

whilst in the opinion of the Bureau the general political and economic situation was not conducive to a resumption of all the work of the Conference, there was a draft Convention, framed by the Conference, on Publicity for National Defence Expenditure and the Working of an Organ of Supervision and Co-ordination which might be suitable for agreement even in existing circumstances. In execution of a decision of the Bureau a report was communicated to Governments with an inquiry whether they would be prepared in principle to accept a system of publicity based on the draft. Several replies have been received, and others are expected. Further, the Secretariat is engaged in collecting information on the present position in regard to the national control of the manufacture of and trade in arms in the principal countries. In due course the Bureau will meet again for the purpose of considering the replies from Governments, discussing the draft Convention on Publicity for National Defence Expenditure, and deciding upon appropriate measures. I would here refer you to that part of the Secretary-General's report which deals with disarmament. The Chairman then laid before the Committee a motion entered in the names of the delegations of Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland. It read:—

“The Assembly—

“Considering it desirable that a first step should be taken towards the conclusion of a General Convention for the reduction and limitation of armaments, and that accordingly use should be made without delay of the work done by the Disarmament Conference,

“(1) Recommends the conclusion of an international Convention on the publicity of national-defence expenditure ;

“(2) Recommends the members of the League to establish, each in so far as it is concerned, national supervision over the manufacture of and trade in arms, ammunition, and implements of war, on the basis of the work done by the Special Committee of the Disarmament Conference, and asks Governments to inform the Secretary-General of the League of Nations of the steps taken for this purpose ;

“(3) Requests the Secretary-General to communicate the present resolution to the States not members of the League of Nations.”

Dr. Lange, of Norway, who has been associated with the Assembly since 1920, at once dealt with the motion. He said it was not only desirable, but a duty under the Covenant to conclude a General Convention for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments. The world was living in a state of war, although war had not been declared ; but something could be done. He then proceeded to dissect the motion, and added that technical committees were in existence and there was material available which would be invaluable in making for progress, given the will in the right direction. The Chairman, having intimated that the discussion need not be limited to the subject-matter of the resolution, Dr. Lange was followed by other speakers. M. Sandler, Sweden, said that speeches were not enough. More was required, and the draft resolution, whilst it did not ask too much of Governments, did raise the issue in definite terms. It was clearly understood that all that could be done at the present moment was very modest preparatory work, pending an improvement in the general atmosphere. Budgetary publicity, acknowledged by treaty, enforced and controlled, was not in itself a means of reducing or limiting armaments ; but it was one of the indispensable bases of action designed to arrive at such reduction or limitation. Similarly, national control over the manufacture of and trade in arms would neither reduce nor limit the level of armaments ; but it was a necessary preparation which States must make in order to be in a position to accept and apply international control as and when the general position permitted. It was true that the motion, if accepted by the Assembly, would not imply immediate execution, but it would amount to a decision in principle entailing measures of application.

M. Politis, speaking not only for his own country (Greece), but as President of the Bureau of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments, said that the question of disarmament was still the focal point of those who believed that there could be no peace without international organization and no international organization without a reduction and limitation of armaments. The peak of spending on armaments was not far off, for peoples would not submit to increases in armaments at the expense of crying social needs. When it was realized that armaments were useless mankind would be forced to the opinion that the principle of international co-operation would have been better. The Conference was not dead, and he agreed in principle with the resolution, subject to slight amendments of form.

The speech of M. Paul Boncour (France) was most interesting. In his opinion, the setting-up of the Third Committee affirmed the continuity of the efforts of the League of Nations in the pursuit of one of its essential aims, perhaps the most important, provided reduction and limitation of armaments were taken in conjunction with their necessary complement in the shape of the organization of mutual aid and collective security. He believed that the draft resolution, subject to amendment, was a satisfactory synthesis of the limits which the situation indicated and of the extensive possibilities which were still open. He added:—

“But, if there could be no question for the moment of limitation or even reduction of expenditure, it was possible at once to proceed to a frank exchange of information as to the existing position. Uncertainty was one of the factors that went to aggravate the situation by its effect in inducing each power to increase its own expenditure and its own armaments for fear of not keeping pace with its neighbours. A Convention of the kind proposed in the resolution appeared to be the very best means of meeting the requirements of the moment.

Mr. Elliot, United Kingdom, said that, whilst the intentions of the draft resolution had the full sympathy of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, he doubted whether the replies which had been received from Governments regarding budgetary publicity gave sufficient ground for thinking