

adopted with some amendments of drafting as its own report, was presented to the Assembly on the 25th September, when the following resolution was passed :—

“ The Assembly, taking note of the report approved by the First Committee,—

“ Reaffirms its intention of continuing the task of inserting in the Covenant of the League of Nations a general prohibition of recourse to war and the principle that the settlement of international disputes may only be sought by pacific methods ;

“ Decides to create a committee consisting of representatives of all the members of the League of Nations, which may meet during the Conference for the Reduction of Armaments for the purpose of seeking unanimous agreement on the bases indicated in the report and of drawing up a final text which may be voted by the Assembly at its next session ;

“ Requests the Council to convene the Committee for the date which it considers appropriate ;

“ Requests the Secretary-General to transmit the present resolution and the report to the Members of the League of Nations, in order that, if they consider it necessary, they may send to the Council their views as to the lines on which they think agreement could be attained.” (Document A. 86.)

This is not the place to examine the report, which is a comprehensive one and takes account of the different views expressed both in the First Committee and in the sub-committee.

Whether a committee of all members of the League of Nations will be able to achieve that measure of unanimity which small expert committees have not succeeded in attaining remains to be seen.

## SECOND COMMITTEE.

The work of the communications and transit, health, and economic and financial organizations has changed considerably in character during the last few years, and is no longer concerned mainly with establishing general principles, but with the practical application of those principles in assisting individual States or groups of States to grapple more successfully with definite practical problems of various kinds.

In spite of the extension in the work mentioned in the foregoing paragraph, the Budget estimate for these three organizations during the coming year would have been less by some 300,000 gold francs than was the case last year, but for the special work undertaken to assist the Chinese Government, in various ways, to tackle the tremendous practical difficulties with which she is endeavouring to contend, in regard to matters of health, communications, public works (especially river-protection works), and economic and financial problems. The estimated cost of this special work (about 480,000 gold francs) more than offsets economies in other directions, but may well prove to have been a sound investment if an increase of world-trade with China is thereby facilitated, owing to the vast potential, but undeveloped, capacity of that great country to absorb the goods of other countries. Moreover, it may be hoped that recognition of the benefits she is receiving through her participation in the League may lead to a greater endeavour by China to pay off her arrears of contributions, which would materially lighten the amount required to be found by other members of the League in the near future.

China's requests for assistance were, of course, received with especial sympathy on account of the disastrous consequences of the recent unprecedented floods in the Yangtze Valley.

## TRANSIT AND COMMUNICATIONS.

The first subject considered by the committee was the report on the work of the organization for communications and transit (see Documents A. 6 and A. 6 (a), Extract 4). This report does not contain much of special interest to New Zealand. One of the principal matters dealt with during the year was the question of unification of buoyage and lighting of coasts, regarding which an International Conference took place at Lisbon in October, 1930. As you are already aware, that Conference reached agreement on certain points with regard to maritime signals, lightships, &c., but was unable to secure sufficient agreement to admit of a convention being drawn up with regard to unification of buoyage characteristics. A proposal that the Conference should be called together again “ at an early date ” to consider further the subject of buoyage, met with considerable opposition, very frank opinions being expressed by various delegates upon the multiplication of Conferences on subjects which were either not vital or upon which it had not first been ascertained, by preliminary inquiries addressed to Governments, that there was a strong probability of general agreement. The Norwegian delegate pointed out that a time when so much of the world's shipping was laid up was not an appropriate one for drafting conventions, the carrying-out of which would be likely to involve considerable expense to Governments and harbour authorities in many countries. The matter eventually dropped after it had been made clear that there would be no question, in any case, of calling a further Conference on the subject *during 1932*.

## CALENDAR REFORM.

A point of some interest in the report is that the General Conference on Communications and Transit, which is to meet this year (it meets regularly once every four years), is to consider, among other matters, the question of what economic advantages would accrue from the reform of the calendar and fixing of movable feasts.

The Committee's report on Communications and Transit (Document A. 76) was adopted by the Assembly on 24th September.