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# GENEVA 1930

*An account of the  
Eleventh Assembly of  
the League of Nations*

By  
H. WILSON HARRIS

LEAGUE OF NATIONS UNION  
15 GROSVENOR CRESCENT, S.W.1

NINEPENCE



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# GENEVA, 1930

## I

### PERSONS AND PROSPECTS

MOST Assemblies of the League of Nations are prefaced by the prediction 'it looks like being pretty dull this year.' That prophecy, incidentally, is rarely fulfilled. This year it was not even made. The Eleventh Assembly looked from the first like being both interesting and important. In some quarters, indeed, there was a feeling that it might be at times a little too lively, in view of various ferments and frictions in Europe, and of the possibility, at any rate, that those tendencies would be reflected, as so many European tendencies are, in the Assembly of the League.

As it so happened, a week or two before the Assembly opened the German Minister of the Occupied Areas, Herr Treviranus, had made a speech in which he suggested that the evacuation of the Rhineland by French troops should be regarded only as a prelude to the revision of Germany's Eastern frontier, particularly the Polish Corridor. Such an utterance naturally roused Polish public opinion to high temperatures, and the Press of France declared itself hardly less vehemently on the subject. Echoes of Treviranus' speech were looked for at the Assembly even if no actual references were made to it from the platform.

#### The Briand Plan

Then, of course, there was M. Briand's scheme for what he called 'a closer federal link between the nations of Europe.' That plan had been maturing since the Tenth Assembly, and it could hardly fail to be the subject uppermost in the minds at any rate of the European delegates, and in a less degree of any national representatives from whatever country, who realised how closely the prosperity of the



League is bound up with the prosperity of Europe. Whatever action the Assembly itself might take regarding the Briand plan, it seemed certain that, as did in fact happen, the opening speeches at the Assembly meeting would centre largely round that dominating question.

There were half a dozen other subjects which the Assembly was bound to discuss at greater length or less. There were the proposals for the improvement of conditions in the League Secretariat, and the Italian Note presenting a particular point of view on this important subject. There was the revision of the Covenant in order to bring it into harmony with the Kellogg Pact, regarding which proposals had been put forward which aroused some fairly extensive criticism in England, but were acquiesced in by most Governments. There was the always burning question of minorities, which the German delegate was thought likely to raise. There was the controversy regarding the Palestine Mandate, and the conflicts which took place between Jews and Arabs in the summer of 1929—a matter which technically concerned the Council only, but was likely to be discussed at some length in the Assembly as well.

All these, and various other subjects of lesser moment, appeared, before the Assembly began, to provide material for discussions of more than ordinary interest; and though it was not likely that the quality of delegates attending would be higher than in recent years, for the good reason that all the most important Ministers of the principal countries had acquired the habit of Assembly attendance already, there was no ground for anticipating any lowering of the average standard. Nor, in fact, was there any.

### **The British Eight**

Altogether fifty-two nations sent delegates to the Assembly, out of the fifty-four who might have been represented—the absentees being the Argentine Republic (as always) and Honduras. The British Delegation was substantially the same as in 1929, the Foreign Minister, Mr. Henderson, the

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President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Graham, Lord Cecil, Mr. Dalton, Mrs. Hamilton and Mr. Noel Baker occupying places in the delegations of both years. The newcomers in 1930 were Miss Susan Lawrence, Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Chairman of the Labour Party for 1929–30, who replaced Mrs. Swanwick, and Mr. C. R. Buxton, who had been a member of the Labour Government's delegation in 1924.

The British Dominions were more strongly represented than usual, since the Imperial Conference immediately succeeding the Assembly had brought to Europe Prime Ministers like General Hertzog, of South Africa, and Mr. Scullin of Australia, who would not otherwise have made the journey. General Hertzog was in his place in the Assembly Hall on its opening day, but Mr. Scullin, reaching Europe much later, was only able to spend two days at Geneva at the end of the second week. Though the Canadian Prime Minister, Mr. R. B. Bennett, was detained by the business of getting his new government on its feet, Canada sent a hardly less influential representative in the person of Sir Robert Borden, who had been Prime Minister of the Dominion during the war. With him were Senator Chapais, of Quebec, and Mrs. Parlby, Minister in the Alberta Government.

### **France and Germany**

France, as always, was represented by M. Briand, the Foreign Minister, but, apart from him, the delegation wore a very different complexion from its predecessor of 1929. Then some endeavour was made to represent all the principal parties in the Chamber. At the Eleventh Assembly that attempt was abandoned and the delegation was composed entirely of Ministers, M. Briand's colleagues being M. Flandin, Minister of Commerce, and M. Laval, Minister of Labour. That meant, or was thought to mean, that the Foreign Minister's hands were rather less free than usual, for the Cabinet of which he was a member stood distinctly



further to the Right than he did himself, and there was a feeling that the presence of his two ministerial colleagues might impose some circumspection on him.

The third of the great Foreign Ministers of Europe, Dr. Curtius, represented his country as expected, but his position was a little delicate in the opening days of the Assembly, since the German elections were impending on the 14th—four days after the Assembly opened—and no one knew what their outcome would be. Dr. Curtius consequently postponed his main Assembly speech till the results (which showed a substantial movement to the Right) were known, and for the same reason his fellow-delegates who were standing for the Reichstag, Prof. Hoetsch, Baron von Rheinbaben and Dr. Breitscheid, could not come till their fate was decided.

#### Signor Grandi's Absence

It had been taken for granted that Signor Grandi, who had become Italian Foreign Minister since the last Assembly, would head his country's delegation this year, as he had always represented Italy in the Council since his accession to office. There is no doubt of the Italian Foreign Minister's interest in the League. His advent to office has, indeed, given to Italy a new position at Geneva. Rather strangely, however, and for reasons which were never fully explained, Signor Grandi returned to Rome as soon as the earlier Council meetings were over, and actually the day before the Assembly met. It was suggested in some quarters that the political situation was so delicate that he was anxious to avoid making the inevitable speech from the Assembly platform at that particular moment, and in others that the course of Franco-Italian negotiations required him to be in close touch with Signor Mussolini. However that may be, Signor Grandi was absent from the Assembly, and the Italian delegation was headed, as it has been for so many years past, by Signor Scialoja.

Such was the representation of the Great Powers of Europe.

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The one Great Power of Asia, Japan, had at its head M. Matsudaira, the Japanese Ambassador in London; while China was represented, as last year, by her Minister in Washington, Dr. C. C. Wu, a former Foreign Minister. Dr. Wu was invited to stand for the presidency of the Assembly, but declined, being more intent on pressing his country's candidature for a seat on the Council. Among other Asiatic representatives of note were the Maharajah of Bikanir, who headed the Indian delegation—the first time, incidentally, that this rôle has been filled by a ruling prince. Siam, not one of the most prominent States in the Assembly, had as the head of its delegation Prince Varnvaidya, who has an English public school and University education behind him and who made one of the most successful of the shorter speeches in the opening general discussion.

#### Notable Figures

But an Assembly of the League of Nations, after all, consists as much of notable personalities as of representatives of notable countries, and as the eye wandered round the Assembly hall familiar and unfamiliar figures stood out, emphasising, taken in mass, the astonishing diversity displayed by this unique gathering of the world's politicians. There was the Greek statesman, Venizelos, venerable beyond his years, with his white hair and beard; there was the veteran Hungarian, Count Apponyi, who each year seems as though he may be appearing for the last time, but fortunately never is. His memories go back half way through the nineteenth century, but at eighty-three he this year addressed the Assembly with all his wonted vigour and at all his wonted length. Then there was Schober, white haired, vigorous, dapper, with a touch of ferocity about his bristling hair, looking to the life the double part he has played in Austria, first as head of the National police, and then as his country's Chancellor. The Prime Minister of Hungary, Count Bethlen, dapper in a different way with his neat black hair and moustache, attended for the first few days; and



Benes of Czechoslovakia, one of the thinning few who have survived the rigours of all eleven Assemblies, headed his country's delegation, as always. M. Motta, of Switzerland, holds the same record, and is likely to be seen at Geneva for many years yet. Apart from the Indians there were a few dark faces, including of course the Abyssinian delegation, led by that country's Minister in London, the Negadras Makonnen, fluent in French and comprehensible in English; and M. Dantes Bellegarde, the accomplished negro from Haiti, whose natural eloquence never fails to impress an Assembly audience.

### Prominent Women

Women in the Assembly were rather more numerous than usual. Miss Susan Lawrence, Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Health, had the distinction of being the first woman to sit as full delegate for Great Britain—a position she filled after the first week of the Assembly when the departure of Mr. William Graham left a vacancy. Lithuania had a woman as full delegate for the second year in succession, and Canada for the first time. Countries including women among their substitute delegates were Australia, Hungary, Finland, the three Scandinavian States and Roumania.

The actual Assembly organisation is not of great moment outside Geneva. It should be recorded none the less that M. Titulesco of Roumania, his country's representative in London, was chosen president by an almost unanimous vote, and discharged the duties of the position admirably. In the election of vice-presidents Mr. Henderson and the Japanese representative topped the poll with an equal vote, M. Briand being just behind.

A word or two should be added on another matter which may seem of purely domestic interest to Geneva. The Assembly forsook this year the hall in which it has regularly met since 1920 under conditions which left almost everything to be desired. Unfortunately, the Salle de la Réformation seemed to be the best that Geneva could produce to

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meet the special needs of the League Assembly, though the International Labour Conference has been held regularly in a building at the other end of the town, called the Bâtiment Electoral. This had never seemed quite suitable for the Assembly, but in 1929 Lord Cecil and other delegates decided that a determined effort was necessary to produce some setting a little less unworthy of the League. It was therefore decided to take the Bâtiment Electoral and alter it extensively. The result was in most respects an unqualified success, and the arrangements for the first time permitted of the Assembly's being held in reasonable decency and order. Stricter rules regarding conversation and perambulation in the Hall were drafted and enforced as much as such rules are ever likely to be, the general outcome being that the meeting of 1930 set a new standard in what may be termed Assembly deportment.

### Translation Marvels

The interesting experiment in ' simultaneous translation ' already familiar at International Labour Conferences was introduced to Assembly delegates for the first time. By this system while a speech is being made in French from the platform an interpreter sitting just below translates it in a low voice into a microphone, and it is then amplified and transmitted to earphones hung on each delegate's desk. Mr. Henderson heard M. Briand perfectly in English by this means, the interpreter keeping just a sentence behind the speaker all the time. English speeches are, of course, rendered simultaneously into French in the same way, and there is no reason why they should not be rendered into half a dozen languages if there are sufficiently capable translators available. At the Labour Conferences, indeed, each delegate can pick up his earphones, and by moving a switch turn on a translation in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish or Japanese. The system being still experimental the ordinary translation from the platform at the end of each speech has not yet been dispensed with, but there is every likelihood that it soon will be.



## II THE DISCUSSION AT LARGE

The general discussion on the work of the League to which the first week of the Assembly is invariably devoted showed the delegates as a whole to be in a rather chastened mood. Various events of some importance had taken place since the Tenth Assembly meeting. The Reparations question had, to all intents and purposes, been settled at The Hague, and Germany had ratified the Young Plan, on which the settlement was based. But before the Assembly's week of general conversation ended the German elections had revealed an extraordinary access of power on the part of that section of German opinion frankly opposed to the execution of the plan. The London Naval Conference had resulted in a three-power limitation agreement, and two of those powers had ratified, while the third (Japan) was understood to be about to do so. But the other two participants in the Conference, France and Italy, had failed to compose their differences even after the post-Conference conversations which were understood to be still in progress.

Other external events which necessarily affected discussions in the Assembly were M. Briand's scheme for a Federation of Europe, which, in the form of a vague idea, had been before the world for twelve months; and a Conference of nine agricultural States of Eastern Europe, held at Warsaw only a fortnight before the Assembly opened, to discuss the common difficulties all States dependent mainly on agriculture were encountering. Practically every speaker from the countries concerned urged that the League should deal on a wider scale with the questions brought under consideration, in a regional setting, at Warsaw.

### Tariffs and Arms

The two outstanding topics of discussion were disarmament and the economic condition of the world, and in regard to both of those such delegates as faced the situation

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frankly were compelled to recognise that the achievement of the League had fallen far below their hopes. Jonkheer Beelaerts van Blokland, the Dutch Foreign Minister, was among those who spoke with the greatest candour on such questions, and his colleague, M. Hymans, of Belgium, took much the same tone a little later. Since the preceding Assembly, both speakers pointed out, a League Conference on the treatment of foreigners had been held at Paris and yielded no results. The Conference on the Codification of International Law held at The Hague had been hardly more successful. The Convention on the Abolition of Import and Export Prohibitions had broken down, because not sufficient States had ratified it to bring it into operation. What is commonly called the Tariff Truce Conference had again proved almost abortive, though there was still a hope that the subsequent negotiations emerging from it might yield some tangible result. 'If we pass in review all these set-backs,' said the Dutch Foreign Minister, 'and watch the race in Customs armaments the spectre of war irresistibly forces itself on our minds.'

The third topic which largely occupied the Assembly was, of course, M. Briand's European Federation scheme, but as that is separately discussed in the following chapter it is unnecessary to dwell on it here.

### British to the Fore

It may generally be claimed that the outstanding speeches on the two main topics which, apart from the Briand scheme, dominated the Assembly's opening week, were made by British delegates, Mr. Henderson contributing a notable declaration on disarmament and Mr. Graham, the President of the Board of Trade, delivering a striking and comprehensive speech covering the whole field of the economic problems confronting the League. The British Foreign Secretary touched on many other subjects in the course of his speech, which he devoted indeed to a succinct exposition of British policy generally in regard to the League. Leaving



economics to Mr. Graham, he gave his support to the majority report of the Committee which had discussed the organisation of the League Secretariat. He urged that States which had signed League Conventions should make it a point of honour to ratify them. He expressed satisfaction at the large increase in the number of States bound by the Optional Clause of the Statutes of the Permanent Court. He created great satisfaction by stating that the members of the British Commonwealth were about to meet in the Imperial Conference in London, and that one of their chief tasks would be to consider what further contribution the Commonwealth could make to the cause of disarmament and world peace. And he announced the intention of the Government to sign the Draft Treaty of Financial Assistance to States Victims of Aggression, but to ratify it subject to the condition that it should not enter into force till a general disarmament treaty had been carried through.

#### Pledges Unfulfilled

Then the Foreign Minister, speaking with greater emphasis, insisted on the honouring of pledges regarding disarmament. 'The authors of the Covenant,' said Mr. Henderson, 'never believed that international co-operation could succeed if national armaments should remain unrestricted and if armament competition should revive.' That was why they drafted Article 8 of the Covenant [regarding general reduction of armaments and national forces by international treaties]. 'That obligation,' continued the Foreign Minister, 'has not yet been honoured, though it was incurred eleven years ago. The years are slipping by. And yet that obligation forms part of the Treaties of Peace, and is not less sacred than any other obligations which those Treaties contain. By that obligation every Government of the League is bound.' Moreover, added Mr. Henderson, the pledge had often been renewed—in the correspondence between Germany and the Powers in 1919; at Locarno in 1925; by repeated Assembly resolutions that still remain ineffective. 'The

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pace is slow,' he declared, 'and the peoples of the world are growing impatient and doubtful of our good faith.' Something, Mr. Henderson admitted, had been done, and he instanced the results of the London Naval Conference. As for Great Britain's part in naval reduction, only a first step had been taken. She was ready to go beyond that, and it was reasonable to hope that at the World Disarmament Conference still further substantial reductions in naval forces might be achieved. The practical demand with which the Foreign Secretary ended was that the Preparatory Commission should meet in November as arranged and carry its tasks to a final conclusion, so that the World Conference on Disarmament might be summoned some time in 1931.

#### A Voice from Australia

The British Foreign Minister's declaration was referred to by many subsequent speakers. Count Apponyi of Hungary, for example, described the declaration that Great Britain would not be bound by the Treaty of Financial Assistance until a disarmament agreement had been concluded as one of the most notable events of the Assembly. But perhaps the strongest support came from a Dominion delegate, Mr. Frank Brennan, Attorney-General in the new Australian Government. Delegates from Australia have not been in the past conspicuous for the expression of progressive views at Geneva, and Mr. Brennan enabled the Dominion he represented to be seen in a new light. Not content with confining himself to generalities, he stated in a few crisp sentences what Australia thought and what Australia was doing and had done. The change of Government in his country, he said, meant no change in regard to the League, unless in the direction of an intensification of support for a policy of ultimate disarmament and outlawry of war. There was too much tendency, said Mr. Brennan, to strive for peace without risk. 'Victories are not won without risk, and the greatest victory in history will be the conquest of



war. For Australia,' he continued, 'we reject the theory that preparedness for war is the best guarantee of peace. It may well be a strong incentive to war. It may well be that those who use the sword shall perish by the sword, and certainly they are likely to misuse it. Australia tells the world as a gesture of peace that she is not prepared for war. We have drawn our pen through the schedule of military expenditure with unprecedented firmness. As far as our country is concerned, we have reversed the policy which has subsisted in Australia for a quarter of a century of compelling the young to learn the arts of war.' The speaker added that Australia fully supported the Treaty of Financial Assistance and the General Act providing peaceful methods for the settlement of all disputes.

#### Thinking Peace

Mr. Brennan was representing Australia in the opening discussions because his Prime Minister, Mr. Scullin, could not reach Geneva till late in the following week. Mr. Scullin, however, though too late for the early plenary meetings, made in the Third Commission a statement of some length on Australia's attitude towards the League. He expressed himself on that subject with unqualified cordiality, covering much the same ground as Mr. Brennan, and emphasising particularly the demand of the Dominion for some effective disarmament scheme. 'We must think in terms of peace, and better still, act on such thoughts. In former times the people thought of little but the glory of war. To-day such an advance in civilised thought has been made by the establishment of the League of Nations that we may now without any hesitation inculcate the humanitarian principle of the glory of peace.' Mr. Scullin observed that the hackneyed declaration that preparation for war is the best means of preventing war had been tragically disproved and discredited and in elaboration of that view, so far as his own country was concerned, he added, in a newspaper interview given on the same day, that Australia was perfectly

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content with the naval reductions effected at the London Conference, and had no misgivings about her own security.

Two other Dominion delegates, Sir Robert Borden of Canada (who was the first speaker in the general discussion) and General Hertzog, the Prime Minister of South Africa, both took occasion to emphasise the need for a world disarmament agreement. The South African Prime Minister, in the course of some salutary words regarding Europe as viewed from a distance, said that it was observed in South Africa that while the League was busily engaged in making safe the path of peace, the nations were equally busily straining after power and interpreting the triumphs of science in terms of instruments of war. That frame of mind was not in conformity with the spirit of the League nor conducive to the maintenance of peace.

