

VERBATIM RECORD

OF THE

Eighth Ordinary Session of the Assembly

OF THE

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

THIRD PLENARY MEETING

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6th, 1927, AT 4 P.M.

CONTENTS :

19. SEATING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DELEGATIONS AND MAINTENANCE OF ORDER IN THE ASSEMBLY HALL.

Proposals by the General Committee of the Assembly.

20. QUESTION OF THE CREATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF THE EDUCATIONAL CINEMA AT ROME.

Proposal by the Italian Delegation.

21. REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL AND OF THE SECRETARIAT.

Speeches by Sir Ramaswami AYYAR (India), H.H. Mohammad KHAN FOROUGHJI (Persia), Jonkheer Beelaerts VAN BLOKLAND (Netherlands).

22. APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE DELEGATES TO THE GERMAN DELEGATION.

Letter from the President of the Delegation.

President : M. GUANI

19. — SEATING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DELEGATIONS AND MAINTENANCE OF ORDER IN THE ASSEMBLY HALL: PROPOSALS BY THE GENERAL COMMITTEE OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The President :

Translation : The General Committee of the Assembly met this morning and dealt with various questions concerning the arrangement of the Assembly Hall and the maintenance of order.

Arrangement of the Assembly Hall.

As regards the first point, you will remember that I informed you yesterday morning that the

arrangement of the Hall and the position of the seats would be temporarily altered pending further suggestions from the General Committee. This morning the General Committee appointed a Committee of three members, who will go into the question and submit suggestions as soon as possible. As the question is one which affects all the delegations, the latter will be duly informed of the measures proposed.

Maintenance of Order in the Assembly Hall.

The second point — the maintenance of order in the Assembly Hall — was dealt with by the General Committee at the seventh ordinary session of the Assembly. At its meeting this morning the General Committee of the eighth ordinary session examined the question again. I have the honour, on behalf of the Committee, to place before you the rules which it adopted and which will doubtless also be adopted by the Assembly :

“1. The front entrance of the Assembly Hall leading directly from the lobby of the Hotel Victoria is reserved exclusively for delegates and substitute delegates, and the officers in charge of this door have been given instructions to allow no one else to enter the Hall by this means. Immediately at the side of this door a passage-way has been arranged leading to an entrance in the rear of the Hall. This passage is exclusively reserved for secretaries of delegations, experts, members of the Secretariat, etc., and should be used by them in entering or leaving the Assembly Hall.

“2. In the front portion of the floor of the Hall seats are reserved for delegates and substitute delegates only

“3. Seats for experts, advisers and members of the Secretariat are reserved on the floor of the Hall behind the space reserved for delegates.

“4. No member of the general public or of the families of members of delegations or of the

Secretariat is allowed on the floor of the Assembly Hall.

"5. Experts, advisers and secretaries and members of the Secretariat are requested to enter the part of the Hall reserved for delegates as little as possible, and to refrain, as far as possible, from moving about or talking on the floor of the Assembly Hall. Delegates wishing to talk to advisers or secretaries are requested, whenever possible, to leave the Assembly Hall themselves for the purpose.

"6. It is requested that, in so far as possible, delegates and officials should not enter or leave the floor of the Assembly Hall during the time when a speech is being made.

"7. Entrance to the floor of the Assembly Hall is by card only. All cards are strictly personal, and if a card is presented by a person other than the person to whom it is issued, the huissiers have been given instructions to refuse admittance and to take up the card.

"8. No applause will be allowed in the galleries reserved for the Press and the general public.

"9. Between the end of a speech and the translation there will always be a pause of two minutes. Only during those two minutes will persons be allowed to enter or leave the public galleries. The doors to these galleries will be closed except during that time.

"10. Huissiers in uniform have been instructed to stop at once all conversation or movement in the public galleries during speeches or translations."

If no objection is raised to these proposals I shall consider them adopted by the Assembly. (Adopted.)

20. — QUESTION OF THE CREATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF THE EDUCATIONAL CINEMA AT ROME : PROPOSAL BY THE ITALIAN DELEGATION.

