

The present want undoubtedly is again chiefly one of liaison, the difficulties of which are accentuated by the distance of Geneva from some of the mandatory Powers and the mandated territories, by the fact that the Permanent Mandates Commission is an independent body of members chosen for their disinterestedness, and by the fact that the secretariat of the Mandates Section, however desirable and useful the contrary practice might be, has adopted the principle of religiously refraining from employing any official, however acquainted with the procedure, facts, or local conditions of the mandate system, "if he be a national of a mandatory Power."

I respectfully suggest that there is therefore all the more reason for a closer liaison between the Secretariat of the League and the representation of the Dominion in London, and that in the meantime this might be effected by a secretariat attached to the High Commissioner's office, replete with information of the latest developments in the mandates administration, as well as performing other similar duties as thought desirable.

GENERAL.

It would seem to be inevitable that certain considerations raised in this report will require decision sooner or later. Some of the difficulties indicated hinge on matters of much larger import, and in the last analysis involve considerations of the present significance of the constitution of the Empire. Some aspects of these problems would appear to be directly related to certain matters contained within the scope of the agenda for the approaching Imperial Conference. In the light of whatever interpretation is taken with regard to them by the Dominion of New Zealand, it would, for example, be interesting to examine the theory of the present relationship one to another of the several self-governing parts of the British Empire, which was recently announced by General Smuts as that which he intends to uphold at the next Imperial Conference. Matters such as the issue of full powers to the representative of a Dominion at an international assembly, or instructions by which a delegate from a Dominion, as a member of the League, is accredited a representative to an Assembly, have a direct relationship not only to the responsibility of the Dominions as members of the League, but to such other matters as the nationality of the inhabitants of "C" mandated territories, the importance of which would appear from the recent amendment to Article 16 of the Covenant.

I have, &c.,

EDWARD O. MOUSLEY.

The Right Hon. W. F. Massey, P.C., Prime Minister of New Zealand.

FOURTH ASSEMBLY OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

New Zealand Government Offices,
Strand, London W.C. 2, 22nd October, 1923.

SIR,—

Fourth Assembly of the League of Nations.

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, which provide that the Assembly of the League of Nations shall meet every year on the first Monday in September, the Fourth Assembly began its sitting on the 3rd September, 1923.

Representation of New Zealand.—I left London for Geneva on Saturday, the 1st September, in order to represent New Zealand at the Assembly. As you are aware, at the last Assembly New Zealand had three delegates, but on this occasion I was the only one appointed. Sir Arthur Steele-Maitland had been invited to act again as a delegate for New Zealand, but was unable to do so. Mr. Knowles, my Private Secretary, was ill, and under treatment at Leysin, in Switzerland. Mr. Burdekin took his place, and Miss Hannam, from my own office, also accompanied me.

Opening of Proceedings and Election of President.—Viscount Ishii, the Acting President of the Council, took the chair at the inaugural meeting, and delivered an address, setting out at some length the main work undertaken by the League during the past year (Document "A" attached). As will be noticed, special prominence was given to the successful results so far attained in connection with the financial reconstruction of Austria. Regretful reference was made to the hindrance to the work of the League and to the attainment of economic stability and peace in Europe, caused by the non-settlement of the reparations question. It is pointed out, however, that this matter, like the Near Eastern question, has been really outside the scope of the League's work, as both are direct legacies of the war. Reference is also made to the fact that the Court of International Justice is now definitely in operation. The Court has already given advisory opinions on several questions submitted to it (*vide* Document A. 10), and a judgment of considerable importance in a case known as the case of the s.s. "Wimbledon"—that being the name of a ship carrying munitions to Poland which was refused admission to the Kiel Canal by the German authorities. Judgment was in favour of the Allied Powers (*vide* Document "B").

Steady progress is reported as having been made with regard to various economic questions which are of practical interest to New Zealand, such as the simplification of Customs formalities, facilities for commercial arbitration, measures to prevent fraudulent trade-marks, double taxation, measures to secure greater uniformity in commercial documents (such as bills of exchange) and international statistics.

Reference to the fact that the mandates system has not yet become fully applicable to Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia seemed to call for some explanation, and in response to my inquiries on this point the Secretary of the Permanent Mandates Commission furnished me with an explanatory document setting out the position regarding "A" and "B" mandates, a copy of which I forwarded to you on the 12th September.