#### Trade Depression

In the economic field the outstanding contribution, as has been stated, was made by Mr. Graham. He gave a technical, but at the same time lucid, review of the general economic situation in the world, showing how the hope of new stability aroused by the reparations settlement earlier in the year had been disappointed owing to the general fall in commodity prices, leading to extensive unemployment, particularly in countries like Great Britain, the United States and Germany. Touching on the question of how far the sterilisation of gold had contributed to this result, without expressing his own views regarding that, he made the practical suggestion (subsequently taken up in the Second Commission) that the League should initiate an exhaustive investigation into the causes of the trade depression and any means that could be adopted to prevent its recurrence. He spoke of the Tariff Truce Conference, expressing disappointment at its results, but announcing that Great Britain would ratify it, though she would have to consider by February whether to continue her adhesion in the light of the action other nations might have taken by



that time. He outlined further plans for action by the League's Economic Committee, and ended by declaring his conviction that the essential problem of bringing producers and consumers together at a moment of over-production and under-consumption could never be solved by a policy of economic restriction. Tariffs and economic nationalism were no real contribution to a lasting solution.

### The Tariff Tangle

The same economic questions were discussed from different angles by a succession of speakers, most of them following Mr. Graham's lead. The Foreign Ministers of mainly Free Trade countries like Holland and Belgium deplored the growing tendency to increases of tariffs everywhere. Dr. Curtius, the German Foreign Minister, admitted and attempted to defend his own country's action in raising its tariff walls still higher, but expressed the hope that collective action by the League would result in general reduction everywhere. The subject was necessarily brought into relation, either openly or by implication, with the Briand scheme, and the various speeches made it obvious that that scheme could find its easiest road of development in the direction of economic understanding. That note, it was interesting to observe, was sounded by non-European as well as European delegates, more than one of the former taking the line that any better organisation of Europe tending to increase that continent's purchasing power would obviously make for the prosperity of other quarters of the world.

Various special aspects of the subject were touched on—some of them too technical to need more than a mention here. Dr. Munch, the Foreign Minister of Denmark, dwelt on the injustices often resulting from an unfair interpretation of the most-favoured-nation clause in commercial treaties (this is discussed more fully in Chapter VI) and moved a resolution calling on the League's Economic Organisation to draft a Convention on the subject. The Italian delegate,

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Signor de Michelis, insisted, as Italian speakers have always done in previous years, on an adequate distribution of the raw materials of the world among the industrial nations that need them, and he threw out what he recognised was a rather more revolutionary suggestion when he advocated collaboration with the object of developing unpopulated lands by the use of available capital, and by means of labour from territories too thickly populated. This, of course, assumes a degree of international co-operation for which the world is as yet hardly ready. The dominance of the international idea in the realm of economics was nevertheless notable throughout the discussion, though it might be argued by a cynic that the words of delegates accorded ill with the policies the countries they represented were adopting.

### Agrarian Claims

The work of the Warsaw Conference was, as stated already, explained by several speakers from countries that had participated in that gathering, and some of the principal resolutions adopted by the Conference were placed on the Assembly agenda with a view to their being discussed by the Second Commission. The main idea underlying the Warsaw deliberations was that the mainly agricultural countries should collaborate and organise with a view to strengthening their position in negotiations with the industrial countries of Europe. They believe that thereby they could get higher and more stable prices for their agricultural products such as wheat, potatoes, pigs and eggs; and they put forward the very debatable demand for a preference to be given by European importing countries to European cereals as against cereal imports from the rest of the world. Naturally some extra-European speakers took exception to this proposal, and the Warsaw Conference discussions gave rise generally to the interesting and important question of whether economic collaboration was best achieved through comparatively limited regional understandings between neighbouring



countries in the first instance, or whether something on a far wider scale ought immediately to be attempted. The Austrian Chancellor, Herr Schober, and Count Apponyi, the first delegate for Hungary, both advocated the regional method, partly perhaps as a result of the tentative negotiations which it was understood were already in progress between certain Danubian countries.

### Minorities and Mandates

Much briefer references were naturally made to other aspects of the work of the League. Forcible speeches on Minorities had been expected from the German and Hungarian delegates in particular, but these in the end were not forthcoming, for the reason that the German delegate had moved the discussion of the Minorities question by the Sixth Commission, and what he and his colleagues interested in the subject had to say was reserved for that more intimate debate. The resolution which Dr. Nansen had invariably moved year after year, referring Mandates to the Sixth Commission also, was put on the paper this year by the Norwegian delegate and duly carried. Not much was said on the subject in the general discussion, though General Hertzog for South Africa, and Mr. Brennan for Australia, took occasion to assure the Assembly of the loyalty with which the Dominions they represented were endeavouring to discharge their mandatory responsibilities in the face of difficulties which were briefly indicated.

Taken as a whole the opening discussion was regarded this year in some quarters as being a little dull. That reproach will hardly lie. It is true there were no speeches of arresting importance, for M. Briand was fettered by the fact that he was speaking not in his own person, but as the authorised mouthpiece of twenty-seven European States, whose representatives had met just before the Assembly opened to discuss his federation scheme; and Dr. Curtius, whose Government had just been heavily defeated at the general election, had obviously to choose his words with care and

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make them, for the most part, non-committal. But the discussion was marked, as was stated at the outset of this chapter, by a frank recognition of disappointments encountered in the course of the past year, and revealed a general resolve on the part of delegates to face the situation as it was, and not to be deluded by false hopes or unjustified enthusiasms. That, on the whole, formed a salutary prelude to the more detailed discussions of the League's activities—a task to which the delegates regularly devote themselves in the Commissions in the second and third weeks of an Assembly sitting.

### III

### A FEDERATED EUROPE?

The Eleventh Assembly opened in an atmosphere of expectation, created by M. Briand's proposals regarding a European Federation. The French Foreign Minister had launched his idea a year before at a luncheon-party he gave during the Tenth Assembly to the representatives of the other twenty-six European States. The communiqué issued in connection with that gathering represented, for some months, all that was concrete in the way of a Briand plan. The delegates, it was stated, took note of the initiative of the French Foreign Minister, aiming at creating 'a bond of solidarity between the European nations,' and viewed that proposal with sympathy. They undertook to lay the matter before their Governments and study it, and asked M. Briand to prepare a memorandum for the Governments of the European States represented at the League, which should form the basis of the general discussion of the question. The replies from the Governments, when they were received, would be collated and summarised, and the result laid before a further meeting to be held in the course of the Eleventh Assembly.

#### The Plan on Paper

This procedure was duly followed. M. Briand put his ideas on paper and sent them to the capitals of the twenty-



seven countries of Europe (twenty-six in addition to France). The main idea was that some kind of scheme of European co-operation ought to be undertaken. The words applied to this conception varied. The memorandum, for example, spoke of the 'policy of European union' and 'the search for a strong bond of solidarity between Governments.' As the heading of one chapter of the Memorandum put it, there was to be a 'general accord, however elementary, to affirm the principle of the moral union of Europe, and to consecrate the fact of the solidarity created between European States.' M. Briand contemplated a very definite organisation, including a Conference, a Council and a Secretariat—a suggestion which, in spite of repeated declarations that no competition with the League was intended, created misgivings in many quarters. Another controversial feature of the plan was the assumption that the economic problem must be subordinated to the political one, which apparently meant that security, according to the traditional French ideas, must be ensured before economic progress was possible.

### The Twenty-Six Replies

M. Briand's original Memorandum, however, is less important than the replies it evoked from the Governments of Europe. None of them failed to make some response, but the ideas embodied were not identical. The British reply, in particular, gave a general welcome to the idea, but questioned the advisability of creating new organs to duplicate those of the League, and also expressed the view that it was the economic field which offered the most hopeful possibilities. The replies as a whole were summarised by the French Government in accordance with plan. It was found that the majority of Governments were ready to sign an agreement adopting 'some regular method of contact with other European Governments.' M. Briand considered that his idea of a Conference, a Committee and a Secretariat had gained general assent, but subsequent discussions at Geneva

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made it clear that that was not the case. Much stress was laid in various quarters on co-operation in the economic field, and practically every State insisted that the new organisation must be placed either directly under the League or kept in close association with it. Many of them, incidentally, took the view that any European organisation must include Soviet Russia and Turkey, if those two countries were willing to enter it.

### A Discussion on Method

A day or two before the Eleventh Assembly opened a meeting of delegates of all European States was held in the League Council Room at Geneva. It had at this stage no connection with the League and consequently no League officials were present. Neither was the general public admitted. Though the meeting lasted three hours, the discussion centred round only one vital point—what steps should be taken to work the new idea out? The British Government, in its reply to the original Briand Memorandum, had suggested that the whole question should be placed on the agenda of the Assembly, with the idea that it should then be referred in the ordinary way to the Sixth Commission and there discussed in detail. M. Briand and his friends had apparently agreed to that, but when the European delegates met there was some difference of opinion as to whether the Assembly should merely be informed of the proposals, which would then be worked out by the European States alone, or whether any further action decided on should be taken definitely in the name and under the authority of the League. The French appeared to favour the former course, but Mr. Henderson carried the majority with him when he urged that what was to be laid before the Assembly should be no definite plan—none, indeed, existed at that time—but merely the broad idea, on which the Assembly and its Commission could work as might seem most useful.

This course was taken and the second speaker in the general discussion of the opening week was M. Briand, who



explained that he ascended the tribune not to voice his own views or those of France, but as spokesman for the twenty-seven States over whom he had presided a few days before. His speech was curiously inconclusive. It was, in fact, the least successful speech he has ever made at Geneva, amounting to little more than an appeal for general sympathy for his idea, to which still he gave no concrete form. It was expected that the Foreign Minister of France would end by moving the resolution which had been adopted by the European States. He contented himself, however, with communicating it later in the day. The resolution contained the affirmation 'that close co-operation between the Governments of Europe in every field of international activity is of capital importance for the preservation of peace.' It expressed the view that any such co-operation would have to be exercised in complete accord with the League and in observance of all the principles of the Covenant, and it ended with the decision to place 'this question' on the agenda of the Assembly.

#### Mr. Henderson's Conditions

The general discussion already described in the last chapter then proceeded, but almost every speaker participating in it, whether he represented a European State or not, made some reference to the still nebulous proposals which the Europeans had been considering. Mr. Henderson, giving the Briand plan a general blessing, as he had already done in the official British reply, said he supported it on two conditions; one, that the final plan should be wholly consistent with the international obligations of the League, and two, that it should facilitate the disarmament policy of the Assembly. No one, indeed, opposed the plan, and it was noteworthy that the representatives of several non-European States welcomed it on the ground that any better organisation of Europe would increase its purchasing power and consequently its demand for goods from other Continents. On the whole, it was the representatives of the smaller European

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States who were most insistent on the identification of the Briand plan with the League. Jonkheer Beelaerts van Blokland, for example, the Dutch Foreign Minister, spoke of 'a European group of nations constituted within the framework of the League'; M. Hymans stipulated that the union should form an integral part of the League of Nations; Herr Schober, the Austrian Chancellor, was inclined to favour agreements on a regional rather than a Continental scale; M. Motta, the Foreign Minister of Switzerland, declared that the European union should not only be embodied within the framework of the League, but should make use of the organs of the League. The right solution, in his view, was a European Committee inside the League. He assumed without hesitation that the resolution placed on the paper would go in the ordinary course to the Sixth Commission and there be fully debated.

#### No Commission Discussion

That course, however, was not taken. Opposition was raised to it behind the scenes on two grounds; first, that some European States were reluctant to have their future organisation criticised before its birth by speakers from Latin-America and other Continents, and secondly, because there was some fear lest representatives of the States defeated in the war might take the opportunity of a Sixth Commission discussion to raise the controversial question of the revision of treaties. There was no very convincing reason why that subject should not be touched on, but a certain nervousness existed in some quarters, and that helped to turn the scale in favour of a simple Assembly resolution which should be worked out in due course by a Committee consisting of the European States themselves. The resolution received the support of well over forty members of the League before it was put on the paper. It summarised the earlier resolution adopted by the European States at their meeting before the opening of the Assembly, and, in regard to the actual



procedure, proposed a course described in the following paragraph:—

‘ Invites the Governments of the European States Members of the League of Nations, acting with the assistance of the Secretariat, as a Commission of the League, to prosecute the enquiry which has already been begun, and of which the French memorandum of May 17, 1930, and replies thereto constitute the first elements.’

It was suggested that other States, whether members of the League or not, and whether European or not, might be invited to assist in the enquiry, and it was assumed that a report would be prepared in time to be submitted to the Twelfth Assembly in 1931.

#### A League Committee

The resolution, it will be seen, completely safeguarded the position of the League. Though the Commission was to consist of the European States, it was specifically a League Commission, appointed by the Assembly and reporting back to the Assembly twelve months later. And any officials whose services it might require were to be officials of the Secretariat. The resolution was unanimously adopted, and the first meeting of the newly constituted Committee took place on the Secretariat premises in the middle of the third week of the Assembly. From this point the proceedings of the Committee were set full within the framework of the League. The meeting had been summoned by Sir Eric Drummond, Secretary-General of the League, and it was he who called on the Commission to elect a chairman, M. Briand being unanimously chosen on the proposal of Mr. Henderson. Then Sir Eric Drummond himself was immediately appointed Secretary of the Committee, which means that the whole of its work will be carried on by the League Secretariat. Few other decisions were taken at this opening gathering, except that the new body should be known as ‘ Commission

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of Enquiry for a European Union.’ The question of inviting non-member States like Russia and Turkey to take part in future proceedings was left over to the second meeting of the Committee, which was fixed for January, when most of the members were likely to be in Geneva for the League Council Meeting. Before that time, it was pointed out, an important League Economic Conference (fixed for November) would have been held and the European Commission would be in a position to take note of its findings.

Thus the Commission of Enquiry for a European Union took formal birth, but its active work was postponed till the beginning of 1931.

#### IV

### THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST WAR

Urgent though the need for some effective action in the realm of disarmament is, and emphatic though many of the Assembly speeches on that subject were, the question gave rise to less actual discussion at the Eleventh Assembly than for many years past. The reasons for that were obvious and sufficient. The League's disarmament work is in the hands of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference. That body had not met since the spring of 1929, because it had stood aside to allow the principal naval Powers to settle their own special differences by conversations between themselves if they could. Those conversations took definite shape in the London Naval Conference, which lasted from January to April of 1930, but even after that France and Italy were left negotiating, in the hope that disagreements not settled at London, so far as those two States were concerned, might yield to more prolonged discussion.

The result of all that was so far as the League's own work was concerned it stood at the time of the Eleventh Assembly just where it had stood at the time of the Tenth. But the Preparatory Commission had been definitely summoned for the beginning of November and confident hopes were entertained that it would then finish its own particular work



and leave the ground open for the summoning of a general disarmament conference in 1931. The Franco-Italian conversations, too, were still continuing and when the Assembly opened it looked as though they might produce the desired results. Unfortunately they reached a deadlock, and were completely suspended before September was over.

### A Question of Date

Under all these conditions all the Third Commission could do was to devote a sitting or two to a discussion of the general situation and allot most of its time to certain minor measures which within their limited spheres were calculated to strengthen the hands of the League Council in coping with any sudden emergency. One of these measures indeed, the Draft Treaty on Financial Assistance, is by no means to be described as minor. It is of very considerable importance, and must be discussed in some detail in this chapter. But, first of all, a word is necessary on the general discussion in the Third Commission. It was marked by striking speeches by M. Lange of Norway, Lord Cecil and others, and the chief point of controversy was whether the Commission should definitely insist on the Disarmament Conference being summoned before the end of 1931. A proposal to that effect was pressed strongly by the German delegate, Count Bernstorff, who observed with some bitterness but some justice that the conference had been deferred year after year and that the Preparatory Commission, in whose hands the key of the situation lay, had so far achieved absolutely nothing.

### Lord Cecil's Logic

Most members of the Third Commission sympathised with the German view, but Count Bernstorff's actual proposal was deprecated even by Lord Cecil, who felt so strongly that the right moment must be chosen for the conference that he was unprepared to fix an actual date for it in advance. The British delegate admitted the delays and

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deplored them. At the same time he counselled patience, in view of the tremendous magnitude of the task. If they succeeded, he said, they would be doing something never before achieved in the history of the world, for what could be more alien to the whole course of history, so far as it had yet unfolded itself, than that sovereign States should deliberately and voluntarily deprive themselves of the right to maintain their armaments at any level they thought fit. He was altogether in favour of calling the conference in 1931, and hoped it would be called then, but for the conference to meet and fail would be much worse than for it not to meet at all. The Council must therefore take a decision regarding the date with full reference to all the circumstances prevailing at the moment.

These arguments clearly represented the general view of the commission. No one can doubt that the success of a disarmament conference will depend largely on the state of the world at the moment, and no one unhappily could doubt either, that if the conference had to be called at the moment the commission was sitting it would almost certainly fail. It was therefore decided to express a strong desire for the convocation of a conference in 1931, but not to take any binding decision which would fetter the discretion of the Council in the matter.

### Financial Assistance

Meanwhile, time could profitably be spent, and was spent, on other measures calculated to make war less likely and less profitable. The chief of these was the Draft Treaty or Convention on Financial Assistance, whose final adoption constituted one of the most solid achievements of the Eleventh Assembly. The Draft Convention had been under the League's consideration for some years. It originated in a proposal put forward by the Finnish Government in 1926, which gradually won general approval and has been developed and elaborated by various Committees since then. The basic idea underlying the Treaty or Convention is the theory that



an important contribution could be made to the preservation of peace if, in the case of a conflict between two States, the League were in a position to assure substantial financial support to one party when that party was being unjustly threatened or attacked.

Exactly what this means must be clearly understood. There is no idea of the League itself lending money to anyone. The League has no money to lend. What it can do is to make borrowing possible for a State which, without League support, would be unable to borrow at all. The best illustration of the kind of process provided for in the Convention on Financial Assistance is what happened in the case of the Austrian reconstruction loan arranged by the League in 1923. Austria was then almost bankrupt. If her Government had tried to float a loan in the markets of the world it would have failed hopelessly. No one would have lent Austria money, because there was no reason to believe it would ever be repaid if they did. The League therefore, in addition to taking responsibility for the wise expenditure of any loan that might be floated, persuaded the Governments of various European countries, including Great Britain, France and Italy, to guarantee absolutely both the payment of interest and the repayment of principal. If, that is to say, Austria found herself unable to pay, these Powers between them would meet the bill. They have, of course, never had to meet it and never will have. The mere fact that they stood behind Austria in case of need created complete confidence in the money market. Austria floated her loan without difficulty and has always met all her obligations in connection with it promptly. The guarantee therefore had cost the guarantors nothing, but it meant the difference between bankruptcy and solvency to Austria.

Much the same is proposed under the Convention on Financial Assistance. A State threatened with an immediate attack, or a State already actually attacked by another, would find it hard to raise money for purposes of defence on any reasonable terms, for possible lenders would have

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to reflect that if the State in question were defeated, they would never see their money again. If, however, some State or States of substance would stand behind the borrower, as Britain, France and Italy and others stood behind Austria, then the difficulty would disappear, and the loan could be floated as successfully as the Austrian loan was seven years ago. The plan of the Convention therefore is that all the States in the League, or as many as are willing to sign, should between them give the necessary guarantee to any State at whose disposal the League Council might, by a unanimous vote, decide to place it.

