

passage through the Suez Canal provided for in the Convention on the Free Navigation of the Suez Maritime Canal signed at Constantinople on the 29th October, 1888."

Some amendments of drafting were made to other articles, but to these I need not make specific reference.

The convention as redrafted (Document A. 78) was sent to the Assembly under cover of a report (Document A. 77), which gives a good account of the deliberations of the Third Committee. You will observe a reference on page 4 of the report to a proposal that the convention should take the form of an instrument open only to the accession of the parties after Governments had received the sanction required by constitution. This proposal, however, was abandoned in favour of a convention open to signature and subsequent ratification or to accession.

The report and convention came before the Assembly on the 26th September, when the Assembly decided to open the convention for signature (see the draft resolution with which the committee's report concludes).

You will note that the convention remains open for signature until the 2nd February next, but that after that date States may adhere.

#### CO-OPERATION OF WOMEN AND OF THE PRESS IN THE ORGANIZATION OF PEACE.

Early in the session the Spanish delegation introduced into the Assembly a motion asking the Council to consider the possibility of studying the best means of associating women with the work of the League of Nations, and of preventing, with the assistance of the press, the dissemination of false information likely to hinder the maintenance of peace and good will among peoples. This motion was referred to the Third Committee. After discussion, the motion was redrafted and sent to the Assembly, which passed on the 24th September resolutions requesting the Council—

- (1) To examine the possibility of women co-operating more fully in the work of the League ; and,
- (2) To consider the possibility of studying with the help of the press, the difficult problem of the spread of false information which may threaten to disturb the peace or the good understanding between nations. (Document A. 73.)

#### ARMAMENTS TRUCE.

I have already referred to the suggestion of an armaments truce made by Mr. Grandi in the course of his speech in the Assembly. His suggestion was eagerly seized by representatives of several of the smaller nations, and later a motion in the names of the delegations of Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Switzerland was handed to the President. It reads as follows :—

"Being convinced that the crisis which is at present creating such serious disturbance among the nations of the world is due to a number of economic and political causes, one of the principal sources of which is the lack of mutual confidence between the nations,

"Being convinced that the realization of the undertakings contained in the Covenant regarding the reduction of armaments will be one of the most important means of re-establishing mutual confidence between the nations and alleviating their crushing economic burdens, while a resumption of competition in armaments would fatally lead to an international and social disaster,—

"The Assembly addresses a solemn appeal to all who desire the application of the principles of peace and justice on which the Covenant is based to devote all their efforts to the creation of a world opinion strong enough to ensure that the General Disarmament Conference will lead to definite results involving in particular a gradual reduction of armaments which will be continued until the object mentioned in Article 8 of the Covenant is attained.

"Considering the importance of carefully preparing the ground for the work of the said Conference, and in particular of avoiding fresh increases of armaments in the present state of affairs,—

"The Assembly request the Council to urge the Governments convened to the said Conference to show their firm determination to support the efforts to ensure peace and re-establish mutual confidence by abstaining, pending the result of the Conference, from any measure leading to an increase in the present level of their armaments."

This motion was referred to the Third Committee, and when the matter came before the Third Committee the Chairman proposed that representatives of the United States, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and Turkey, be invited to take part in the discussion. This suggestion was received with considerable favour, although there were one or two dissentient voices. Ultimately, it was agreed that the President of the Assembly should ask the Council to approve the despatch of an invitation to States non-members of the League which had been invited to the Disarmament Conference. When the Committee resumed its labours there was present a representative of the United States in the person of the Hon. H. R. Wilson, Minister at Berne, and later representatives of Costa Rica, Egypt, Turkey, and Brazil also took part.

After the Norwegian delegate had spoken in favour of the motion, the Italian representative rose and stated that, in the opinion of his delegation, the five Power motion was inadequate. He proposed for land armaments an undertaking by each State not to increase expenditure upon the army above the current year's estimates ; for naval armaments to suspend further construction, although construction already commenced might be continued and completed ; and for air armaments to give an undertaking not to build any new military aircraft except in replacement of craft which had become obsolete during the truce. Such a truce would last for one year.