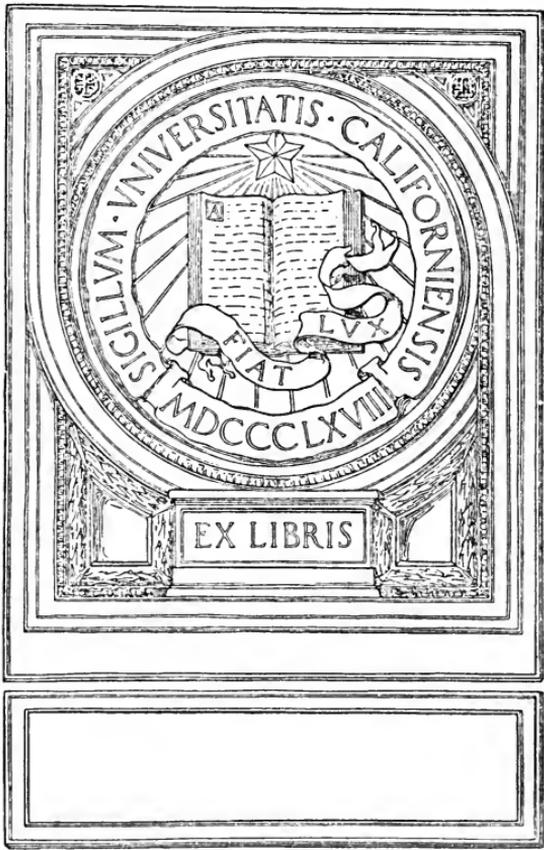


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# GENEVA, 1921.

An Account of the Second Assembly of  
the League of Nations.

By

H. WILSON HARRIS.

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THE DAILY NEWS, LTD.,  
19, Bouverie Street, London, E.C. 4.  
and  
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UNIV. OF  
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I.  
IN GENERAL

The First Assembly of the League of Nations met in November, 1920, and sat for five weeks. The Second Assembly met in September, 1921, and sat for four and a half. The First Assembly symbolised creation, the Second evolution. The First was something that had never happened before. The delegates to the First tended, like Cortes' pioneers, to "look at each other with a wild surmise." The delegates to the Second greeted each other like old collaborators and friends. For all the resemblances between the two gatherings the differences that leaped to the observing eye were fundamental. The experimental of 1920 had become the established in 1921, the enthusiasm of starting the machinery had given place to steady and sober concentration on the task of keeping it running, doubts and speculations were replaced by assurance and confidence.

In spite of that there was every prospect that the second Assembly would be less spectacular than the first. The fact is that, although it rightly attracts attention by the infrequency, the comprehensiveness and the publicity of its meetings, the Assembly of the League of Nations is, by the nature of things, an unspectacular body. The more efficiently the other two instruments of the League—the Secretariat and the Council—do their work, the less demand the routine business of the League will make on the energy and time of the Assembly delegates, although it is no doubt true that the wider the League's activities the more important will be those early days of each Assembly devoted to the consideration of the Secretary-General's report on the work of the past year. The criticism will no doubt continue to be current, as it was current last year and this, that the Assembly is wasting its time in talk. It is possible for speeches to be too long and too frequent, but to charge the Assembly with merely talking is to level no reproach against it at all. Its business is to talk. It is to some extent an executive body, but primarily a forum in which the affairs of the world can be discussed by the representatives of the States of the world, the work of the various agents of the League's activity passed in critical review, and the broad lines of policy laid down for the immediate future.

One other fundamental fact must be emphasised. The League is a League of Nations, and of nations represented by Governments. It can only function at all as the Governments agree to act in common—and they can only be persuaded, not compelled. Where the Governments agree the League machinery has shown itself abundantly adequate to carry their common policy

into effect. Where they fail to agree the League comes near being paralysed. It has been said with justice in regard to the Second Assembly that when the League had matters in its own hands it achieved complete success. Its failures, or apparent failures, were due to the refusal of individual Governments to embark on common action. But to that judgement one essential qualification must be added. It has already been amply demonstrated that as members of a common Society of Nations, States reach in a month or a week accords they would never have succeeded in establishing at all in the days of the old long-distance diplomacy between capital and capital.

This rather protracted preface is necessary if the successes and failures of the Second Assembly of the League of Nations are to be properly valued. But who were the men responsible for the successes and the failures at Geneva? The Second Assembly had the advantage of numbering among its members a considerable body of delegates, present in 1920 and therefore familiar with the facts, the traditions and the mechanism of the Assembly, and also a valuable infusion of new blood, in the shape notably of such representatives as Mr. Sastri of India, Professor Gilbert Murray, representing South Africa, M. Agustin Edwards of Chili and M. Noblemaire of France.

A number of countries sent precisely the same delegation as last year. France, for example, had M. Léon Bourgeois, M. Viviani and M. Gabriel Hanotaux, but M. Viviani, the outstanding orator of last year's meetings, succumbed to rheumatism and went home without once having addressed the Assembly. Belgium, too, made no change in its trio, M. Paul Hymans, M. Pouillet and Senator Lafontaine. For Great Britain, Mr. Balfour and Mr. Fisher came again, but Mr. George Barnes was replaced, for reasons it would be unprofitable to probe, by Sir Rennell Rodd, a change which gave the Assembly a cultured and urbane diplomatist, and robbed it of one of its most courageous and independent voices. Switzerland, too, was represented again by M. Motta, M. Gustave Ador and M. Usteri.

For South Africa, Lord Robert Cecil, this year as last the pioneer in every progressive movement, was powerfully reinforced by the addition of Professor Gilbert Murray as colleague; Australia, with Capt. S. M. Bruce, the old Cambridge rowing coach, as its chief delegate, was much more effectively represented in 1921 than in 1920; and India, in the person of Mr. Srinavasa Sastri, gave the Assembly one of its most impressive and eloquent speakers. Italy chose as its three representatives Signor Scialoja, who presided over the Assembly Commission which dealt with amendments to the Covenant, Signor Schanzer, one of the chief architects of the blockade and disarmament proposals, and the Marquis Imperiali. Dr. Nansen, the chief of the Norwegian delegates, had his mind largely preoccupied by the Russian famine question, in regard to which he strove

tirelessly but in vain to move the League to action. Mr. Branting again led the Swedish delegation, and Dr. Benes the Czechoslovakian till he was called home to Prague to form a new administration. Another noteworthy figure was that of Dr. Wellington Koo, the head of the Chinese delegation, who, as acting-president of the Council, had enough on his shoulders to keep him almost wholly silent in the Assembly. Japan, in M. Adatci, an active member of the League Transit Conference at Barcelona last April, found a representative ready to depart from the tradition of almost unbroken speechlessness set by his delegation last year. Four women deputy-delegates were present to justify the clause in the Covenant providing that all positions in connection with the League should be open to both sexes indifferently. Dr. Bonnovie, of Norway, and Mlle. Forchhammer, of Denmark, put up an active fight for the White Slave Traffic Convention; Mme. Bugge-Wicksell, of Sweden, as a member of the Permanent Mandates Commission, made her only speech in the Assembly on that subject; and Mme. Vacaresco, of Rumania, won herself tumultuous cheers by her plea for the Armenian and other women and children in the hands of the Turks.

Of the new figures in the Assembly, other than those already mentioned, the representatives of the states admitted to the League last year and this deserve reference. Austria was represented by her former Ambassador in London, Count Mensdorff, on whose once spruce figure the war and its sequel had left enduring traces. The delegates from Finland, Luxemburg, Costa Rica and Bulgaria, admitted last year, took no prominent part in the discussions, though the Bulgarian peasant-premier, M. Stambulisky, was a conspicuous landmark in the Assembly Hall. So was the chief delegate of the sixth state admitted in 1920, the stalwart and blackbearded Albanian bishop, Monsignor Fan Noli, who frequently pleaded the cause of his country in fluent French or English before Assembly, Council and Commission.