The President :

Translation : Before we continue our discussion of the agenda, Count Cippico, delegate of Italy, who desires to submit a proposal, will address the Assembly.

Count Cippico (Italy) : In the name of my Government, I have the honour to make the following declaration :

"The Royal Italian Government, in consideration of the wishes formulated by several international congresses and meetings, encouraged by many experiments made in Italy in the use of moving pictures for the intellectual development of the nation and its employment as an auxiliary system of teaching in every kind of public school ;

"Conscious of satisfying a need which all civilised nations strongly feel, and considering that even the industrial world does not only look at the cinema with a view to speculation but with a real sense of the lofty and practical objects which it is possible to attain with this new and important form of propaganda ;

"Conceived that the creation of an International Institute of the Educational Cinema, to be established in Rome, might have the most beneficial effects, not only for the Governments but also for public and private

institutions and commercial enterprises, which will be able to find in it a powerful help in their business :

"Has decided to propose the creation of the International Institute of the Educational Cinema, to be established in Rome, which, according to Article 24 of the Covenant, has to be placed under the direction of the League of Nations."

For this purpose the Royal Government offers the funds necessary for the first establishment of the Institute and for its ordinary maintenance, together with a seat in the historical palace of the "Stamperia" in Rome. It will thus be possible for all nations to participate, under conditions of perfect equality and without laying any pecuniary burden on them or on the Budget of the League of Nations.

The Royal Government will later state its views as to the final purposes of the Institute ; but it is already possible to form an idea of the nature of its future activity.

It is assumed that it would be a centre of information for the different problems of the cinema, giving the best opportunity for a mutual interchange and diffusion of every kind of film : scholastic, hygienic, historical, archeological, artistic and, in a general way, educational.

I am sure that my honourable colleagues will highly appreciate the advantage of such an Institute, and I have therefore the honour to ask that the proposal of my Government should be placed on the agenda of the Assembly.

The President :

Translation : The Assembly has just heard the proposal put forward by Count Cippico, delegate of Italy, and the request that it be included in the agenda of the present session.

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, the proposal will be printed and communicated to the members of the Assembly and inserted in the Journal of the Assembly.

I propose to-morrow to make a suggestion to the Assembly as to the action which might be taken in regard to this motion.

21. — REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL AND OF THE SECRETARIAT

The President :

Translation : The next item on the agenda is the general discussion of the report on the work of the Council, on the work of the Secretariat and on the measures taken to execute the decisions of the Assembly. (Annexes 3, 3(a) and 3(b), documents A. 13 and A. 13(a), 1927.)

Before calling on the first speaker on the list, I should like to say that the General Committee has this morning examined the steps to be taken to facilitate and expedite the work of the present session.

It is the unanimous wish of the General Committee that the general discussion on the report of the Council should close at the end of the present week — that is to say, by next Saturday.

It is, however, still impossible to say how many plenary meetings will be necessary. This will depend on the number of members who ask to speak. Up to the present few members have expressed such a desire. I therefore venture once more to urge members of the Assembly who wish to take part in the general discussion to inform me as soon as possible so that I may know how many meetings may be anticipated.

Sir Ramaswami Ayyar, delegate of India, will address the Assembly.

Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar (India) :

The plenary meeting of the Assembly of the League of Nations furnishes an opportunity for passing in review the multiform activities of the Organisation and its constituent and allied bodies. As one of the delegates representing India at this Assembly, it is both my duty and my privilege to contribute to this discussion, and, in doing so, I shall naturally confine myself to those aspects of the work which have a close bearing on my country and her problems. I shall only pause for a moment to congratulate the Secretary-General and the heads of the various departments of the Secretariat of the League upon the comprehensiveness and thoroughness with which they have discharged their duties and the lucidity that characterises the numerous documents produced as the result of their co-ordinated activities.

The position of India *vis-à-vis* the other Members of the League and the entire organisation itself is unique. By her signature to the Treaty of Versailles and the Covenant and by her continuous and faithful adherence to the principles of the organisation, she has enrolled herself in the fraternity of those who have undertaken and are pledged to the work of establishing the principles and understandings of international co-operation as the actual rule of conduct among Governments.

