for different parts of the world. On the 24th August, the date of the New Zealand delegation's latest instructions from its Government, by cable, the New Zealand Government had not received Document E. 696, dated the 1st June, containing the observations of various Governments in regard to the draft Convention, and it was possible, of course, that the views of his Government might be slightly modified on certain points in consequence of those observations, but what he had said might be regarded as representing generally the views of his Government.

Document A. 11/3, 1931, explains the alterations made in the draft text compiled by the Economic Committee in June, 1930. The report to the Assembly on the subject (Document A. 64) was adopted at its thirteenth session on the 24th September, and the convention was thereupon opened for signature. I signed the convention on behalf of New Zealand on the same day.

ECONOMIC MATTERS.

By far the greatest amount of the time of the Second Committee was occupied with the consideration of economic subjects. The committee had before it not only the report of the Economic Section of the League (Document C. 427, M. 177), but also two reports from the Commission of Inquiry for European Union (Documents A. 36 and A. 38), and a most interesting and important report from the Sub-committee of Economic Experts set up by the Commission of Inquiry for European Union (Document C. 510, M. 215). In spite, however, of the very great amount of study and hard work which has taken place on this subject, it is impossible to disagree with the view expressed by the German delegate—viz., that no ideas or proposals of outstanding value as a remedy for the present

extremely serious position have so far emerged. One fact, however, is very striking—namely, that the enormous worsening of the economic position of practically all nations in the world which has taken place since the world economic crisis of 1927 has in no way shaken the faith of the economic experts in the remedy then prescribed—namely, the abolition of the artificial barriers to trade created by tariff walls, or, at the least, the lowering of such walls. Whilst the representatives of most countries at League Assemblies or on the Committee of Inquiry for European Union have paid lip-service to the efficacy of the remedy proposed, their Governments have deemed it necessary in many cases to increase tariffs rather than to reduce them, and, in some cases, import restrictions of a direct character have also been imposed. Such efforts as were made, by means of bilateral treaties between individual countries, or by those Governments which took part in the proposal for a Customs truce, which the British delegation in particular pressed so strongly last year, have either come to nought, as in the case of the Customs truce proposal, or, at best, accomplished remarkably little.

The discussions which took place in the committee clearly indicate that, despite the almost desperate economic plight of many countries and the lively dread of worse things befalling them on the part of countries so far less severely affected, there was still no indication of any general willingness to apply the drastic remedy proposed by the World Economic Conference. It is obvious that no individual country is likely to be willing to abolish or considerably lower its Customs Tariffs unless, at any rate, assured that all, or most, other countries will do likewise. The committee could not but be impressed by a striking, but far from encouraging, speech delivered on the morning of the 18th September by M. Colijn, in which he mercilessly analysed the various attempts made by the League, or under its auspices, to find a remedy for the economic ills of the world, and showed how barren of results they had been. He ended with a prophecy that the few remaining citadels of free-trade would inevitably be forced to surrender, and that only when retaliation had been met by retaliation until the position had become desperate would the nations "be forced in the end to do what they ought to have done in the beginning." The possibility that Great Britain may be forced at an early date to abandon free-trade was even more directly alluded to by the German delegate, who frankly admitted that such a prospect was viewed with the utmost alarm in his country.

UNEMPLOYMENT; PUBLIC WORKS; AND INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL MORTGAGE CREDIT CO.

Two of the most definite proposals emerging from the work of the Commission of Inquiry for European Union are for the establishment of an International Agricultural Mortgage Credit Co., and for the preparation of plans for public works of international importance, with a view to relieving unemployment. In neither instance are the proposals necessarily limited to Europe in their application, but in neither case does it seem probable that, even if anything definite comes of them, they will in fact be extended beyond Europe. The greatest difficulty in respect of both proposals is the finding of the necessary capital. Obviously there can be no question of the League providing any funds for such purposes. The only way in which the League may be directly associated with either scheme would be through the proposals being submitted to the technical organs of the League (Economic and Finance Sections) for expert advice and criticism.

COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY FOR EUROPEAN UNION.

The fact that the Committee of Inquiry for European Union is operating as a part of the machinery of the League gives rise to considerable difficulties, although it was largely with a view to allaying disquiet amongst non-European States with regard to the proposal that it was originally decided that it should be carried on within the League.

CEREALS: PREFERENTIAL TARIFFS.

The point with regard to which the proposals of the Committee of Inquiry for European Union have so far caused most misgiving on the part of various overseas countries has been in connection with cereals. The various grain-growing States of Eastern and Central Europe (generally referred to in this connection as the Danubian States) have been suffering very severely indeed through the fall in the price of wheat and difficulty in disposing of their products. With a view to assisting them, special treaties have been made between certain of the Danubian States and certain European grain-importing States, whereby specified quantities of cereals from such Danubian countries are to be admitted at a preferential rate of duty. The arrangements have been hedged about with various restrictions, among the most important of which are the limitation of the agreements to certain specific quantities and to specific and limited periods. Further, the treaties are subject to no objection being raised by the countries with which the importing State has most-favoured-nation treaties. Finally, in return for the preference granted, the exporting country undertakes to grant a reduction in tariffs (or equivalent drawback) of 30 per cent. on the manufactured goods of *all* countries, not merely those of the countries granting the preference. It seems very doubtful whether the system is likely to be operated to any very great extent, but, even so, it has caused considerable uneasiness, even amongst certain European States, who consider the preservation intact of the most-favoured-nation system absolutely essential. While these States, in recognition of the plight of the Danubian countries, might have been disposed to view leniently the *temporary* infraction of the most-favoured-nation principle in respect of cereals, they plainly indicated that any proposals to enlarge the scope of the arrangement to cover commodities other than cereals might well lead to their withdrawing even their qualified acquiescence with regard to cereals. The position of the overseas wheat-growing countries is, of course, much more definitely in opposition to any preferences to Danubian cereals. (See also Documents A. 36 and A. 38.)

CUSTOMS NOMENCLATURE.

The Sub-committee of Experts, which for the past four years has been at work upon the drawing-up of a draft unified Customs nomenclature, has at last concluded its labours, which occupied some five hundred meetings. The draft will shortly be submitted to all Governments for their examination and observations. The Committee considered that, if generally accepted, it should prove of very practical assistance in removing causes of misunderstanding and difficulty in commercial relations between countries. Its acceptance would doubtless cause a certain amount of inconvenience through the necessity for adjustments in the existing practice, but this would very possibly be more than compensated for by the advantages likely to accrue from uniformity.

ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS: CARTELS.

Proposals for international economic agreements with a view to the cartelization of, at any rate, certain industries which lend themselves particularly to such treatment, were strongly urged by some delegates, but the general opinion of the committee was not enthusiastic, and many delegates stressed the necessity for adequate safeguards against monopolies and other dangers inherent in the cartel system.

DIVERGENT VIEWS.