Such were the men, or some of them, who did the work at Geneva. Now for the work itself. The discussions engaged in and decisions taken may be presented, for the purpose of this brief survey in five further sections.

The League did something to modify its own constitution by amending the Covenant, developing fresh activities, adding new members. This will be discussed under the heading, "The Fabric of the League." Such issues as disarmament, the use of the economic weapon of the League and the Court of International Justice fall under the title, "Barriers against War." The title, "Territorial Problems," tells its own tale. So, very largely, does "International Action," covering the common humanitarian activities of members of the league. Finally a section constituting "A Glance Ahead" has been added, with a view to indicating the work before the League between now and the next Assembly.

## II.

### THE FABRIC OF THE LEAGUE.

The First Assembly decided that the most effective way of getting its business through was to divide up its delegates into six commissions, on each of which every delegation was entitled to one place. Since no delegation contained more than three members it followed that each individual delegate sat on two commissions and that as a consequence not more than three commissions could be in session simultaneously.

This year the same procedure was followed. The commissions, and their chairmen, were as follows:—

- |                                       |                         |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Legal and Constitutional Questions. | Signor Scialoja (Italy) |
| 2 Technical Organisations.            | M. Janesco (Rumania)    |
| 3 Blockade and Armaments.             | M. Branting (Sweden)    |
| 4 League Organisation.                | M. Edwards (Chili)      |
| 5 Humanitarian Questions.             | Mr. Doherty (Canada)    |
| 6 Political Questions.                | Count de Gimeno (Spain) |

The six chairmen, together with the six elected vice-presidents—M. Léon Bourgeois (France), Senor da Cunha (Brazil), Mr. Balfour (Great Britain), Viscount Ishii (Japan), M. Hymans (Belgium), and Dr. Benes (Czecho-Slovakia)—formed, with the President, the standing committee of the Assembly. By a notable advance on the procedure of 1920, all the commissions of 1921 sat, with rare exceptions, in public.

The question of who the President should be exercised the minds of the delegates a good deal on the opening day of the session. The Assembly contained singularly few men with just the qualities that go to make a successful president of such a body. Last year M. Hymans filled the post and for a time it seemed as though the wisest course would be to choose him again. But the reasons against re-election are sound. Ultimately the choice fell, very happily as it turned out, on the Dutch Foreign Minister, Jr. H. A. van Karnebeeck, the head of the Netherlands delegation. The Assembly had no cause to regret its decision. Jr. van Karnebeeck presided well. His voice was hardly strong enough to fill the Hall, but he was firm and courteous and did effectively all that was required of him.

The fabric of the League underwent certain important modifications in the course of the 1921 Assembly. In the first place the number of member states was increased from 48 to 51, (though the absence of Argentina, Peru and four out of five Central American States reduced the attendance to 45).

Four candidates applied, Hungary and the three Baltic States, Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Unfortunately Hungary, at the very moment the Assembly was sitting was hard at work violating her treaty obligations in the Burgenland, and foreseeing the inevitable rejection of her application she very prudently withdrew it. As to the Baltic States, all of whom applied unsuccessfully in 1920, there was never any question about the admission of Esthonia and Latvia.

With Lithuania the case was different. She was still engaged in a bitter dispute, which the League had for twelve months been attempting to settle with Poland. On the very morning of the day her application came before the Sixth Commission Mr. Balfour and M. Bourgeois had charged her representatives and the Polish alike with absence of any sincere resolve to come to an agreement. She lacked one of the essential characteristics of a stable State, settled frontiers. When the question came before the Commission the issue was altogether doubtful, but a letter from M. Hymans, the League's mediator in the Polish-Lithuanian dispute, advising admission, carried much weight, and when Mr. Fisher in a judicial speech summed up in Lithuania's favour the last fear of rejection was removed. The Commission accordingly recommended, and the Assembly approved, the admission of all the three Baltic republics.

One other application which might have been looked for, that of Germany, was not forthcoming. Germany, apprehensive of the rejection of her candidature, never put it forward. It was noteworthy that in the closing week of the Assembly the French deputy, M. Noblemaire, following up his appeal for a Germany free and peaceful at the side of a France free and peaceful, declared that he hoped Germany would be admitted next year.

Another change that kept the Commission concerned in long and frequent session was the adoption of a new system of assessment for the contributions of member States to the League funds. The new scheme divides the nations into six categories. States in the first (such as Great Britain and France) paying 90 units, the progression ranging down in stages of 65, 35, 15, 10 and 2, the last category of all including Austria, Albania and one or two others. Under this arrangement, out of a total budgeted expenditure of just over £1,000,000 (which includes the cost of the International Labour Office), Great Britain pays about £90,000. It may be added, for purposes of comparison, that the four battleships voted this year by the House of Commons will cost as a minimum £32,000,000.

Another change in the League fabric, long discussed but ultimately postponed, was the proposal to increase the numbers of the Council. As constituted hitherto the Council has consisted of four permanent members—Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan—and four non-permanent—at present Brazil, Belgium

Spain and China. The proposal to vary this arrangement came in the first instance from M. Agustin Edwards, head of the Chilian delegation, who suggested the addition of one non-permanent and two permanent members. A number of alternative proposals followed, the best supported being that of Belgium, who wanted the addition of two non-permanent members only. The arguments against increasing the numbers of permanent members while the United States, Germany and Russia are still outside the League are almost unanswerable, and in the end it was decided to let the whole matter stand over till next year, when the composition of the Council will be examined from every angle. The four non-permanent members were thereupon re-elected for one year.

But the most important change effected in the permanent structure of the League was the amendment of the Covenant. Action in regard to one Article at least, was forced unexpectedly. How are amendments of the Covenant to be effected? "They shall take effect," says Art. 26, "when ratified by the members of the League whose representatives compose the Council and by a majority of the members of the League whose representatives compose the Assembly."

The question was argued up and down and round and round, but the issues involved were much too important for the matter to be left in any doubt, and the rational course of amending Article 26 forthwith was adopted. As it now reads the provisions with regard to ratifications remain, but the majority needed in the Assembly is fixed at three-quarters, in which must be included all members of the Council. This amendment was passed without dissent and is to be given retro-active force as soon as ratified by the necessary number of States.

It has been necessary to deal first with Article 26, as the procedure it lays down affects the amendment of any other Article in the Covenant. But it is now more convenient to deal in order with the changes proposed or actually effected in the Covenant.

#### ARTICLE 1. ADMISSION TO LEAGUE.

The Argentine Republic proposed in 1920 an amendment which would include in the League automatically any nation which did not declare its desire to be excluded. This proposal was carefully considered but the Argentine delegation was not present to put its case. The proposal was manifestly unacceptable in the form presented and while not rejected definitely it was put by till further notice.

#### ARTICLE 3. ASSEMBLY MEETINGS.

A Scandinavian amendment providing for fixed annual sittings of the Assembly was, after discussion, withdrawn, on the ground that the matter was adequately dealt with in the Rules of Procedure.

ARTICLE 4. COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL.

The discussions on this question have been outlined above. Action was postponed till next year.

ARTICLE 6. SECRETARIAT.

The provision that the expenses of the Secretariat should be borne by member States in accordance with the apportionment of the expenses of the Universal Postal Union was repealed and a new provision substituted to the effect that the apportionment should be such as the Assembly might fix.

ARTICLE 10. The Canadian Delegation gave notice in 1920 of a proposal to eliminate this Article, which has, incidentally, formed one of the chief grounds of criticism of the League in the United States. The head of the Canadian delegation, Mr. C. J. Doherty, made an effective statement of the case against the Article, but after full discussion agreed that the decision here too should stand over for another year.

