

M. Delbos (France) said that by informing the Council officially of the Franco-British declaration of 24th April, their desire had not merely been to inform the Council of the new character to be assumed by the relations between France and Belgium on the juridical plane. Nothing had been changed on the plane of mutual friendship. Their object was also to make before the Council a double affirmation. Whatever obstacles might have been encountered during the past fifteen months in the negotiations for a Western agreement intended to replace the Treaty of Locarno the determination of the French Government to reach such an agreement had in no way lessened. They were continuing their efforts and did not despair of obtaining a favourable result. In doing this, however, the French Government at no time forgot the connection between Western security and the security of Europe in general. The former could not be acquired at the cost of the latter. On the contrary, the French Government had conceived a Western settlement as one that must contribute to the consolidation of general peace.

Mr. Eden (United Kingdom) said that the British Government hoped the negotiations concluded with the Belgian Government might prove to be a step towards negotiations of a wider scope and might make possible closer collaboration between all the interested countries. They would persevere in their efforts to bring about settlements.

M. Spaak, the representative of Belgium, who was invited to the Council table, stated that the Note of 24th April, while it had relieved Belgium of the obligations which she had contracted at Locarno and in London, maintained the Franco-British guarantee to Belgium. This guarantee was based on a definition of the foreign policy of Belgium, a definition which he accepted completely. It contained two essential affirmations: (1) Belgium's determination to defend her frontiers against all aggression or invasion and to prevent her territory from being used to further an aggression against another State, either for the passage of troops or as a basis of operations by land, on sea, or in the air, and, finally, with this object, to organize her defences in an effective manner; and (2) an assurance of the fidelity of Belgium to the Covenant of the League of Nations and to the obligations which it entailed.

The Belgian Government, like the French and British Governments, considered that this declaration should be regarded as a stage towards the elaboration of a new Western Pact, the conclusion of which was bound to facilitate the solution of other problems.

The President expressed his thanks to the representatives of the three Governments concerned for the statements they had made, and proposed that the Council should take note of the communication from the French and United Kingdom Governments and the observations made by the representative of Belgium, and, further, that the question be adjourned until the next ordinary session. These proposals were adopted.

#### HEALTH.

Conference on Rural Hygiene for American Countries. Representative of New Zealand: Rapporteur (Document C. 261, 1937, III).

It will be remembered that at the last assembly thirteen representatives of Latin America, supported by representatives of Spain and the Netherlands, proposed that a Rural Hygiene Conference should be summoned for American countries. The Assembly asked the Council, together with the International Labour Office, to examine the possibility of such a conference. The Health Committee in approving of the proposal felt that the conference would result in the association, in the rural hygiene work of the League, of the continent of North and South America.

In February, 1937, the Mexican Government informed the Secretary-General that it would be very gratified if the conference were to meet in Mexico City, and asked him to communicate this invitation to the Council. Accordingly, the various American Governments were asked to say whether they would send representatives to the conference and also any suggestions for the Agenda.

At its session in April, 1937, the Health Committee concluded that in view of the time needed to make proper preparations and because of the necessity of avoiding any overlapping with the Tenth Pan-American Sanitary Conference to be held at Bogota in July, 1938, the Rural Hygiene Conference should not be held before the end of 1938. The International Labour Office signified their willingness to take part in the conference and in the work of the Preparatory Committee. So far the United States of America, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela have announced their intention of sending representatives. The Argentine has accepted, subject to official confirmation, and Canada has replied to the effect that she is interested and will decide whether a delegation can be sent when the date is fixed. Nicaragua stated that she would reply at a later date.

In view of the replies received the Rapporteur thought that the Council could accept the generous offer of the Mexican Government, which had given so many proofs of its attachment to the League of Nations, and suggested that the Council send a letter of thanks to the Mexican Government.

The representative of Chile stated that his Government attached the greatest importance to questions of rural hygiene, and was pleased to learn that the conference was to be held in Mexico.

The representative of Mexico, who was in attendance at the Council table for the presentation of this report, stated that rural hygiene was of vital importance to his country, and Mexico was happy to be of assistance in the technical work of the League. They felt it their duty and, in fact, a necessity to strengthen international collaboration "in a technical field where passions are not aroused." He thanked those countries of America which had promised their collaboration, and added that the technical organs of the League and of the International Labour Office constituted the best augury for the success of the conference.