Study of the report of the Commission in the Assembly (Document A. 75) will at once reveal that, interesting as it is, it is to a large extent merely a synthesis of various more or less divergent opinions expressed with regard to a great many of the points considered, and there is a disappointing absence of real unanimity and of any important constructive proposals, and certainly nothing which holds out any real hope of contributing immediate and tangible results on a scale in any way commensurate with the magnitude of the economic problems with which the world is confronted to-day.

In saying this, I do not wish it to be supposed that I fail to appreciate the value of the great amount of study and research work in connection with economic problems which the Economic Section of the League is carrying out. In this connection I would specially refer you to the publication entitled "The Course and Phases of the World Economic Depression," a copy of which I am forwarding herewith. While correct diagnosis of the disease is doubtless the first step towards effecting a cure, one cannot but feel anxious, however, for the diagnosis to result without too much delay in more definite suggestions as to a remedy. On this point, however, it is only right to mention the remark made by Sir Arthur Salter, the British economist, in reiterating his belief in the essential soundness of the recommendations of the World Economic Conference. As he remarked, "It is hardly fair to blame the medicine if the patient has never taken it." M. Flandin, French Minister for Finance, used a somewhat similar figure of speech when he remarked that "Quinine is a bitter medicine, but it has excellent tonic qualities."

The Committee's report on this subject (Document A. 75) was adopted without debate by the Assembly at its meeting on the 24th September. In presenting the report the Rapporteur said very truly that the necessity for securing unanimity had involved the deletion or modification of many of the most definite suggestions contained in the original draft, with the result that the report had become a somewhat anæmic one, and the solutions suggested, though not without value, were obviously only fragmentary and partial ones. There was general agreement that a remedy could only be found through collective action, he said, but collective action inevitably involved individual sacrifices, and the moment any call for the necessary sacrifices was made, national suspicions and distrust became apparent and thwarted any progress being made.

FINANCIAL QUESTIONS.

Documents A. 55, A. 55 (a), and A. 55 (b) deal with work done by the Financial Committee of the League, particularly in relation to Austria and Hungary, whose finances were rehabilitated some years ago under the auspices of the League. Despite the very marked success which at the time attended the League's work in this direction, it will be seen that the finances of these countries are again in a somewhat critical position. This appears to be due, however, not to any inherent weakness in the plans put forward at the time by the Financial Section of the League, under which indeed these countries were restored from financial chaos to something approaching prosperity—or, at any rate, financial stability—but to the inescapable results of the present world economic and financial crisis.

FINANCIAL CRISIS.

The discussion in the Second Committee dealt with the general aspects of the financial crisis rather than with its particular effects on any individual country. This will be found reflected in the report of the committee to the Assembly (Document A. 88). This report, however, is a very much less definite document than the report as originally introduced by the Rapporteur. There was, however, a notable measure of agreement on the point that the financial crisis was both more important and more urgent than even the economic crisis, and that no solution of the economic crisis was possible until a remedy had first been found for the financial crisis.

GREAT BRITAIN AND THE GOLD STANDARD.

As indicated in the first paragraph of the report, the debates in the committee were overshadowed by the news of Great Britain having gone off the gold standard and the impossibility of gauging with any degree of accuracy what the repercussions of that momentous step were likely to be.

VIEWS ON SOLUTION OF FINANCIAL CRISIS.

One of the most important contributions to the debate was the speech by Sir Arthur Salter (Great Britain) on the 23rd September. You will note that, after enumerating various ways in which he considered the position might be alleviated, he referred finally to the possibility that it might become necessary for the governmental resources of creditor States to be made available as security for loans to the debtor countries, and expressed the opinion that, in view of the immense difficulty in restoring the confidence of the investing public with the rapidity for which the situation called, the possibility of resorting to this measure should be occupying the urgent attention of the Governments concerned. That at least one of the great creditor countries is unlikely, at present at any rate, to be willing to contemplate such action was sufficiently indicated, however, by the speech of the French representative, M. Flandin.

ACCUMULATION OF GOLD.

A particularly interesting point in M. Flandin's speech was his contention that the accumulation of gold which has been taking place in France and the United States of America has been purely automatic, and not due to any deliberate policy on the part of those States; and, further, had no direct relation to reparation payments. In support of the last-mentioned point, he stated that the accumulation of the gold holdings of the Bank of France had been more rapid under the Young Plan than under the Dawes Plan, and most rapid of all since the 1st of July last, when payments under the Young Plan were suspended in consequence of President Hoover's "debt holiday" proposals.

SHORT-TERM CREDITS.

Another point emphasized both by M. Flandin and Sir Arthur Salter was the grave risks involved in obtaining funds as short-term credits and utilizing them for what are practically long-term purposes, as such short-term credits were always liable to be called in just at the time when credits were most needed.

LONG- AND MEDIUM-TERM CREDITS. FRANQUI PLAN.

In Document C. 504, M. 211, 1931, will be found proposals made by the French Government to the Committee of Inquiry for European Union with regard to the methods by which a resumption of the granting of long-term credits might possibly be brought about. That a movement of capital from countries having credit balances to markets showing a deficit is an essential preliminary condition to the return of prosperity—a proposition put forward in this document—is one the soundness of which few will be likely to question, but the difficulties in the way of obtaining *immediate* results along these lines are numerous, and the Committee of Economic Experts was evidently more disposed to consider that a scheme for medium-term credits put forward by M. Francqui (Minister of State for Belgium) held out more hopes of immediate results. Particulars of this scheme are given as an annex at the end of Document C. 510, M. 215.

M. Francqui's scheme and the scheme for the International Agricultural Mortgage Credit Co., to which I have referred in connection with economic questions, are perhaps the most concrete suggestions so far put forward. The details of the proposed International Agricultural Mortgage Credit Co. will be found in Document A. 6.

In concluding my remarks on this subject, I would like to mention almost the sole optimistic note struck in this discussion. This occurred at the end of Sir Arthur Salter's speech when he pointed out that the present crisis, unlike those caused by famine in times past, had come at a time when nature was prodigal as never before and man's skill to exploit nature most highly developed. If at such a time there was depression, the inference was that the fault lay in the machinery connecting the producer with the consumer. That, at any rate, was a problem which should be capable of human solution, and he believed, if it were solved, the world would make such a leap forward in prosperity as it had never before seen.

THIRD COMMITTEE.

The Third Committee paid me the honour of electing me its Vice-Chairman, on the motion of M. Benes, of Czechoslovakia.

COMMUNICATIONS WITH GENEVA IN TIMES OF EMERGENCY.

This subject has been dealt with in reports of previous Assemblies. All that the Third Committee had to do was to note the present position in relation to facilities accorded to aircraft, to motor transport, and to the creation of a special radio-electric station. Consideration of a fourth question, the lay-out of an aerodrome near the seat of the League, was postponed until the next Assembly, as, although the matter had been studied from a technical point of view, and conclusions reached, negotiations would have to be opened between the Swiss Government and the Secretary-General. (See Document A. 21.)

Some information regarding the League wireless station will be found on pages 111 and 112 of Document A. 6.