Many questions, of course, arise regarding this arrangement. Up to what limit are the States which sign the Convention to guarantee a loan, and how is the responsibility divided between them? The answer to that is, that what is guaranteed is the payment of interest and sinking fund each year, and the maximum figure authorised by the Treaty is a hundred million gold francs (£4,000,000) annually for those requirements. Responsibility for guaranteeing this sum will be shared by the States signing the Convention in the same proportion as their annual subscription to the League budget.

#### A Considered Plan

The plan as a whole has been so long before the League, and has been so fully studied, on its financial side by the League's financial Committee, and on its political side by the Committee on Arbitration and Security, that comparatively little discussion was needed on the draft that had emerged from the deliberations of these bodies. The only two points on which anything like controversy centred were whether the plan should operate only when war had actually broken out, or whether the Council could authorise a loan merely in face of a threat of war. It might be assumed that a decision in the latter sense must impose itself inevitably, since the value of the scheme would lie largely in the deterrent effect its operation would have on any party which knew



that the Council was prepared to give financial support to its opponent. The Assembly did, in fact, decide in this sense, though it was argued on the other side that the Council ought to maintain studious impartiality up to the very outbreak of a conflict, and therefore not provide any such demonstration that its judgment was in favour of A rather than B. But the grant will only be made if two conditions are fulfilled. One of the parties must have put itself in the wrong by refusing to conform to the Council's recommendations; and the Council must be of the opinion that peace can only be safeguarded by extending financial support. The party assisted, moreover, must undertake to submit its dispute to some form of peaceful settlement.

### A Disarmament Condition

The other question most under discussion was whether the operation of the Convention should be linked up with the question of disarmament or not. The British Government was always determined that it should be. From the first the British Treasury and successive Cabinets have wholeheartedly supported the draft Convention, but Sir Austen Chamberlain in 1928 declared that that support was conditional on the postponement of the operation of the scheme till after a disarmament plan has been adopted and carried out. The reasons for that attitude were twofold. It was felt that those States which cared most for the Financial Assistance scheme would have their zeal for disarmament quickened if they knew that so important a country as Great Britain would not adopt the scheme till reduction of armaments was an accomplished fact; and at the same time it was reasonable to argue that financial obligations of some seriousness should not be undertaken until a reduction in expenses on armaments had been effected. Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Henderson held this view just as strongly as the Conservatives, and Mr. Henderson persuaded the Assembly to adopt it, being strongly supported in his attitude by the British Dominions and the Scandi-

navian States. Accordingly Article XXXV of the Treaty on Financial Assistance reads as follows:—

'The entry in force as regards the authorisation of new loans shall be conditional upon the entry in force of the plans for the reduction of armaments adopted by a general conference on disarmament in execution of Article VIII of the Covenant of the League of Nations.'

It follows logically that any State which is not carrying out its disarmament agreements is not eligible for assistance under the financial scheme.

### Maximum Obligations

The details of the plan are naturally technical, and the only feature of them that need be mentioned here is the arrangement whereby a few of the most important States financially arrange to act as 'super-guarantors' in the event of a loan having to be arranged quickly. If, to take an example, it was necessary to guarantee at short notice a loan requiring interest to the amount of fifty million gold francs a year (£2,000,000) that would be covered under the plan by the ordinary guarantors, amounting altogether to perhaps thirty or forty States; but over and above that, the five or six strongest States would give a guarantee that these thirty or forty guarantors would not default. The purpose of this is simply to give confidence to the market, and it would not in reality add anything material to the responsibility of the States concerned. The liability of the 'super-guarantors' therefore need not be seriously considered. It is calculated that the maximum liability of Great Britain as an ordinary guarantor would be limited to an annual payment of about £400,000 a year. That liability would, of course, become operative only if the borrowing State defaulted, and only to the extent to which it defaulted. That any such default is considered quite improbable is proved by the fact that the British Treasury has consistently supported the scheme throughout, which it certainly would not have done if it had thought it meant any real burden on British taxpayers.



### Thirty States Sign

Though there is little doubt of the practical value of the plan if ever it has to be put into operation, its moral importance is much greater than its financial, for it provides the Council with a means of supporting one side in a dispute much less costly and dangerous than the alternative method, provided by Article XVI of the Covenant, of bringing material pressure to bear on the other. The scheme, it is worth repeating finally, can be put into operation only by a unanimous vote of the Council. Few documents produced at Geneva have been the fruit of longer and more detailed study, and the Assembly as a whole viewed the final consummation of the plan with considerable satisfaction. The Convention was laid open for signature before the Assembly dispersed, and some thirty States, including Great Britain and France, immediately signed it.

Among what may be termed the minor moves in the campaign against war mention must be made particularly of the proposal, originally put forward by the Germans in 1928, empowering the Council to impose on two belligerents, either before or after war has actually broken out, such measures as the withdrawal of their forces behind their own frontiers, or behind the frontiers of a neutral zone, if one exists, or behind any line the Council may see fit to lay down. The need for such a step as this is explained by the fact that under Article IV of the Covenant any State may send a representative to sit on the Council when matters affecting that State are under discussion. Consequently, if the Council desired to require two belligerents to withdraw their forces and one of them objected, that one, by voting against the resolution, could break the necessary unanimity and prevent the Council from taking any decision at all. The object of the German proposal was that any two States should be encouraged to sign a treaty saying that if ever they were before the Council as belligerents they would undertake in advance never to oppose any decision it might think it wise to take in such a matter as this.

### Separating Combatants

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This German suggestion, it will be noted, was for a bilateral treaty or treaties, *i.e.*, between a pair, or various pairs, of States, but the British Government thought the idea so valuable that at the Tenth Assembly in 1929 the British Delegation proposed the conclusion of a general treaty on the German lines. Such a treaty was, in fact, drafted and discussed by the Committee on Arbitration and Security, but it was found impossible to secure complete agreement, and it was in the form of two alternative drafts that the treaty came before the Eleventh Assembly. Both the German and the British delegates put forward suggestions for bridging the gulf. The main question was how far the treaty was to go. Was the Council to have power to require the withdrawal of troops behind any arbitrary line it might choose to lay down, or only behind actual frontiers? And must a State agree in advance to conform to such demands even if it was convinced that compliance with them would threaten its national security? And was the proposal to apply to armies only, or to armies and air forces as well? It was mainly on the last point that the commission finally split, the French demanding an all-round application of the principle and Lord Cecil responding that that was not practical politics because you could not draw a line in the sea—a debatable contention which the Admiralty, no doubt, insisted on putting forward. But the idea of a convention was not dropped. On the contrary the commission declared formally and unanimously in favour of it, but recognising the impossibility of achieving complete agreement on questions so delicate in the short time available during an Assembly sitting, called on the Council to appoint a special committee to study the question and produce an agreed plan for submission to the Twelfth Assembly. The Draft Convention With a View to Strengthening the Means of Preventing War will therefore be heard of again next September.



### Some Minor Points

Other matters which the Third Commission had before it were various small conventions for ensuring to League delegates and others rapid transit to and from Geneva by road and air in times of emergency. These provisions, regarding the use by the League of special aeroplanes and cars with distinctive markings which all countries would recognise, and which would everywhere be granted special facilities, are of interest mainly as demonstrating that the League is not too much occupied in the development of theories to concern itself as it should with the practical and necessary measures making for its effective working.

Finally, the Third Commission had briefly before it the two allied conventions on the international traffic in arms and the private manufacture of arms. The convention on the latter subject has never even reached the point of an agreed draft. The former has been signed but has not received sufficient ratifications to bring it into operation. Various speakers, such as M. Léon Jouhaux, the French Trade Union leader, Count Bernstorff and Mr. Noel Baker, urged the importance of these conventions, but it had to be generally recognised that they formed part of a much larger subject, and that the right time to tackle them again was after the Preparatory Commission had held its final meeting and prepared a broad disarmament plan into which agreements regarding private manufacture could be fitted. All the commission therefore could do was to put on record its opinion that that course should be taken.

## V

### AMENDING THE COVENANT

Every year the League Assembly has to consider some question or other affecting the League's own constitution, or some new instrument (such, for example, as the General Act of Arbitration and Conciliation) designed to increase the

League's efficiency in realising its fundamental aims. The XIth Assembly had two or three such questions before it, and they were all in due course referred to its First Commission. One was a Finnish proposal, for which there was a good deal to be said on the face of it, that the Permanent Court at The Hague should be constituted a final court of appeal from arbitral tribunals, not in all cases, but if the latter were alleged by one of the parties to have exceeded their jurisdiction, or acted without any jurisdiction at all. Such a case had actually arisen in the dispute between Rumania and Hungary over the Optants question. Various jurists who had examined the Finnish proposal seemed to have some misgivings regarding it, and it was agreed, with the full consent of the Finnish Delegation, to hold the question over for another year. It will therefore appear on the agenda of the XIIth Assembly.

### Signing and Ratifying

Of more immediate and practical importance was the discussion on the steps that could be taken to increase the number of ratifications of treaties signed under League auspices and reduce the delays between the date of signature and that of ratification. This was a matter that called for serious consideration, for far too many League conventions have either lapsed altogether for lack of an adequate number of ratifications or else have come into force far too late because the ratifications were so delayed. Nothing could be worse for the League's reputation than that colour should be lent to the idea that States go to Geneva to sign agreements which they have no real intention of ratifying. In 1929 the Danish delegation had moved that a special enquiry should be made into this situation and proposals brought forward with a view to improving the prospects for the future. A committee was accordingly appointed, and its findings were referred to the First Commission, which gave them its general approval and sent them on to the full Assembly very much as they stood.



It was found in point of fact that the question is not quite as simple as it seems. A country can only be expected to ratify an agreement if it has given full consideration to the agreement before it signed it, and there was a general feeling that the League had often been a little precipitate in convening conferences to draft conventions, or approve conventions drafted by some committee, and that the best way to ensure more numerous and earlier ratifications was to pay more attention to the preparation of conferences. There have been one or two recent cases, notably the Conference on the Codification of International Law, which, in the opinion of many competent judges, failed to achieve their objects because the ground had not been adequately prepared in advance. Whether that criticism does justly apply to that particular conference or not, it certainly applies to many. For that reason the report and resolutions which the Assembly ultimately approved laid down an elaborate procedure which must in future be carried out before any conference is summoned with a view to the drafting of conventions. The details of it can be omitted here, but briefly it provides for a first decision as to whether in principle a conference for a particular purpose is desirable, followed by a consultation of all Governments concerned to discover whether there exists a sufficient measure of agreement to make it likely that a convention or treaty will in fact emerge from the conference if a conference be held.

If this procedure is carried through and evidence of probable agreement is obtained, then it is reasonable to expect that a Government, having signed the treaty drafted at the conference, shall proceed to ratify it without undue delay. At present nothing happens if it fails to do that. In future the attention of Governments will be drawn to their omissions by the Secretary-General. A reminder will be sent to a Government which does not within twelve months ratify a treaty it has signed, and any Government which, after five years, has not signed a League convention which is open for general signature will be asked to explain whether there

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are any special reasons which restrain it from doing so. In the case of conventions which fail to secure enough ratifications to make them of general value, the question of calling a new conference to amend the convention with a view to making it more widely acceptable shall be raised. When the resolutions came before the Assembly, Mr. Noel Baker, in approving them on behalf of the British Delegation, said the position regarding the ratification of conventions was not as bad as was sometimes suggested, but since these League conventions constituted a new method of international legislation, it was important that the process should be as rapid and efficient as possible. There can be little doubt that the regulations approved by the XIth Assembly will tend in that direction.

#### Codifying Law

Mention has just been made of the codification of international law. A Conference was held at The Hague early in 1930 with the purpose of effecting the codification of existing law and practice in regard to three questions—nationality, territorial waters, and the responsibility of States for crimes committed on their territory against foreigners. It did not get far. As the Italian delegate, Signor Giannini, who reported on the question to the Assembly, observed, it was neither a complete failure nor a complete success. But the fact remained that it had not produced the desired agreement on any of the subjects dealt with, and the Assembly was called on to decide what step to take next. The discussion on that in the First Commission was a little discursive, but it was clearly out of the question for that Commission to enter in detail in the space of ten days or so into questions on which the special delegates at The Hague had failed to reach agreements in the course of weeks. Everyone desired that the work of codification should go forward, but everyone saw that it could not go straight forward from where it was dropped at The Hague. All therefore that could be decided was that the Governments should be asked for their views on



the work done, and the tentative conclusions reached, at The Hague, and that, on the basis of the answers they gave to that request, the XIIth Assembly in 1931 should lay down the lines of future action. When the resolution to this effect was laid before the Assembly Mlle. Forchammer, of Denmark, took the opportunity of expressing the general opinion of women on the nationality question. She voiced their regret that the view had not found universal acceptance at The Hague that a woman's nationality should be left unaffected by her marriage or the decision of her husband regarding nationality—that she should, in fact, be placed on precisely the same level in this matter as a man.

#### **Amending the Covenant**

But the question of the ratification of conventions and consideration of the future of codification were among the secondary matters to which the First Commission had to devote attention. Much more important was the proposal to revise the League Covenant with a view to bringing it into harmony with the Kellogg Pact. The decision to take such a step had been definitely registered by the Xth Assembly in 1929 on the motion of the British Delegation, which submitted that since practically all members of the League had signed the Kellogg Pact, which prohibited war in all circumstances, it was undesirable on every ground that the League Covenant should continue to permit war under certain circumstances. Some attempt was made in 1929 to carry the desired amendments through at once, but it was felt, on consideration, that so important a matter should be made the subject of further study, and a committee was accordingly appointed, with Lord Cecil as its British member, to find the best form of words to carry out the Assembly's purpose and report to the XIth Assembly in 1930.

#### **The Changes Required**

That was accordingly done. The principal change required was in Article XII of the Covenant, which, as it stands at

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present, lays it down that members of the League will, in any case, not resort to war till three months after a ruling on their dispute has been given by one or other of the bodies to which they may submit it. Under the Kellogg Pact they may not resort to war at all, and to bring the Covenant into harmony with the Kellogg Pact that article would clearly have to be altered. The committee proposed to make the undertaking read 'The Members of the League agree that they will in no case resort to war for the settlement of their dispute.' The other amendments proposed cannot be discussed here in detail, but mention must be made of two round which controversy centred. In Article XV, in dealing with a unanimous recommendation of the League Council, the revision committee proposed to add the words 'If the Council's recommendation is not carried out the Council shall propose suitable measures to give it effect.' This meant investing a recommendation of the Council with compulsory force. The other suggestion which had failed to secure universal approval was the proposal to add a paragraph to Article XV, authorising the Council at any stage in a dispute to seek an advisory opinion from the Permanent Court by a majority vote.

When the Assembly opened there seemed little doubt that the amendments drafted by the revision committee would be adopted with little, if any, change. Most of the speakers in the Assembly's opening discussion expressed approval of them, though Mr. Henderson, for Great Britain, said his country would not ratify them till after a disarmament convention had been signed. But when the amendments came before the First Commission they found themselves at once in rough water. To begin with, M. Ito, of Japan, though he had himself been a member of the revision committee, raised the question of whether it had been definitely decided to amend the Covenant at all. It clearly had, as the chairman, Signor Scialoja, showed by reading the resolution of the Xth Assembly on the subject. Other members, including particularly M. Uden, of



Sweden, had misgivings, because under the Covenant in its new form the field of sanctions would be extended. It was true that in one sense it would, for under the Covenant as it stands war is sometimes permissible, and in that case no sanctions can be invoked, whereas under the new proposals war would always be illegitimate, and sanctions would be, therefore, applicable against any State that made war. Against that Lord Cecil argued emphatically from the Assembly platform that the extension was only theoretic, for the effect of prohibiting war completely would have the effect of making the danger of war—and consequently the danger of the application of sanctions—more remote. There were other delegates who did not shrink in any case from the extension, whether theoretical or real, and Dr. Wu, of China, scored what was at any rate a good debating-point when he said he could not understand the state of mind of a man who said 'I disapprove of murder. I undertake not to commit murder. But if I do commit it I object to being tried and punished.'

#### A Decision Postponed

Distracted by the variety of criticisms and suggestions, the First Commission found it unexpectedly difficult to reach agreement. The majority of its members was for accepting the revision committee's amendments, but M. Unden and the Norwegian delegate remained uneasy about sanctions, and others were concerned a little unnecessarily about the effect of the reservations certain States had made in signing the Kellogg Pact—though there was no idea of embodying these ideas in the revised Covenant. Mr. Noel Baker put up a very able fight in the full Commission for the amendments as they stood, but the sub-committee which was appointed to review the Revision Committee's proposals broke down finally after having got within sight of agreement. It therefore came to the conclusion that the question was not yet ripe for final settlement, and after recording some of the points on which differences of opinion still existed, it

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proposed the reference of the whole matter back to Governments with a view to a considered decision being taken in 1931. That did not mean, however, that the principle of revision was called in question, for the opening sentence of the resolution adopted by the Assembly ran 'Believing it to be necessary to incorporate in the Covenant of the League of Nations the general prohibition of resort to war and the principle that the settlement of international disputes should never be sought except by pacific means. . .'

Lord Cecil, who had been a leading member of the Revision Committee, was much disappointed at the failure of the Assembly to complete the work set on foot in 1929, and in an impressive speech delivered on the last morning of the session, he drove home the lesson that if the world wanted peace it must be prepared to pay for it. He did not himself believe for a moment that the new proposals would increase the likelihood of sanctions having to be put into operation, but even if that prospect did exist, was it not worth while, he asked, if it furthered the one supreme task of the League, that of making peace secure. To every delegation he put the questions: 'Do you really want peace? Are you really determined on it? Are you really prepared to take whatever measures may be necessary for that object and even to undergo the sacrifices which may be required?' It is with that challenge before it that the XIIth Assembly in 1931 will have to take regarding the amendment of the Covenant the decision which the XIth Assembly deferred.

## VI MONEY AND TRADE

If there was one subject which rivalled the debates on the Secretariat in general interest it was the discussion on economic questions in the Second Commission. That body had to deal with financial matters, health and intellectual co-operation as well, but it was the economic state of the world that absorbed three-fourths of its attention. That had been foreshadowed by the general discussion in the



Assembly, for no question had figured so largely in the opening ten days as the stringency from which practically every country in the League—even France—was to a greater or lesser degree suffering.

Of many important speeches delivered at that stage in the Assembly's labours three in particular arrested attention for different reasons, those of Mr. William Graham, President of the Board of Trade in Great Britain, M. Mironescu, Roumanian Foreign Minister, and Dr. Peter Munch, Foreign Minister of Denmark. Mr. Graham's speech was a comprehensive review of the situation which confronted the League. He dwelt on the general depression in the world and discussed some of the possible causes of it—the accumulation of gold in certain capitals, for example—without committing himself to acceptance of any special theory. He admitted that where a nation's trade was going badly, as almost every nation's trade was, there would be an almost irresistible tendency to try to bolster it up by means of tariffs. That was a fact that simply had to be faced.

