

The attitude of New Zealand is already well known through the publication in the Dominion of the Government's proposals which you empowered me to transmit to the Secretary-General of the League and which were duly distributed to States Members prior to the opening of the Assembly. On the 29th September I supported these proposals in a speech, the text of which is reported in the verbatim record of the 29th September, 1936.

APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE COVENANT.

The Assembly, at the beginning of its session, had referred to its General Committee for examination certain items on the Agenda. Amongst these was the question of the application of the principles of the Covenant, with which is associated—

- (a) The problem of harmonizing the Covenant with the Treaty for the Renunciation of War (Pact of Paris), and the Treaty of Non-aggression and Conciliation signed at Rio de Janeiro in 1933; and
- (b) The question of prohibiting, under the provisions of the Covenant, the supply of arms and war materials to belligerents.

It was not until the 8th October—three days before the close of the Assembly—that this question came up for general discussion. On that date the President of the Assembly submitted a draft resolution from the General Committee to set up a General Commission to put forward suggestions for its study. Its terms were as follows:—

“The Assembly—

“Acting upon the recommendation adopted by the Assembly on 4th July, 1936;

“Having regard to the replies of the Governments of States Members to the invitation extended to them in pursuance of that recommendation;

“Having regard to the statements that have been made concerning the application of the principles of the Covenant during the general discussion;

“Considering that among the problems which arise out of the question of the application of the principles of the Covenant, and which must therefore be covered by the inquiry into that subject, mention should be made of the problem, already considered by the League, of harmonizing or co-ordinating the Covenant with other treaties of a universal tendency aiming at the pacific settlement of international disputes—that is to say, the Treaty for the Renunciation of War, signed at Paris on 27th August, 1928, and the Treaty of Non-aggression and Conciliation, signed at Rio de Janeiro on 10th October, 1933, on the initiative of the Argentine Republic, which treaties fall within the scope of Article 21 of the Covenant and, like the Covenant, are designed to ensure the maintenance of peace;

“Considering that another problem already envisaged by the League of Nations is also connected with the question of the application of the principles of the Covenant—namely, the prohibition, in virtue of the provisions of the Covenant, of the supply of arms and war material to belligerents—a problem the study of which was entrusted by the Council to a Special Committee, which suspended its work owing to the fact that the Assembly was also dealing with the question of the application of the principles of the Covenant;

“Decides to set up a General Commission of the kind provided for in Rule 14 of the Rules of Procedure for the question of the application of the principles of the Covenant and all problems connected therewith, the Commission to report to the Assembly and submit its recommendations to the latter on the manner in which the study of these problems should be pursued.”

After some discussion the Assembly adopted this draft resolution, and the General Commission was accordingly set up.

At its first meeting, open to the delegates of all States Members of the League, Mr. S. M. Bruce was unanimously elected Chairman. Then followed a lengthy and animated exchange of views on the question of setting up a special body to make a preliminary study of these problems, two main suggestions being debated:—

- (1) The establishment of a large Committee on which all the views expressed by Member States would be represented; and
- (2) The establishment of a smaller or limited Committee.

It was finally decided, although not unanimously, to recommend to the Assembly, on the general basis of a proposal made by Switzerland, the formation of a limited Committee, which it was subsequently agreed should be composed of the fifteen members of the Council of the League and thirteen representatives of Member States not having seats on the Council. The Committee thus elected consisted of the following States:—

Argentine.
Austria.
Belgium.
Bolivia.
United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland.
Bulgaria.
Canada.
Chile.
China.
Colombia.
Czechoslovakia.
France.
Greece.
Iran.

Italy.
Latvia.
Mexico.
Netherlands.
New Zealand.
Poland.
Portugal.
Roumania.
Spain.
Sweden.
Switzerland.
Turkey.
Uruguay.
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.