M. Villegas, in his most suggestive discourse, described the work of the technical organisations of the League as possessing a universal character, as removing sources of conflict and forging the links joining nations one to the other by their true interests and as establishing valuable relations amongst all the members including the most distant. It is the path of wisdom to realise this aspect of the League's work and not to fix our attention exclusively on certain spectacular political happenings, and, in the language again of M. Villegas, to "see in them the whole of international life".

It is true that many of the problems coming up for discussion before the League are essentially European in character and do not concern India in the narrower sense. But he would be both petty in outlook and short-sighted in policy who does not see in most of the activities of the League a genuine effort to promote that active and practical comradeship without which world opinion cannot be adequately formed.

The formation of such a world opinion and the impact of that opinion on the several nations must have a profound and enduring effect on India and on the world from many points of view, and therefore it is not inappropriate that India should have taken, as indeed she has taken, a lively interest in the deliberations of the League and its constituent bodies. The quest of the ideal is one of the strongest characteristics of my race. As an Indian, therefore, I feel at home in an Assembly which expects, and indeed assumes, the existence of idealism in its members; but our idealism, to be of value, must be not merely our inspiration but must be applied in a practical way to the complicated issues of national and local character which come before us.

There is no question that the necessity of establishing on an international basis social, commercial and diplomatic standards is being more generally recognised. We are striving for the creation of a new mental attitude, which has been called the international mind, and which can only be evolved by the widening of our interests. Though I recognise and appreciate the value to our country of its participation in the League, yet I hope also that the presence of delegates from India and from other far-off lands, such as Japan and China and the South American

Republics, may be of value to the League itself by preserving that character of universality which was the intention of its founders. It is just the fact that delegates from all parts of the world are not merely present but take an active part in the League's business which has kept it true to its name of a League of Nations and has saved it from degenerating into a concert of Powers.

It is not without legitimate pride that I point out that India has been fulfilling in real practice the ideals of which I have spoken, and, in particular, has shown her loyalty to them by legislation in pursuance of the Washington Labour Convention. This is not, perhaps, directly the work of this Assembly but of an organisation which forms part of the League as a whole.

As an instance of a subject in which India is less directly interested, but in which, nevertheless, she has accepted and fulfilled obligations involved in her membership of the League, I may mention that my country has signed and ratified the Convention and Statute on the Freedom of Transit, the Convention and Statute on the Regime of Navigable Waterways of International Concern and its additional Protocol, and the Convention and Statute on the International Regime of Railways and of Maritime Ports. It is also noteworthy that India took part in the Conference on Communications and Transit, which has, in accordance with the spirit underlying the work of the League, made provision for the collection and exchange of such general information on communications and transit as is likely to improve international co-operation.

A similar remark may be made as to India's attitude with regard to many other questions connected with the activities of the League and its ancillary bodies. I may specially refer to the Agreement concerning the suppression of the manufacture of and the internal trade in and use of prepared opium that has just now become operative. India's recent work in connection with the implementing of the Slavery Convention is also, I venture to say, a notable example of her adherence to the League ideals.

It is a matter for sincere congratulation that, day by day, the authorities of the League are, in their turn, realising the importance and the world-reactions of Indian and of Eastern problems. This is illustrated by the work on opium, the work of the Health Section, including the Singapore Bureau, the interchange of medical officers, researches into problems of malaria and sleeping-sickness and many other enquiries recently undertaken at the instance of the League authorities.

But it is not easy for my countrymen, remote as they are and absorbed with the problems of their own land, to realise in a concrete way how the ideals of the League are being converted into practice; and the development of the international attitude depends not merely on enlightenment but upon the establishment of more extensive and solid relations between the practical work of the League and the actual interests of my country. We shall welcome anything which will tend to develop the contact between India and the League and the appreciation of the League in India, believing that such development cannot fail to be of mutual benefit.