#### **Will Tariffs Help?**

Mr. Graham pleaded earnestly, in spite of that, for a general reduction in tariffs. He pointed to the tragic irony of a situation in which production was almost paralysed because commodities could not be turned out at the price obtainable for them, while millions of people were starving for those commodities and had not the wherewithal to buy them. That gulf between production and consumption could never, in the speaker's view, be bridged by tariffs, nor could that expedient make any contribution to the solution of the problem of world restoration. Coming to definite steps, Mr. Graham harked back to the Conference on Concerted Economic Action, commonly known as the Tariff Truce Conference. He announced that Great Britain would ratify the convention drafted at that Conference, binding its signatories not to raise their tariffs (apart from quite exceptional cases) before April, 1931, and he appealed to all

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States to do the same and to use the interval between September and that date to continue negotiations aiming at some form of tariff reduction such as the Economic Conference of 1927 advocated. He was careful to add that if these negotiations promised no results of importance, Great Britain would at once release herself from the pledge not to increase tariffs.

M. Mironescu's speech was of importance because it touched on an event which was to figure largely in the more detailed discussions of the Second Commission—the Warsaw Conference, which had been held just a fortnight before the Assembly opened. That conference, which followed on various conversations that had taken place between Jugoslavia and Roumania, and between those two States and Hungary, on their common agricultural problems, had been attended by nine agrarian States, of which the three just mentioned, together with Poland, were the most important. Their aim was to do something to improve the conditions of agriculture in eastern Europe, and one of several proposals to that end called for the granting of a preference by European countries to European cereals, mainly wheat, rye and barley. Several speakers from the countries concerned referred to different aspects of the problem and expressed a desire to see the Warsaw negotiations (for whose continuance provision had been made) taken up on a larger scale by the League itself. Hints of regional economic understandings were dropped by various delegates, notably Dr. Schober, the Chancellor of Austria. Finally, the States represented at Warsaw handed in a resolution asking that certain of the more important questions discussed at Warsaw should be placed on the Assembly agenda. That meant that they would come in due course before the Second Commission.

#### **The Most Favoured Nation**

The third speech to which special reference has been made was that of Dr. Peter Munch, the Danish Foreign Minister. It dealt with a variety of subjects, but with one in



particular, which, technical though it may be, is of great commercial importance. That is the most-favoured-nation clause in commercial treaties. What that clause means, very broadly, is simple enough. Great Britain, let us say, makes a treaty with Aquitania. Each grants the other 'most favoured nation' rights. Aquitania, that is to say, promises to let in British goods at as low a tariff as is paid on any goods that go into Aquitania from anywhere. And if, for example, Aquitania decides (no doubt in return for some advantage granted by France) to reduce the duty on French cotton goods, then the duty on British cotton goods drops to the same level automatically.

The principle on which the most-favoured-nation clause rests is important and valuable, but there are many complaints that the obligations the clause imposes are being evaded in various ways. To go into that would be to plunge unnecessarily into technicalities, but the importance of the question must be emphasised. The League had been studying the question for some time, but Dr. Munch urged that it should pass from theories to acts, and on behalf of the three Scandinavian States and four others he moved a resolution aiming at the drafting of an international convention defining the scope and limitations of the most-favoured-nation clause beyond possibility of misunderstanding.

The questions raised in these three speeches provided the Second Commission with most of the raw material of its discussions. They centred primarily round the Warsaw proposals, which included the abolition of bounties and subsidies on exports, a scheme of agricultural credits, the conclusion of arrangements which would ensure that veterinary regulations (relating to the imports of live or dead stock) were honestly administered, and not used, as they often are, as an excuse for prohibiting the entry of pigs or cattle, and the controversial provision, already mentioned, regarding a preference for European cereals. On the former points most members of the Commission were agreed. It was

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only a question of how best to get the proposals carried out. But on the preferences proposed the debate was long and lively. It resolved itself largely into an argument between the European agrarian States and the British Dominions, which as exporters of corn to Europe—particularly, of course, Canada—protested vigorously against the idea that the League should in any way encourage a preference for European wheat as against overseas wheat.

### Europe and Canada

The contention of the European States was, first that their case was desperate and something must be done to preserve the European farmer from extinction, and secondly that since the European countries only produced 15 per cent. of the cereals Europe consumed a preference to them would do little real harm to the great producers overseas, who would still have 85 per cent. of the market open to them. To that there were several answers. The importing countries were non-committal. They were not likely to give something for nothing, and though there was force in the arguments of the agrarian countries that if they could sell their cereals at reasonable prices they would become better customers of the industrial countries, the latter were likely to ask for a preference for their goods in return for any preference they accorded to other countries' wheat. The agrarian States were quite prepared for that. Miss Susan Lawrence, who was representing Great Britain on the Second Commission, held out no hope that Britain, which, of course, has no duties on wheat, could offer a preference of any kind, but M. Madgearu, the Rumanian Minister of Industry, who was the chief spokesman of the Warsaw group, explained later that they never expected anything of the kind from a free trade country. All they asked for there was a free field and no favour, meaning no unfair competition from dumped wheat allowed in at ruinous prices to wreck the market. That kind of reference to Soviet dumping ran through the whole discussion, the most bitter complaints coming from



Rumania and Bulgaria, but it was recognised that each country must take steps to deal with dumping on its own account, and collective action was not much discussed.

As to the competition between European wheat and overseas wheat, the Dominion delegates stuck to their guns to the end. Their argument was clear and sound. They had full sympathy with Europe's difficulties. If Europe wanted to organise itself economically, well and good. That was Europe's affair. But for Europe to ask the League to come in and give its approval to the granting of a preference to four or five League members at the cost of other League members was altogether inadmissible. That argument could not well be withstood, and the report presented by the Commission to the Assembly contented itself with observing that all these questions fell within the scope of the discussions to be initiated in November regarding the possibilities of an agreement on lower tariffs. Everything that was said at Geneva during September was calculated to invest the November discussions with considerable importance.

### **An Insoluble Problem**

But the Warsaw proposals and suggestions were in a sense not much more than blind gropings after the solution of a problem which no one in the least understood. The universal depression was the most glaring fact in the world. But why did it exist? How did it happen? Was it one of the ordinary inexplicable 'trade cycles,' or something different? And in any case what could be done about it? To none of these questions could any delegate at Geneva supply an answer, certainly not an answer that convinced anyone else. Investigations, some of them of considerable value, had been carried out in different countries, but the results had never been co-ordinated, and one country had not studied another country's experts' conclusions. Hence the Indian delegation, acting possibly not without outside inspiration, clearly took a wise step when it proposed that the League's Economic Organisation should carry out as soon as possible an enquiry

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into the causes and nature of the depression and recommend any steps that could be taken to prevent its recurrence. That suggestion was universally approved, and its adoption may prove one of the most important decisions taken by the XIth Assembly. No one looks for any dramatic discoveries in the field either of diagnosis or of remedy, but at least the evidence accumulated and the theories elaborated by the foremost experts of every country will be scientifically studied, and it can hardly be doubted that some conclusions of value will emerge.

### **Skilful Evasion**

The most-favoured-nation clause was discussed from various points of view. Certain exceptions to it are regularly admitted. Great Britain, for example, reserves the right to grant preferences to the Dominions without thereby incurring the liability to grant the same terms to any other State with whom she may be in 'most-favoured-nation' relations. Other countries manage to give their friends an advantage by arranging to admit a quota of, say, 10,000 pigs from any country at a reduced rate, 10,000 representing the whole of the normal import from country A, but only a fraction of the normal import from country B. That means that country A gets a preference on 100 per cent. of its pig imports, while country B gets it on only perhaps 20 per cent. It is these and other devices which most delegates wanted to counteract. Miss Susan Lawrence, for Great Britain, said Britain stood for the strictest interpretation of the clause. On the other hand, certain pairs, or groups, of States, which contemplate specially close tariff relations between themselves, were anxious to find a way of achieving this without exposing themselves to demands for similar treatment from other States with whom they had treaty relations. In the end the Economic Committee was instructed to push forward with the enquiry it had already begun on the working of the most-favoured-nation clause, with a view to the preparation of an international convention on the subject at an early



date. Another resolution called for a full discussion of indirect forms of taxation, and also of dumping, at the conference convened for November in accordance with the agreement reached at the Conference on Concerted Economic Action in March, 1930.

### Committing the Governments

One principle it has been sought to establish at Geneva in regard to problems of this kind is that conferences to deal with them should be attended by the Minister of Commerce of every country (in the case of Great Britain by the President of the Board of Trade) just as regularly as Council meetings and Assemblies are by Foreign Ministers. Some delegates this year were anxious to establish the practice of holding a regular conference of Government representatives (as distinguished from independent experts) annually. Others, however, felt on consideration that it was well to be a little less precise than that, and the Assembly consequently did no more than emphasise the importance of these meetings of Government delegates, urging that conferences attended by them should be convened 'at the most suitable moment and under the most appropriate circumstances, if possible annually.' That left it open for such a conference to be dropped when there was nothing for it to do.

The broad tendency of all the economic discussions may be summed up in a declaration, inserted at the beginning of the Second Commission's report to the Assembly, to the effect that there is an unhesitating and clear determination to find a remedy for the confusion at present existing in world economy, by strengthening, rationalising and systematising what is commonly called 'concerted action' between States; supplemented by the assertion that one of the primary convictions underlying the debates was the inadequacy of purely national action in this sphere.

### Financial Tasks

The two halves of what has so far been the League's Financial and Economic Organisation are henceforward to be

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separate wholes, each with a Director of its own. Hitherto, Sir Arthur Salter, who is unhappily leaving the League's service, has most capably controlled the destinies of both. The Assembly itself and its Second Commission were this year so much preoccupied with the economic problems discussed above, that they passed comparatively lightly over the financial side of the work. That did not mean that the Financial Committee had done little of importance in the year. It is true that some of its main tasks, the reconstruction of Austria and Hungary, the refugee schemes in Greece and Bulgaria, the preparation of the Convention on Financial Assistance, had been, or were being, carried through to a successful conclusion. But plenty of useful work is still in progress and the Second Commission had really little to do but to encourage the Financial Committee to go on as it was going. That encouragement could be given with the greater confidence in that the Committee itself, in a recent report to the Council, had given a general indication of the probable lines of its future labours. There is the study of general questions like double taxation (*e.g.*, liability of a shareholder to taxation on his dividends both in the country where they are earned and in the country where he is domiciled), agricultural credits, and the effect of gold supplies on world prosperity or depression. On all these, useful work is being done. A convention on double taxation is in course of preparation, and while the Assembly was in session an interim report of the highest importance on the gold question was issued. This is naturally a very technical document, and it must be studied in extenso by those interested in the question. Here it is enough to say that the general conclusion reached is that there is likely to be in the next few years a gold shortage sufficient to depress prices, but that various remedies for this situation can be devised.

### Expert Advice

Of more general interest and importance is the Financial Committee's reference to the function it is prepared to



discharge by giving advice and assistance to individual Governments on financial matters. The great advantage of that is that the League's advice is completely disinterested and that it can call on the services of the most competent experts in the world. It has already advised countries like Estonia, Greece and Bulgaria in this way, but the best example of the kind of service the Financial Committee could render is provided by Sir Otto Niemeier's recent mission to Australia. Sir Otto, it is true, did not go to Canberra on behalf of the League, though he is one of the oldest, as well as one of the ablest, members of its Financial Committee, but what he has done for Australia is exactly what the Financial Committee is prepared to do for any State making application. And since the League is a kind of club, any one of its members is fully entitled to avail itself of the services offered.

### The Transport of Goods

If the destruction of tariff barriers is necessary in order to get trade moving smoothly, it is necessary, also, that the actual material means of transportation, by which goods are carried from one country to another, shall be efficient. That section of the League's work is in the hands of the Communications and Transit Section, whose activities are largely directed by a general conference meeting every few years. There was no lengthy discussion on transit at the XIth Assembly, partly because the work was technical and was running on smoothly enough under the direction of capable experts, and partly because the Second Commission, within whose sphere this question falls, had its hands full already with economic problems. The Transit Section deals with the movement of persons and goods by road and by rail, by sea and by river and in the air, and in regard to movement in all these elements there was something to report to the Assembly. The sea and river questions under consideration at the moment were mostly extremely technical. All, for example, that the general public is likely to be interested about in an impending conference on the buoyage and

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lighting of coasts is the fact that it was convened at Lisbon, this being the first time a League meeting had been summoned in Portugal. At the same time, considering the part played by buoys and lighthouses in promoting safety at sea, even so technical a conference as this is not to be dismissed as merely trivial.

Of much greater moment, in the light of subsequent tragic events, was the meeting of the League's Air Transport Co-operation Committee, which took place in July, 1930. With the whole field of civil aviation before it, the committee spent most of its time at its initial meeting in mapping out a programme for the future, and it may be noted that among those who assisted its work in different ways were Colonel Lindbergh and the designer of the Graf Zeppelin, Dr. Eckener. The aim of the committee is to promote civil aviation by removing the various difficulties at present confronting services which fly over a number of different countries. The need for this was realised by the committee in the course of its discussions, and the conclusion was reached that civil aviation was by no means as far developed as technical possibilities would permit. Whether the committee will feel called on to discuss the important question of the comparative value of airships and heavier than air machines has not so far been made clear.

### Roads Across Europe

Road transport has developed vastly in volume and importance in the eleven years of the League's existence, and the Transit Committee has, therefore, been well advised in doing what it can to smooth out obstacles in this sphere. It has most recently been concentrating on a uniform code of road signals, and on regulations for commercial motor transport. This latter action is particularly timely, for motor lorries to-day thunder ceaselessly across Europe as they thunder daily up and down the Great North Road. Frontier problems have to be solved here quite as much as on the railways, and it was announced at the Assembly that at a



conference to be held in March, 1931, draft conventions both on motor signalling and on commercial motor transport would be submitted. A draft convention has also been prepared on the abolition of taxes on foreign motor vehicles for submission to the March Conference. Looking a little further ahead, M. Inouye, of Japan, who presented the report on Communications and Transit to the Assembly, mentioned that at the Fourth General Transport Conference towards the end of 1931, an attempt would be made to secure a definite decision on the reform of the calendar. This raises two separate questions—the fixation of Easter and the more drastic reform involved in the establishment of a year of thirteen months of approximately equal length, so arranged that the same date in any month will always fall on the same day of the week. Both these questions, particularly the fixation of Easter, raise important religious questions. These, however, were not to be dealt with at the 1931 Conference, whose debates would centre only on the social and economic aspects of the question, leaving the Governments to decide for themselves between those conclusions and the views of the religious authorities if, as might well not be the case, the two seemed likely to conflict.

Other work on which the Transit Committee has been engaged was the elaboration of plans for motor transport for League delegates in times of crisis, a departure, incidentally, which would involve the choice of some special League symbol to be borne on the cars used, and the formulation of proposals for the establishment of through international communication across the still closed frontier of Poland and Lithuania. This latter question falls rather within the competence of the League Council than the Assembly, and at a Council meeting in September it was decided to hold the matter over till January, with a view to allowing the Governments of the two countries concerned to consider it at their leisure and decide on their policy.

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## VII MINORITIES AND MANDATES

Not since 1925 has a League Assembly indulged in anything like a full-dress discussion on the question of Minorities. There have been many speeches of importance on it in the plenary gathering, but speeches at a plenary meeting do not send a subject on for discussion in a Commission unless a definite resolution is brought in to that effect. This year such a resolution was in fact moved in the Assembly by the German delegate, whose interest in the Minority question is obvious enough in view of the number of former German citizens now living under the sovereignty of other countries, notably Poland. Hungary is another country which habitually, and for similar reasons, has much to say about the Minority question, but this year Count Apponyi, too, was silent in the Plenary Session discussions, reserving what he had to say for the more detailed debate in the Sixth Commission.

### Foreign Ministers Gather

That debate assumed almost unprecedented importance. Never before, probably, in the history of the League, has a Foreign Minister of the status of M. Briand sat through a Commission discussion on four successive days. Dr. Curtius of Germany attended much of the time as well, and so did almost every other Foreign Minister in Europe, notably Benes of Czechoslovakia, Zaleski of Poland, Marin-kovitch of Jugoslavia, Mironescu of Roumania, Michalakopoulos of Greece, Bouroff of Bulgaria and several others from countries less directly interested in the Minority question. Great Britain was represented throughout by Mr. Roden Buxton.

The discussions revealed the expected differences of opinion. Broadly speaking, the delegates divided themselves into three camps. For the countries whose main concern it was to champion the grievances of Minorities the chief spokesmen were the German and Hungarian delegates.



In defence of the existing procedure in regard to Minority complaints, and of the general policy of the Governments of countries possessing substantial Minorities, were ranged the three Little Entente States, Czechoslovakia, Jugoslavia and Roumania, and Poland. France, in the person of M. Briand, was disposed to give general support to the theses of this school. The third category consisted of States containing Minorities but not bound by any treaties to accord any special treatment to their alien subjects. Chief of these is Italy with her large population of Germans in the Southern Tyrol and of Slovenes on the Adriatic Coast, and at one point in the debate the Italian declarations were reinforced by the delegates of Spain, mindful of her Catalan Minority, and of France, conscious of the existence of Alsace-Lorraine.

#### Temperate Criticism

Taken as a whole, and having regard to the emotions Minority questions can sometimes stir, the speeches were surprisingly moderate in tone. That was due in no small measure to the handling of the case by the opening speaker, Herr Koch-Weser of Germany. It appeared, indeed, that both Germany and Hungary were mainly concerned this year with establishing the principle that Minority questions should be regularly discussed, as Mandate questions always have been, by the Sixth Commission of the Assembly. For that reason they were anxious not to take any course which might create reluctance on the part of delegates generally to embark on a similar discussion next year. The suggestion was made in one or two quarters that an Assembly Commission was going beyond its province in discussing Minority procedure at all, seeing that this is left in the hands of the Council by Minority Treaties, but there was general agreement that Article 3 of the Covenant which lays it down that 'The Assembly may deal at its Meetings with any matter within the sphere of action of the League or affecting the peace of the world' provided full justification for the discussion the German delegate had initiated.

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The main thesis of Herr Koch-Weser and of Count Apponyi was that the League should take its responsibilities in the matter of Minorities with the utmost seriousness, and that it should consider whether the existing procedure for ensuring fair treatment of Minorities was adequate in itself, and whether it was as diligently and scrupulously applied as it might be. At the Madrid meeting of the League of Nations' Council in June, 1929, certain changes in procedure had been agreed on, designed to give rather more publicity to action taken by the Council regarding complaints which came before it. Statistics regarding this had been printed in the Assembly Journal in very meagre form, and the German delegate raised the question whether the world could not be told a little more about what happened when a complaint was sent to Geneva, either by a Minority or on its behalf. He touched on the suggestion often made for the creation of a Permanent Minorities' Commission. Though he did not definitely propose the creation of such a Commission he pointed out that it might serve a useful purpose by drawing up a statement of general principles regarding the treatment of Minorities, based, possibly, on the practice of countries which, like Switzerland and Canada, had admittedly solved the problem completely; by educating public opinion on the question; and by gradually developing a recognised standard of conduct in Minority matters.