The Third Committee's report, which is Document A. 74, was approved by the Assembly at its meeting on the 24th September.

GENERAL CONVENTION TO IMPROVE THE MEANS OF PREVENTING WAR.

The draft convention, then known as the model treaty, came under the consideration of the Third Committee last year, and after a lengthy discussion, during which considerable divergence of opinion manifested itself, the question was referred to a Committee of Conciliation, which suggested that the draft treaty should be transformed into a draft convention, and that the Assembly should ask the Council to appoint a special committee to continue the study of the convention. The Eleventh Assembly having approved of the recommendation submitted to it, the Council in due course appointed a special committee which met in Geneva between 11th and 15th May, 1931, under the presidency of M. Politis. Both the minutes of the session of the special committee (Document A. 14) and its report (Document A. 9) contain the general draft convention which was framed in the course of its discussions, but with a variation of text. These documents were remitted to the Third Committee by this year's Assembly.

Much of the discussion in the Third Committee was concentrated on Article 2 of the draft and particularly on the first paragraph of that article. A convention designed to prevent war is hardly likely to be applicable to a state of war, and as paragraph 1 of Article 2, as drafted by the special committee, contemplates actual invasion, it was natural that several speakers should hold the view that in such circumstances the Pact of Paris would have been violated, and that, consequently, Article 16 of the Covenant would come into question, rather than Article 11, with which the principle of the Convention is closely allied. Indeed the Polish delegate went so far as to propose a suppression of the paragraph and he obtained some support. Ultimately, however, he introduced a new text. A possibility of more than one interpretation of the paragraph as it stood was certainly involved, so it was decided to form a Drafting Committee consisting of representatives of Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and Uruguay, to which this question and any others bearing on the convention might be referred.

The amendment proposed by the Polish delegate included a new paragraph reading :—

“ In the event of the Council's deciding that an international obligation concerning the state of a High Contracting Party's armaments has been violated, it shall call upon the High Contracting Party to restore the situation in accordance with the said obligation. The High Contracting Parties undertake to comply with such invitation without delay.”

This gave rise to a somewhat lengthy discussion. Personally I felt the unreasonableness of introducing at this stage of the proceedings something quite new to the Third Committee, and I said so. The French delegate, whilst agreeing with the principle underlying the proposal, thought that it was a matter for the Disarmament Conference : whereupon the Polish delegate stated (I quote from the *Journal*),—

“ That he would not on principle object to the transmission of the proposal to the Disarmament Conference, but he doubted whether that Conference, including non-members of the League, could accept it. He did not consider that a convention for the prevention of war should be confined to the case contemplated in Article 2—namely, that of invasion. In his opinion, the convention should have a wider scope and include cases of a threat of war, which consisted in the non-fulfilment of disarmament engagements. The Polish proposal made it possible for the Council to intervene any time before an actual threat of war existed, which would appear to be the real object of the convention.”

Ultimately the proposal was withdrawn.

In due course the Drafting Committee produced a new text of paragraph 1, Article 2. This text leaves to the Council the decision whether a given set of circumstances do not create a state of war. The text, which reads as follows, met with the approval of the Polish delegation :—

“ It, in circumstances which, in the Council's opinion, do not create a state of war between the Powers at issue which are parties to the present convention, the forces of one of those powers enter the territory or territorial waters of the other or a zone demilitarized in virtue of international agreements, or fly over them, the Council may prescribe measures to ensure their evacuation by those forces. The High Contracting Parties undertake to carry out without delay the measures so prescribed without prejudice to the other powers vested in the Council under Article 11 of the Covenant.”

The second paragraph of the article was redrafted, and now reads as follows :—

“ If the circumstances referred to in Article 2 have arisen, or, if in the event of a threat of war special conditions, and in particular the possibilities of contact between the forces of the parties to the dispute render it necessary, the Council may fix lines which must not be passed by their land, naval, or air forces and, where necessary in order to avoid incidents, by their civil aircraft. The High Contracting Parties undertake to comply with the Council's recommendations in this matter.”

This, together with the remaining paragraphs, becomes Article 3 of the new convention. It will be observed that in the new draft mention is made of air forces, as well as of land and naval forces.

The British representative introduced an amendment designed to restore the phrase “ territorial waters ” in the convention. Although, for obvious reasons, the amendment met with some opposition, it was ultimately accepted on condition that the meaning of the phrase was not defined.

Another amendment introduced by the British representative had reference to the Suez Canal. Its importance as a world highway, and the possibility of the right of free passage accorded under the Constantinople Convention of 1888 being interfered with, showed how necessary it was to conserve the right of free navigation. Some speakers thought that the point would be covered if the matter were referred to in the committee's report to the Assembly rather than in the convention itself. However, the matter was likewise referred to the Drafting Committee, which recommended the inclusion in the convention of a paragraph to the effect that the convention should not “ affect the right of free

passage through the Suez Canal provided for in the Convention on the Free Navigation of the Suez Maritime Canal signed at Constantinople on the 29th October, 1888."

Some amendments of drafting were made to other articles, but to these I need not make specific reference.

The convention as redrafted (Document A. 78) was sent to the Assembly under cover of a report (Document A. 77), which gives a good account of the deliberations of the Third Committee. You will observe a reference on page 4 of the report to a proposal that the convention should take the form of an instrument open only to the accession of the parties after Governments had received the sanction required by constitution. This proposal, however, was abandoned in favour of a convention open to signature and subsequent ratification or to accession.

The report and convention came before the Assembly on the 26th September, when the Assembly decided to open the convention for signature (see the draft resolution with which the committee's report concludes).

You will note that the convention remains open for signature until the 2nd February next, but that after that date States may adhere.

CO-OPERATION OF WOMEN AND OF THE PRESS IN THE ORGANIZATION OF PEACE.

Early in the session the Spanish delegation introduced into the Assembly a motion asking the Council to consider the possibility of studying the best means of associating women with the work of the League of Nations, and of preventing, with the assistance of the press, the dissemination of false information likely to hinder the maintenance of peace and good will among peoples. This motion was referred to the Third Committee. After discussion, the motion was redrafted and sent to the Assembly, which passed on the 24th September resolutions requesting the Council—

- (1) To examine the possibility of women co-operating more fully in the work of the League ; and,
- (2) To consider the possibility of studying with the help of the press, the difficult problem of the spread of false information which may threaten to disturb the peace or the good understanding between nations. (Document A. 73.)

ARMAMENTS TRUCE.

