

this Committee of Experts is to be composed of a Norwegian, an Englishman, a Frenchman, a Japanese, a German, a South American, and one or possibly two representatives of the British Dominions. These will not be delegates of Governments, but experts appointed to advise the Economic Committee, and they will have direct knowledge of the subject. I am sending to you copy of each report issued since the Assembly of 1928 by the Economic Committee and the Economic Consultative Committee. I draw special attention to the appendix (dealing with the exploitation of the riches of the sea) to the report of the July session of the Economic Committee (Document C. 307, M. 106).

The resolutions introduced in the Assembly and sent to the Second Committee were redrafted. One, in the names of the British and French delegations, recommended the setting on foot of negotiations for the convening of a preliminary Conference, to be held early next year, with a view of concluding collective agreements for diminishing hindrances to trade, such as protective tariffs, and developing and facilitating economic relations by practical means. In this connection a two-years truce on tariffs was proposed. Another resolution, also in the names of these delegations, having reference to coal, requested the governing body of the International Labour Office (1) to consider the inclusion in the agenda of the International Labour Conference of 1930 of questions relating to hours, wages, and conditions of work in coal-mines; and (2) to consider the advisability of convening a Preparatory Technical Conference of representatives of Governments, employers, and workers of the principal coal-producing countries of Europe, in order to advise what questions relating to conditions of employment in coal-mines might best be included in the agenda of the International Labour Conference of 1930, with a view of arriving at a practical international agreement.

As the Economic Organization of the League is already studying the coal industry, and has issued an interim report (Document C. 150, M. 58), the present motion invited the Council to consider the recommendations which the Economic Committee may make at its next session, with a view of convening a Conference of the Governments concerned to consider such recommendations.

The representative of Great Britain, in introducing the second of these motions (that relating to the coal industry in different countries), stated that it dealt with an extreme example of anarchy in the economic sphere. The motion did not give rise to a long discussion, although a number of speakers expressed pleasure that the consuming countries were not to be forgotten; whilst others doubted whether any satisfactory solution could be found to the wages question, owing to the varying standards of life in the coal-producing countries.

As to the motion on tariffs and on the convening of a Conference, it was clear in the debate that little or no enthusiasm for the principles of the motion had been aroused. Indeed, if those who had taken part in the World Economic Conference of 1927 had been hampered by Government instructions, there would not have been even an approach to unanimity. Some speakers wondered whether a Conference on Tariffs was intended to facilitate the foundation of a European Zollverein, about which so much has been said lately. Others attached more importance to the tariff truce proposed in the motion. These speakers thought that the truce might be renewed from time to time, while others refused to commit their Governments, as they did not wish to have their hands tied. Some, professing to see in the motion a condemnation of tariffs, argued the necessity for protecting nascent industries, and the need for raising revenue by tariffs, though they admitted that tariffs were often used to bolster up badly managed industries, and mentioned their evil effects when used for the purpose of bargaining.

Another resolution, introduced by the French delegation, concerned sugar, an industry which is peculiarly liable to price-fluctuations. The sugar industry has been the subject of study by the Economic Committee, and the French resolution was designed to secure a meeting of representatives of Governments concerned to study the recommendations of that committee. Several speakers frankly declined to believe that any useful purpose would be served by convening a Conference. They felt that Government action would be ill-placed, and that the difficulties were likely to remedy themselves or be remedied by private action.

Other motions introduced had reference to the Convention on the Execution of Foreign Arbitral Awards, to the establishment of a simplified and unified Customs nomenclature, to the treatment of foreigners, to the trade in agricultural products, and to comparative statistics. It is not necessary to do more than mention these. There is a point I would desire to emphasize. In my judgment, the study of agricultural problems is worthy of much greater attention than it has hitherto received at the hands of the Economic Organization of the League.

To return to the joint British and French motion regarding a Conference on Tariffs, it soon became apparent that unanimity would not be reached by the committee. It was obvious that many countries would not be prepared to give a pledge not to raise tariffs during a period of two to three years, and that if attendance at a Conference were dependent on such a pledge having been given, there would be many absentees. A small Drafting Committee was appointed to collate the text of the motion and of some amendments that had been put in, with the result that that portion of the report which deals with the proposed Conference underwent considerable revision in substance and in form.

It will be seen from the Second Committee's report to the Assembly (Document A. 68), that recognition is given to the special economic circumstances imposed by the geographical position of countries, and to other cases where industrial development has not yet reached an advanced stage. It seems clear from the resolutions that only those States which are prepared to accept the recommendation of the Assembly not to increase their protective tariffs above the present level for a period of two to three years are expected to take part in the Preliminary Conference, although if such