

nevertheless, a number of women were active in Geneva in an effort to obtain a definite promise that the question would be formally inscribed on the Assembly's agenda for 1939. While they obtained no success in this direction, it is only right to state that they did not unduly push their proposal. In this matter, as in others, the grave international crisis doubtless had a sobering effect.

DATE OF OPENING OF THE ASSEMBLY: PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO RULE 1, PARAGRAPH 1, OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE ASSEMBLY.

This rule provides, in effect, that the Assembly shall be opened during the first ten days of September. In practice the rule has been suspended on several occasions in order to allow of opening at a later date. The United Kingdom Government proposed an amendment under which the Assembly would meet on the Monday falling between the period 14th to 20th September (see Document A. 11, 1938). There was a short discussion in the First Committee, with the result that the matter was sent to a small sub-committee. The sub-committee reported to the main Committee on the 26th September, when its report was adopted, and the Assembly was recommended to substitute the following for the present rule:—

“The Assembly shall meet in general session every year at the seat of the League of Nations, commencing on the Monday which falls in the period 10th September to 16th September inclusive.”

At its meeting on the 29th September the Assembly approved the recommendation of its First Committee (Document A. 60, 1938, V).

AUSTRIA.

This item on the agenda of the First Committee had its origin in a request of the Fourth Committee to be advised whether, for the purpose of Article 1 of the Covenant, Austria was to be regarded as a State member of the League for the period of two years from the date of the receipt of a letter from the German Government announcing that Austria had become a land of the German Reich, and that from the date of the promulgation of a law bringing the incorporation of the territory into force Austria ceased to be a member of the League of Nations. The material before the Committee is contained in Document A. 1/2, 1938.

The proceedings opened with a long statement by M. Hambro, Chairman of the Special Committee on Contributions, and one could not help being struck by the irony of the situation. No country member of the League has received more help at the hands of the League than has Austria, and she had been a faithful member taking an active part in the work of the League and paying her contributions regularly, when, suddenly, through action from without, she ceased to be an active member of the institution to which she owed so much. Austria was admitted to membership in 1920, when her contribution was assessed at five units. In 1922 a scheme of financial reconstruction of the Austrian finances was undertaken. Her arrears of contributions for 1921 and 1922 were cancelled and she was assessed at one unit. In 1925 she had recovered to such an extent that her contribution was increased to eight units, and in 1936 to ten units. From the time of the increase she paid regularly.

Whilst this is not the place to deal with the work of reconstruction by the League, yet I think every word uttered by M. Hambro was worth saying, for nothing in the League's annals is finer than the scheme of reconstruction which was undertaken only in time to prevent chaos.

There was no debate in the First Committee. The question being of a purely legal nature, the Chairman suggested its transmission for consideration to a small sub-committee, and to his suggestion the First Committee agreed.

On the 26th September the First Committee considered the report of its sub-committee. It was couched in the following terms:—

“The First Committee finds that the German Government's letter to the Secretary-General of 18th March, 1938, is not a notice of withdrawal from the League of Nations within the meaning of Article 1, paragraph 3, of the Covenant.

“The obligation to pay contributions during two years is simply the consequence of the fact that a notice of withdrawal from the League under the above-mentioned provision leaves the State which gives such notice with the rights and obligations of a member of the League during a period of two years.”

Immediately after the report had been read by the Chairman, the Spanish delegate rose and stated that his country regretted that the only opportunity of considering questions arising out of the disappearance of Austria had been afforded by the raising of a purely administrative question, and he then made a declaration on behalf of his Government. M. Andersen, the delegate of Denmark, speaking as Vice-Chairman of the