#### Loyal Collaboration

The other side of the picture was put by the Little Entente speakers, of whom Dr. Benes, the Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia, was the first and the most important. He made three definite points. The first was that the existing procedure with regard to Minorities (*i.e.*, reception of petitions by the League Secretariat and consideration of them by three members of the League Council) could not be altered without the consent of the States, of whom his own was one, bound by Minority Treaties. The second and third



points were allied to this. The obligations contained in the Treaty, he said, could not be enlarged or extended by any changes in procedure, but in spite of that he was perfectly prepared to have the whole subject discussed, and he agreed with the German speaker that the only hopeful solution of the problem was in sincere collaboration between the Minorities and the Governments of the States in which they lived.

The point of view of the Minority States was put also in two separate speeches by M. Zaleski, the Foreign Minister of Poland. He took much the same ground as Dr. Benes, emphasising the fact that the nine States which were bound by Minority Treaties refused absolutely to undertake any fresh obligations which would distinguish them still further from other States which contained Minorities within their borders but were bound by no Treaty, though he added that in the event of a general obligation being accepted by all States he would be willing to reconsider his attitude. M. Briand, while coming down on the side of the Minority States, was concerned chiefly to defend the action of the League in the past. He would not admit for a moment that the procedure had failed of its object. Answering the objection that petitions which ought to have been more fully considered were stifled at some point, he observed that any member of the Council had the right to bring a Minority question forward, and yet there had never been a single case in which such action had been taken as a result of any alleged default on the part of the Secretariat or Committee of Three.\* He emphasised almost unduly the tendency of Minorities to make factious complaints and adopt an attitude hostile to the Government of their country, and dwelt on the harm that might be caused if a Geneva discussion created the impression that there was something seriously wrong which was only now for the first time being put right.

\* All Minority petitions that are found to conform with the regulations are examined by a committee of three members of the League Council.

## The Second Round

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After a number of such speeches on either side, what may be termed the second round began. The Germans brought forward a resolution which they did not actually move, but which was laid before the meeting with the idea that it might be embodied in the report of the Commission to the Assembly. It called for the provision of fuller information annually regarding the work of the League in connection with Minorities. It spoke of submitting the Madrid procedure to further examination later, and it urged that the Minorities' Committees should be more frequently held, and that more publicity should be granted to their transactions. In so far as this resolution implied criticism of existing conditions, the Little Entente Powers, whose chief spokesman this time was M. Marinkovitch of Jugoslavia, declared themselves unable to accept it, and M. Marinkovitch repeated, with marked emphasis, M. Zaleski's declaration that none of the Minority States would accept any new obligations whatsoever. Dr. Curtius, the German Foreign Minister, came down to reinforce Dr. Koch-Weser, who had been challenged by M. Zaleski to say whether Germany, in her zeal for the protection of Minorities, would be ready to sign a Minorities Treaty herself, and assume the same obligations as, for example, Poland. To that he replied that the German Government would be perfectly ready to discuss the question of the extension of Minority Treaties to all countries of Europe. He took up another important point made in an earlier speech by the Greek Foreign Minister, M. Michalakopoulos, who appeared to suggest that a complete assimilation of Minorities was the goal to aim at. Dr. Curtius strongly contested that, taking the view that a Minority was entitled to retain indefinitely its cultural and linguistic individuality, provided always that it remained, as he fully recognised it should, loyal to the Government under which it found itself.



## Summing It Up

By this time the main question that emerged was the character of the report the Commission would have to submit to the Assembly. The task of drafting it was entrusted to the Swiss Foreign Minister, M. Motta, whose work was made more difficult by the fact that there was no definite resolution before the Commission, since that drafted by the German delegation had only been brought forward as a focus for general discussion. The report therefore could only sum up the speeches that had been made from various quarters, and M. Briand, in particular, was concerned lest it should appear to reflect on the League's past handling of the problem. He therefore intervened with a second speech which went rather far in the direction of suggesting to the rapporteur what he should put in his report, the main point of it being that public opinion should be informed that neither the League as a whole, nor the Council, nor the Minority Committees of the Council, nor the Secretariat, had in any way failed in their duty.

With that parting shot, M. Motta was left to produce the best report he could. The result of his endeavours was a rather colourless document which did, however, indicate what the trend of discussion had been in both directions, and emphasised certain principles which, though vaguely stated, it was well to have on record. The rapporteur commented on the high level of the debate as a whole, and the friendliness and courtesy exhibited on all sides. He noted the general agreement that the Minorities problem was one of those questions which might affect the peace of the world, and he observed that all the delegates looked on respect for religion, language and culture as sacred—a statement which may accurately describe the trend of the public speeches, but can hardly be taken as representing the actual policy of all the countries concerned. Everyone, said the report, was agreed that the procedure adopted at Madrid in 1929 should be given a further trial

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before it was either approved or condemned. Everyone was agreed further that the existence of the Minority Treaties and the fact that the League had to ensure, and did ensure, their application, was contributing to the development of a new spirit. A further principle laid down as emerging from the discussion was that the solution of the Minorities problem was to be found in constant co-operation and mutual confidence between the majorities and minorities in each country. 'The main idea brought out by the debates,' said M. Motta, 'was co-operation between Majorities and Minorities. Majorities must be just and generous and Minorities must be loyal. Governments must constantly endeavour to smooth the way for mutual understanding and confidence, and for co-operation between the Majority and the Minority.'

## A Crop of Reservations

Perhaps the best testimony to the success of M. Motta's report is that it gave complete satisfaction to no one, and when it was laid before the Committee all the three schools of opinion already mentioned made reservations, without definitely objecting to any phrase in the report. The Minority States, through the mouths of Dr. Benes, M. Zaleski and others, made one general reserve, declaring that nothing in the report must lead it to be supposed that they accepted the present procedure as having statutory force. They had agreed to it temporarily at any rate, but held themselves free, if necessary, to challenge it and go to the Permanent Court for a ruling as to whether it was mandatory on them. Dr. Curtius and Count Apponyi, as representing the interests of Minorities, made it clear that, while they accepted the report, they stood by all the statements they had themselves made in the course of discussion; while Count Bonin-Longare, Italy, Señor Quiñones de León, Spain, and M. Briand, France, commented, with some firmness of language, on a phrase in the report on the question of whether the protection of Minorities should be extended to all Minorities in all States. The Spanish delegate, indeed,



wanted the sentence to be taken out all together, but he withdrew his objection after the rapporteur had emphasised the fact that no opinion, for or against such a principle, had been expressed. M. Briand refrained from proposing any amendment, but laid it down, in language of some emphasis, that the concern of the League was exclusively with the administration of certain existing Minority Treaties, and that, outside that, it had no status whatever to discuss what might be termed Minority questions generally. The French Foreign Minister, indeed, went so far towards ruling out of discussion a subject which many delegates thought might most properly be discussed that one or two sentences from his speech must be quoted as they stand.

### Briand's Ban

'If the minority problem were to be raised as a whole,' said M. Briand, 'not as a mere hypothesis but as a definite thesis, I am bound to say that if I were representing my Government and my country in a commission in which such a question were raised, I should immediately move the previous question, for I consider that neither the League of Nations nor any of its organs has the right to deal with any such topic.' The speaker went on to explain that in his view the Assembly could discuss the particular Minority Treaties whose operation it had to supervise but not go an inch beyond that, and he concluded by repeating his rather minatory declaration. 'I very much hope,' he said again, 'I shall never see the problem raised again in a general sense. If it should be—and I ask that this declaration be recorded in the minutes—I should quite flatly move the previous question in the name of France.'

### Contented Minorities

This insistence that never at any time might the League so much as discuss the possible contingency of the extension of existing minority obligations to all States possessing

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a minority of any consequence was repudiated by no one so strongly as by certain of M. Briand's own friends, for the Little Entente States and Poland are perpetually arguing—indeed, constantly argued in the course of the current Assembly—that bare equity demanded such an extension, and that their own invidious situation was unjust. M. Briand's thesis, therefore, is very far from finding general acceptance. It was, however, allowed to pass at the time, and M. Motta's report was duly sent forward to the Assembly. No further general discussion took place in the plenary meeting, but both M. Motta himself and the Canadian delegate, Senator Chapais, had some interesting observations to make on the treatment of minorities in two countries where minority grievances are unknown. The Swiss delegate spoke of the small Italian minority in the Canton of Tessin, of which he is himself a member, while the Canadian representative, speaking in fluent French, told of the complete content of the French Catholic population of Quebec, enjoying every right it desired in a British and Protestant Dominion, and added that the British Protestant minority within Quebec was just as satisfied with the treatment it received there. The speech brought important facts to the notice of delegates, and the Assembly demonstrated its warm approval of it.

Though the discussion led to the adoption of no definite resolution, there can be no doubt that its initiation was fully justified. Rarely has any discussion on any subject in any Assembly Commission attracted so much attention as this, and the German Foreign Minister was no doubt right in suggesting that the occasional ventilation of opinions in this way was a safety-valve in itself. On the other hand, it is no doubt true to some extent that there may be a slight danger of encouraging some unreasonable Minority to believe that it can always find champions at Geneva, no matter whether its case be good or bad. Those two considerations must be balanced, but the general conclusion that emerges is that this particular discussion was useful and that



if, as seems likely, it now becomes, like the Mandates discussions, an annual event, that will be a development to welcome.

### MANDATE QUESTIONS

The discussion on Mandates at the Eleventh Assembly was expected to assume a more important character than usual, owing to the recent developments regarding Palestine, following on the grave disturbances of August, 1929. The British Government had from the first assured the League, and the Permanent Mandates Commission in particular, that they should be put in full possession of the results of any investigation the British Government carried out. This investigation took the form of a Committee of Enquiry presided over by Sir Walter Shaw, and commonly known, in consequence, as the Shaw Commission. The report of that body was duly sent to Geneva, and the Mandates Commission, at its sitting in June, went into the question exhaustively in the course of an Extraordinary Session which lasted for sixteen days. As a result, the Mandates Commission sent on a report to the Council, commending British administration in Palestine in most particulars, but adding a considerable number of frank criticisms. In reply to this the British Government, acting through the Colonial Office, addressed to Geneva a memorandum which, in some British quarters at any rate, was felt to be unfortunate, protesting against various of the strictures the Mandates Commission had thought it necessary to pass.

#### A Twofold Aim

Both these documents came before the League Council at the meeting it held a day or two before the Assembly opened, and it was as a result of the proceedings at the Council table that Assembly delegates contented themselves with no more than passing references to the question. Several members of the Council expressed their views on the whole situation, all of them recognising the grave difficulties

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with which the British Government was faced in its endeavour to reconcile the two distinct aims of promoting the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and at the same time safeguarding the rights of non-Jewish communities and developing self-governing institutions for a population the great majority of which is Arab.

It was, however, Mr. Henderson's statement which made further discussion unnecessary, for the British Foreign Minister, adopting a tone markedly different from that of the British Government Note on the Mandates Commission report, declared explicitly that 'His Majesty's Government recognise that it is the duty of the Permanent Mandates Commission to criticise, and they fully appreciate the Commission's attitude in this respect.' Mr. Henderson touched on the large part the question of land settlement played in Palestine, observing that a special Commissioner had been sent out, in the person of Sir John Hope-Simpson, to report on this, and said that after study of Sir John's report the Government would formulate its future policy and communicate it to the Council at the earliest opportunity.

#### The British Dominions

This rather detailed account of proceedings which took place before the Council may not seem wholly in place in an account of the Assembly, but, in fact, as has been said, it was these Council proceedings which explained why the Assembly felt it unnecessary to discuss the Palestine question as it would otherwise undoubtedly have done. As it was, the only reference to Palestine during the debates of the Sixth Commission took the form of appreciative references by the Italian delegate, Count Bonin-Longare, to the attitude of the British Government and its declared resolve to take all steps necessary for the preservation of order in the mandate area.

As to Mandates generally, the principal references to the subject in the general discussion at the beginning of the Assembly were by the delegates for South Africa (General



Hertzog) and Australia (Mr. Frank Brennan). Both these Dominions have, of course, Mandates under their charge, and both of them, South Africa in German South-West Africa, and Australia in New Guinea, have had special difficulties to contend with. Both speakers explained this to the Assembly at some length, and General Hertzog, by his cordial references to the work of the Mandates Commission, did a good deal to dispel the misgivings which South Africa's occasional tendency to claim full sovereignty over South-West Africa had created. Mr. Brennan dwelt on one very real difficulty—the lack of men adequately trained for the administration of backward territories like New Guinea, large parts of which are still completely unexplored. Rather similar declarations were made again when the subject was discussed in more detail by the Sixth Commission. That body, however, which had its time fully taken up with Minorities, was content to touch rather lightly on the Mandates question.

#### Samoa and Tanganyika

In addition to the Australian and South African representatives, Sir Thomas Wilford, for New Zealand, spoke of that Dominion's administration of Samoa. He claimed that New Zealand's successful handling of its own Maori population gave it useful experience in the task of dealing with the Samoans, and added in that connection the interesting observation that the 'Father' of the New Zealand Parliament is to-day a Maori. Other speakers in this debate were the French delegate, who mentioned that Syria had just received a definite constitution, establishing the beginning of representative government in that country, and the German, Dr. Koch-Weser, who insisted, as German speakers always do, that in the development of any scheme for closer union between British territory in East Africa the interests of the Mandate area of Tanganyika must be scrupulously safeguarded. Mr. Roden Buxton, the British representative on the Sixth Commission, repeated earlier assurances regarding submission to the League of any East African scheme

before action was taken on it, and spoke of the value of the Mandates system in its bearing on colonial administration generally. Without suggesting for a moment that the Colonial possessions of European Powers generally should be brought under the Mandates system, he observed that 'not by compulsion but by voluntary acceptance on the part of those responsible would the system instituted by the Covenant come to be applied in practice to all populations not capable of standing by themselves in the strenuous conditions of the modern world or able to speak with their own voice in their own defence.' This is a point on which Portugal, whose colonial administration is open to considerable criticism, is always sensitive, and the Portuguese representative at once took exception to a sentence in the Commission's report to the Assembly declaring that the experience gained in Mandate areas 'may be of great value for the administration of other territories in which conditions are similar.' The phrase was, however, maintained in the report.

While supervision over the administration of the Mandates system is placed definitely in the hands of the Council, the annual Assembly discussion is of undoubted value in keeping the question before the public. If the discussion this year was less lengthy than usual, the reason was a general conviction that the Mandates Commission and the Council between them were, by handling the subject at once sympathetically and vigilantly, doing all the League reasonably could do to ensure that the principles enshrined in Article 22 of the Covenant were carried out.

#### STAMPING OUT SLAVERY

Slavery is a subject with which the League has been dealing a little half-heartedly since the Slavery Convention of 1926 was adopted on the initiative of the British Government. The convention has undoubtedly been of value, and any disappointment regarding it is not the fault of the League,



but comes from the failure of the different Governments to send to Geneva information on which opinions could be formed and action based. There was no compulsion on them to do so, and as a rule not more than half-a-dozen forwarded reports of any practical value. In judging those figures it must of course be borne in mind that the number of States in practical contact with slavery is limited.

But the British Government, at any rate, thought a good deal more might be done, and the British Delegation at the Eleventh Assembly accordingly brought forward a proposal for the establishment of a permanent commission on slavery, with an international slavery office, to receive and sift information, at Geneva. That suggestion excited doubts and suspicions on every side, the strongest opposition coming from States where the conditions are notoriously least satisfactory. Liberia was the first to object, and Abyssinia hastened to take the same line. Portugal discreetly supported them. Mr. Roden Buxton explained that his Government had no thought of establishing the kind of supervision or control that the Liberian delegate feared, but he found himself on rather doubtful ground when he mentioned that Great Britain possessed a great deal of information about slavery, but had not seen fit to forward it to Geneva—had not, in fact, done just what States signing the Slavery Convention of 1926 had always been urged to do.

#### Attempts at a Compromise

Various modifications of the British proposal were put forward, both in the full commission and in a sub-committee which was appointed to try to reconcile divergent views. Mr. Buxton fell back first on the revival of the old Temporary Commission on Slavery, which had paved the way for the 1926 Convention, and then on the appointment of an expert advisory committee reporting to the Council. The Liberian delegate was prepared for an international commission of enquiry such as had lately visited Liberia at that country's own request. But neither these nor other alternatives

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offered in some profusion could command a majority on the sub-committee, which ultimately adopted by 7 votes to 3 with 2 abstentions a resolution postponing any final decision for twelve months and urging all States in the meantime to send the fullest information they possessed on slavery questions to the Secretariat. Mr. Buxton spoke with some bitterness of this evasion of the issue he had raised at the outset of the Commission's sittings and reserved his right to vote against it in the Commission, as he did, and to speak against it in the full Assembly. Other speakers insisted that the question was only held over for fuller consideration a year hence, not deliberately smothered, but it is clear that the battle will have to be fought over again if Great Britain should see fit to reopen it. As things stand no one has any power to compel a State to furnish information or to submit to any form of inquisition. The League cannot force States an inch beyond the obligations they assumed when they signed the Slavery Convention. Anyone who wants them to go farther must persuade them to assume new obligations, and there was clearly no disposition among the States at the Eleventh Assembly to do that in regard to slavery.

#### An Appeal to the World

When the Sixth Commission's decision was reported back to the Assembly, Lord Cecil, at this time head of the British Delegation in consequence of Mr. Henderson's departure, made a most impressive speech of the kind too rarely heard from the Assembly platform. He deeply deplored the refusal of the Commission to take the desired step forward, insisting that the decision reached meant no advance at all, and declaring that the results secured so far through the information voluntarily tendered by such States as chose to tender any amounted to absolutely nil. The object of the British proposal was the creation of an international authority specially charged with supervision over the League's great campaign against slavery. He believed that



news of the postponement of any decision would be received with profound disappointment throughout the world. Mentioning that in his own belief there still existed at least 5,000,000 slaves in the world to-day, Lord Cecil said it had been proved again and again that you could not put down the slave trade, 'that horrible and utterly bestial institution,' without putting down slave-holding as well. The British delegate concluded by stating that while the British Delegation would refrain from voting for the Commission's report, it could certainly not vote for it, adding that he trusted public opinion throughout the world would so declare itself in the ensuing twelve months as to make further postponement next year impossible. The speech was loudly applauded, but it came too late to change the Assembly's decision, and the resolution putting off action for another year was duly approved.

## VIII COUNCIL AND COURT

Every September the Assembly has to carry out one election, that of three members of the Council. This time it had two to deal with, for it happened to be the year for choosing the judges of the Permanent Court of International Justice.

The Council elections were a relatively simple matter. The three retiring States were Canada, Finland and Cuba, and for the vacancies five candidates presented themselves—the Irish Free State, Norway, China, Guatemala and Portugal. Of these five three seemed pre-destined to be elected, the three which in the end were elected. Certain traditions, by no means altogether good, have grown up regarding seats on the Council. It is taken for granted, for example, that the three little Entente States, Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Jugoslavia, shall always sit on the Council in rotation. When one goes off the next expects to be elected, and always is. There is a group of northern European States, consisting of the three Scandinavian countries,

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Holland and Finland, which sit more or less in turn, and in that group this time Norway was regarded as the normal successor of Finland. The Latin Americans, who, when they are all present cast 16 votes between them, claim three out of the nine non-permanent seats, and their choice fell on Guatemala to succeed the outgoing Cuba. Both Norway and Guatemala were elected.

