

some general and some regional, which had been proposed. I am not at all sure, however, that this will be a matter of serious consequence. As the Hon. G. R. Graham (Canada) pointed out, many of the resolutions passed at the Barcelona Conference on Communications and Transit Organization, in 1921, have still not been acted on in many countries, and the same thing is true with regard to other conferences which have been held. Unless they are to lead to definite results, the expense of holding numerous conferences in regard to a number of subjects certainly does not appear to be justified.

*Last Week of Assembly.*—During the week commencing the 24th September the Assembly sat daily and at the end twice daily. The meetings were principally occupied in adopting the reports of the committees on various subjects, and, in general, the debates do not seem to call for much comment.

*Shelving of Difficulties.*—One unsatisfactory feature of this, as of previous Assemblies, has been the tendency, after lengthy consideration of a subject presenting any difficulties, to decide to postpone it "until next Assembly," instead of facing the facts and endeavouring to arrive at some definite decision. This happened in regard to quite a number of subjects during the present Assembly.

*Unimportant and Unsuitable Subjects.*—Another dangerous tendency is to overload the Agenda with a number of subjects of little, or at any rate only secondary, importance, and some of them quite outside the proper scope of the League's activities, as I conceive them. The report on the work of the Committee on Intellectual Co-operation (Document A. 102) furnishes several examples—notably Resolution No. vii on page 4 of that document, with regard to the placing of the Charterhouse at Capri at the disposal of artists of all nations. What frequently happens is that a delegate—often at a late stage of the proceedings—brings forward a resolution about some subject in which he may be interested. The Assembly, instead of deciding that it is not a suitable matter for consideration, adopts a resolution that the subject be entered on the Agenda for the next Assembly. As examples of this I would refer to the following three questions, which the present Assembly decided should be entered on the Agenda for the next Assembly:—

Young women travelling alone to be required to furnish themselves with a report from the police authorities at the port of embarkation (Document A. 125).

International arrangements for civil justice for the poor (Document A. 124).

Relations between municipalities (Document A. 123).

The inclusion of such subjects on the Agenda exposes the League to adverse criticism.

*Attempt to increase Budget Item as fixed by Finance Committee.*—The Fifth Committee included in its resolutions of appreciation of the great work accomplished by Dr. Nansen and his staff in the relief of Russian refugees in eastern Europe a recommendation that a sum of 300,000 Swiss francs should be appropriated for continuance of the work in 1924. The Fourth Committee, however, adopted the recommendation of the Supervisory Commission that the amount to be included in the 1924 Budget for this work should be 153,000 Swiss francs only. When the Budget was under consideration by the Assembly an attempt was made to obtain an increase in the amount of this vote, but this was unsuccessful. Although I had the greatest sympathy with Dr. Nansen, and realize to the full the value of the work which he has performed, I voted against the increase, as I considered it entirely wrong in principle for the Assembly to endeavour to override the decisions come to by the Budget Committee after that committee has duly investigated the circumstances of each case.

*Admission of Abyssinia.*—The most picturesque incident of the Assembly took place on the morning of the 28th September, when the admission of Abyssinia to the League was agreed to and the Abyssinian delegates, in the full splendour of native costume, took their seats in the Assembly. Up to the last there was some doubt as to whether the admission would be agreed to, owing to the prevalence of slavery in Abyssinia. Ultimately, however, all opposition was withdrawn, upon the Abyssinian delegates signing a declaration agreeing to adhere to the Convention of St. Germain in regard to slavery and the traffic in arms.

*Questions regarding the Interpretation of the Covenant arising out of the Italo-Greek Incident.*—Although the Assembly did not directly deal with the Italo-Greek crisis, it requested the Council to make a statement regarding the same before the Assembly rose. Accordingly, towards the end of the afternoon's sitting on the 28th September, Viscount Ishii, as Chairman of the Council, made an important statement, which will be found in Document A. 128. It had previously been announced that the actual dispute between Italy and Greece had been settled as the result of the action taken by the Council of Ambassadors. Consequently the statement made by Viscount Ishii related not directly to the incident itself, but to questions arising out of it with regard to the proper interpretation of Articles 12 to 15 of the Covenant.

Document A. 128 makes no reference to Article 10, although, in my judgment, the Italians, having agreed to Article 10, were bound to respect the territorial integrity of Greece. The bombardment of a helpless town and the killing of women and children can by no manner of means be considered as respect of territorial integrity. A perusal of the verbatim record containing the speeches on this subject (Record of Eighteenth Meeting of Assembly) will be found interesting. Lord Robert Cecil, in my judgment, put the case for the Council about as well as it was possible to do under the very difficult circumstances. There is no doubt that many States—the smaller ones particularly—are far from satisfied with regard to the settlement which has been arrived at, and particularly with regard to the methods by which it has been achieved, and they feel that the value of the Covenant as a protection for small States against aggression by their more powerful neighbours has been demonstrated to be very much less than they had hoped and believed. The Council were undoubtedly confronted with a problem of the utmost difficulty and delicacy. It seems to me that there can be little, if any, doubt that the action of the Italians in bombarding the defenceless Town of Corfu was a flagrant act of aggression, and that Italy thereby rendered herself liable to the penalties referred to in Article 16 of the Covenant. The Council had, however, to consider what would have been the practical effect of endeavouring to enforce the penalties provided for in that article. Joint military