ARTICLES 12, 13, 15. PROCEDURE IN CASE OF DISPUTES. Verbal amendments, necessitated by the fact that the Permanent Court of International Justice is now in being, were made in these Articles.

ARTICLE 16. "SANCTIONS" OF THE LEAGUE.

The changes made in this Article are more fully discussed below in the chapter devoted to Armaments and Blockade. They give the Article precision without raising any new point of principle.

ARTICLE 18. REGISTRATION OF TREATIES.

The proposed amendment of this Article opened up very controversial questions. The Article as it stands in the Covenant contains two provisions—(1) that all international engagements must be registered with the League, and (2) that no such engagement is binding until registered. At the 1920 Assembly the Dutch delegation moved successfully for the appointment of a committee to examine the real scope of the Article.

The committee sat and duly presented a report, which advocated the suppression of the clause enacting that no obligation was binding till registered, and also the exemption of agreements of a purely technical administrative character from registration.

That report was fully considered by Commission I of the Second Assembly. The Article, which was regarded as the sheet-anchor of open diplomacy, found plenty of defenders, and the proposal to suppress its second clause was soon dropped. As sent forward to the Assembly the amended draft of the Article contained a lengthy clause exempting from registra-

tion technical agreements of the class mentioned above. This, however, raised at once a very pertinent question, which Lord Robert Cecil at once put—Who is to decide whether an agreement is “of a purely technical and administrative nature”? Lord Robert proposed that such questions should be referred to the President of the Court of International Justice, but that plan was open to objection and the suggestion was dropped. Another equally serious question was raised. Did the new exemption clause mean that “technical” agreements were binding even though not registered, or that states which preferred not to register such agreements lost the right to consider them binding? These points were pressed by Lord Robert and taken up by various other speakers. It was the last day of the Assembly. There was no time to go into the whole matter *de novo*. Lord Robert, who had never wanted to see the Article altered at all, moved that its amendment be postponed for a year. Mr. Balfour, with some reservations, agreed. So did the Assembly as a whole. The Article therefore, remains for the moment unchanged.

#### ARTICLE 21. REGIONAL UNDERSTANDINGS.

A joint Chinese and Czecho-Slovakian amendment, declaring that regional understandings tending to the maintenance of peace and the promotion of international co-operation might be not merely approved by the League but promoted and negotiated under its auspices, was similarly presented to the Assembly and accepted by it, in the form of a recommendation, without any actual change in the Covenant.

#### ARTICLE 26. AMENDMENTS.

The changes made in this Article, laying down new conditions for the amendment of the Covenant, have been indicated above.

As a result of the whole discussion, though amendments of no fewer than twelve out of twenty-six Articles of the Covenant were seriously considered, the only changes (other than verbal alterations in 12, 13 and 15) actually made were in Articles 6 (Allocation of expenses), 16 (Blockade) and 26 (Amendment of Covenant). These changes will become actually operative when the amendments embodying them have been ratified by a clear majority of the members of the League (i.e., 26), in which must be included all the Council States.

### III.

## BARRIERS AGAINST WAR.

The function of the League of Nations is to replace international rivalry by international co-operation, to substitute harmony for war. These purposes are to be achieved by different methods. The League must prevent the creation of conditions leading to war, it must find an alternative to war as means of deciding disputes, and it must remove the temptations to war that come from the possession by individual nations of powerful armaments.

Every beneficial activity of the League tends to create conditions pointing away from war, and nothing need be said here of specific decisions of the Assembly falling into that category. They will be dealt with under another heading later.

At the Assembly of 1921 three steps of varying importance were taken towards the erection of barriers against war—the establishment of the Permanent Court of International Justice, the formulation of a scheme pointing to eventual disarmament, and the elaboration of a definite procedure for enforcing by economic pressure the decisions of the League.

The creation of the Permanent Court is the League's greatest achievement. At the Assembly of 1920 the foundation was laid. The Assembly of 1921 set the coping-stone in place. Whether it would be in a position to do that was doubtful till almost the very eve of the opening session. The constitution of the Court had been adopted and embodied in a protocol in December 1920, but till that protocol had been ratified by a majority of the members of the League (25 out of 48) the election of the judges could not go forward. Governments are traditionally dilatory in ratifying protocols. It may be doubted whether twenty-five ratifications have ever been collected in nine months before, but thanks to urgent reminders sent out by the Secretariat the feat was accomplished by September 1st, with three or four to spare.

The Assembly accordingly proceeded in the second week of its sittings to choose the eleven judges and four deputy-judges. It had before it the names of between eighty and ninety candidates, nominated by the national panels of arbitrators at the Hague. The American panel had reluctantly concluded that under existing circumstances it could not nominate, but candidates from the United States were none the less put forward by Hayti, Siam and other States.

In order that account might be taken in the election both of the superior interests of the greater States and of the equal

sovereignty of all it had been decided that the judges should be chosen separately by the Council, which consists of eight States only, and the Assembly, which then numbered forty-eight. Only those candidates chosen by both bodies were declared elected.

On the day of election the Assembly sat in public in its usual hall of meeting and the Council in private at the Secretariat offices. The Assembly made its choice and the results were posted on a screen below the platform. Then the Council's list arrived in a sealed envelope and was forthwith read out by the President. The similarity between the two lists was remarkable. Nine names were common to both and nine of the judges were therefore declared elected as follows :—

Senor Altamira (Spain),  
Signor Anzilotti (Italy),  
Dr. Ruy Barboza (Brazil),  
Dr. da Bustamente (Cuba),  
Lord Finlay (Great Britain),  
Dr. Loder (Holland),  
Dr. J. Bassett Moore (America),  
Dr. Oda (Japan),  
M. André Weiss (France).

A further selection by Council and Assembly was necessary to fill the last two places and this resulted after little delay, in the choice of

Dr. Max Huber (Switzerland) and  
Dr. Nyholm (Denmark).

Then came the four deputy-judges. Over three of them the two bodies of electors agreed at once, and

M. Negulesco (Rumania),  
M. Jovanovitch (Jugoslavia) and  
Dr. Wang Chung-hui (China)

were appointed forthwith. On the fourth place, however, there was a sustained difference of opinion, the Council standing for a Belgian and the Assembly for a Chilian. This brought into play the mechanism designed for such an emergency, a conciliation committee of three members of each body. The committee recommended a different candidate altogether,

Dr. Beichmann (Norway),  
whom both Council and Assembly accepted without more ado.

Thus the bench was constituted, for all the fifteen accepted the League's invitation within a week. As it stands it is representative of every established legal system in the world, its one defect being that in Mahomedan law—which cannot be described as an established legal system—none of the judges has direct experience. It will be observed that out of eleven elected candidates one is a Spaniard and two Latin-Americans. If the principle is admitted that the nationality of the judges should bear some rough relation to the nationality of the litigants,

the number is not excessive, for out of the 48 members who constituted the League at the time of the election 17 were Spanish or Latin-American.

The Court is therefore now in being, ready to deal with any case that may be brought before it. Its seat will be The Hague, and its President, who is not yet elected, must reside permanently there. He like all the judges, gets an annual salary of 15,000 Dutch florins (say £1,250) together with a special allowance of 45,000 Dutch florins annually. The ordinary judges, in addition to the 15,000 florins, get a "duty-allowance" of 150 florins a day, which might amount at the maximum to 30,000 florins a year, salary and allowance being thus equal at the normal rate of exchange to £3,750. There is also a subsistence allowance of about £4 for each day actually spent at The Hague. All judges are appointed for nine years, and in normal cases the full bench sits. It may be mentioned that the salary of a High Court judge in England is £5,000, and a Lord Justice of Appeal £6,000.