I have already referred to the suggestion of an armaments truce made by Mr. Grandi in the course of his speech in the Assembly. His suggestion was eagerly seized by representatives of several of the smaller nations, and later a motion in the names of the delegations of Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Switzerland was handed to the President. It reads as follows :—

"Being convinced that the crisis which is at present creating such serious disturbance among the nations of the world is due to a number of economic and political causes, one of the principal sources of which is the lack of mutual confidence between the nations,

"Being convinced that the realization of the undertakings contained in the Covenant regarding the reduction of armaments will be one of the most important means of re-establishing mutual confidence between the nations and alleviating their crushing economic burdens, while a resumption of competition in armaments would fatally lead to an international and social disaster,—

"The Assembly addresses a solemn appeal to all who desire the application of the principles of peace and justice on which the Covenant is based to devote all their efforts to the creation of a world opinion strong enough to ensure that the General Disarmament Conference will lead to definite results involving in particular a gradual reduction of armaments which will be continued until the object mentioned in Article 8 of the Covenant is attained.

"Considering the importance of carefully preparing the ground for the work of the said Conference, and in particular of avoiding fresh increases of armaments in the present state of affairs,—

"The Assembly request the Council to urge the Governments convened to the said Conference to show their firm determination to support the efforts to ensure peace and re-establish mutual confidence by abstaining, pending the result of the Conference, from any measure leading to an increase in the present level of their armaments."

This motion was referred to the Third Committee, and when the matter came before the Third Committee the Chairman proposed that representatives of the United States, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and Turkey, be invited to take part in the discussion. This suggestion was received with considerable favour, although there were one or two dissentient voices. Ultimately, it was agreed that the President of the Assembly should ask the Council to approve the despatch of an invitation to States non-members of the League which had been invited to the Disarmament Conference. When the Committee resumed its labours there was present a representative of the United States in the person of the Hon. H. R. Wilson, Minister at Berne, and later representatives of Costa Rica, Egypt, Turkey, and Brazil also took part.

After the Norwegian delegate had spoken in favour of the motion, the Italian representative rose and stated that, in the opinion of his delegation, the five Power motion was inadequate. He proposed for land armaments an undertaking by each State not to increase expenditure upon the army above the current year's estimates ; for naval armaments to suspend further construction, although construction already commenced might be continued and completed ; and for air armaments to give an undertaking not to build any new military aircraft except in replacement of craft which had become obsolete during the truce. Such a truce would last for one year.

The debate which followed was keen and protracted. It revealed a sympathetic attitude on the part of most delegates to the principle underlying the Italian proposal; indeed, the representative of the United States informed the Committee that although his country's cruiser level was below the figure provided for in the London Naval Treaty, and an undertaking not to increase naval forces would interfere with plans for construction, nevertheless, so important was the question of disarmament, that the United States would be willing to forgo certain treaty rights during the truce, if arranged.

The British representative gave his unqualified approval to the principle, and suggested that the Governments who were to take part in the Disarmament Conference should be asked to say whether they would make before the 1st November next a solemn declaration to observe a truce.

There were, however, objections if not to the principle at any rate to the form of the motion, particularly on the part of France and Poland, and the French delegation submitted an amendment to the five Powers motion, the essence of which is contained in the following paragraph:—

“And considers it necessary that, without prejudice to the decisions of the Conference or the programmes or proposals that any Government may there put forward ‘corresponding to existing conditions in regard to regional and general security,’ an agreement should be reached as soon as the general Conference of 1932 meets in order to avoid any rivalry in armaments while the Conference is in progress.”

Here were two motions each having its advocates, and the Third Committee was once again confronted with the task of reconciling differences of opinion with a view of the adoption of a formula acceptable to all. After sittings, which were prolonged beyond the date when it was hoped the Assembly would have risen, the committee ultimately produced, for submission to the Assembly, a motion which, excluding the preamble, reads,—

“The Assembly—

“Requests the Governments invited to the Disarmament Conference to prepare for this event by means of an armaments truce and, accordingly,

“Requests the Council to urge the Governments convened to the said Conference to give proof of their earnest desire for the successful issue of the efforts to ensure and organize peace and, without prejudging the decisions of the Conference or the programmes or proposals submitted to it by each Government, to refrain from any measure involving an increase in their armaments.

“Likewise requests the Council to ask the Governments to state before the 1st November, 1931, whether they are prepared for a period of one year as from that date to accept this truce in armaments.”

And this was accepted by the Assembly at its meeting on the 29th September. The report of the Third Committee to the Assembly is Document A. 93.

FOURTH COMMITTEE.

BUDGET FOR 1932.

The original Budget (Documents A. 4, A. 4 (a), A. 4 (b), and A. 4 (c)) amounted to 35,407,109 gold francs. After it had been prepared it was found that necessary supplementary credits were required, and the Budget as presented to the Fourth Committee (Document A. 4 (d)) amounted to 35,906,845 gold francs, an increase of more than four million gold francs on the Budget of the current year. This increase was in great measure due to the necessity for inscribing a large credit for the Disarmament Conference, which is to open in Geneva on the 2nd February next; indeed, under the heading “Reduction of Armaments” there was an increase of more than three and a half million gold francs.

My plea for economy in the Assembly met with an excellent reception from many delegates, and the Fourth Committee had no sooner begun to sit than it became apparent that this year the attempt to enforce economy would be persevered with.

In conjunction with the papers enumerated above should be read the report of the Supervisory Commission (Document A. 5). The Chairman of the Commission opened the proceedings in the Fourth Committee with a long statement which was followed with the deepest interest. He showed that the financial position of the League was serious. If you will refer to Document A. 34, you will see it stated that on the 31st August last a sum of rather less than seventeen and a half million gold francs had been received towards the total Budget of more than thirty-one and a half million gold francs for 1931, and that the arrears of contributions to the end of 1930 amounted to more than fourteen and a half million gold francs. It is certain that the financial crisis through which many States are passing is having its effect on the finances of the League. The Chairman of the Supervisory Commission was followed by the Secretary-General, and the committee heard with satisfaction that early in the year he had taken steps to economize wherever possible. There is no doubt that he realized the seriousness of the position, and that he was prepared for a demand for considerable reduction in the estimates.

In the course of the discussion a number of suggestions for revising the Budget were made, and two motions were moved providing for definite cuts. Whilst all agreed that the Budget should be referred back to the Supervisory Commission, it was felt that instructions to revise on a basis of a definite cut of say 10 or 12 per cent. might be impracticable, so the Supervisory Commission was left with a free hand on the understanding that only essential expenditure should be provided for.

The committee then drafted two motions for submission to the Assembly, and these were ultimately adopted as resolutions :—

“ The Assembly, being convinced that it is imperative not further to increase the Budget of the League for 1932, which will have to provide for the expenses of the International Disarmament Conference, and hoping that it will even be possible to reduce the draft Budget,—

“ Makes a strong appeal to its committees to follow the principles of economy dictated by present circumstances,

“ Requests these committees to limit and, if possible, to reduce to the indispensable the programme of work to be undertaken in 1932 and especially to abstain as far as practicable from making recommendations which might involve avoidable expenditure.”

“ The Assembly, impressed by the difficult situation through which most of the States members of the League are passing, and by the possible effects of that situation on the finances of the League, and convinced that in the present circumstances it is important that the whole of the appropriations provided in the Budget for the present financial year should not be expended,—

“ Requests the competent officials of the three organizations of the League to limit to the utmost possible extent the expenditure incurred between now and the end of the year ; and

“ Makes a strong appeal to the Council and the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to endeavour to postpone or cancel the sessions of Conferences and committees convened or contemplated for the last quarter of this year, provided always that such postponements or cancellations do not interfere with the essential work of the League.”