### A Dominion Seat?

Another tradition seems in process of being established. That is that there should always be a British Dominion on the Council. That principle cannot be said to be fully accepted yet, for the first Dominion to sit, Canada, has only just retired and Ireland, in making its candidature for one of the vacant places known, explained specifically that it was standing not as a British Dominion, but simply as an ordinary member of the League. That may have been thought tactically sound, but there can be no doubt that in the eyes of most members of the League Ireland's election (for her candidature was successful) was looked on as marking the succession of one Dominion to the seat vacated by another. Why Ireland, the youngest and almost the smallest Dominion, should have been preferred to Australia or South Africa is not clear. Her candidature was, however, approved by all members of the British Commonwealth.

Of the two unsuccessful candidates Portugal belongs to no special group and is at undoubted disadvantage in consequence. China was a special case. She was a member of the Council down to 1928, and will be eligible again in the ordinary way in 1931, for there is a rule that when a State retires from the Council it must stand aside altogether for three years to give others a chance. This rule, however, can be abrogated if the Assembly so decides by a two-thirds majority. In 1929 China applied for permission to stand, but failed by a few votes to secure the necessary two-thirds majority. This year another attempt was made. The arguments both for and against the Chinese candidature



were strong. On the one hand the fact that the country was in complete political confusion, that it was owing the League half a million francs in arrears of subscriptions, and that it had had a term on the Council from 1925 to 1928, seemed conclusive. Against that China's friends, even more than China herself, pointed out that all these things counted for little compared with the importance of keeping China in the closest association possible with the League. It is a country of 400,000,000 people, and Moscow is exerting much more effort to pull it in one direction than the League ever has done to draw it in the other. China could have produced extremely competent representatives to sit on the Council, and there was a considerable section of opinion which thought the case for China's election stronger than that against. But the Assembly did not quite take that view. A majority of its members, including, it was believed, all the Great Powers, voted in her favour, but their number fell a little short of the required two-thirds, the actual figure being 27. The number needed to confer the right to stand was 32. The field was, therefore, left to the other four candidates. The votes cast for them were, Guatemala 41, Norway 38, Ireland 36, Portugal 30. The first three of these were elected.

### Electing Fifteen Judges

The elections to the Court were a much more important affair. The whole bench of judges had to be appointed, and they were to hold office for nine years. Delegates, therefore, had a serious responsibility resting on them when they cast their votes. But before that point was reached an incident occurred which necessitated a considerable re-arrangement of plans. In 1929 there was carried through a revision of the Court's statutes designed to increase the efficiency of the tribunal in various ways. The number of judges was to be raised from eleven to fifteen, deputy-judges being dispensed with, their salaries were to be increased, they were to be required to reside at The Hague, and the Court was to be

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regarded as in perpetual session, instead of beginning its sittings in June of each year.

The Court having been established by an international treaty, the assent of all signatories was required before any revision of the treaty could be effective. A few days before the Assembly met one of the least important of all the signatories, Cuba, announced that she would not ratify the protocol of revision because she objected to the provision requiring judges to reside at The Hague. The objection was obviously lodged in the interests of one of the existing judges, Señor de Bustamente, who was a candidate for re-election and who, having an extensive law practice in Cuba, was not disposed to transfer his residence to Holland. Every endeavour was made to persuade the Cuban delegation to abandon its obstructive attitude, and a lively little scene was staged in the First Commission when M. Politis, of Greece, made some justifiably scathing remarks about the one country which had declined to show goodwill in a society where mutual concession was the rule of life. The Cuban delegate retorted warmly that Cuba was merely exercising her sovereign rights, and that she did not come to Geneva to be dictated to. A little later he went so far as to say that Cuba might subsequently modify her attitude, but that did not help the immediate situation. The revised statute had gone by the board and the Assembly had to consider what steps could be taken. A committee of lawyers was set hastily to work, and it was discovered that some at least of the reforms embodied in the revised statute could be carried through by a vote of the Assembly. That was true in particular of the increase in the number of judges, and of their salaries. As for the proposal that the Court should sit perpetually, the judges themselves could decide that if they chose, and the Assembly accordingly passed a resolution inviting them to do so. Thanks to these expedients, delegates were enabled to proceed in due course to the election of fifteen judges.



### Forceful Latins

Before then, however, another incident occurred which occasioned considerable adverse comments. The Latin American States addressed a letter to the League Council, intimating that they considered it reasonable that the new bench of judges should include at least three Latin Americans. Since the whole idea and intention of the Court is that it should consist of individuals chosen purely for their individual merit as jurists, and not on any political grounds, it was felt that such a *démarche* was wholly improper. No notice was taken of it, but the voting did, in fact, result in the election of three Latin Americans hailing, as it happened, from the not very considerable States of Cuba, Salvador and Colombia. That, however, would have been of no great consequence if the judges in question had been of the desired calibre—which could not be said of all three of them.

The election of judges of the Permanent Court is carried through on special lines. Lists of candidates are submitted to the League by the national panels associated with the old pre-war arbitration tribunal at The Hague (which, apart from this, has nothing to do with the Permanent Court). The League Assembly and the League Council, sitting separately, vote by secret ballot on these lists, and those candidates which receive a majority of votes in both bodies are declared elected. The result of that system, on this occasion, was curious. It was expected that, with fifteen judges to elect, the Assembly and Council would find themselves in agreement regarding, perhaps, ten candidates, and that a series of further ballots would be needed before the two bodies got themselves into line on the remaining five. As it turned out, there was a difference of opinion regarding one name only. When the Assembly votes had been counted the President opened the sealed envelope which had been sent him from the Council containing the record of that body's choice. It was found that fourteen names were common to

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both lists, and it remained only to achieve agreement regarding the last place. This proved an unexpectedly lengthy business, not because Council and Assembly could not agree, but because the Assembly could not make its own choice. The successful candidate had to secure a majority of the votes cast, not merely to beat the candidate next behind him, but again and again the votes were divided between three or four candidates, so that none of them reached the required 50 per cent. At last two candidates, Señor Urrutia, of Colombia, and M. Hammerskjold, of Sweden, the Registrar of the Court, were left heading the list and at the eleventh ballot the Assembly's choice fell definitely on Señor Urrutia. The Council had also reached the same conclusion, and after most of two sittings of the Assembly had been given up to the election the successful candidates were announced as follows (in alphabetical order):—

- M. Adatci (Japan)
- \*M. Altamira y Crevea (Spain)
- \*M. Anzilotti (Italy)
- \*M. de Bustamente (Cuba)
- M. van Eysinga (Holland)
- \*M. Fromageot (France)
- M. Guerrero (Salvador)
- \*Sir Cecil Hurst (Great Britain)
- \*Mr. F. B. Kellogg (United States)
- M. Negulesco (Rumania)
- \*Baron Rolin-Jacquemyns (Belgium)
- Count Rostworowski (Poland)
- M. Schücking (Germany)
- M. Urrutia (Colombia)
- M. Wang Chung-Hui (China)

Those judges marked with an asterisk were outgoing members of the Court, but that is true only in a technical sense of Mr. F. B. Kellogg, the late Secretary of State in the United States, who had been elected less than a fortnight



previously to fill till December 31, 1930, the vacancy created by the resignation of Mr. Charles Evans Hughes. The new bench holds office from January 1, 1931, to December 31, 1939. Two of the former deputy-judges, M. Negulesco and M. Wang Chung-Hui, were elected as full judges. A little difficulty arose about new deputy-judges. The revised Court statute, which fell to the ground because Cuba declined to ratify it, had provided for the abolition of deputy-judges, since the increase in the number of full judges from eleven to fifteen made them unnecessary. But, as the old statute still prevailed, four deputy-judges had to be elected, since the Assembly possessed the right, which it exercised, to increase the number of judges, but not the right to abolish deputy-judges. Everyone knew, however, that in these circumstances the new deputy-judges would not be called on to serve, and no great interest therefore was taken in the announcement that M. Erich (Finland), M. da Matta (Portugal), M. Novakovitch (Jugoslavia), and M. Redlich (Austria) had been elected to that office.

As a whole the new bench was not regarded by the most competent critics as an improvement on the old. There are many able judges on it, but the list contains several names to which no great weight attaches. It is therefore of great importance that as vacancies occur in the course of the coming nine-year term every opportunity should be taken of strengthening the tribunal.

## IX DRUGS AND DISEASE

The League's fight against the evils of the drug traffic is, and always must be, uphill work. The ease with which drugs can be smuggled, and the vastness of the profits derived from illicit transactions, are factors in the case which make total suppression almost impossible, and even any substantial reduction in the volume of illicit traffic difficult. It has, moreover, always to be remembered that the League

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itself cannot fight the traffic at all. It has none of the necessary weapons in its hands. It is the Governments of the different countries, and they alone, by their vigilance and by their co-operation, which can do what is possible to stamp the evil out. That point was very properly emphasised in the course of the discussions in the Fifth Commission this year by the British delegate, Mrs. Hamilton, who urged that when there was a disposition to criticise the League for its lack of success in the fight against the drug smugglers, it should always be remembered that the fault lay not at all with the League, but with the Governments, which were lax when they ought to be vigilant, and lenient when they ought to be severe. The League's part in the business is to keep the Governments up to the mark, and, in particular, to supply that element of co-operation without which progress in this field would amount to next to nothing.

### A Multiple Attack

The drug evil—using the term a little inaccurately to include both opium-smoking and drug-taking and to cover both the products of the poppy and of the coca plant (cocaine)—has to be attacked from various angles at once. If possible the production of the raw material must be restricted down to the level of the world's legitimate needs, so as to leave none available for illicit use. That, at present, is frankly impossible, for the political chaos in China makes it out of the question for the miracle of poppy suppression, achieved round about 1913, to be realised to-day. Other producing countries, moreover, most notably Turkey, are holding aloof from co-operation with the League, which has no means of bringing pressure to bear on them in this matter. As a consequence, opium-smoking continues on a large scale in Eastern Asia, and the League has found it difficult to know what action to initiate.

In order to secure the fullest information available, and to obtain the best advice on methods of reduction or suppression, it despatched a special Commission to Far Eastern



countries in the course of 1929. The Commission returned to Geneva in May, 1930, but its report, which was understood to be voluminous, was not available when the Assembly met, and consequently little discussion centred round this particular aspect of the problem. It was understood, however, that in due course a Conference would be held in some suitable centre in Eastern Asia, to consider action arising out of the report of the Commission, and Prince Varnvaidya of Siam evoked applause by announcing from the Assembly platform that the Siamese Government would be gratified if the Conference would accept an invitation to meet in its capital, Bangkok. He added that Siam would be glad to defray any extra expense involved in the convocation of the Conference in Bangkok instead of in Geneva.

### Restricting Manufacture

But if that aspect of the problem had to be largely disregarded for the moment, for the reason stated, there was abundant material for discussion in regard to limitation, not of the raw material, but of the manufactured article. In most parts of the world it is the manufactured drug, heroin, morphine, cocaine and the rest, which causes the trouble, and its restriction can be effected in two ways, partly by making the transportation of illicit consignments difficult, and partly, and most effectively, by restricting the actual output of the factories to the total quantity required by the world to supply its legitimate needs. What that quantity is can be roughly computed, and, if it were possible to supervise every factory in the world, then an exact balance could be struck between what the world needs and what would be provided for the world's use. Such complete supervision cannot be established, if only for the reason that there are certain countries outside the League, notably again Turkey, over which the League has no control. But these account only for a fraction of the total production, and if the States which are members of the League and have signed The Hague Convention of 1912 and the Geneva Convention of

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1925 co-operate loyally and efficiently in limiting the factories within their own borders, then restrictive measures of great value can be carried through.

Success in this sphere is much more nearly attainable than it was a few years ago. Important manufacturing countries like France have tightened up their legislation, as the French representative on the Fifth Commission this year was able to report, the names being given of two firms in France (and one in Switzerland, by the Swiss delegate) from which licences have been withdrawn owing to the discovery of irregularities. Belated ratifications, moreover, of the Geneva Opium Convention of 1925 have been coming in with fair rapidity, with the result that that Convention is now more extensively ratified than any other concluded under the League's auspices, except that establishing the Permanent Court of International Justice. Latin American States, however, are laggards in this respect, and the Secretary-General was instructed to stimulate them.

### Coming Conferences

In 1929 it was decided, on the initiative of the British delegation, to tackle the manufacturing situation forthwith, and to convene a Conference of the Governments of manufacturing countries with a view to concluding agreements on measures of limitation. It was then observed with some justice that the manufacturing countries, if they met alone, might be inclined to be a little over-indulgent towards themselves, and it was therefore agreed that an equal number of consuming countries, whose interest it was to limit a commodity which was demoralising their populations, should have places at the conference also. The British Government undertook to convene also a preliminary conference of manufacturing countries with a view to preparing some rough scheme of limitation to lay before the larger gathering later. It had been hoped that this preliminary conference would meet before the XIth Assembly, but circumstances made that impossible, and Mr. Henderson



announced that it had finally been convened for October 27. The date of the full Conference at Geneva was fixed for May 27, 1931.

The Fifth Commission's discussions consisted chiefly of suggestions for tightening control in various directions. Satisfaction was expressed at the demonstration of police vigilance provided by the seizure of important illicit consignments at Marseilles, Rotterdam and elsewhere. On the other hand, those very seizures showed how extensive the illicit traffic was, and any doubts on that point had been dispelled by the disclosures made by Russell Pasha, head of the section of Egyptian police dealing with narcotics, at a meeting of the Opium Advisory Committee earlier in 1930. It was known, moreover, that illicit imports of Persian opium into China continued to be extensive. All the League itself could do in such a matter, apart from urging more vigilance and less leniency on the Governments, was to try to acquire the fullest information possible to lay before the Advisory Committee and the special Conference convened for 1931. With that end in view a lengthy resolution was adopted instructing the Secretary-General to seek detailed information from the Governments on a number of material points, such as the character of the illicit transactions discovered on their territory, the origin, distribution, etc., of the drugs concerned, methods followed by the smugglers, and so forth. It may be questioned, indeed, whether the enquiry thus ordered may not be regarded by some Governments as irritatingly meticulous.

#### **A Latin American Drive**

With regard to the projected Conference on the limitation of these manufactured drugs, a lively discussion arose at one of the later meetings of the Fifth Commission. It had been arranged, as already stated, that the Conference should consist of the principal manufacturing countries of the world (invitations were to go to the United States, Soviet Russia and Turkey among non-members of the League) and an

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equal number of consuming States. The Latin Americans, however, suddenly demanded that a Conference of all States Members of the League should be convened, on the ground that there was traffic in drugs, both licit and illicit, in every country, and that, therefore, all States were concerned in a Conference regarding the distribution of such drugs. This suggestion was opposed by the principal initiators of the Conference, mainly on the ground, which could hardly be stated in public in so many words, that those who shout loudest very often know least, and that the presence of a bevy of small Latin American Republics would make neither for efficiency nor for brevity. There was, however, some logic in the argument that if all States were to be asked to sign a Convention resulting from the Conference they ought to be present when the Convention was discussed, and, consequently, the decision to make the Conference universal was carried by a fairly substantial vote. The Conference's most important task will be to reach agreement on the delicate question of what quantity of drugs the factories in each country shall be entitled to contribute to the ascertained total representing the world's needs. The difficulties here will be less formidable than might appear, for the number of authorised factories in the whole world does not exceed thirty.

#### **Exposure by Figures**

There is one third method of limitation which was not discussed in detail, because its execution is in the hands of the Opium Central Board at Geneva, a new body which is just settling down to its work. The business of that Board is to receive from Governments figures representing (a) the estimated requirements of each country for twelve months ahead and (b) actual figures of manufactures and imports each quarter. The Board can therefore discover, by checking and comparing these figures, whether any excessive quantity of drugs is flowing in any particular direction. The Secretary of the Board attended a meeting of the Fifth



Commission and gave a satisfactory account of the progress of its work. Among the incidents of the general discussion mention may be made of the Japanese delegate's promise to enquire into the alleged flow of drugs from Japan into India; the statement that Greece had practically eliminated poppy growing altogether; and the French delegate's report that France had destroyed the whole crop of Indian hemp in Syria.

### HEALTH

The Health work of the League of Nations has technically no connection with the anti-opium campaign, except in so far as the Health Organisation is called on from time to time to advise on medical questions affecting drugs, but the two may well be associated in this chapter. Health is another of the activities the consideration of which suffered a little from the fact that it fell within the scope of the overburdened Second Commission. For that reason the speeches delivered were confined largely to expressions of appreciation by delegates from all parts of the world of some aspect of League work from which their own countries had derived benefit. Appropriately enough, Miss Susan Lawrence, who is Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health in Great Britain, was charged with presenting the report on the Health Organisation to the Assembly, and in her opening paragraph she put her finger on the central feature of the whole of the League's health activity by observing how infinitely valuable was the experience of each country to all the rest. In no sphere of the League's work does that truth emerge more incontestably than in the field of public health. The League does not fight epidemics itself, but shows national administrations how to fight them best, and it does that by garnering experience from every country with information to offer and making the results available to all mankind. Miss Lawrence herself quoted a trifling but suggestive incident of the value of the League's methods. In Great Britain, she said, large sums of money had been

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spent on the purchase of radium for the treatment of cancer, but it was soon discovered that radium wrongly used could do almost as much harm as good. The Government, therefore, approached the League Health Committee with the suggestion that it should initiate an enquiry into the best methods of the use of radium, a problem which, of course, was confronting not Great Britain alone, but all the more progressive countries of the world. The Health Committee adopted the suggestion, and the enquiry, which was still in progress, had, said the British delegate, already yielded valuable results.

### A Chorus of Praise

The speeches delivered in the Second Commission provided between them a fairly exhaustive catalogue of the Health Organisation's main activities, for the Australian delegate spoke with satisfaction of the enquiry the Health Organisation had undertaken at Australia's request in certain Pacific Islands. The Japanese delegate urged that the Organisation enquiry into leprosy should be continued and extended. The Indian delegate asked for a study of sera for use against snake-bite. The Venezuelan wanted an investigation into the properties of various medicinal plants and the supply available. It was reported that the Latin American States, stimulated by the League's investigations into syphilis in Europe, had convened a Conference on that subject at Montevideo and asked the Health Organisation to name its President. The results of infant mortality enquiries in a number of European and Latin American countries were recorded. The work of the Malaria Commission and the Sleeping Sickness Commission was referred to, and more extended reference was made to a more recent and highly important development in the form of service rendered by the Health Organisation to the Governments of different countries, for the purpose, not of combating some particular disease, but of laying the foundations of a general health organisation.



The two most important recent instances of that were Greece and China. In Greece, which was without any public health service worthy of the name, plans provided by the Health Organisation at the Greek Government's request had been adopted as they stood, and it was announced, while the Assembly was sitting, that a new School of Hygiene, established on lines prescribed by the League, was opening in November, 1930, to train candidates for positions as public health officers. China, of course, is a much larger proposition, but there, too, the Nanking Government has decided definitely to accept the advice tendered to it by the League Commission which it invited to go to China for that purpose. An attempt is being made, very wisely, to institute an effective health service in one province to begin with, in the hope that if success is achieved there the other provinces will follow in due course on the same lines. League experts are in China assisting in the launching of this experiment, and as a quite separate enterprise a sanitary service in Chinese ports is being instituted in collaboration with the League and in accordance with its counsel. Bolivia, at the other end of the world, has had similar advice, and it was reported to the Assembly by the Fifth Commission that League experts were engaged in a survey of that country, facing grave difficulties created by political upheavals and the lack of communications which made it necessary for them to journey largely by aeroplane, crossing the Andes as well as other obstacles by this means.