The Permanent Court of International Justice promises to be the most effective of all the barriers it is in the power of the League of Nations to raise against War, for the effect of its existence and operation will, unless all hopes are disastrously disappointed, be to substitute justice for force in the minds of men as the deciding factor in an international controversy. A tradition tending away from war, not towards it, will be insensibly established.

But so long as every nation makes elaborate preparation for war the danger that war may break out at any moment remains. Disarmament, therefore is not merely a result of efforts towards a tradition of peace but a positive factor in the maintenance of peace. To limit, and then reduce, existing armaments has always been one of the main purposes of the League. Article 8 of the Covenant lays it down that the Council of the League shall prepare definite plans of reduction for all members of the League, and in particular shall seek means to eliminate the grave evils declared to be attendant on the private manufacture of material of war; and Article 9 prescribes the creation of a permanent commission of experts to assist the Council in its task. In addition the Assembly created a Temporary Mixed Commission on Armaments, including not merely soldiers and sailors but labour representatives, employees, politicians and economists, to approach the subject from other standpoints than that of the purely military or naval expert.

There is unfortunately little to say of the results of the efforts of the First Assembly. There were practically no results. The Temporary Mixed Commission met only twice and all that emerged from its deliberations was a decision to undertake fresh statistical enquiries, together with a resolution, pressed by the French Labour leader, M. Jouhaux, in favour of the calling of a world conference on the private manufacture of munitions:

Thus the problem stood when the Second Assembly approached it afresh. A number of delegates had come to Geneva resolved that some effective progress should be registered this time. Lord Robert Cecil in particular had received urgent instructions from General Smuts to treat this as a subject of paramount importance, and among other representatives Signor Schanzer of Italy and Dr. Lange of Norway pressed incessantly for action.

The question was hedged around with difficulties, most of them summarised in the depressingly incontrovertible survey of the problem embodied by Mr. Balfour in his general speech on the work of the Council in the year just closed. Of these two in particular were almost sufficient to block all progress—America's refusal of co-operation, and the hopeless instability which marked the political situation in Europe and parts of Asia.

These difficulties seemed to weigh with particularly oppressive weight on the British representatives, for Mr. Fisher, confronted in Commission III by Lord Robert Cecil's resolute insistence on definite action, became consciously or otherwise the exponent of distinctly cautious and conservative views. But the Commission discussions did in the end produce tangible results and the Assembly adopted without modification the series of resolutions put before it. The disarmament programme thus adopted by the League may be summarised as follows:—

1. The Temporary Mixed Commission, reinforced for the purpose, and backed by a strengthened section of the Secretariat, to draw up a general plan for the reduction of armaments, such plan to be in the form of a draft treaty or some instrument equally definite, and to be presented to the Council if possible before next Assembly (i.e. before September 1922).
2. A statistical investigation of the armaments of all countries, particularly for the years 1913 and 1921, to be made, a distinction being drawn in all cases between what is needed for preserving domestic order and what is claimed to be required for defence against external aggression.
3. The Temporary Mixed Commission to invite all countries, whether League members or not, to take part in an international conference on the Private Manufacture of Arms and the Trade in Arms, to be held if possible before next Assembly.
4. All signatories of Arms Traffic Convention of St. Germain to be urged to ratify that instrument at the earliest possible moment.
5. Council to prepare—without prejudice to ratification of Convention of St. Germain—draft protocol providing for exclusion of imports of arms into countries where arms traffic is not effectively controlled.

6. Further appeal to Governments not to exceed during the next two years their military expenditure for the present year.

This programme, it will be seen, consists of two parts. In its first article it proposes to define here and now the ultimate hope and aim of the League—to work out, that is to say, not in meticulous detail but on definite and practical lines, a concrete scheme of disarmament. To have that done will be of enormous value, for it means that disarmament will no longer be a vague and nebulous idea of propagandists. It will be a practical proposition, thought out and put on paper by competent authorities. A road and a goal will be marked out and public opinion in every country will have a standard to rally round.

But no one supposes that the goal will be reached except by slow and halting steps. It was necessary for the League, therefore, while it mapped out the whole journey, to concentrate for the moment on the stage immediately before it. There are certain measures that can be taken here and now. The restriction of private manufacture and traffic in munitions of war is of the highest importance. The Convention of St. Germain covered part of the ground, but only part of it, and in any case the Convention of St. Germain is a dead letter till America is ready to ratify it. Hence the proposal that a fresh appeal should be made to signatories to ratify, the expression of desire that the whole matter should be brought before the Washington Conference, and the decision to call an international conference to consider not merely the desirability but practical methods of control or prohibition.

In addition the Assembly invited the Temporary Mixed Commission to consider whether any useful purpose would be served by appealing to the scientists of all countries to publish their discoveries in regard to poison gas, with a view to avoiding a national monopoly in any such weapon; and further expressed the view that propaganda in favour of the reduction of armaments should be carried out "with earnestness and conviction" in all countries.

The Assembly debate in which these recommendations were adopted was made notable by three striking speeches, that of the Australian, Captain Bruce, appealing as a soldier to the politicians to realize what war was to the soldier; that in which M. Noblemaire, the French Deputy and director of the P.L.M. Railway, held up before the Assembly the picture of a France free and peaceful reconciled with a Germany peaceful and free; and the reply of Mr. Fisher, in which he declared that France and England between them had it in their power to realise the dream of humanity and lay the foundation of a general peace.

But disarmament and the Permanent Court are only two of the three legs of the tripod on which a world moulded to the League

pattern must rest. The third leg consists of the measures taken to prevent the will of the League as a whole from being set at naught by a single recalcitrant state. It has always been postulated that only in the last resort shall a League brought into being to avert war itself employ the methods of war. Article 16 does indeed provide that in certain circumstances the Council shall advise the different Governments concerned as to the military, naval and air effectives they are asked to contribute to any armed force designed to improve compliance with the engagements of the League. But that weapon has so far been left entirely in the background (the police force it was intended to send to Vilna to keep order during the plebiscite was not a "weapon") and its practical use has not even been discussed.

The effective weapon of the League is to be economic pressure. If a State has recourse to war in defiance of the obligations it has accepted (to submit differences to the Council or to the International Court, and to wait at least three months after a ruling has been given, etc.) then it becomes an outlaw from society, and all members of the League are pledged to cut off intercourse with it. That means sudden and concerted economic pressure, such as finds no precedent in anything that happened in the Great War. Sustained for any length of time it would strangle the commerce, and ultimately the physical existence, of any State not completely self-contained.

The general principles of the application of such pressure are laid down in Article 16 of the Covenant. It was the business of the Assemblies of 1920 and 1921 to give them precision. To do that meant amending the Article in certain important particulars. The discussions in Commission III were lengthy, Lord Robert Cecil, as a former Minister of Blockade in Great Britain, naturally taking a prominent part in them. The chief difficulty was to find a suitable form of words to express the relations of the Council and League members in this matter. League members are sovereign States, retaining their full sovereignty unimpaired, and it is not open to the Council to direct or require them to take at any moment steps that might mean disorganising or stopping dead some of the principal industries in the respective countries. It is accordingly laid down that each State must decide for itself whether a breach of obligation, bringing into force its own undertaking to join in an economic blockade, has been committed. That provision is included, as has been said, out of deference to the sovereignty of States, but it is certain that in nine cases out of ten the decision of the League Council as to whether or not a breach of obligations has occurred will be accepted by all member States. It would then devolve on the States to take the necessary steps, which again will be concerted by the Council.

As to the nature of the steps, certain lines of procedure are proposed. It is suggested, for example, that pressure should be

progressive, being intensified with whatever degree of rapidity the circumstances in each case might dictate. The first step would be the withdrawal of Ministers. The next would be the severance of all trade and financial relations. A naval blockade might be employed in suitable cases. It is, however, clearly laid down that the cutting off of the food supplies of the offending state should only be resorted to as an extreme measure, and that humanitarian relations would in all circumstances continue.

