

The early proceedings of the Assembly followed the new practice established last year. Having nominated a small Committee of nine, and having charged the members to examine immediately the credentials of the delegates and to report thereon as soon as possible, I began my opening speech. On this considerable care had been bestowed. I could, of course, have used the occasion for expounding the views of the New Zealand Government, but I felt that a speech of a more general nature, containing nothing very controversial, would better meet the circumstances in which we were meeting. I will not attempt to summarize the speech, but will embody it as a whole in this report as an appendix.

The Assembly having been declared open, the report of the Credentials Committee was presented. This having been read and adopted, I appointed, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, a Committee of eleven known as the "Nominations Committee," whose duty it was to make suggestions for the appointment of the various officers of the Assembly, such as the President, the Vice-Presidents, and the Chairman of Committees.

At the second meeting of the Assembly the Chairman of the Nominations Committee (M. Hambro) announced that he and his colleagues proposed the nomination of Mr. de Valera as President of the Assembly. The Assembly at once proceeded to vote by secret ballot. Of the forty-seven votes cast, five were spoiled or blank; thus the absolute majority required for election was twenty-two. Mr. de Valera received thirty-nine votes. The number of votes cast in favour of Mr. de Valera is the measure of the popularity of the appointment. He is almost as well known in Geneva as in the British Commonwealth of Nations. I welcomed him to the presidential chair, and he made a short speech which is reported in the *Journal* of the 13th September. Four sentences of that speech, embodying a truth which should be ever present with us, must be quoted:—

"All history tells us that in the long-run to be just is to be truly wise. But we seem unable to apply the lesson. The circumstances of war are such that the settlements imposed by it are almost inevitably unjust. It was true in the past; it will, I fear, be true in the future, no matter whose is the victory."

This brief account of the early proceedings of the Assembly may be concluded by mentioning that the Nominations Committee proposed the following:—

- (1) As Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, the first delegates of the United Kingdom, France, Poland, Siam, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.
- (2) As Chairmen of Committees—
 - First Committee: M. V. Pella (Roumania).
 - Second Committee: M. A. de Nickl (Hungary).
 - Third Committee: M. E. Lapointe (Canada).
 - Fourth Committee: Count Carton de Wiart (Belgium).
 - Fifth Committee: Ali El Shamsy Pasha (Egypt).
 - Sixth Committee: M. R. Olivera (Argentine Republic).

These were subsequently elected by secret ballot.

The Nominations Committee proposed M. S. Lozoraitis (Lithuania) as Chairman of the Agenda Committee, referred to later.

The Committee on Credentials had already elected M. Garcia-Calderon as Chairman.

These officers of the Assembly having been appointed, the General Committee was constituted. It is usual for the Assembly to appoint a small Agenda Committee to consider whether new items proposed should be inscribed on the agenda. This year no exception to the rule was made, and a Committee of seven was nominated by the President, whose nominations were accepted. Mr. R. M. Campbell, of the New Zealand delegation, was amongst the number.

At the third meeting of the Assembly the President put forward a number of proposals emanating from the General Committee which had reference to the distribution amongst the Committees of the Assembly of the work to be done. In the main the proposals were familiar, since it was suggested that the First, Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Committees should deal respectively with legal questions, disarmament, Budget, social questions, and political questions. As, however, a Committee which had been examining the structure and functions of the Economic and Financial Organization had made certain proposals regarding the consideration by the Assembly of the work of that Organization (see Document A. 31, 1938), the General Committee proposed for the present session an arrangement under which one of the Committees of the Assembly could give its entire attention to the study of economic, financial, and transit questions. Such work belonged quite properly to the Second Committee; the General Committee proposed that other matters with which that Committee had dealt in past years should be sent to a Seventh Committee, which should examine such questions as health and opium and also various reports and documents on intellectual co-operation. Other questions, however, such as housing and nutrition, might be examined jointly by the Second and Seventh Committees. The proposals were accepted by the Assembly, which also agreed to the grouping of Committees for the purpose of meeting, the two groups being 4, 6, and 7, and 1, 2, and 5.

I should mention that M. Schmidt (Estonia) was elected Chairman of the Seventh Committee.