By reason of her political and geographical position, which is *sui generis*, India is only indirectly though much interested in some of the great political problems, such as disarmament, which have been sought to be tackled by the League, and it is therefore through the technical organisations of the League that its ideals can be most adequately realised in the non-European countries.

I propose, therefore, to deal specially with two departments of the League's work in which India's interest is direct and conspicuous. The work of the Health Organisation in Eastern countries was specially considered in 1926 and the Assembly drew particular attention to the universality of the work done by the Organisation.

The annual report of the Health Organisation for the year 1926 discloses that weekly and monthly epidemiological reports are published, giving information of great importance transmitted from the Eastern Bureau at Singapore, dealing with 122 ports served by the Bureau. These data are made available to the world very early and in a collated form. They furnish a valuable index of the trend of epidemic diseases. India is represented on the Eastern Bureau at Singapore, and the Bureau's work has continued to expand and has acquired a new significance from the duties lately entrusted to it as part of the machinery for carrying out the International Sanitary Convention. The Government of India has recently agreed to broadcast a résumé of the Bureau's weekly bulletin concerning the prevalence of epidemic diseases. It is in the highest interests of India that she should make every effort to prevent and check the spread of infection and epidemics and, realising such obligations to the full, she welcomes heartily the co-operation of the Health Organisation of the League. Such co-operation should, I submit, be regarded as one of the methods by which the League may manifest its interest in the problems of those parts of the world which are distant from the centre of its activities. Is it, therefore, too much to ask that such an obligation should be one of the first charges on the energies and finances of the League as a whole?

Very important work in connection with malaria has been done by the Malaria Commission and there is no doubt that such researches as relate to the importance of river deltas from the point of view of endemic malaria will be of the most vital importance to India. I hope that the Malaria Commission may be able to find an opportunity of visiting India. Special courses in malaria, organised by the Health Organisation of the League of Nations, were held last year at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

It is also to be hoped that the programme of interchanges of public health personnel will include British India, as is indeed suggested in the annual health report. It is important to remember in this connection that a study tour for medical officers belonging to administrations in Asia and Australasia will take place in India in January 1928. The contemplated visits of these officers to the various provinces in India will, there is no question, be of great value not only to the countries concerned but to India itself. This event will, moreover, be a noticeable instance of a visible interest in India taken by the League authorities, as this will be the first occasion on which a League organisation will come into direct personal contact with India and with the Indian Administration, and we confidently anticipate valuable results not only from the technical but also from the wider aspects.

Perhaps, however, the work in which India is most interested, in connection with the recent activities of the League, are the discussions, deliberations and conclusions of the International Economic Conference held at Geneva in May 1927, wherein the Indian delegates, I may venture to assert, played a useful and honourable part. As one of the Assembly resolutions truly pointed out, economic peace will largely contribute to security amongst the nations, and the difficulties standing in the way

of the revival of general prosperity are largely economic in character.

The meeting of the Assembly of the League last year realised that the economic situation of the world called more imperiously than ever for international co-operation, and it hoped that the Economic Conference would be summoned as soon as possible. That Conference comprised among the participants both Members and non-Members of the League of Nations, and there were also present economic experts and publicists from the United States, the Soviet Republics, Egypt and Turkey, and delegates from such organisations as the International Chamber of Commerce. It is needless for me to recount the results of the work of that Conference as that task has been performed in a masterly fashion by M. Theunis in his closing speech made on May 23rd, 1927. He emphasised that the Conference must be regarded not as an isolated event but as a stage in the continuous work of international collaboration in the economic sphere.

The Conference worked through three Committees, one on Commerce, a second on Industry and a third on Agriculture. In the reports of the Committee on Commerce it is rightly stressed that, in spite of the variety of questions raised, the diversity of theories and the legitimate national sentiments of all those who took part in the discussions, one important and extremely encouraging fact has emerged, namely, the unanimous desire of the members of the Conference that it should mark the beginning of a new era during which international commerce will successfully overcome all obstacles in its path that unduly hamper it and resume that general upward movement which is at once a sign of the world's economic health and the necessary condition for the development of civilisation. While considering the economic problems in their international bearings, the Conference did not ignore the importance of national considerations, some of which are, in the language of M. Theunis, social and political rather than economic in character.

