

With those matters which appear not to have very great interest for New Zealand I do not purpose dealing at length, and I merely refer to the discussions on the Armenian question, on the need for the publicity of discussions and decisions of the Council, on the scope of Article 18 of the Covenant, on the motion of Mr. Barnes asking for full information as to the reasons which induced the Council to refrain from interfering to prevent hostilities between Poland and Soviet Russia, and on the difference between Poland and Lithuania—all raised during the discussion on the work of the Council, and treated at length in the provisional verbatim record.

The document from the German Government concerning mandates, which was referred to at the tenth meeting of the Assembly, can be more properly dealt with when I come to consider the mandates.

The Assembly, having disposed of the questions which it was not necessary to refer to committees, was now ready to consider the reports of its committees. Whilst I am able to send you the various reports as presented to the Assembly, I regret I am not yet able to furnish prints as amended, but I have, wherever possible, inserted the amendments.

COMMITTEE No. 1.

On the 30th November the report of Committee No. 1 on the rules of procedure was discussed by the Assembly, and the committee's report (Assembly Document No. 143) adopted as amended.

On the 2nd December the Assembly considered the committee's report on the draft amendments and addition to the Covenant of the League, transmitted by the Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish Governments, which will be found in Assembly Documents Nos. 10, 42, and 150. As Mr. Balfour pointed out in the speech introducing the report, there has been little or no experience of the working of the Covenant, and the committee had come to the conclusion that the amendments should not be taken into consideration by the Assembly, but that the Council should be invited to appoint a committee to study the proposals already submitted, together with any which might be submitted by a member of the League within a period to be fixed by the Council, and the Assembly passed resolutions to this effect, which will be found in Assembly Document No. 158. Probably the Scandinavian delegations were a little disappointed at their suggestions not having met with more favourable treatment, but the spirit of conciliation again made itself felt, and they heartily agreed to the suggestions made. These resolutions doubtless had considerable effect in inducing the Argentine delegation to withdraw from the Assembly. The motion of the Argentine delegation and of Mr. Doberty, of the Canadian delegation (Assembly Documents Nos. 163 and 164), were, on the 6th December, by resolution of the Assembly (Document No. 181), referred to the committee above mentioned to be appointed by the Council.

At the meetings on the 6th and 7th December the Assembly discussed the valuable report presented by the committee on the relations between the respective competence of the Council and the Assembly. The discussion was lengthy, but the net result, amounting to three amendments, which have been indicated in Assembly Document No. 159, did not alter the report in any material sense.

On the 11th December the Assembly considered the report (Document No. 172B) on the question of the designation of the non-permanent members of the Council, the mandates of Belgium, Brazil, Spain, and Greece, as members of the Council, being due to expire on the 31st of that Month. I may here parenthetically say that the matter presented considerable difficulty. The Council of the League had been in existence for a very short time, and to have rejected all the above-mentioned countries might have implied a degree of censure; but with regard to Greece, the recent political changes and the uncertainty of the future of that country rendered such a consideration unjustifiable, and, whilst the delegations might, on the whole, have been willing to vote for the retention on the Council of Belgium, Brazil, and Spain, it was thought that Greece might be replaced by another Power. There was a feeling, and it was often voiced, that one of the smaller European Powers might be selected, and Czecho-Slovakia, probably the most progressive and stable of the nations which have recently risen in Europe, was suggested. On the other hand, there was also the feeling that the non-European representation was not particularly strong, and this feeling probably induced the committee to suggest the Assembly's passing a resolution that of the four non-permanent members to be selected by the Assembly in 1920, three should be selected from among the members of the League from Europe and the two American continents, and one selected from among those from Asia and the remaining parts of the world. In the Assembly it was seen, however, that such a resolution would meet with opposition, and it was accordingly turned into a recommendation. The resolutions of the Assembly on this important question will be found embodied in Document No. 218.

On the 15th December the Assembly proceeded to elect the four non-permanent members of the Council. From the beginning there was little doubt as to the ultimate result, for Spain, Brazil, and Belgium were re-elected, and China was elected to the position to be vacated by Greece. I think the League is to be congratulated, for the reason that the vast American Continent is, in the absence of the United States, in a manner represented by Brazil; the representative on the Council of Spain, Monsieur Quinones de Leon, an able man, is a friend of the Allies; and the election of China gives representation to a vast country with an enormous population, and if that country's representative is to be Mr. Wellington Koo, her Minister in London, the Council will have the assistance of a man of considerable ability and sound judgment.

COMMITTEE No. 2.

On the 7th December the Assembly considered the report of this committee on Typhus in Poland (Assembly Document No. 152, which should be read in conjunction with Assembly Document No. 124 and the note by the Chief Medical Commissioner of the Typhus Commission of the League of Nations).