#### A Question of Money

It is impossible to make any reference to the League's health work, uniformly and singularly successful as it is, without coupling it with the name of Dr. Rajchman, the Director of the Health Section of the Secretariat, and Miss Lawrence was not guilty of any such omission in presenting her report. As she justly observed, the League's Health work passes naturally through three stages. First comes the study and the collection of information, secondly, the formulation

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of conclusions on the basis of the material collected, and thirdly and finally, action taken on the basis of these conclusions. The action, of course, lies almost wholly with Governments of individual countries, but it is taken, as has been shown, as a result of League study and on the lines to which that study has pointed. The only criticism heard anywhere regarding health work during the XIth Assembly was that many countries wanted more of it. But here, unfortunately, budgetary considerations have to be reckoned with. The Health Organisation is spending all the money the Assembly is willing to grant it, in addition to subventions it receives from outside bodies like the Rockefeller Foundation for special purposes. One new development in immediate prospect is the creation in Paris, at the cost of the French Government, of an International School of Hygiene, to which public health officers and others from different countries can go for short courses (given by experts from all over the world) designed to familiarise them with the latest discoveries and doctrines in the field of public health administration and the fight against disease generally. Reference was made to the French Government's offer in the course of the Assembly's discussions, but it fell actually to the Council on the day before the Assembly ended to accept the offer with appreciation.

## X

### THE LEAGUE AS PROTECTOR

The League of Nations within the field of its humanitarian work concentrates particularly on the protection of the unprotected. That function is discharged in regard to mandates and minorities and other sections of work described elsewhere in this booklet. In this chapter it may be taken as applying particularly to the care of women and children, of prisoners and of homeless refugees. The League's work for women and children falls under two separate headings, child welfare and the traffic in women and children. The latter has always attracted considerable



public interest and with some reason, for in this field the League has done a piece of work that badly needed doing and has done it, all things considered, extremely well. The enquiry conducted a few years ago into the international traffic in women in Europe, America and parts of Africa is one of the League's notable achievements, and the most important fact recorded at the XIth Assembly was that all the arrangements for an extension of that enquiry to Asia had been made, thanks to a grant of funds by the American Bureau of Social Hygiene, and that the investigators appointed were about to start on a two years' tour, which would carry them through most countries of Asia, including the Philippine Islands and the Dutch Indies. The investigators were working under the direction of an expert committee, with whom they discussed every detail of their plans at a meeting at Geneva a fortnight before the Assembly opened. In the course of the debate in the Fifth Commission speakers from almost every Asiatic country expressed their appreciation of the impending visit of the investigators and the readiness of their Governments to provide every facility for the enquiry.

### The Advance of Abolition

For the rest the chief aspect of the work to come under discussion was the progressive abolition of licensed houses of prostitution in country after country. This may reasonably be considered to be due almost wholly to the publicity given to the question by the Committee on the Traffic in Women and Children. For years past a steady pressure in favour of abolition has been exercised. Those countries which had already achieved abolition gave reasons for their action, and expressed themselves as uniformly satisfied with the results. As a consequence, hardly a meeting of the Committee passed without some country announcing that its Government had decided to fall into line with the rest. In the course of the Fifth Commission discussions the Lithuanian delegate, Mme. Ciurlionis, said her country was

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studying the question, and was anxious to know more of the experience of others. The French delegate, explaining that in France the question is decided, not by the central Government, but by each municipality, said that twelve towns had abolished the licensed house system and six others were intending to do so. Mlle. Vacaresco, of Rumania, recalled that in 1923 she had voted against her Government on this question, and that as a result of the conversion of public opinion abolition had recently been decided on. But abolition itself gave rise to certain problems, and the Polish delegate suggested that the Secretariat should study the comparative merits of voluntary and compulsory treatment of venereal disease. The same delegate made a statement which throws a sinister light on the extent of the traffic in women. There had, he said, been a case of traffic discovered in Poland in the previous year in which 110 persons had been implicated, and which had led to the arrest of thirty-three traffickers. He mentioned further that in the Argentine, owing to the efforts of a particularly resolute judge, an organisation of 700 members carrying on traffic in women and children had been discovered. Apart from the discussions already mentioned the Fifth Commission contented itself with urging that heavier penalties should be imposed on souteneurs, and with expressing its approval of the proposal to penalise those engaged in the traffic in women no matter what the woman's age might be. Hitherto an age limit of twenty-one has been fixed.

### CHILD WELFARE

The League's work for child welfare has more than once been criticised, particularly by successive British members of the Council, on the ground that it tends to be diffuse and to include questions which are essentially of national rather than international concern. There is, no doubt, some basis for this criticism. At the same time in certain spheres of the League's work, and still more in that of the International Labour Organisation, a good deal can be done, and has, in



fact, been done, to level up standards in different countries by giving publicity to the practice followed both by the more progressive and the least progressive, and drawing attention to the contrast between the two. That consideration has, in the view of the Child Welfare Committee, justified it in taking up several questions, which admittedly do not involve co-operative action between States. In the course of 1930, Mr. Henderson at a Council meeting had a little deprecated one convention which the Child Welfare Committee was endeavouring to draft, on the rather technical question of assistance to foreign minors, the British Foreign Secretary taking the view that this was only a small part of the larger question of the treatment to be accorded to foreigners generally in any country, and that it was well not to proceed with it separately. The British representative on the Fifth Commission, Mrs. Hamilton, did her best to smooth down Mr. Henderson's words by indicating that the British Government had no desire to impede any reform which the Child Welfare Committee considered important, but the Commission as a whole did, in fact, agree that, while the treatment of foreign children should be investigated to the full and all possible information about it acquired, definite action should not be taken till the larger question had been further considered.

Another question under consideration is the protection of the illegitimate child, a matter of considerable importance, since in some countries all children have equal right to public services of different kinds, regardless of whether they are legitimate or illegitimate, while in others considerable hesitation is felt about putting the illegitimate child on precisely the same footing as the legitimate. An international convention on this subject may be drafted. Juvenile courts are also being discussed, and there is constant co-operation between the Child Welfare Committee and the International Educational Cinematograph Institute. Several members of the Fifth Commission emphasised the importance of the influence the cinema may exert on the young, the Indian

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representative dwelling particularly on the bad effect of certain films, while Dr. Chodzko, of Poland, mentioned that in Warsaw there was a cinema devoted to purely educational pictures. As so often when an expert committee is obviously doing its work effectively, the Assembly felt called on to do little more than take note of the activities in progress and express its general approval of them.

### REFUGEES

Of refugees it is impossible to write without calling up at once the tireless and self-sacrificing figure of Dr. Nansen. With his name the League's refugee work will be inseparably associated, and nothing could have been happier than the suggestion made by Lord Cecil from the Assembly platform that the new refugee office it has been decided to establish should be known to the world as the Nansen Office. The League's refugee work must, by the nature of things, be temporary, not permanent, in character. There has, indeed, been some anxiety in the past lest it should tend to become too permanent. It is concerned with refugees displaced from their homes through or as a result of the War, and their numbers should be perpetually diminishing as they gradually find settled work and habitations. That has, in fact, been happening, and the decision has been definitely taken to wind up the remaining work by the end of 1939. In the past both the League itself and the International Labour Organisation have, at different times, been responsible for the general control of the refugee work, and in 1929 it was decided that the refugee organisation should run for a year experimentally as part of the League Secretariat, Dr. Nansen, as High Commissioner, retaining general direction of the work. Nansen's death re-opened the whole problem, and, just before the XIth Assembly met, a Conference of Government delegates was held at Geneva to consider what steps should be taken for the future. The conclusions reached, which were duly approved by the XIth Assembly, were that any legal questions connected with the refugees, as, for example,



in regard to nationality, passports, etc., should be handled by the League Secretariat, but that the actual work of moving the refugees from one country to another and finding them employment should be handed over to a new autonomous body to be established at Geneva, and supplied with the funds which the old organisation under the League Secretariat had in hand, together with the future yield of the Nansen Identity Certificates, each of which has to be renewed annually by its bearer for a small fee that goes towards financing the settlement of more refugees.

#### A Successor to Nansen

To find an adequate successor to Dr. Nansen was beyond hope, but the League pretty certainly made the best choice it could when it prevailed on Dr. Max Huber, a distinguished Swiss jurist, who has sat since 1921 as a judge of the Permanent Court of International Justice, to become head of the new refugee office. Dr. Huber was to retire from the Permanent Court at the end of 1930, and it was hoped to get the new office started by the beginning of 1931. Since there had been no time to draft its constitution it was decided to ask Dr. Huber to undertake that work, and the President of the League Council was authorised to give the necessary approval in case it should be required before the Council held its January meeting. These technical arrangements were approved by the Assembly without being discussed at any length, though certain special aspects of the refugee question, such as the presence in Greece of a number of Armenians for whom the Greek Government could not take permanent responsibility, were touched on. What is now in prospect is the opening of a new and final chapter in the story of the League's refugee work, the aim before the new office being to reduce to the least possible number within the nine years limit set for its work those refugees who still remain exiled from their country and without settled home. The vast majority of them are Russians and Armenians with the addition of a small contingent of Assyrio-Chaldeans from the region on the frontiers of Turkey and Iraq.

## PRISON REFORM

Last in the list of the League's protégées, and indeed, not actually figuring in it at all as yet, are the inmates of the prisons of the world. The Howard League in Great Britain has long urged that the League should take up this question and give its approval to an 'international prison charter' embodying the minimum standards which it may be agreed should be observed in every prison in every country. This proposal was deprecated in some quarters on the ground that prisons are essentially a domestic concern of each country, and that the question has no international aspect at all. It was possible enough, however, to point, in reply to that, to various other sections of League work where the main object is to level up standards existing in different countries, and the League Council went so far early in 1930 as to ask the Assembly to place the subject on its agenda, at the same time instructing the Secretary-General to consult the International Prison Commission and the Howard League for Penal Reform as to what, in their opinion, could advantageously be done by the League in this matter. The Howard League in reply sent a memorandum, but the International Prison Commission did not, no doubt for the reason that it was holding an important Conference at Prague just before the Assembly met and was not in a position to take action till the matter had been there discussed. During the Assembly, however, a letter was received from the Commission saying that it would be delighted to co-operate with the League, and would in due course present a memorandum indicating what form that co-operation might take. There is already in existence a set of rules drawn up by the International Prison Commission, representing a minimum standard for the treatment of prisoners, and it was felt that these might well form the basis of any action by the League in the matter. Beyond that the Fifth Commission was hardly in a position to go, since no action could well be taken till the promised memorandum



from the Prison Commission arrived. The Assembly therefore decided that copies of the standard minimum rules referred to should be circulated to all States, and to one or two private associations, asking for any comments both Governments and associations might have to offer. At the same time the Secretary-General was instructed to confer with representatives of the International Prison Commission as to future co-operation between the League and that body. The subject is to be placed on the agenda of the XIIth Assembly, by which time, it is hoped, considerable information will have been amassed.

### INTELLECTUAL CO-OPERATION

A word must be added somewhere—so why not here?—on Intellectual Co-operation. As the French delegate, M. François-Poncet, observed in the course of the discussions in the Second Commission, it is difficult to define Intellectual Co-operation, but it is an essential part of the League's work. (Not everyone, perhaps, would endorse the second half of this observation, since the intellectual co-operation enterprise is commonly felt to be a little of a sideshow.) Though intellectual co-operation cannot be accurately defined, it may be described with some justice as an attempt to establish and maintain in the intellectual sphere that element of international co-operation which forms the basis of all the League's work. That is an ideal which it is easier to aim at in theory than to work out in practice.

What the League has been doing regarding it is to establish an Institute of Intellectual Co-operation at Paris (the funds being mainly supplied by the French Government) under the indirect but ultimate control of a Committee on Intellectual Co-operation sitting at Geneva. There has been considerable dissatisfaction with the work of the Institute, on the ground largely that its activities have been too diffuse, and that it has been maintaining an unnecessarily large staff. The Assembly, in 1929, decided to overhaul the Paris Institute, and the committee arranged for that purpose

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recommended that the field of work should be curtailed and the staff drastically pruned. The existing Director of the Institute resigned, and there was appointed to take his place (as from the beginning of 1931) M. Henri Bonnet, a well-known member of the staff of the League Secretariat. These changes were reported to the XIth Assembly, which gave them its general endorsement. In view of the fact that a fresh start was being made on new lines delegates had not a great deal to say on the question of Intellectual Co-operation, leaving it to the new Director to set his own course, subject to the Committee on Intellectual Co-operation, in the coming months. Special approval, however, was given by various delegates to particular aspects of the work of the Intellectual Co-operation Committee. Both Mrs. Hamilton, of Great Britain, and Baron von Rheinbaben, of Germany, for example, urged that everything possible should be done to promote the instruction of youth in the aims of the League, and both of them laid stress on the importance of educating the teaching staff of the schools. The German delegate spoke particularly of the great value of the visits German teachers had paid to Geneva from time to time. Sir D. P. Sarvadhicary, of India, attached importance to the enquiry about to be undertaken into the problems arising (in non-European countries) from the co-existence in some territories of populations belonging to different civilisations. He hoped that when political conditions in India were more settled a National Committee on Intellectual Co-operation would be formed in that country.

That remark draws attention to an important feature of the organisation created by the League in this field, for out of the international committee sitting at Geneva there have arisen national committees in many countries, designed to promote nationally those aims which the League is endeavouring to attain internationally.

The resolution finally adopted gave general approval to the new scheme for the Institute at Paris, whereby enquiries by committees of experts on special subjects are largely



substituted for enquiries carried on in the Institute itself, and to the proposed strengthening of the Intellectual Co-operation section in the League Secretariat by the appointment of a new official to deal particularly with educational information, for which that section of the Secretariat forms a centre.

## XI

### A SECRETARIAT STOCKTAKING

There is generally one subject which dominates all others at a League Assembly. This year it was the reorganisation of the League Secretariat. That is by no means the purely domestic affair it may seem to be. The Secretariat is the pivot of the whole League machine. The Assembly meets only once a year. The Council meets only three times. The Secretariat is at work all the time. Without it the League would cease to function altogether, and according as the efficiency and enthusiasm of the Secretariat rises or falls the general prosperity of the League will wax or wane.

In the main, and viewed over a term of years, the Secretariat has completely justified the confidence reposed in it. The 600 men and women working there are drawn from over forty different nationalities, but they have settled down astonishingly well, under the leadership of Sir Eric Drummond, into a perfectly homogeneous and effective body. But in the last year or two various discontents regarding the Secretariat have made themselves manifest, both from inside it and from outside. The trouble inside was that some of the best men were tending to leave, and others to grow dissatisfied with their conditions of service, because there was no security of tenure—engagements in the upper ranks of the Secretariat being for seven years only, with a possibility, though no certainty, of renewal—no assurance of promotion, because men were often brought in from outside to fill the higher posts, and no freedom from anxiety regarding old age, because no pension system had been instituted.

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These are rather serious defects in the organisation of an international Civil Service, but more serious were the indications that certain States desired the Secretariat, so far, at any rate, as its higher officials were concerned, to reflect the national policies of the different States, rather than to subordinate all national aims to the larger task of working out an international, League of Nations, policy. The chief exponent of that point of view was Italy, whose attitude was quite clearly defined on more than one occasion.

#### The Committee of Thirteen

But to say that is to anticipate a little. It was at the Tenth Assembly, in 1929, that on the motion of the British Delegation a committee of thirteen members was appointed to consider the whole conditions of service in the League Secretariat and bring in any necessary recommendations. M. Sokal, of Poland, was its Chairman, and Lord Cecil its British member, Count Bernstorff its German, and Professor Gallavresi its Italian. The committee sat between the Tenth and Eleventh Assemblies, producing its report at the end of June, 1930. Its members could not reach agreement, the chief dissentients being the Italian and German members. The difference between majority and minority went deeper than might appear. Superficially it turned on the question of permanence of contracts. The minority wanted those in the higher ranks kept short, so that men might be constantly going to Geneva fresh from their national capitals and able to interpret at Geneva national ideas and national policies. On the face of it there is much to be said for that, and if Secretariat officials were recruited mainly from the ranks of professional men in private life the contention might be sound enough. But in fact most recruits to Geneva come from national Civil Services, and if a man is to leave his own country's service for no more than about seven years, with the hope of returning and ending his days in it, he is under an irresistible temptation so to comport himself at Geneva as to maintain and, if possible, increase the favour in which his



own Foreign Office may hold him. In other words he will regard himself as in some sense a trustee of national interests while a member of an international institution.

### National or International?

That idea is perfectly fatal to the whole idea on which the League Secretariat is based. As long ago as 1920, Mr. Balfour, as he then was, drew up, and the Council unanimously approved, a declaration to the effect that members of the Secretariat were no longer the servants of the country of which they were citizens, but became for the time being servants only of the League. That might seem to go without saying, but it had become a matter of general comment that Secretariat officials belonging to one or two countries in particular were in unduly close touch with their own Governments and solicitous to excess for the interests of their own countries. Attention was further focussed on that tendency when the Italian Government, in 1927, issued a decree laying it down that no Italian must accept or retain office in an international organisation except with his Government's consent, which was liable to be revoked at any moment without reason given. On the Committee of Thirteen, which studied the whole question of the Secretariat between the Tenth and Eleventh Assemblies, the Italian member joined with the German in signing a minority report the chief characteristic of which was that it exalted national interests at the expense of international. It opposed permanent contracts for the higher officials (on this point the Colombian and Venezuelan members associated themselves with the other two) on the ground that these officials should be in close touch with public opinion in their own countries and not allowed to settle down to a long term of Geneva life. It contained a challenging sentence beginning 'Until the "international man" is created . . .', which suggests without any justification that the League has so far failed in producing international men. In actual fact the Secretariat is full of them. The shorter minority report, signed

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only by Count Bernstorff (Germany) and Professor Gallavresi (Italy), contained another proposal, which the majority decisively rejected, to the effect that the Deputy-Secretary-General and Under-Secretaries-General should form an Advisory Committee, with the Secretary-General in the chair, to which all questions of importance arising in the Secretariat should be referred. Such an expedient would considerably encroach on the present prerogatives of the Secretary-General, and the fact that it was advocated on the ground that the Under-Secretaries-General, who all belong to Great Powers, would be able to 'represent' public opinion in their respective countries was not calculated to commend it to delegates from other States or to the much larger number who consider that the task of 'representing' opinion, whether public or governmental, belongs to the Council and Assembly, and that the business of the Secretariat is simply to serve.

