

The meeting was concluded by an eloquent speech from the President, Mr. Motta, who, in my opinion, conducted the proceedings of the whole session in the ablest manner possible. He was businesslike and courteous, and not on one occasion had the Assembly cause to question the ruling of the chair.

COMMITTEE No. 1.

RULE 27 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The Netherlands Delegation proposed an addition to Rule 27 in order to provide that a decision of a committee should be taken by a majority vote. This has been the practice, but the proposal aimed at its definite incorporation in the rules. After exhaustive consideration by a small sub-committee, to which the proposal was referred, it was decided to reject the proposal. Whilst there is, of course, always the danger that a minority may successfully oppose a resolution in the Assembly, it was felt that it would be better not to bind the committees, but to follow the elastic procedure which has hitherto been the practice. Two further proposals depending on that submitted by the Netherlands were withdrawn, and the Netherlands delegate concurred in the committee's point of view, which was accepted by the Assembly at its meeting on the 20th September. The report on the subject is Document A. 72.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE POOR.

The first reference to this question is contained in my report of last year. The Fourth Assembly passed a resolution to place it on the agenda of the Fifth Assembly, and to invite the Secretary-General to prepare a report in the meantime. The question was, with the approval of the Council, referred to a small committee of experts, whose recommendations are contained in the report drawn up by the Secretary-General (Document A. 34). This report was considered by a sub-committee of Committee No. 1, which drew up a series of resolutions providing for—

- (a.) The publication by the League of a list of agencies established in each country for the purpose of giving poor persons legal assistance, which list should be distributed amongst the various Governments.
- (b.) The collection by the Secretariat of various treaties, laws, and other provisions relating to the question.
- (c.) The nomination by each Government of an authority who would answer inquiries on the matter from other countries.
- (d.) An inquiry of States whether they would be disposed to become parties to a new convention, based on Articles 20 and 23 of the Hague Convention, 17th July, 1905.

These articles will be found reprinted at the end of Document A. 34.

The resolutions (Document A. 71) were passed by the Assembly at its meeting on the 20th September.

DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL LAW.

This is the proposal (referred to earlier in this report) made by the Swedish delegation in the course of the debate on the work of the Council. The matter was referred to the First Committee, which put forward a resolution (Document A. 73) providing that a committee of experts be convened to prepare, after consultation with interested organizations, a provisional list of the subjects of international law which might be regulated by international agreement. After obtaining the comments of Governments on this list, the committee so established is to report to the Council on questions sufficiently ripe for a conference to be called for the purpose of solving them.

THE AMENDMENT OF ARTICLE 16 OF THE COVENANT.

It is the first paragraph of this article which has been the cause of much controversy, owing to the use of the word "nationals." An amendment designed to limit the application of the paragraph to persons over which Governments have effective control was passed by the Assembly in 1921, but has not come into force owing to the absence of the necessary number of ratifications.

Consideration of a further amendment, proposed by the British Government in 1923, which it was thought might gain more ready acceptance, was postponed until this year. As will be seen from the perusal of the First Committee's report to the Assembly (Document A. 108), the British proposal has been accepted in substance if not in form, and it would appear that the drafting of the amendment as it left the hands of the First Committee has had the happy effect of reconciling every kind of criticism. Should the amendment obtain sufficient number of ratifications, paragraph 1 of Article 16 will read as follows :—

"Should any member of the League resort to war in disregard to its covenants under Articles 12, 13, or 15, it shall *ipso facto* be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other members of the League, which hereby undertake immediately to subject it to the severance of all trade or financial relations, and to prohibit all intercourse at least between persons resident within their territories and persons resident within the territory of the covenant-breaking State, and, if they deem it expedient, also between their nationals and the nationals of the covenant-breaking State, and to prevent all financial, commercial, or personal intercourse at least between persons resident within the territory of that State and persons resident within the territory of any other State, whether a member of the League or not, and, if they deem it expedient, also between the nationals of that State and the nationals of any other State whether a member of the League or not."