To summarise the decisions of the Second Assembly, Article 16 as finally adopted provides for the following procedure in the case of a breach of the Covenant :—

1. The Council gives an opinion as to whether a breach has actually taken place, and if satisfied that it has recommends to League members a date for the application of economic pressure.
2. Members, unless they challenge the Council's opinion, are thereupon pledged to sever all financial, commercial and personal relations with the Covenant-breaking State.
3. The Council recommends to League members any military measures that may be necessary.
4. League members undertake to support one another in the application of economic pressure; but in cases of special difficulty the Council may relieve particular States from responsibility for exercising such pressure.

The case contemplated in the last clause is that of a small State called on, without any support near at hand, to start blockading a powerful neighbour. This would be a hostile act, and the small State might be crushed before help could be given it.

Article 16 in its new form has to be ratified by a majority of members of the Assembly, that majority to include all the Council States. Certain difficulties are possible, though not probable, here, France having strongly opposed one amendment approved by the Assembly. In the original version of the Article all states were pledged to prohibit all relations between "their nationals" and those of a Covenant-breaking State. The Commission and the Assembly, feeling it too drastic (to take a wholly imaginary case) to prohibit an Englishman living in Warsaw from carrying on his business in the event of a blockade of Poland, changed "nationals" to "persons residing in their territory," making the breaking-off of relations a much simpler and little less effective business. France, however, stood for the Article in its full rigour, and it is therefore relevant to point out that as a Council State she has the power, though it is hardly likely to be exercised, to veto this particular amendment by casting her vote against it.

#### IV.

### TERRITORIAL PROBLEMS.

Certain of these questions should properly not be discussed here because they did not directly concern the Assembly at all. The Aaland Islands dispute for example, which the League handled with excellent effect, had been settled by the Council before the Assembly met, and only came before the latter body as a matter of report. The Upper Silesia problem, on the other hand, was referred to the Council before the Assembly opened and not decided till after it had closed. It, therefore, has no place in a record of the work of the Assembly.

Of the Assembly's particular business, the Albanian and Polish-Lithuanian questions bulked largest in the territorial section. The Vilna dispute had made more extensive demands on the League than any other single problem. Finally the League Council nominated M. Hymans as President of a conference of the two sides at Brussels. After some weeks of talk he put before them a project which neither side would agree to accept, and there matters stood when the Second Assembly opened.

Further conversations then took place at Geneva, and M. Hymans ultimately amended his project and put it again before both parties, calling on each of them to indicate acceptance or rejection by the 12th of September. By the 12th accordingly or, to be precise, the 13th, both replies had come in. Lithuania sent a letter which said substantially "we accept," accompanied by a memorandum which said substantially "we decline." Poland answered that she was prepared to accept, not this project but the old one "as a basis of discussion."

This brought M. Hymans to the end of his tether. All that was left for him was to report to the Council, and the Council, in response to a well-advised request by the Lithuanians, dealt with the whole matter in public. The scene was memorable and historic. Never had diplomacy been so conducted. The Council Chamber open to the world. A purely European question under discussion. In the chair, a young Chinese of thirty-five. On his right and left, each of them double his age and more, two veterans in European statesmanship, Mr. Balfour and M. Léon Bourgeois. Around the table the other members of the Council—an Italian, a Japanese, a Belgian, a Spaniard, a Brazilian. Opposite the chairmen representatives of the two contending parties, sitting to receive thus publicly judgments, criticisms and reproaches never uttered hitherto save in the rigorous privacy of a Foreign Minister's cabinet.

For neither of the two chief members of the Council spared his words. Lord Robert Cecil, speaking in an earlier debate in the Assembly, had described the continuance of the Vilna dispute as an international scandal. Mr. Balfour was of the same opinion. No one, he said, who listened to the Polish and Lithuanian delegates could suppose their main object was to come to an agreement. They seemed to prefer to spend their time in mutual recriminations, in going over and over again the sad and ancient story of their differences.

Then the British delegate concentrated on General Zeligowsky. What was the real attitude of the Polish Government towards him? "Is he a rebel deserving military sentence? Is he a patriot deserving a patriot's crown? We know not." At all events, while the negotiations drag on, "this ambiguous general, with his troops of uncertain allegiance, remains in occupation of the disputed territory." What was now to be done? The matter must go to the Assembly. That body, with its great authority must come forward as a whole and press on the opposing states the necessity of accepting the Hymans solution.

So Mr. Balfour. M. Bourgeois followed with a speech equally admirable. The rest of the Council concurred, and the problem accordingly went to the Assembly.

The Assembly debate was frankly disappointing. Everyone was substantially in agreement and the importance of a series of short speeches from different delegations insisting on a settlement of the quarrel was not appreciated as it should have been. M. Hymans set the whole facts of the case before the delegates; M. Milosz, for Lithuania, made a short and reasonable statement and M. Askenazy, for Poland, a long and unreasonable one, in the course of which he used language which suggested that Warsaw had in reality full control over Zeligowsky. The Portuguese delegate then appealed to the two States to come to an agreement; Lord Robert Cecil moved a resolution associate the Assembly to the fullest degree with the Council's support of the Hymans project; a Dane added to the resolution an amendment embodying a formal appeal to the two parties; M. Léon Bourgeois followed with a speech distinctly less firm than his address at the meeting of the Council; Lord Robert's resolution was adopted unanimously; and so the discussion ended—not to say collapsed.

There, as these words are being written, the matter rests, though there are signs that the League's action is having some effect on the governments both at Kovno and Warsaw. It is to be noted that under the Covenant the League has no power to impose a settlement on two disputants both of whom decline to accept it. If, however, one of the two accepts, then the full force of the measures contemplated under Article 16 (economic pressure and possibly naval and military action) can be employed against the other. This may yet happen in the case of the Vilna

dispute, for at Geneva the Lithuanians were brought very near the point of full acceptance. It is still open to them to go the whole way.

To regard the episode as marking a failure on the part of the League would be altogether premature. The League has at any rate stopped the fighting that was actually in progress between the two countries. That was as long ago as September 1920, and there has been no recrudescence since. And the hope is still justified that at no distant date a settlement, prepared for by the League plan or actually based on it, may be effected.

Another territorial question that attained a prominence equal to the Vilna dispute was that of the settlement of Albania. Even to summarise the vicissitudes of Albania since 1913 is a formidable matter. In that year, after the Balkan Wars, she was guaranteed her independence by the Six Great Powers of Europe, but she had little opportunity of enjoying it before the Great War broke out. From that moment Albania figured principally as bait to be offered to one or other more powerful States as a bribe. Under the secret Treaty of London in 1915 she was practically handed over to Italy. Again at the beginning of 1920 M. Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George would have used her, if President Wilson had not intervened, to compensate Jugo-Slavia, Italy and Greece for various sacrifices asked, or claims rejected, elsewhere. Her admission to the League, thanks largely to the efforts of Lord Robert Cecil, at the Assembly of 1920, gave her a firmer footing in the world, and in the middle of 1921 she appealed to the League to mediate in her disputes with Greece, which claimed the two provinces of Koritza and Argyrocastron, and Jugoslavia, which was occupying large tracts of what was claimed to be Albanian territory.

That appeal woke into sudden activity the Council of Ambassadors, which announced that the fixing of Albania's frontiers was its business, and proceeded to set a committee of experts to work on the problem. The League Council, wisely or unwisely, felt it necessary to acquiesce, whereupon Albania appealed quite legitimately over the head of the Council to the Assembly. Before the Assembly met a hitch in the affairs of the Council of Ambassadors had occurred. The experts had drawn up a unanimous report on the Albanian frontiers, giving an award almost uniformly in Albania's favour. It only remained for the Council of Ambassadors to approve the report, after which the League could proceed to secure to Albania full enjoyment of the territory thus allotted to her. But the Council of Ambassadors would not approve the report. They would not even meet to consider it. They were on holiday, they had other business to engage them, they had as many excuses as the prophets of Baal.