### Italy Emphatic

A week or two before the Assembly opened the Italian Government addressed an official Note to the Secretary-General substantially endorsing the attitude of the Italian member of the Committee of Thirteen, who had sat on that body in an individual capacity, not as representative of Italy. The Note also drew attention to the disproportionate number of British and French members of the Secretariat, a criticism whose force had to be admitted, though there were, in fact, good reasons why those two nationalities should predominate in the early days of the League.

### A Minority of Two

It was in the light of these events that the discussion on the Secretariat opened. The great majority of delegates accepted the majority report of the Committee of Thirteen from the outset, but Count Bernstorff and Professor Gallavresi, the dissentient members of the committee, were also delegates to the Assembly and there was every prospect that they would fight the majority proposals, point by point,



in the Fourth Commission. So far as Professor Gallavresi was concerned that prospect was realised. The Italian delegate, able in presentation of his case, and always courteous even when he was unsupported, argued day after day the case he had embodied in his minority report. On some points Count Bernstorff supported him. On others the German delegate accepted reasonable compromises or bowed to the majority decision. Other leading figures in the Commission were the British delegate, Mr. Dalton (Lord Cecil, who had been a member of the Committee of Thirteen, was engaged on the Third Commission), the French delegate, M. Cahen-Salvador, M. Hambro, the Norwegian and M. Rappard, the Swiss. M. Rappard had at one time been Director of the Mandates Section in the Secretariat, and consequently spoke with detailed knowledge of the administration, but that did not preclude him from adopting an often critical attitude regarding the institution of which he had lately formed a part.

#### The Contested Points

There were four main points round which discussion centred, the international character of the Secretariat, permanence of tenure, the so-called "higher direction" (the number, position and functions of Under-Secretaries-General and Directors) and pensions. For reasons already stated the first three of these raised important questions of principle. So did the fourth, in so far as it bore on security of tenure, and helped to make the staff of the Secretariat, what Mr. Henderson once said it should be, "a body of independent, efficient and contented men and women." To the pension scheme no objection was made, except by the Indian delegate, Mr. Bajpai, who at one point opposed it on general grounds of expense. All that had to be decided was a series of details regarding scales and amounts, and as the best actuarial advice had been obtained on these points the Committee had not much to say about them.

But regarding the remaining questions there was almost interminable discussion, first on the majority proposals as

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a whole and then on each of them taken seriatim. In almost every case a vote was needed and the figures usually came out at about 30 to 4 or 5. On the international character of the Secretariat, Professor Gallavresi made his case again in a number of quite persuasive speeches, but he was on weak ground tactically in desiring to keep the higher posts in the Secretariat in the hands of the Great Powers, apart from one which he would give to Latin America. On the other side Mr. Dalton and M. Cahen-Salvador were conciliatory but unyielding and the end of the 'internationalism' discussions was that the attempt to install nationalism within the Secretariat was decisively repelled. The first article in the staff regulations, defining the duties and loyalties of Secretariat officials was considerably strengthened, and it was decided that in future every new official should sign the undertaking 'I solemnly undertake to exercise, in conformity with Article I of the Regulations\* in all loyalty, discretion and conscience the functions which have been entrusted to me as an official of the Secretariat of the League of Nations.' Any future Secretary-General was to take a more solemn pledge before the Assembly. In the end, the Italians, by raising this issue, did an unintended service to the League, for they enabled the delegations as a whole to record their all but unanimous decision regarding it, and, as a result, the principle of the unequivocally international character of the League Secretariat is more firmly established than ever.

#### Nationality Claims

That does not mean, of course, that the ideal of choosing the best man for a given position, no matter what his nationality, can be realised in anything like fullness. Some sort of rough balance of nationalities must be maintained, for States desire, and, within limits, are justified in desiring, to see a certain number of their citizens members of the Secretariat, not with a view to the exercise of political

\* Laying it down that 'the officials of the League of Nations are exclusively international officials, and their duties are not national but international.'



influence, but in order that they may feel their country plays its due part in the running of the machine on whose efficiency the League's welfare so largely depends. To consider the claims of nationality to that extent is perfectly compatible with the maintenance of a genuinely international outlook and the pursuit of wholly international purposes.

On permanence of engagement the difference between the two schools of thought boiled down to very little. Both majority and minority were agreed that the lower grades of staff should have long-term engagements and that the highest of all—Under-Secretaries-General and Directors—should have only seven-term contracts. The contested question was whether the so-called Chiefs of Sections and Members of Sections (the highest grades under Directors) should come under the long-term or the short-term arrangement. And even here, the difference was only between a seven-year engagement which the Secretary-General was free to renew if he saw fit, and a long-term engagement which he could terminate at any moment for sufficient cause. That distinction, nevertheless, might mean a good deal to a man with family responsibilities, anxious to settle down for life in a post he could be reasonably sure of retaining so long as he continued to discharge his duties with efficiency.

Into the debates on this question there is no need to go. The Italian delegate maintained his fight for the short-term contract and various compromises were suggested in the hope of promoting an agreement. The matter had in the end to be carried to a vote, when the long-term contract proposal was carried by 30 to 8, with 4 abstentions. Another step towards security of tenure was thus taken.

### The Under-Secretaries

Next came the battle of the Under-Secretaries. There were several aspects of that. The Committee of Thirteen had been divided as to their number. At present the Secretary-General of the League is British, the Deputy-

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Secretary-General French, and the three Under-Secretaries-General German, Italian and Japanese respectively. The five Great Powers in the League are thus firmly entrenched in the highest posts in the Secretariat, an arrangement to which many of the other States not unnaturally take exception. The majority on the Committee of Thirteen considered that the only way to meet the views of the latter—which they considered perfectly reasonable—was to increase the number of Under-Secretaries by five, making eight altogether, though Sir Eric Drummond said he should only propose actually to make two new appointments at present. The minority were anxious to maintain the prerogatives of the Great Powers and quite frankly defended their attitude. They did, however, propose that the Legal Adviser of the Secretariat—who happens to be a Latin American—should be promoted Under-Secretary.

Both these expedients were open to obvious objection, which is, perhaps, why the Fourth Commission could not reconcile itself to adopting either of them. A number of its members, indeed, led by M. Hambro, the first delegate of Norway, were for solving the difficulty rather drastically by abolishing the position of Under-Secretary altogether. That proposal gained considerable force when Count Bernstorff, the German member of the committee, declared himself ready to vote for it in spite of the fact that that meant abolishing a post held by a German. The French delegate, on the other hand, was dead against abolition, and Mr. Dalton, for Great Britain, said he would vote for the increase of the Under-Secretaries-General by two, and against any other proposition, but he was ready, in view of the sharp difference of opinion on this point, to accept a suggestion put forward by the Japanese delegate that this particular question be referred to a committee for further study. That course was ultimately taken, the terms of reference to the committee being as wide as they could well be made, for it was asked to consider 'the retention or elimination, the increase or reduction, of the posts of Under-Secretary-General as well as the



consequences resulting therefrom.' The committee is to report by May 1, 1931. Its findings can in no way be forecast. It must be, to some extent, impressed by the support given in the Fourth Commission to the proposal to abolish the post altogether, but it is to be doubted whether Italy or Japan would agree to the disappearance of posts which they like to see their nationals holding. It will be a little difficult, indeed, for the committee to do anything but bandy to and fro once more the arguments worn threadbare in the discussions of the Committee of Thirteen.

### An Advisory Council

Bound up with the question of the number of Under-Secretaries was the Italian proposal to constitute those officials an Advisory Committee, to which the Secretary-General should be bound to refer all questions of importance. Though mere numbers might not seem to affect this principle directly, Professor Gallavresi took the view that the Advisory Committee must be small enough to discuss freely the most confidential questions, and the Committee of Thirteen's proposals for an ultimate total of eight Under-Secretaries was fatal to his plan. But the plan had no chance in any case. Member after member of the Fourth Commission rose to oppose it, on the ground that the authority of the Secretary-General must be preserved paramount. The British delegate was particularly strong on that, and the Bulgarian Finance Minister, M. Moloff, who was a member of the Commission, went so far as to suggest that it ran counter to the provisions of the Covenant regarding the Secretary-General's functions. Sir Eric Drummond, appealed to for his personal opinion, said the plan would make for delays and difficulties within the Secretariat, and on the matter being put to a vote the Italian proposal was decisively defeated by 30 to 5.

On pensions no differences of opinion as to the principle revealed themselves, except that the Indian delegate raised the question whether the existing Provident Fund did not

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meet all reasonable needs sufficiently. Apart from that there was unanimous agreement that a pension system was essential on grounds of justice and expediency alike, and all that came up for discussion was certain details of the arrangements—as, for example, the contribution members of the staff and the League itself should respectively make, the maximum amount any official might draw as pension (this was fixed at 25,000 Swiss francs, £1,000, per annum), and the percentage by which the pension should be reduced if the recipient left the League's service before the statutory retiring age. It was generally felt by the time the debate closed that all these points had been satisfactorily settled, and that service in the League Secretariat would in future hold out far more attractions, or be attended by fewer disabilities, than it had done in the past.

### The League's Budget

But all this, of course, costs money. You cannot suddenly graft a pension system on to the League budget and leave the total the same as before. Apart from that the gradual development of the League's work makes some expansion of its expenses essential. If they did not expand, it would mean that the League was, in a measure, stagnating. Take, as example of that, the Indian proposal, warmly and universally approved, that the League's Economic Organisation should undertake an exhaustive investigation into the causes of the world's economic depression. The cost of that enquiry will be 100,000 francs, or £4,000, but no one can doubt that if the enquiry yields any practical results the nations in the League will be saved twenty or fifty or a hundred times their share of this extra expenditure. Still, it all increases the budget, and the total for 1931 is a good deal higher than in any previous year. The actual amount voted by the Assembly was 31,637,501 francs, or £1,265,500, as against a last year's vote of 28,210,428 francs, or £1,128,410. This covers the cost of the League itself, the International Labour Organisation and the Permanent Court of International Justice.



Great Britain's share of the whole works out at about £135,777. Pensions were responsible for about 1,000,000 francs of the difference, other increases being due to expenditure on the League's new wireless station and to changes in Secretariat organisation proposed by the Committee of Thirteen. The Opium and Social Service Section, for example, which has so far been under one head, is to be separated, and the Transit Section, whose work is perpetually increasing in volume and importance, is to have a Director of its own for the first time. All this is a clear sign of health and vigour, and no one can cavil seriously at the budget total. At the same time some of the small States are hard put to it to find their annual subscription to the League and more than once reforms for which money was needed had to be abandoned because certain delegates said their instructions prohibited them from sanctioning any fresh expenditure. One satisfactory event in this field was the announcement that China, which owed the League heavy arrears of subscriptions, had agreed to pay them off by twenty annual instalments.

## XII THE ASSEMBLY IN RETROSPECT

If anyone could listen to every speech made in the course of a League Assembly—which is impossible, since there are usually three separate commissions sitting simultaneously—he might well find it no easy matter at the end to form a considered judgment on the Assembly as a whole. For the attempted verdict which follows here nothing is claimed except that it represents the views of one casual individual who followed the Assembly from start to finish as best he could.

One fact has to be borne in mind about every Assembly, and two facts about this particular XIth Assembly of 1930. As to Assemblies generally, the mistake is too often made of asking anxiously what they did. Assemblies are not there

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in the main to do things. If they attempted to do much they would do it badly, for the space of three-and-a-half weeks, one of which is given up merely to general discussion, and in the course of which nearly every political problem in the world is dealt with, is altogether too short a time for any serious constructive work. The League needs constructive work urgently, and it has created special organs for that purpose. It is for the Assembly to decide, if it can, that it wants something done, and it is for the Council or, more probably, some technical committee, to do it. A good example of that is the Convention on Financial Assistance, which was, as already described in an earlier chapter, approved by the XIth Assembly and signed on behalf of a large number of States before the delegates dispersed. At least four years' work has gone to the forging of that valuable instrument. The Assembly, the Council, the Financial Committee and the Committee on Arbitration and Security have all taken it in hand and done their part in moulding it. Now, after surviving searching scrutiny and expert criticism, it has emerged as a finished product to take its place in the international legislation of the world. If a single Assembly had attempted to carry through a measure of this complexity it would have failed ignominiously, and nothing could be more disastrous than to expect from an Assembly any achievement of that kind. An Assembly must be judged rather by the seriousness and frankness of its discussions, and the extent to which they set a course for the League to follow in this field or that in the months lying immediately ahead.

### Initial Depression

The two facts of importance in regard to the XIth Assembly are the economic depression under which the whole world was suffering, and the results of the German elections, which were made known on the fifth day of the session. With two million unemployed in Great Britain and far higher figures than that in Germany and the United



States, and with the volume of trade diminishing in almost every country, it was not astonishing that a certain gloom overhung the Assembly. One consequence was that the economic discussions assumed an unusual importance, and another was that, for psychological reasons, delegates and observers were disposed to be a little unduly pessimistic about the Assembly as a whole. As for the German elections, their salient feature, as everyone knows, was the extraordinary access of strength achieved by a party the main plank in whose platform was something like a plain reversal of the Stresemann-Curtius policy of fulfilment of the Versailles Treaty and execution of the Young Plan. That is a matter of common knowledge now, but a result so unlooked-for fell with something of a shock on the Assembly, and had the double result of stiffening up France and other countries against any substantial reduction of their armaments in the face of a Germany thus ominously nationalistic, and of compelling Dr. Curtius, Foreign Minister in what had now become a minority Government, to pick his words with almost painful discretion, and to attune himself, in some degree, to the public opinion which had thus declared itself in Germany.

### Discussion and Decision

In view of these considerations, to say that the XIth Assembly devoted itself more to discussions than to decisions is to say nothing by any means derogatory. Quite the contrary, indeed. If the discussions took due account of hard facts, if they were characterised by frankness and a desire to probe difficult situations to the depths, then there could be little question that they would reflect themselves ultimately in the policy of the League itself and of the several countries constituting it. On the whole that can be claimed of the discussions. Rarely, if ever, have better debates been heard at Geneva than those which took place in 1930 in regard to minorities, disarmament and economic questions generally. All these have been discussed in earlier chapters

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of this booklet, and it is, therefore, unnecessary to deal with them in any detail now. It so happened that in the case of minorities and disarmament the outstanding speeches were made in each case by M. Briand. In either case he was, as it were, on the defensive against criticisms emanating mainly from Germany. The minorities consist largely of populations transferred from the nations defeated in the war to the rule of other States. The disarmament question consists largely in persuading the States victorious in the war to bring down their armaments to something like the level they had imposed by duress on the conquered. It was, therefore, natural that Germany and France should find themselves opposed on both issues, but each side stated its case temperately, and in the minorities discussions in particular the most marked characteristic was the moderation and cordiality with which the opponents pressed their points.

The situation regarding the world's economic problems was a little different. There all alike were sufferers, though, no doubt, in differing degree, and even those States which appeared at the moment most prosperous were no less apprehensive regarding the general prospects than the rest. There was no special clash between groups of States, apart from the opposition of interest between the European wheat-growing countries and those overseas, and the keynote of the debates was a general demand that the League should take some steps, even though no one could quite suggest what, to discover what was wrong and put it right.

### Words, or Something More?

But it is necessary, of course, to ask whether these discussions amounted, in fact, to anything more than mere words. Was a single member of any minority likely to be better treated because of what was said at Geneva? Was a single tank or a single submarine likely to be scrapped a day sooner because of the disarmament discussions in the Plenary Assembly? Would anyone's shares go up or any country's taxes go down as a result of the suggestions thrown



out, sometimes, as it appeared, rather desperately, in the debates of the Second Commission? None of these questions can be answered with a definite 'Yes' or 'No.' Only the future can show what the debates at Geneva were worth. There is little doubt, none the less, that Governments with minorities to administer will be more on their guard if they know that a full-dress debate on minority problems is in prospect at the Assembly each year, than if there is no such salutary publicity in store. There is equally little doubt that the insistence of the demand for an early meeting of the Preparatory Commission will prevent delays which might otherwise have ensued, and will impress hesitating Governments with the fact that the world expects that as a result of the coming Conferences armaments shall be, not merely arrested at their present level, but substantially reduced. As for economics, it is something, at any rate, that the League should have been charged with investigating the causes of the present depression and suggesting means for preventing its recurrence. That will not cure the ills from which the world is suffering, but nothing is more astonishing than the complete inability of all the experts to explain the trade slump of 1930, to say nothing of prescribing effective remedies. This is essentially a case in which action must be based on knowledge, and the requisite knowledge at present is not in existence. If the League can shed illumination here—and it remains to be seen whether it can or cannot—it will have rendered an immeasurable service to the world.

No excessive claims need or should be made regarding these Geneva discussions, nor are any undue expectations regarding their consequences justified, but it may be said, at least, that they went as far as they could go in the circumstances, and that they do inspire some confidence in an acceleration of progress along the lines emerging from the principal speeches.

#### **Some Definite Decisions**

To pass from discussions to decisions, the Convention on Financial Assistance was adopted and extensively signed.

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The Briand scheme of European Union was brought definitely within the orbit of the League. A Secretariat reorganisation of considerable importance was carried through, apart from one comparatively secondary detail on which a decision is held over till next year. The date for the Disarmament Conference was as nearly fixed as the Assembly was justified in fixing it in view of political uncertainties. An enquiry into the causes of the world depression was ordered. A World Opium Conference, designed to limit the quantity of manufactured drugs to the amount required for the world's legitimate consumption, was fixed for next May. The amendments to the Covenant to bring it into harmony with the Kellogg Pact were almost put in final shape but not quite, that work remaining to be completed by the XIIth Assembly. The fifteen judges of the Permanent Court of International Justice were elected, with results that can be pronounced tolerably satisfactory, but not more, and three members of the League Council were elected of roughly the same calibre as the States they succeeded.

#### **Finally———**

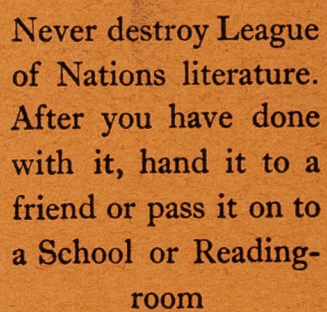
If the number of Foreign Ministers who attended the Assembly, and the proportion of that number who found it wise to remain till the end or very near it, be any gauge of the importance of an Assembly—as it undoubtedly is—then this XIth Assembly must rank high. A general feeling was prevalent that the world was in rather a bad way, that if anything could put it right the League could, and that therefore Geneva was the right place for a Foreign Minister in September. The assertiveness of the Latin American States, particularly the less important of them, gave rise to some annoyance, and problems presented themselves in that field which will undoubtedly have to be faced before long. That can wait, however, till more light is thrown on the ultimate intentions of the Argentine Republic and Brazil in regard to the League, and the Secretary-General's impending



visit to Latin America was expected to have some influence in those quarters. Viewed as a whole the XIth Assembly, if it converged less than some of its predecessors on one particular point, and if it has less to display than some others in the way of concrete achievement, fulfilled with quite a normal measure of success an Assembly's primary function, namely to provide a forum in which the problems of the world can be discussed and approaches towards their solution broadly indicated without being decisively defined. That decisive definition must be the result of explorations carried out by experts and technical committees under the Assembly's general instructions. As it is, the committees concerned have been given quite sufficient sailing orders.

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