The Indian delegates presented a document to the Conference pointing out the principal features of the position of the world as envisaged from the point of view of India. In that document it was made clear that, speaking generally, India depends more on internal rather than external markets; but at the same time it was emphasised that in India as in Europe many industries endured their share of the prevailing depression, especially inasmuch as the reactions of economic factors are nowadays very rapid and complete. The fiscal policy of India and the need for its adoption, with a view to the development of nascent industries built up with local labour and capital to meet local needs, were then outlined and it was rightly asserted that the protective policy of India aims at the development of such manufactures only as possess natural advantages and will one day be able to meet world competition. The gap that has occurred in India between the price of raw materials and the price of manufactured goods as well as the fluctuations of price were also mentioned. This was done by way of stressing the elementary truth that India stood to gain from an improvement of the world's economic situation.

In dealing with the question of Customs tariffs, Sir Campbell Rhodes, who sat on the Economic Committee, dissipated all possible misunderstandings of the Indian position by pointing out that the Indian tariff before the war was very low and has been augmented both to obtain revenue and, in a very limited number of cases, for the purpose of protection; but that her economic and tariff policy can well stand a comparison with that of

many other countries, and the India delegation proved that, although the proportionate increase was great, the actual level of Indian tariffs was not open to just criticism.

The position of India with reference to agriculture was specially recognised by the appointment of Dr. Hyder as one of the Vice-Chairmen of the Committee on Agriculture. It has to be borne in mind that the Economic Conference has definitely realised the importance of agriculture as entitled to an equal footing with industry and commerce and as being the occupation of the majority of workers throughout the world. It was the object of the Indian delegation to concentrate attention on measures which will diminish the cost of production and eliminate the unnecessary links in the chain connecting the producer with the consumer. The resolution that was finally passed provides that care should be taken to assist in the maintenance of an equitable balance between industry and agriculture.

In the memorandum submitted by the Indian delegates, India's position as a producer of raw materials was specifically adverted to and the necessity advocated of: (1) a reduction of agricultural cost; (2) the improvement, by organising research and popular education side by side, in the quality and quantity of crops; and (3) the spread of the co-operative movement in all its forms as designed to produce efficiency at all stages of agricultural work up to the stage of sales and as insuring to producers their just share in the market value of the crops.

One of the most important subjects on the agenda of the League is the consideration of the report of the Economic Conference, and it is to be fervently hoped that the attitude of the League towards the deliberations and resolutions of that Conference will be such as will demonstrate its abiding interest in the problems and conditions of countries far removed from the scene of European economic life but forming nevertheless component and by no means insignificant factors in the sum-total of world economy.

It must be realised that the recommendations and suggestions of the Conference have yet to be considered by the Indian Legislatures and the Indian Executive Government, but it can be said with some confidence that these recommendations are in general conformity with the principles already followed in India; and, where there are differences, they are susceptible of adjustment and compromise. In the matter of agriculture, it is generally known that there is an important Royal Commission dealing with the topic of Indian agriculture and allied problems and we in India are awaiting the report of that Commission, which will no doubt engage the early attention of our local and central Governments. In their consideration of the matter they will undoubtedly derive immense assistance from the resolutions of the most authoritative gathering of economic experts that has ever been summoned.

The subjects dealt with above and others, such as the Slavery Convention, the difficulty caused by the diversity of laws in the matter of bills of exchange and the progressive codification of international law, are amongst the topics which are of special interest to my country. But, as has already been stated, it is not only with a view to the elucidation of these specific problems, but in the conviction that all the different but convergent activities of the League—political, technical and humanitarian—are slow but sure advances in the direction of organised co-operation amongst the peoples of the earth, that India is not only content but is most willing and anxious to take part in the work of the League.

The President:

Translation: His Highness Mohammad Ali Khan Foroughi, delegate of Persia, will address the Assembly.

