

action against Italy was obviously out of the question. It was almost equally impossible to invoke the economic weapon with any hope of success. Even in the unlikely event of all States members of the League being prepared to make the sacrifices which the severance of all trade relations with Italy would have entailed on their trade, the blockade would have been ineffective, as the United States and other States outside the League, in my judgment, would not have respected it. In view of the extreme sensitiveness and almost fanatical patriotism of Mussolini, any drastic action by the Council, if such were possible, would, in all probability, have precipitated a conflagration, the extent and result of which no man could estimate. In the circumstances one cannot but feel that the Council adopted a wise course in accepting humiliation and in attempting out of the violated articles of the Covenant to reaffirm some of the principles contained therein. That the Council was to some extent successful can be judged from a perusal of the paragraph in Document A.128 which restates, with the concurrence of the Italian representative on the Council, "that any dispute between members of the League likely to lead to a rupture is within the sphere of action of the League." On the other hand, what has occurred in regard to this matter has vindicated beyond question the correctness of the opinion I have several times expressed in my reports concerning previous Assemblies, that the only really effective weapon which the League possesses (at any rate, so long as it is not universal) is the power of public opinion. It is probably just as well that any illusions which may have been cherished by some of the smaller Powers with regard to the extent to which the League could protect them and their territorial integrity by the adoption of coercive measures should have been shattered. Although the prestige of the League has suffered as a result of the recent crisis, I think that a true appreciation of the position would convince an intelligent observer that in an indirect way the League did serve a good purpose, and, assuredly, as an exponent of healthy public opinion and friendly relationship between nations, it exercised a restraining influence which led the Italians in the later stages to adopt a more humane attitude than that which characterized their earlier actions.

Election of Non-permanent Members of the Council.—The election took place on the afternoon of the 29th September. All the non-permanent members of the Council in 1923 were re-elected except China, which was replaced by Czecho-Slovakia. The recommendation passed at the First Assembly that one of the non-permanent members should be an Asiatic country was thereby ignored; but I think there can be little doubt that Czecho-Slovakia is a desirable State to be represented on the Council, especially as M. Benes is a particularly able man.

REPORT ON THE WORK OF COMMITTEES.

A good many subjects dealt with by the various committees have already been touched on in the first part of this report dealing with the work of the Assembly. I will therefore only deal in this section with some of the others concerning which the debates in committee were more important than the debates in the Assembly.

COMMITTEE No. 1.—CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL QUESTIONS.

The subjects considered by this committee were—

- (1.) The Canadian proposal *re* amendments to Article 10 of the Covenant.
- (2.) The British proposal *re* alteration in the wording of the first amendment to Article 16 passed by the Assembly in 1921.
- (3.) The rules governing election of non-permanent members of the Council.
- (4.) The legal aspect of the request by Lithuania for submission to the Permanent Court of International Justice of questions concerning the competence of the Council to take the action it did with regard to the Polish-Lithuanian dispute.
- (5.) The delay in obtaining sufficient ratifications of the amendments to the Covenant, to comply with the provisions of Article 26.

Article 10.—I wrote fairly fully regarding this matter in my reports on the Second and Third Assemblies. It will be remembered that as long ago as the First Assembly the Canadian delegates put forward, on behalf of their Government, an objection to this article, which deals with the guarantee given by the League to all its members with regard to the preservation of their territorial integrity. The First Assembly decided, however, to postpone the consideration of all amendments to the Covenant until the Second Assembly. At the Second Assembly the Canadians moved the deletion of Article 10, but were unsuccessful. At the Third Assembly they moved two amendments to Article 10 delimiting the liability of States under the article. The Third Assembly, however, after lengthy consideration, decided to postpone a decision on the matter until the Fourth Assembly. No. 1 Committee again considered the matter at a number of sittings this year. As it became apparent that there was no chance of securing the adoption of their amendments, the Canadian delegates agreed that they would be satisfied with the adoption of an interpretative resolution on the subject. The discussion showed that there was a very marked difference of opinion as to the liability imposed on States by the article. Some of the smaller States, and particularly Persia, objected very strongly indeed to anything which could be considered as weakening in any way what they conceived to be the effect of Article 10. Their objections applied, not merely to an amendment, but equally to an interpretative resolution. Other States contended that an amendment or an interpretative resolution was unnecessary, although quite agreeing with the two points made in the Canadian proposals—firstly, that, in any recommendation the Council might make with regard to the discharge of the obligations imposed by this article, account should be taken of the political and geographical circumstances of each State; and, secondly, that no member should be under an obligation to engage in any act of war without the consent of its Parliament, Legislature, or other representative body. They considered that these reservations were implicit in the