

views amongst the members of the Council, which resulted in a resolution framed by a drafting committee set up by the Council. This resolution was submitted to the Council at a public meeting on the afternoon of the 14th May, and it reads :—

“ The Council—

“ Having heard the statement by the representative of China on the situation in the Far East and on the needs of the national defence of China ;

I.

“ Earnestly urges members of the League to do their utmost to give effect to the recommendations contained in previous resolutions of the Assembly and Council in this matter, and to take into serious and sympathetic consideration requests they may receive from the Chinese Government in conformity with the said resolutions ;

“ Expresses its sympathy with China in her heroic struggle for the maintenance of her independence and territorial integrity, threatened by the Japanese invasion, and in the suffering which is thereby inflicted on her people.

II.

“ Recalls that the use of toxic gases is a method of war condemned by international law, which cannot fail, should resort be had to it, to meet with the reprobation of the civilized world ; and requests the Governments of States who may be in a position to do so to communicate to the League any information that they may obtain on the subject.”

It fell short, far short, of the desire of the Chinese delegation, and is a compromise, the result of suggestion and counter-suggestion. But, even in the form in which it was presented it did not meet with that full measure of support which is signified by an affirmative vote of all members voting, for Poland abstained, although it is due to the Polish representative to quote his statement in full :—

“ From the very beginning of this conflict in the Far East my Government has taken up an attitude that is well known. My Government was always of opinion that the responsibilities of members of the League of Nations could not be engaged by any action whatsoever undertaken whether by one or several Powers. The resolution which is submitted, being merely a confirmation of previous resolutions, I am compelled to maintain my attitude of abstention.

“ I desire, however, to state that I accept the final paragraph of the resolution, since this paragraph formulates a general rule—namely, the rule of the absolute prohibition of chemical warfare, without giving any judgment or opinion on specific facts.”

The terms of the resolution were undoubtedly a source of great disappointment to Mr. Wellington Koo, but he accepted it on the understanding that the Council remained seized of the Chinese question, and in his speech he made it quite clear that his Government would not be satisfied unless Article 17 of the Covenant were applied, effect given to former resolutions of the Assembly and the Council, and measures taken for aiding China in her resistance. The Chinese representative was followed by other speakers representing both great and small Powers. Their speeches were full of sympathy. But the attitude of States members of the League towards the Chinese question has already been made known to you through former reports, and I will write no more on this subject.

THE NEUTRALITY OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

On the 20th April the Swiss Federal Government gave notice to the Secretary-General of the League that the Federal Council was preparing a memorandum for the Council of the League on the Neutrality of Switzerland within the Framework of the League. The matter was accordingly inscribed on the agenda of the one hundred and first session of the Council, and on the 30th April the Secretary-General issued to States members the Swiss Government's memorandum, which is Document C. 146, M. 87, 1938, V. This memorandum deals in clear terms with Swiss neutrality viewed from the historical standpoint. It concerns a principle which is fundamental, and it is needless to add involves a decision which may and perhaps will be quoted as a precedent.

Briefly, the position is as follows : Swiss neutrality has always been dear to the hearts of the Swiss people, even when they have taken part in wars beyond their own frontiers, and which were not concerned with their own country. In 1815, after the close of the Napoleonic wars, the Great Powers declared that “ the neutrality and inviolability of Switzerland and her independence of all foreign influences are in the true political interest of Europe as a whole.” In 1919 Swiss neutrality was recognized and confirmed in the Treaty of Versailles and was declared to be compatible with the Covenant for securing the maintenance of peace within the meaning of Article 21. In February, 1920 (and be it noted in this connection that the first Assembly did not meet until November of the same year), the Council, when examining the question of Switzerland's special position, made a declaration whereby note was taken of Switzerland's resolve to defend her territory in every circumstance. She preserved her military neutrality, but, on the other hand, she was to accept the obligations devolving upon other States members in respect of economic and financial sanctions. It is known that this variation of Swiss neutrality was not accepted by the people as a whole without question, but it was accepted by the majority of the people, and when, in 1935, the League applied sanctions against Italy Switzerland played her limited part in the imposition of sanctions, which were, of course, economic and not military in nature.

What is the position to-day ? In 1920 the frontiers of Switzerland marched with those of four other Powers, three of them Great Powers, the fourth but a remnant of her former self. Both France and Italy were then members of the League. Austria was admitted shortly afterwards, and Germany in