The real trouble was that Italy was wanting to get certain claims of her own in regard to Albaina conceded before she

agreed to the fixing of the frontiers, and the League Assembly, instead of being able to concentrate on bringing Serbia and Greece respectively to an agreement with their Albanian neighbours, found itself faced with the task of stinging the Council of Ambassadors into action. In this it was gradually successful.

In the end the League achieved a partial victory, achieved indeed all it could hope to achieve in the face of the attitude of a body over which it could have no control. The discussions in the Commission were lively, for the Jugo-Slavian representative, Dr. Spalaikovitch, was excitable and uncontrolled. If the Albanian, Bishop Noli, had met his attacks in the same spirit the proceedings would have been considerably disturbed. In the end an important set of resolutions was adopted and sent forward to the Assembly, which adopted them unanimously. Their main features were

1. A full recognition of the sovereignty and independence of Albania.
2. Advice to Albania to accept the then pending decision of the Council of Ambassadors on her frontiers.
3. Request to the League Council to appoint immediately a small commission of three impartial persons to proceed forthwith to Albania and report fully to the League on the execution of the frontier decision.

The appointment of the Commission, which the Council subsequently decided must be on the spot by November 1st, was much more important than may appear, both on account of the difficulty of getting any reliable information from the Balkans except from impartial persons and because of the deterrent effects the presence of outside witnesses would have on elements otherwise disposed to make trouble.

Viewed as a whole, though they provided the League with nothing that could be displayed as a spectacular success, the Albanian discussions had a distinctly satisfactory result. The League has undoubtedly made the sovereignty and independence of Albania secure, it succeeded ultimately in forcing the Council of Ambassadors to action, and it has done everything possible to assure the peaceable execution of a decision welcome neither to Greece nor to Serbia.

Other territorial problems dealt with by the Second Assembly were of less importance than those of Vilna and Albania. There was, however, a moment at which that could hardly be said of one of them—the dispute between Chili and Bolivia. In view of the fact that the Argentine delegation had walked out of the Assembly in 1920, and that in 1921 it was by no means the only Latin-American absentee, the prospect of trouble between two South-American members of the Assembly caused apprehensions which the initial attitude of the disputants was little calculated to relieve.

The controversy arose out of an old war and an old treaty. The story is too long to tell here, but the facts were, briefly, that in 1879 and onwards Chili and Bolivia had a war, in which Chili was victorious, followed after a considerable interval—in 1904—during which a prolonged truce prevailed, by the signature of a treaty which deprived Bolivia of rich nitrate-producing provinces to which she claimed to have an indefensible title. Her appeal to the Assembly was to demand revision of the Treaty in question in accordance with Article 19 of the Covenant, which provides that “the Assembly may from time to time advise the reconsideration by members of the League of treaties which have become inapplicable and the consideration of international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world.”

The opening debate in the Assembly was not promising, Chili taking the line that the Assembly was not competent to deal with the matter at all, and declaring that she could accept no intervention of any kind. After this beginning an interval was left for cooling down, and then, with the assent of both parties, a committee of jurists was appointed to report on the legal questions raised by Bolivia's application. After unhurried deliberations the committee gave its finding on technical grounds against Bolivia, holding that the Assembly had no power to revise treaties but only to invite the parties concerned to reconsider them together, and that this referred in any case only to “treaties which had become applicable” or to a case of the existence of international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world. It was implied, though not definitely affirmed, that neither of these conditions was fulfilled in the case of the Chili-Bolivia treaty.

This finding was naturally welcomed by Chili and loyally accepted by Bolivia, who, however, reserved her right to raise the question in different form at a later Assembly.

The incident, however, raises wider issues than appear. At one point Chili took the ground that the Monroe Doctrine prevented any action by the League, but that questionable argument was, perhaps fortunately, abandoned before it could be made the subject of debate. What is of less doubtful, and more general value is the implied ruling of the jurists, which the Assembly unanimously adopted, that the League does not exist to relieve a party to a treaty of obligations she happens to find onerous. The treaty must be definitely “inapplicable” before revision can be even recommended. If it were otherwise every defeated nation that had ever made a treaty with its victorious enemy would be rushing to the League for relief.

Though it was hardly under the head of a territorial question that Austria came before the Assembly, it is convenient to deal with that unfortunate country here. Admitted a member of the League at the Assembly of 1920, Austria had slipped further and further towards economic ruin, and early in 1921 the Supreme

Council had called on the League for advice. The League's Finance Committee took the matter in hand, sent an able commission to Vienna, and, acting on the commission's report, drew up a scheme for the rehabilitation of Austria's finances and economic life. This scheme depended for success on three factors, the readiness of the Austrian Governments to accept the rigorous financial reforms required by the League (including supervision by a board on which the League would appoint four members out of seven); the willingness of Austria's creditors under the Treaty of St. Germain, (i.e. the Allied and Associated Powers), and also certain other States which had given her relief credits, to suspend all their claims for a period of years; and the ability of the League to find loans for Austria for her immediate needs. Austria did her part admirably under the first heading; the League was confident it could secure what was necessary under the third; and one by one the various Powers suspended their liens under the second. Unfortunately, one of the principal creditors—America—delayed. There was good reason to suppose that she too would come into line, but an Act of Congress was necessary and till it was passed the whole scheme was at a standstill, for Austria can offer no security to fresh lenders so long as America has a first claim on all her assets. This was the position as this pamphlet is being written. Under the circumstances all that was possible for the Assembly was to receive a report on the satisfactory progress the scheme had made up to this sticking-point; to listen to the words of profound gratitude in which the Austrian delegate expressed his country's recognition of the League's efforts; and to pass a resolution voicing an earnest hope that the obstacles still standing in the way of the scheme's early consummation might rapidly be removed.

On one other territorial question the Assembly cast its eyes, only to turn reluctantly from it. At the Assembly of 1920 high hopes were entertained that the League might do something effective for Armenia. Definite schemes were under consideration when the part of Armenia till then independent turned Bolshevik, and it became manifest that action by the League would receive no welcome from the very persons it was intended to benefit. Between the First and Second Assemblies the situation became more obscure and even more hopeless, but with Armenia, in September 1921, divided between the Kemalists and the Bolsheviks, and out of the reach of representatives of any European Powers, it was clear that no action by the League short of a campaign on an inconceivably extensive scale could do the Armenians any service. This being so the Assembly, on the invitation of Lord Robert Cecil, passed a single resolution urging the Allied Powers, when re-drawing the Treaty of Sèvres in its final form, to make provision for a national home for the Armenians entirely independent of Turkish rule, and offering any practical assistance the League could command in the reconstruction of the country when the time came.

Of a quite different order are two territorial questions which the Assembly had referred to it merely as a matter of report, the actual responsibility in these cases resting with the Council Dantzig and the Saar Valley arc, under the Treaty of Versailles, administered under the supervision of the League. In either case the initial difficulties to be surmounted were enormous, and complete success in the working of the experiments seemed unattainable. Nevertheless at the Council meetings held immediately before the Assembly most satisfactory reports of the condition of both localities were presented. This is especially true of Dantzig, where controversies between the Germans and the Poles had down to a few months earlier been continuous. But in September it appeared that, thanks largely to the steps taken by the Council in June and to the firmness and wisdom of the League's High Commissioner, Sir Richard Haking, a new era of co-operation had opened. Polish and German representatives who appeared before the Council expressed genuine satisfaction with the agreements reached, and Sir Richard Haking paid impartial tribute to the conciliatory attitude both parties were adopting.