In due course the Supervisory Commission completed its labours and the result was shown in a substantial reduction, although a few members of the Fourth Committee had hoped for a rather larger one. Salaries were not touched.

During the progress of the Assembly the committees put forward proposals involving additional expenditure, and the demands for money were considered by the Supervisory Commission. I need comment on only one of these proposals. The Sixth Committee had decided to recommend the Assembly to propose the appointment of a small Committee of Experts to examine the material upon slavery which had been supplied or transmitted by Governments since the signature of the Slavery Convention of 1926. Slavery had been brought within the orbit of the League on a motion introduced by one of the New Zealand delegates in 1922. The matter is fully dealt with in later pages of this report. Here it suffices to say that the information at my disposal was such that I felt the Dominion should support the credit, even in face of the recommendation of the Supervisory Commission that it be deferred. As a result of efforts made in the Fourth Committee, to which I materially contributed, an amount of 10,000 francs was voted on the understanding that any balance required to complete the work would be met from private sources.

The Budget, as passed by the Assembly at its meeting on the 29th September, amounts to 33,687,994 gold francs, showing a substantial reduction on the draft Budget, but, unfortunately, an increase of rather more than two million francs on the amount voted last year. However, when one considers that the most important Conference (the Disarmament Conference) ever held under the auspices of the League will meet next year, and that for this a sum of more than four million francs has been voted, I am sure you will agree with me that the result is, on the whole, satisfactory.

The report of the Fourth Committee on financial questions is numbered A. 90, and to that I refer you for information on a number of minor points to which I have not made specific reference above.

AUDITED ACCOUNTS, 1930.

This document, A. 3, gave rise to little discussion. Some apprehension was shown regarding the possibility of depreciation of investments held by the Provident and Pensions Funds. It was pointed out that these investments are long-dated securities, and that interest thereon is regularly received.

NEW WORK INVOLVING NEW EXPENDITURE ON THE PART OF THE LEAGUE.

Document A. 32 gives particulars of new expenditure, and it will be seen that this year there has been heavy drawing on the vote for unforeseen expenditure. Most of the money required is in respect of work undertaken outside the European continent. The Fourth Committee took note of the items.

ORGANIZATION OF THE SECRETARIAT AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS OF THE LEAGUE.

If you will refer to my report on last year's Assembly, you will find that several pages are devoted to the organization of the Secretariat, the International Labour Office, and the Permanent Court of International Justice. I endeavoured to give within as brief a compass as possible an account of the course of the debate in the Fourth Committee on the report of a special committee known as the Committee of Thirteen, set up to deal with various questions of organization, salaries, pensions, &c. On some of the points the Fourth Committee last year was not able to arrive at a decision, and these points were referred to a new committee of thirteen members. This new committee sat and reported and its recommendations will be found in Document A. 8.

No one acquainted with the work of the League committees will be surprised to hear that the recommendations are in the nature of a compromise. What else could be expected when, of several

proposals to be considered, one advocated the abolition of all the posts of Under-Secretary-General, and another the increase in number of these officers from three to five or six? Although the new Committee of Thirteen voted, almost unanimously, against the maintenance of the *status quo*, the net result is actually the maintenance of it with a provision that new or renewed contracts concluded with the Deputy Secretary-General, or the Under-Secretaries-General, should have a maximum duration of three years, and should contain a clause under which they may be denounced within one year from the date on which the Secretary-General officially notifies the Council of his intention to resign. These recommendations, together with others concerning length of office of a future Secretary-General and a future Deputy Secretary-General, salaries of the principal officers and of directors (no increase recommended), indeed all the report (A. 8) down to and including paragraph 20, obtained the approval of the Fourth Committee after a long discussion. A decision on paragraphs 21, 25, and 26, recommending increases of salaries of the Treasurer (an officer of the Secretariat), the Deputy Registrar of the Permanent Court, and of Chiefs of Section was deferred until the Committee had before it the report of the Supervisory Commission on the reduction of the Budget, but not before a vote was taken as to whether a pronouncement should be made at once on the principle involved or not. The size of the majority for deferring the decision was such that it would perhaps have been better for all concerned to have made a definite pronouncement without delay.

Paragraphs 22, 23, and 24 of the report of the Committee of Thirteen relating to the Registrar of the Permanent Court of International Justice were referred to at a subsequent meeting of the Committee. A long and quite unnecessary debate followed regarding the powers of the Assembly in the matter of finance. There is no doubt that the Assembly in the matter of finance has sovereign powers, and of these it is very jealous. Ultimately these paragraphs of the report of the Committee of Thirteen were likewise referred to the Supervisory Commission. When the report of the latter Commission came before the Fourth Committee it was found that the Commission had recommended the postponement of a decision relating to the increase of salaries. This recommendation was accepted by the Fourth Committee which, however, agreed to give the Treasurer the rank of Director, but without an increase of salary in 1932.

The report of the Fourth Committee (Document A. 91) was adopted by the Assembly at its meeting on the 29th September.

COUNSELLORS AND SEPTENNIAL LEAVE.

The suggestion to create eight special posts of Counsellor, promoting members of the Secretariat to fill them, with, of course, an increase of salary, and the further suggestion that officers of the First Division be granted three months' special leave after seven years' service was, on the motion of the Secretary-General, postponed until 1932 (Document A. 15).

PENSIONS.

You will recollect that a pensions scheme was established by the Eleventh Assembly. The first report of the Administrative Board of the Staff Pensions Fund (Document A. 20) was considered by the Fourth Committee on the 22nd September, when the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Rappard, made a brief statement on the operations of the Board. As the option of the present members of the staff to join the fund does not expire till the 31st December, the information given in the report, although interesting, is not of much value from an actuarial point of view. The Board is advised that it should receive an average rate of interest on its investments of $4\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., but apparently there has been difficulty in obtaining sound securities in sufficient quantity to bring in interest at this rate. The Board has been somewhat unfortunate in one of its early investments, since a security maturing shortly and payable in sterling, is likely to show capital depreciation when converted into Swiss francs. A suggestion that the staff of the Institute of Intellectual Co-operation in Paris and that of the Nansen International Office of Refugees be affiliated to the Pensions Fund was mentioned in the Fourth Committee. It remains a suggestion to be studied by the Board of the fund and for decision in the future.

SUPERVISORY COMMISSION: ELECTION OF MEMBERS.

Count Moltke, having resigned membership of the Supervisory Commission, and the term of office of Lord Meston being due to expire, although under the Financial Regulations he was eligible for reappointment, the Fourth Committee elected by secret ballot two members to fill their place. Thirty votes were given to Lord Meston and twenty-nine to Mr. Hambro.

The Assembly confirmed the election (Documents A. 57 and A. 90).

ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES.

As you know, the present scale of allocation is provisional. Normally the question would have been definitely dealt with next year, but the small standing committee which is charged with the study of the question has recommended that the drawing-up of a new scale be deferred until 1934, owing to prevailing economic and financial conditions. The Assembly at its meeting on the 29th September passed a resolution requesting the Council to ask the Allocation Committee not to submit its draft revised scale until the 1934 Assembly, and, at the same time, it accepted a recommendation to fix at fourteen the number of units allocated to Mexico, which country had been recently received into the League (Document A. 92).

CONTRIBUTIONS IN ARREARS.

This year no less than fourteen States were in arrear.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW BUILDINGS.

Towards the end of the Assembly there was laid before the Fourth Committee a report, marked "confidential" by the Supervisory Commission on the financial situation in regard to the construction of the new building. The essence of this report is embodied in Document A. 89, submitted on the 29th September to the Assembly, which then passed a resolution concluding as follows:—

"The Assembly

"Declares that it is resolved in principle to keep within the estimate adopted last year; and

"Instructs the Supervisory Commission, after having obtained the necessary technical and legal advice and without excluding the possibility of reconsidering the contract concluded with the architects, to submit to the Council for approval as soon as possible a programme which will comply, under the best possible conditions, with the above decision."

The financial position in regard to the new buildings is indeed disturbing. Comment at the moment would be out of place, as a solution has been left to a body of men on whose common-sense and zeal for the interests of the League I think we can rely.

FIFTH COMMITTEE.

As usual, this committee received and considered reports on the work done by the sections of the League organization which deal with opium and narcotic drugs, traffic in women and children, and child-welfare, and it also devoted some time to the question of penal administration, which was first included on the agenda of the Assembly last year, and in regard to which there exists no special League organization.

OPIUM AND NARCOTIC DRUGS.

Very marked progress is, I am glad to say, being made by the League in connection with the suppression of the traffic in opium and dangerous drugs. The work done during the past year is very ably summarized in the report presented to the committee by the Japanese delegate (Document A. V/1 1931). In this document will be found an explanatory summary of the provisions of the convention for limiting the manufacture of narcotic drugs and regulating the distribution of such quantities as are required for medicinal and scientific purposes, which was drawn up by the Conference which sat from the 27th May to the 13th July, 1931, at Geneva. The full report of this Conference and the terms of the convention will be found in Document C. 455, M. 193, 1931, while the reports of the advisory committee, which made the preliminary arrangements for the Conference (Documents C. 168, M. 62 and C. 168 (a), M. 62 (a)), also contain much interesting information.

If this convention is generally adopted, as there seems to be good reason to anticipate that it will be, it will constitute a step forward in the campaign against the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs by bringing their manufacture and distribution under strict supervision in a way which has proved impossible hitherto. Even apart from what it is hoped may be achieved in the future through the operation of this convention, however, very marked progress has been made during the year, under the terms of the Geneva Convention of 1925, in the direction of diminishing the quantities of drugs manufactured, and securing, through stricter Government supervision in certain of the manufacturing countries, that drugs were only exported in satisfaction of orders for which import certificates had been issued by the Governments of the countries to which the drugs were to be sent. Interesting information regarding the encouraging progress made in this direction is contained in Document A. V/1, already referred to, and further information with regard to the tremendous diminution in the quantities manufactured in his country was given to the Committee by the Swiss delegate. The report of the Egyptian Government that drug addiction in that country has been reduced by half is particularly noteworthy.

A most hopeful feature has been the tangible evidence given by Turkey (which is not a signatory of the Geneva Opium Convention) of her willingness to take steps to prevent narcotic drugs manufactured in that country from going into the illicit traffic.

The Australian delegate—a lady doctor—took occasion during the debate to point out that the apparently exceptionally high drug consumption in Australia, as shown by the figures given in Document C. 629, M. 250, 1930, were due to the very general use of drugs by the medical and dental professions to produce local anaesthesia, and to the completeness of the statistical information available in Australia regarding drugs, and not to any general drug addiction. No doubt the same considerations apply in respect of New Zealand.

With a view to still more effectively tackling this problem at its source, the Committee included in its report to the Assembly (Document A. 65) a recommendation for the taking of preliminary steps to secure information necessary to ensure the success of a Conference which it is proposed to convene at some future—and probably not very early—date with regard to the limitation of the growing of the poppy and harvesting of the coca leaf, from which these drugs are derived.

The Assembly adopted the report on the 23rd September.

CHILD-WELFARE.

The report of the Child-welfare Committee (Document C. 249, M. 113) on the work performed during its session last April does not contain much of special interest to New Zealand. Some of the principal questions dealt with, such as the draft convention with regard to the return of children and young people to their homes, and the treatment of foreign minors, while of considerable importance in many countries, arise out of problems which, fortunately, are practically unknown in New Zealand.

MAINTENANCE ORDERS.

The question of the execution of maintenance orders abroad was recognized by the Child-welfare Committee as one not exclusively relating to child-welfare, though having an undoubted bearing on it. It therefore decided to ask the Council to appoint a temporary special committee, on which leading immigration and emigration countries will be represented, to consider this question, together with that of treatment of foreign minors, which cannot well be separated altogether from the larger question of treatment of foreigners generally. This special Committee will not meet before October, 1932.

The subjects of illegitimate children and the protection of children from injury through undesirable cinematograph films were held over by the Child-welfare Committee for consideration at its 1932 session, and were, therefore, scarcely touched on in the discussions in the Fifth Committee.

CHILDREN'S COURTS.

The value of Children's Courts, wherever they have been adopted, was stressed by a number of speakers. This, however, is obviously a national rather than an international matter, and it has to be borne in mind that it is really only the international aspects of child-welfare which rightly fall within the province of the League's committees to consider. This sufficiently explains why there is usually little to report on the subject of child-welfare, despite the keen interest taken in the subject in New Zealand, as the matter only arises there in its *national* aspect and as a subject for purely internal action.

The report of the Fifth Committee on this subject (Document A. 71) was adopted by the Assembly at its meeting on the 23rd September.

TRAFFIC IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

In Document C. 267, M. 122, 1931, will be found the report of the Traffic in Women and Children Committee on its work during the past year. It shows that a little progress has been made in obtaining additional signatures to the 1921 convention on the subject, but the total number of States who have ratified the convention is still only thirty-eight, and among the States which have not done so are to be found a considerable number of those in which there is reason to fear that the evil exists on a considerable scale. An effort has been made during the year to obtain the accession to the convention of States which are not members of the League, but it is rather early yet to estimate the probable results.

"SOUTENEURS."

The principal step of any note in connection with this subject during the past year has been the drawing-up of a protocol to supplement the 1921 Convention. This protocol, which appears as an appendix to Document C. 267, M. 122, deals with the punishment of "Souteneurs"—*i.e.*, persons living wholly or partly on the immoral earnings of women—and the resolution contained in the report to the Assembly (Document A. 72) on this point commends the protocol to the attention of all Governments. There was a strong feeling amongst members of the Fifth Committee that the laws of many countries provided quite inadequate penalties for such offenders, and it was hoped that States generally would take steps to provide a maximum penalty of not less than five years.

OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS.

When the financial position admits of such a course, it is proposed to print and circulate to Governments a compilation of the laws of various States on this subject. Meanwhile, particular attention is called to the system in operation in Belgium, whereby a protective zone is established round all schools, within which zone particularly stringent regulations are enforced with regard to the exhibition of anything of a nature likely to disturb the imagination of a child.

Stress was also laid, during the committee's discussions, on the harmful effects liable to result, owing to crude methods of presentation, from the exhibition of films ostensibly prepared as propaganda against venereal disease, prostitution, &c.

WOMEN POLICE.

Each year great emphasis is laid by various speakers on this committee (principally women) upon the success attained by women police in connection with the fight against the "white slave" traffic.

The report on this whole subject (A. 72) was adopted by the Assembly at its twelfth session, on the 23rd September.

PENAL AND PENITENTIARY QUESTIONS.

On this subject the committee had before it two reports from the Secretary-General of the League (A. 25 and A. 25 (a)) and a typewritten memorandum (N. 200/19/0/1) from the International Labour Office dealing particularly with the question of prison labour. The two first-mentioned documents cover observations by various Governments on the "Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners," which were circulated after last Assembly, and also communications from the International Prison Commission at Berne and from various private organizations, such as the Howard League for Penal Reform, which was principally instrumental in getting the question of penal administration taken up by the League.

The report of the committee (Document A. 70) was adopted by the Assembly on the 23rd September, after a further protest had been made by the British delegate against the introduction, without notice, of subjects not included on the agenda of the Assembly and on which delegates had no opportunity of obtaining instructions from their Governments.

SIXTH COMMITTEE.

PROTECTION OF MINORITIES.

This subject was sent to the Sixth Committee for consideration on a motion moved by the German delegation in the Assembly on the 10th September.

Petitions in connection with minorities are dealt with by a committee of members of the Council. This committee meets during the session of the Council, and this year there were meetings between the sessions. The German delegate on the committee entered a plea for more frequent meetings of the Minorities Committee, and asked that it should examine more in detail the questions remitted to it, and also that greater publicity should be given to the result of the examination. The debate gave an opportunity for an exchange of views and a restatement of the position of several countries in regard to the question of minorities, but no formal motion was proposed. A brief report was sent to the Assembly, which was adopted at its meeting on the 23rd September (Document A. 67).

MANDATES.

There is little to be said under this heading. In accordance with its usual practice, the Norwegian delegation moved in the Assembly that various papers on the subject be referred to the Sixth Committee. This was done. Some speakers in the debate seized the opportunity for reaffirming the principles of the mandatory system, and specific reference was made to public-health services and to the general conditions which must be fulfilled before the mandate regime can be brought to an end in respect of a country placed under that regime, a subject which had been considered by the Permanent Mandates Commission during its twentieth session (doubtless in view of the position of Iraq). The work of the Permanent Mandates Commission was referred to in appreciative terms.

The report of the Sixth Committee (Document A. 68) came before the Assembly on the 23rd September, when the draft resolution was adopted.

SLAVERY.

As stated in the earlier part of this report, I spoke in the Assembly on the 10th September, and in the course of my speech touched upon the question of slavery. (See *Journal* of 11th September.)

It was under a resolution put forward by Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland in 1922, when acting as a representative of New Zealand, that the question of slavery was first taken up by the League, and it was as a result of such resolution that the temporary Commission was appointed to collect the facts then in existence regarding the amount of slavery in the world. And so I felt I could not ignore the special appeal to me to speak on behalf of the setting-up of a permanent bureau by the League.

Discussion was opened in committee on the 16th September by Lord Lytton (delegate of Great Britain), who said that the Slavery Convention (which had been ratified by forty countries) was not to be considered as the end of the work of the League in the matter of slavery, but only as the starting-point of its labours. It was not the purpose of the British delegation to criticize the Governments where the conditions of slavery still existed—their difficulties were recognized—it was for the League to help them to overcome those difficulties. Lord Lytton referred to the fact that year by year the British delegation had put forward the suggestion of a permanent bureau, but he did not think it opportune to repeat the proposal this year, because of the financial difficulties under which all were working, and to which the Fourth Committee had drawn attention. He remarked that an analogy had been drawn between the Permanent Slavery Bureau (which it was desired to set up) and the Permanent Mandates Commission, an analogy which was rather misleading, as the Permanent Mandates Commission was a quasi-judicial body through the medium of which the League exercised its trusteeship towards the population of mandated territories; but that would not be the character of the permanent bureau, which would be composed of experts, of men well versed in the subject, capable of reviewing facts brought forward and able to hear the views of the Governments concerned. In that sense they would be capable of helping the League on the one hand and the Governments in which slavery existed on the other. This year the British delegation proposed to bring forward a modified proposal—namely, that the temporary Slavery Commission should be reconstituted. There were a number of documents dealing with slavery which required examination by some expert body; there was the definite demand for help by the Emperor of Abyssinia; and Lord Lytton suggested that the proposal which the British delegation had made regarding a permanent bureau should itself be referred to this temporary Commission. If the usual procedure were adopted of appointing a sub-committee, he would propose that that sub-committee should invite the Council to reconstitute this temporary Commission for one year on the understanding that the expense involved therein should be reduced to the lowest possible point.

The Chairman then drew the attention of the committee to the copies of letters from the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society and from the Emperor of Abyssinia, which had been distributed at the request of the New Zealand delegate. (A. VI 5.)

The Portuguese delegate saw no reason why a permanent bureau or a temporary Commission should be in existence. He said the question before the Committee was slavery and the progress that had been made. Since last year there had been eleven further ratifications of signatures to the convention, and demands for information had come from an increasing number of States, which showed good progress. Setting up new machinery of any kind would cost money. There would be compensation for setting free slaves, as well as the cost of organizations for the benefit of enfranchised slaves: in fact, the financial requirements would be considerable. He added that anything that could be done to make the convention more effective could be done through the League itself without the help of subsidiary bodies.

There were a good many more speakers on the subject, most of whom were willing to support the British delegation's proposal in its modified form, while the Netherlands' delegate suggested a middle course—namely, the setting-up of a small body, consisting of three members only, to do similar work to that which had been done by the temporary Slavery Commission. When the list of speakers had come to an end, a sub-committee was formed to go further into the matter. The representatives of eleven countries were appointed, and New Zealand was included, but as I was the sole representative of my Government, and it was necessary for me to attend to all the other committees, I begged leave to be excused.

As a result of the labours of the sub-committee, a report was drafted and submitted to the full committee. It contained the following resolution:—

“The Assembly requests the Council to appoint for one year a small Committee of Experts to examine the material upon slavery which has been supplied or transmitted by Governments since the signature of the convention of 1926. This committee will submit to the Council suggestions with a view to recommending to the next Assembly the measures of assistance which the League of Nations could render to those countries which have agreed to abolish slavery, and which request such assistance.”

