

" And whereas the Inter-American Conference for the Consolidation of Peace which met at Buenos Aires on 1st December, 1936, on the initiative of President Roosevelt, was actuated by the desire to supplement and strengthen the League's efforts to prevent war :

" The Assembly declares that—

" In the event of war, or a threat of war, the League of Nations, while not delaying for that purpose its own action in virtue of the Covenant, shall take suitable steps and shall establish such contacts as may appear to be necessary to associate in its efforts for the maintenance of peace those States which are not members of the League, but are mutually bound by the above-mentioned covenants, the common aim of which is to maintain peace." (Document A. 69, 1937.)

I have interrupted my account of the general debate in the Assembly in order to deal with the action taken by that body on certain proposals made by M. Edwards. The Chilean delegate was followed by several other speakers.

Mr. Wellington Koo devoted his speech entirely to his own country, and I do not think I can do better than quote the very brief résumé of that speech which I have given in my report on the Ninety-eighth Session of the Council. After referring to the Japanese occupation of certain parts of China involving operations by land, sea, and air, and quoting from accounts of eye-witnesses, he said that the situation in the Far East was one of the gravest character. He was of opinion that Japan was not out to conquer because of the necessity for finding an outlet for her dense population (seeing that the territory she had already conquered had attracted comparatively few of her people), but because of the lack of raw materials within the home-land : yet most of her needs were supplied not from China, but from the United States of America, the East Indies, countries of the Pacific, Canada, and Scandinavia. He concluded by stating that, if there was a will to co-operate, something could be done ; and he cited the success of the recent Nyon Conference on the Mediterranean Sea. China had appealed to the League. It was for the Council to decide whether to proceed itself to consideration, laying the question before the Assembly at the same time, or whether, in the first instance, to refer the appeal to the Advisory Committee on the Sino-Japanese conflict set up by the Assembly of February, 1933.

General Tanczos, the chief Hungarian delegate, devoted part of his speech to the work of the Special Committee on the Application of the Principles of the Covenant. He expressed anxiety at the slowness of progress, and criticized such preliminary work as had been done on the ground that it was too closely attached to the past and to the ideas of the past. The past was a burden which should be thrown off, and unless the Committee looked rather to the future it might be unable to carry out its work.

It should be recorded that the Hungarian delegate made the comparison between the minority clauses of some of the Treaties concluded after the Great War and the provisions respecting the treatment of minorities contained in the Fundamental Law of the Sanjak of Alexandretta, provisions which have been approved by the Council. He inferred that the Council now professed more liberal ideas in the matter of the protection of minorities. The duties devolving on the Council in respect of the protection of minorities have nearly always been a theme in the Hungarian delegate's speeches to the Assembly, and on this occasion General Tanczos considered that the question deserved the current Assembly's earnest attention.

The Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was the chief delegate of his country, devoted almost the whole of his speech to Palestine. The speech was temperate in tone, but it contained a special plea against the policy of partition advocated by the British Royal Commission. He admitted the good will of the United Kingdom and the sincerity of the Royal Commission, but said that partition would merely result in greater confusion, in maintaining discord, and in stirring up hatred.

The Foreign Minister of Iraq also dealt briefly with the problem of Palestine.

M. Koht, the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, dealt with a number of matters, including the weakness of the League in the face of aggression, the problems of disarmament, the treatment of refugees, and the appeal of Spain to the League. On the Spanish question he followed somewhat the line that I had myself advocated in the Council. He said :

" We consider that national questions can best be decided by the free vote of the citizens of the country concerned. Could not the League invite the parties in Spain to accept an armistice, in order that a referendum might be taken under the authority of the League on the question of the constitution of that country ? I do not underestimate the difficulties of such an undertaking : they are only too evident. Accordingly, I will make no formal proposal : but I felt I could not omit to lay before the Assembly this idea of pacific intervention. I shall now await the statements of other members of the Assembly, and shall be prepared, should occasion arise, to support any proposal on the lines I have indicated. If the League were to lend its authority to such a procedure, there might be some chance, however slight, of bringing to an end the cruel strife which is now laying waste unhappy Spain. The suggestion is not a new one, and I venture to leave its consideration to the Council, at whose last meeting this very question was raised by the representative of New Zealand."

M. Koht was followed by M. Negrin, the Prime Minister of Spain. As, however, the questions raised by the Spanish appeal were to be considered by the Sixth Committee, I will leave them to be dealt with in that section of this report devoted to the Sixth Committee.