In the Saar Valley the difficulties are in some respects greater, and during the Assembly a delegation of the inhabitants appeared at Geneva to lay before individual delegates the grievances arising from the employment of francs as well as marks as legal tender in the area. This unfortunately is a provision embodied in the treaty of Versailles, not imposed by the League, and the League has no power to change it. Apart from that the reports were good, and though it is on some grounds to be regretted that the area cannot maintain a local gendarmerie for purposes of international order satisfaction was felt and expressed at the decision that a considerable detachment of French troops (black) was to be moved immediately out of the Saar territory to France's side of the frontier.

Finally there may appropriately be added here a word on perhaps the most important of all the League's territorial obligations—the administration of the mandate system. Mandate territories are held directly by the League. They were, indeed, allotted by the Treaties of Versailles and Sèvres to the Allied and Association Powers, which shared them out among individual Allied States without any reference to the League. But such territories cannot be held, like ordinary colonies, as possessions of the mandatory state. They are held in trust—"a sacred trust of civilisation" as the Covenant puts it—under the League, which is charged with satisfying itself that the administration of the territories in question is in accordance with the Covenant provisions.

When the Second Assembly opened, the mandate system had hardly begun to work. It is true that in 1920 the League Council had approved what are known as the Class C Mandates—those

for German South-West Africa and certain Pacific Islands—but this form of mandate is not far removed from annexation, and the powers of the League in regard to it are very limited. Much more important are the Class A Mandates (Mesopotamia, Palestine, Syria) and the Class B (Tanganyika Territory, Togoland, Cameroons). In regard to these the mandates are even now not approved in a final form. That is inevitable in the case of Class A, as no final step can be taken there till the Treaty of Sèvres is ratified. In the case of Class B one obstruction is the claim of the United States to the right as one of the victorious Powers to a voice in the disposition of mandate territories.

The note in which this claim was made was discussed at the June Council Meeting. The Allied Governments communicated further with the United States, and in September Mr. Balfour reported the arrival of a further Note, the contents of which were kept strictly private, but are known to have included a demand that America should enjoy equal trade opportunities with League members in any mandate territory, and that the terms of no mandate should be revised without America's assent.

It was at that point that the Assembly took the matter up. Technically the Assembly has no authority in regard to mandates, the Covenant putting the matter specifically into the hands of the Council. But it came up as one of the questions dealt with in the Secretary-General's report and was duly referred to Commission VI (Political Questions). There Lord Robert Cecil proposed at once that the Council should be asked to issue the mandates in final form without further delay, embodying in them such of the American suggestions as it deemed reasonable. This, however, was further than the Allied representatives were prepared to go. They thought there must be more conversation with America yet. Lord Robert's motion was accordingly defeated, but in response to the lead he gave in his various speeches the British, French and Belgian members of the commission (Mr. Fisher, Senator Raynald and M. Poulet) rose successively and declared that their respective governments were prepared, as an act of grace to regard the terms of the draft mandates as 'definitive, to administer the territories entrusted to them in accordance with the terms of the draft, and to submit reports to the League annually as provided by the drafts.

That meant that in five minutes the whole mandate system was brought, as regards Class B territories, into full working. The difficulties America had raised were swept away at a stroke. Before the Assembly ended the Permanent Mandates Commission, appointed to consider the reports from mandatories in their administration of mandate territory, was holding its first session and passing in review the actions of Great Britain, France and Belgium in various parts of Central Africa. The scheme devised by General Smuts was in full and active operation at last.

## V.

### INTERNATIONAL ACTION.

Matters involving international action came before the Assembly of 1921 in different forms. In the main it was a question of reviewing work already in progress in the preceding year, but there are certain enterprises that were launched for the first time during the Second Assembly. The great majority of the undertakings both new and old are directly humanitarian. They must now be considered individually.

#### WHITE SLAVE TRAFFIC.

At the first Assembly the question of further restrictions on the traffic in women and children was discussed, and the Council requested to call an international conference on the subject. This was done, and the conference, attended by delegates officially appointed by thirty-four governments, adopted by a unanimous vote certain proposals, which it cast into the form of an "acte finale." The proposals involved action, i.e. the imposition of various restrictions, by individual governments, and in order to accelerate this Great Britain embodied the contents of the acte finale in a draft convention, which, if its terms were approved by the Assembly, could be signed on behalf of the different States by their delegates then at Geneva.

After prolonged discussion in Commission V and further spirited though not acrimonious, controversy on the Assembly platform, the convention was adopted and eighteen States signed before the sittings closed. The requirements of the convention represent little, if any, advance on existing practice in a country like Great Britain, but their adoption would mean a notable step forward in the case of many less progressive States. Under its main clauses the signatories agree

1. To ratify the White Slave Traffic conventions of 1904 and 1910 if they have not already done so.
2. To take all measures to discover and prosecute persons committing or endeavouring to commit, offences involving the traffic in women and children, and to facilitate the extradition of such persons where necessary.
3. To take adequate steps to check this traffic in connection with immigration and emigration, in particular at ports and railway stations.

The discussion of this question acquired an unexpected importance owing to the sustained opposition of the French to the immediate adoption of a draft convention, not of course out of lack of zeal for the suppression of the White Slave Traffic, but

on the constitutional ground that the Assembly was going beyond its powers in drafting conventions and submitting them for signature. The contrary view was ably defended through the prolonged discussions by Mr. Balfour and Professor Gilbert Murray, and the French raised only eight votes in the Assembly of thirty-three cast. The question of principle is bound to be raised again in some other connection.

#### DEPORTATION OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

The question of the deportation of women and children in Asia Minor and adjacent regions was before the Assembly of 1920, which recommended the appointment of a commission to investigate the facts on the spot. As a result distressing statistics were laid before the Second Assembly. Numbers are to be handled with some reserve when they refer to anything east of the Adriatic, but there seems good reason to believe that at least 70,000 Christian children, Greek and Armenian, are still in Turkish harems.

With a view to rescuing them the Assembly decided to appoint a High Commissioner of the League, at Constantinople, with a mixed board to assist him, and to request Great Britain, France and Italy to appoint their High Commissioners at Constantinople to serve on the Board and act in conjunction with the League Commissioner. A Mr. Peet, an American, has since been appointed High Commissioner.

#### PRISONERS OF WAR.

The great work done by Dr. Nansen, as High Commissioner for the League, in the repatriation of prisoners of war had been carried sufficiently far by the date of the first Assembly for a comprehensive interim report to be submitted then. At the Second Assembly Dr. Nansen was able to speak of his task as virtually completed. He had restored to their homes no fewer than 380,000 men, some of them exiled for as long as five years, at the incredibly low cost of little more than £400,000. The High Commissioner emphasised the fact, which is, indeed, obvious, that without the International machinery of the League the execution of such a work would have been quite impossible.

#### RUSSIAN REFUGEES.

The condition of many thousands of Russian fugitives from Bolshevik rule at present scattered over Egypt and South-Eastern Europe was considered at a conference held at Geneva in August, and a Committee of delegates of certain States and several international organisations has been formed. The position of High Commissioner for Russian Refugees has been accepted at the invitation of the League Council, by Dr. Nansen, who is at present carrying through arrangements for the migration, employment and settlement of those refugees who do not expect or desire to return to Russia. Negotiations with the Soviet Government regarding those who do are in progress.

## TYPHUS CAMPAIGN.

The fight conducted against typhus in Eastern Europe is an example of both success and failure on the part of the League. So far as concerns the League as an organisation there has been no failure at all. On the contrary, the results achieved at an expenditure almost grotesquely unequal to the need have been remarkable, thanks largely to the efforts of the League Commissioner, Dr. Norman White, and his Polish colleague, Dr. Rajchman. But the response of individual nations to the appeal for funds was deplorable. When, at the Assembly of 1920, the situation was presented by Mr. Balfour and other speakers, and a fund of £2,000,000, with £250,000 for an immediate beginning, asked for, there followed a regular procession of delegates across the platform, each of them pledging his country to some substantial contribution payable with a minimum of delay. The promise of practically the whole of the initial £250,000 was thus secured in an hour.

