

felt strongly that the prestige and influence of the League as a world-power would be seriously impaired if some further attempt, even though it were only a beginning, were not made to prepare for the day when a conference on disarmament might be convened.

In an impressive speech, which was followed in the Assembly with the utmost attention, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and first delegate for Great Britain, explained the attitude of the British Government towards the protocol. Mr. Chamberlain said that the British Government felt that the greatest contribution it could make to the cause of peace was to seek a guarantee for peace in that region with which it was most intimately associated, and to secure guarantees for peace by mutual agreement among all those whose interests were immediately affected, and he concluded by quoting the following passage from his speech to the Council at its sitting in Rome:—

“Our object is to supplement the Covenant by making special arrangements in order to meet special needs. That these arrangements should be purely defensive in character, that they should be framed in the spirit of the Covenant, working in close harmony with the League and under its guidance, is manifest. And in the opinion of His Majesty’s Government these objects can best be attained by knitting together the nations most immediately concerned, and whose differences might lead to a renewal of strife, by means of treaties framed with a sole object of maintaining as between themselves an unbroken peace.”

The value of these regional pacts—and, of course, that proposed with Germany was in most minds—was freely acknowledged by delegates, but at the same time they were strongly of opinion that the League of Nations should not rest content with playing a passive part, and should not leave the entire initiative to individual States to conclude special arbitration treaties, even though such treaties would secure a partial adoption of the principles contained in the Geneva Protocol. It was pointed out that there was a vast amount of preliminary and exploratory work to be undertaken in respect to all phases of disarmament—the technical, industrial, economic, and psychological were among some mentioned—before even a conference could be summoned to consider any basis of disarmament. This was a work which the Council of the League might most usefully pursue in order to be ready to convene the conference and submit concrete proposals for its consideration as soon as the precedent and essential condition of security had been attained. Without exception, all the speakers in the most interesting debates which occurred in the Assembly and in the Third Committee were definite in stating that they could only support any proposition which contained the three inseparable elements of arbitration, security, and disarmament.

Three resolutions were submitted to the Assembly. I quote them in full as follows:—

- (a.) “Considering the importance of proceeding without delay with the preparation of a general programme covering the whole question of the reduction and limitation of armaments with a view to convening, at an opportune moment, a general International Conference, the Assembly begs the Council to study this problem, particularly with the object of setting up a special organism entrusted with the duty of preparing a draft for the above-mentioned programme.” (Presented by the Netherlands Delegation, Document A. 51.)
- (b.) “The Assembly—profoundly attached to the cause of peace and convinced that the most urgent need of the present time is the re-establishment of mutual confidence between nations; declaring afresh that a war of aggression constitutes an international crime; taking note of the declaration submitted to the Council and the Assembly of the League of Nations in respect of the Protocol for the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes and of the fact that the said protocol has not up to the present received the ratifications necessary for putting it into operation immediately—regards favourably the effort made by certain nations to advance these questions by concluding treaties of mutual security conceived in the spirit of the Covenant of the League of Nations and in harmony with the principles of the protocol (arbitration, security, disarmament); records the fact that such agreements need not be restricted to a limited area, but may be applied to the whole world; recommends that, after these agreements have been deposited with the League of Nations, the Council should examine them in order to report to the Seventh Assembly on the progress in general security brought about by such agreements; undertakes again to work for the establishment of peace by the sure method of arbitration, security, and disarmament; and requests the Council to make preparatory arrangements for a conference on the reduction of armaments, as soon as, in its opinion, satisfactory conditions have been achieved from the point of view of general security as provided for in Resolution XIV of the Third Assembly.” (Presented by the Spanish Delegation, Document A. 53 (1).) And
- (c.) Replace the last paragraph of the Spanish proposal by the following: “And invites the Council to consider forthwith plans for a general reduction of armaments in accordance with Article 8 of the Covenant, and at the same time to make preparatory arrangements for a conference on the reduction of armaments, such conference to meet and to begin its work without delay, as soon as, in the opinion of the Council or of the Assembly, those conditions of security are fulfilled on which the success of the conference must depend. The Council is invited to report to the Seventh Assembly on the progress of the work undertaken in execution of the present resolution.” (Presented by the Hungarian Delegation, Document A. 63.)