This was adopted by the Sixth Committee, but great fears were evinced as to what would be its fate when it reached the Fourth Committee, for, naturally, there would be a certain amount of expenditure involved; so the Chairman instructed the Rapporteur to defend the draft resolution when it came before the Fourth Committee. However, the members of this Committee were not severely antagonistic, and a grant of 10,000 Swiss francs was voted, with the proviso that should any further money be required for the Committee of Experts, it should be obtained voluntarily or through private channels.

The resolution above quoted came before the Assembly on the 25th September, and was passed (Document A. 83).

REFUGEES.

The report of the Governing Body of the Nansen International Office for Refugees is Document A. 27. You will recollect that this office was constituted by resolution of the Eleventh Assembly, and that to it is entrusted the political and legal protection of the refugees, a task which for many years had been undertaken by the late Dr. Nansen. The Eleventh Assembly also approved a motion submitted to it by its Fourth Committee, requiring the new organization to present in 1931 a methodical plan for winding up the Refugees Organization by a date not later than the 31st December, 1939.

Document A. 27 gives an account of the work of the Refugees Organization since its creation, and also contains a scheme for the liquidation of the office. It was to this scheme that M. Huber, the President of the Governing Body of the Nansen International Office for Refugees, particularly referred in the speech with which he opened the debate in the Sixth Committee. You will see that this scheme provides for a gradual decrease of expenditure, which will come to an end in 1938, although, naturally, the world-wide depression has affected the activities of the office, since unemployment has increased and opportunities for placing refugees have consequently diminished.

The Sixth Committee was glad to learn that the Government of Erivan had agreed to repatriate 10,000 Armenian refugees from Greece if transport were provided. For this purpose money has been forthcoming from private sources. Such an arrangement, if carried out, would ease the problem which, however, will still present difficulties. For instance, it is said that there are in China 100,000 Russian refugees. These it is proposed to settle in American countries. Generally speaking, the debate was concentrated on the report of the Refugees Organization, although the question of framing a convention ensuring the protection of refugees on the liquidation of the office was raised. Action in this direction is not contemplated, however, for the present.

The Sixth Committee's report to the Assembly (Document A. 85) concludes with a draft resolution dealing with a number of points, and recommending the adoption of the plan for liquidation to which I have referred above. This resolution received the approval of the Assembly at its meeting on the 25th September.

INTELLECTUAL CO-OPERATION.

Two documents were before the Sixth Committee—i.e., the report of the International Committee of Intellectual Co-operation (Document A. 23) and the report of the Governing Body of the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation (Document A. 24).

The Sixth Committee's report to the Assembly (Document A. 69) summarizes the work performed by the International Committee and the International Institute; but, for a proper understanding of the activities of the organization, it is necessary to read the reports mentioned above and the various publications issued by the League on the subject of intellectual co-operation.

COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY FOR EUROPEAN UNION.

In the section of this report devoted to the Second Committee I have given a brief account of the consideration given by that committee to the work of the Commission of Inquiry for European Union in the economic sphere. Certain of the political aspects of the various questions which are the subject of inquiry were more properly within the competency of the Sixth Committee of the Assembly, and to this Committee were referred various documents bearing on the suggested European union. Of these documents, the more important are A. 17 (the report of the Secretary-General on

the work of the Commission of Inquiry for European Union) and the minutes of the third session of the Commission (Document C. 395, M. 158). The Sixth Committee also had before it a motion proposed by the Estonian delegation, reading as follows:—

“The Committee of Inquiry for European Union is instructed to include forthwith and permanently in the programme of its work the question of the various possible methods for the constitution and organization of European union.

“The Secretariat of the League is instructed to facilitate the task of the Committee of Inquiry by bringing together and collating the existing technical literature on the subject.”

The debate in the Sixth Committee was not long, but it was interesting. It was perhaps wise of the Chairman, M. Motta, in his opening remarks to mention that the committee could, if it wished, reconsider any question of principle which concerned the existence of the Commission of Inquiry, but, at the same time, he prudently suggested that members should abstain from bringing forward motions under this head.

There exists considerable scepticism in regard to the work of the Commission not only amongst countries situate outside Europe, but also amongst some European countries. Many of the problems with which the Commission is dealing concern extra-European countries; indeed some of them may be described as universal. For instance, the proposed Pact of Economic Non-aggression, submitted to the Commission at its third session by the Soviet representative, is surely of more than European interest. It sometimes happens that two organs of the League are engaged on work of a somewhat similar nature and that there is a tendency to overlap; fears, doubtless prompted by the wishes of certain extra-European countries who were not able to take an active part in the work of the Commission of Inquiry, were expressed lest duties which properly belonged to the Economic and Financial Organization of the League should be discharged by a body whose interests were primarily European. These fears are, of course, limited at the moment to economic questions; and the debate in the Sixth Committee concerned itself largely with economics, for the reason that the Sixth Committee, having before it no motion of a political nature other than the Estonian motion, had only the duty of submitting, if it thought fit, proposals as to the constitution, organization, and methods of work of the Committee of Inquiry. As to the Estonian motion, one speaker described it as premature, and eventually it was decided that it should be studied by the Commission of Inquiry itself.

At the conclusion of the debate the Chairman suggested the creation of a small sub-committee to draft a motion for submission to the Assembly. This was agreed to and a committee of nine was appointed for the purpose. This motion, which was accepted by the Assembly at its meeting on the 24th September (Document A. 66) approves the report of the Commission of Inquiry regarding its constitution, organization, and methods of work; requests the Commission to pursue its work in conformity with the principles laid down in the resolution of the 17th September, 1930; recommends the Commission to consult whenever possible the technical organizations of the League, and to refer to the League the settlement of problems thought to be capable of solution on a world scale; approves the proposal of the Commission of Inquiry that a special committee should be constituted to study the Pact of Economic Non-aggression; and (to meet the objections of extra-European countries) proposes that Australia, Canada, Chile, China, India, Japan, and Uruguay should be invited to take part in the work of the Commission. The Government of the United States is also to be invited to send a representative to take part in the work of the committee appointed to consider the Pact of Economic Non-aggression, if that Government so wishes.

It will be seen that under the above resolution one more committee is added to the number already in existence, and although in this particular case such action may be wise, I cannot help thinking that this multiplication of committees, having duties which sometimes overlap, is not in the best interests of the League. The work of the Commission of Inquiry has caused the establishment of committees and sub-committees to such an extent that the organization may in time become unwieldy. However, the principle of the inquiry has been accepted by the League, it has the sympathy of a number of European States, and it has to be recognized that in this time of great depression any suggestion which may be put forward for the possible amelioration of European troubles cannot be lightly rejected.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

THOMAS M. WILFORD,

High Commissioner for New Zealand.

The Right Honourable the Prime Minister, Wellington, New Zealand.

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