## HEALTH.

The League's responsibilities in the field of public health are increasing. The First Assembly laid the foundations of a Health Organisation directly associated with the League and designed both to co-ordinate and develop existing efforts. Unfortunately one important step in that direction, the placing of the Office International d'Hygiène at Paris under the direction of the League, was frustrated by the opposition of the United States, which is a member of the Office International. There had, therefore, to be some modification of the First Assembly's plan. The organisation provisionally adopted by the Second Assembly is as follows:—

1. No General Committee, but Office International will give any advice sought by League on health questions.
2. Provisional Health Committee.
3. Epidemics Committee.
4. Medical Secretariat.

The latter three bodies form the Health Organisation of the League, with the Office International standing outside but consenting to advise. Dr. Rajchman, of Poland, has been appointed Medical Director and head of the Medical Secretariat.

## RUSSIAN FAMINE.

The League's association with the Russian Famine problem was depressing. Dr. Nansen, appointed High Commissioner for Famine Relief by an important conference of governments and voluntary organisations which met at Geneva in August, made repeated appeals to the Assembly to take action on behalf of the League. That appeal was strongly supported by Lord Robert Cecil and other delegates, but the decision lay with the constituent governments. Unless they would provide credits the

League's hands were tied, for here, as with the typhus campaign, its lack of funds kept it dependent on the States that composed it. At one time it seemed possible that certain governments would find the credits needed. But whatever hope there was of securing money gradually vanished, and all that came of the prolonged discussions in Commission VI and in the Assembly Hall was a series of resolutions wishing Dr. Nansen well in his enterprise and encouraging the Council to take action if at a later date funds should become available.

### OPIMUM TRAFFIC.

Here, as in other matters, it fell to the Second Assembly to complete tasks initiated by the First. The latter body, having taken over from the Netherlands Government the administrative duties arising out of the Opium Convention of 1912, appointed an advisory committee, with three assessors, to discharge these functions. On the recommendation of this committee the Second Assembly decided to urge on all governments parties to the Convention a stricter supervision over all imports of opium; to circulate a questionnaire with a view to discovering the world's maximum requirements of opium for purely medicinal and scientific purposes; and to authorise the Advisory Committee to extend its investigations to all dangerous drugs producing similar effects, calling a world conference on the subject if deemed desirable.

### INTELLECTUAL WORK.

At the 1920 Assembly a rather vague resolution was passed (the British Empire delegates forming a solid and solitary minority) in favour of the assumption by the League of some responsibility for what was termed "the organisation of intellectual work." The Secretariat having made certain investigations on the subject, the Second Assembly, on the recommendation of the Council, decided to appoint a Committee of twelve, including both men and women, to draw up a comprehensive report on the subject for the Third Assembly. The importance of this decision lies in the fact that it opens the door for the first time to action by the League in the field of Education.

### INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE.

At the first Assembly the supporters of Esperanto endeavoured without success (owing in part to an impassioned philippic by the French Academician, M. Gabriel Honataux, in defence of the language of his country) to commit the League to at least an examination of the possibilities of an international language. At the Second Assembly they attained their desires, carrying without opposition a resolution directing that the question should be placed on the agenda for the Third Assembly, and that in the meantime the Secretariat should compile a full report on the position of Esperanto, with special reference to the teaching of the language in schools.

## ECONOMICS AND FINANCE.

The League's Economic and Financial Committee, which came into being as a result of the Brussels Financial Conference of 1920, has been continuously engaged on various important tasks. The Assembly itself had no decision of moment to take in regard to these matters, contenting itself in the main with approving the report of the committee. This, however, involved giving the formal endorsement of the Assembly to various principles and proposals, notably

1. Initiation in concert with the Transit Commission, of an enquiry into the meaning and scope of the provisions of Article 23 of the Covenant (relating to "freedom of communications and transit and equitable treatment for the commerce of all members of the League").
2. Nomination by the Committee of competent advisers prepared on request to assist particular States in their financial and economical administration.
3. Urgent consideration of questions of adaption of international credit systems to needs of different countries.
4. Convocation, if deemed expedient, of regional conferences on transit and communication in parts of the world where transport is still disorganised as a result of war conditions.

With regard to 4, such conferences would be arranged by the Transit Committee, but the instigation comes from the Economic and Financial Committee.

A further resolution was adopted by the Assembly regretting the inevitable delay (under circumstances already explained) in the application of the League's scheme for financial reconstruction in Austria.

## TRANSIT.

The Committee on Communications and Transit came into existence as a result of the Barcelona Transit Conference of April 1921, and the Assembly had before it a detailed report of the work accomplished at Barcelona, notably the drafting of two conventions (already ratified by many States) on freedom of transit and on the use of navigable waterways, and of two series of "recommendations" on railways and ports. Report was also made under this head of the results achieved by a conference held in Paris in October 1920 with a view to simplifying passport and through-booking formalities.

## LABOUR.

Lest the omission of this important question should seem due to inadvertence it may be explained that the matter did not come before the Assembly at all, for the reason that the Labour organisation, though an integral part of the League, works quite independently, and renders account of its activities to its own annual conferences.

## VI.

### A LOOK AHEAD.

It is worth while enumerating the principal tasks that will engage the League between now and the Third Assembly, which opens on Sept. 4th, 1922. For after all the main part of the League's work is not the annual meeting of the Assembly and the periodical meetings of the Council, though these events naturally attract most attention, but the steady running of the wheels of routine business day by day.

The list that follows is not exhaustive, but it will serve at least to demonstrate the number and variety of the League's activities.

- (1) The Permanent Court of International Justice will sit, at latest on June 15th, and earlier if business requires.
- (2) The Mixed Armaments Commission will be
  - (a) drawing up agenda for an international conference (to be called by the Council) on the private manufacture of arms; and
  - (b) preparing a scheme for a general reduction of armaments.
- (3) The commissioners to report on the execution of the Albanian frontier decision will be on the spot by November 1st.
- (4) The Financial and Economic Committee will be carrying through its scheme for the financial reconstruction of Austria as soon as America suspends her liens.
- (5) The same committee will be recommending technical advisers and administrators to any government that applies.
- (6) The commission for the recovery of deported women and children in Asia Minor will be at work.
- (7) The Russian Refugees Repatriation Commission under Dr. Nansen will be at work.
- (8) The Typhus campaign will continue if funds are forthcoming.
- (9) The League administration of Danzig and the Saar Valley will continue.
- (10) The Transit Commission may, and probably will, call regional conferences on disorganised transport.
- (11) The Opium Advisory Committee will be acquiring further information on the world's requirements in opium and may call an international conference on the use of dangerous drugs generally.

- (12) The Council will be circulating to mandatory Powers a questionnaire on their administration of mandate territory.
- (13) The Permanent Mandates Commission will meet to consider further reports on mandate territory.
- (14) A special committee will be preparing for the Third Assembly a report and recommendations on the organisation of intellectual work.
- (15) A special committee will be considering further amendments to Covenant.

That, as has been said, represents only the main features of the tasks already definitely before the League. It is certain that in addition various new responsibilities will be laid on it in the course of the year. Meanwhile it has to be remembered that along certain lines progress is blocked till the Member States have done their part in ratifying different proposals on which the Assembly has agreed, notably the amendments to the Covenant, and the Convention on the Traffic in Women and Children. But there is every reason to hope that the required number of ratifications in these cases will be forthcoming before September 1922.

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## Some Books about the League.

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