His Highness Mohammad Khan Foroughi (Persia):

Translation: Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen—In appointing as delegates from our distant land to your Assembly men like ourselves, who, though as yet unknown to you, have spared no effort since the League's foundation in order that their country might become and remain a Member of that organisation, the Persian Government desired to emphasise its deep and earnest devotion to the cause of the League.

My colleagues and I rejoice to find ourselves in this illustrious Assembly and to join in its fruitful debates. Whatever is said or done within these precincts we shall carry back to our countrymen; and we most earnestly hope that the resolutions you adopt here will facilitate the task of those who, undeterred by difficulties and obstacles, are endeavouring to refute the criticism of a public which is necessarily exacting and naturally sensitive, and which demands an assurance that Persia, while gladly assuming the obligations attaching to co-operation with other Powers, while gladly accepting the sacrifices which devotion to the common ideal involves, shall at the same time find in those obligations and sacrifices adequate guarantees of her own independence and progress.

We are convinced that the time will come when the work of successive sessions of our Assembly will in itself suffice to allay the anxiety felt by some of our fellow-countrymen regarding the discussions, decisions or omissions of some, at all events, of the Conferences held under the auspices of the League.

I have no wish, however, even to appear to be criticising a work which, as a whole, elicits our admiration, and am anxious to pass on immediately to a study of the report on the work of the Council.

We are glad to note the progress made in regard to the progressive codification of public international law. Persia feels that any effort to lend greater precision and unity to the rules governing the relations between organised communities will contribute to a better understanding among the nations and to the consolidation of peace. She is of opinion that codification is imperative if the defects and anachronisms of common law are to be eliminated from international law. Persia is now engaged in framing her own codes, in organising her courts and in reasserting her complete jurisdiction over her own territory, and she realises that the rules adopted by the world conscience for the government of international relations should be acknowledged by all nations and in respect of all nations.

For these same reasons we welcomed the foundation of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law. As regards one point, however, we have been disappointed. Was not an assurance given, and rightly given, that at this seat of learning all the great historical legal systems would be represented?

Now, the Persian religious law, albeit of Moslem origin, has particular features of its own. It governs the legal relations not only of my fellow-countrymen but of millions of Moslems throughout the world, and more especially in India, Egypt and Iraq. Sunni law only is represented in the International Institute, and Shiah law is not. Let us hope that this omission will be remedied.

One of the manifest benefits of the League is that it endeavours to bring all the nations together, even the smallest and most distant,

and offers them permanent facilities for meeting, for becoming acquainted and for learning to esteem and to help one another. Hence, in order to be true to the common ideal, every nation must bear in mind the individual requirements and aspirations of the others. This was our intention, this was our expectation, when we took part in the International Economic Conference. Its discussions were undoubtedly of value, and the resolutions it adopted were calculated to promote and facilitate production throughout the world and to adapt production to requirements, but on one condition, namely, that, instead of confining ourselves to Europe and America, we should also turn our attention to Asia and regard that continent not simply as a market; we should remember its various zones of production, its multifarious peoples, each one anxious to become a centre of production, to trade with other nations on a footing of equality, with absolute freedom in the matter of Customs tariffs and maritime navigation and, subject to the conventions voluntarily adhered to, with absolute freedom as regards the choice of purchases.

We ask for the same sympathetic understanding of the economic, geographical and historical circumstances by which our national life is governed, the same recognition of our aspirations in regard to two other questions of special importance, on which I now propose to touch.

The Persians are essentially a peaceable nation, but we have learned from the tragic experiences of the past always to be on our guard in order to protect our independence, on which we set such store and which we have maintained throughout the gravest vicissitudes. Accordingly, it is our most earnest desire that nothing should attenuate the articles of the Covenant, since these, if rightly interpreted, will enable us to establish a mechanism whereby, in the event of aggression, the efforts of all the Members of the League will immediately be brought to bear on the aggressor, in order to defend the victim of the aggression.

For that reason, a former delegate of Persia once expressed the fears voiced by Finland. We desire to state unreservedly that the Treaties of Locarno, in our view, express principles which should be followed, in accordance with the recommendation of the seventh ordinary session of the Assembly, and furthermore that, within the scope of the Covenant, and with due regard to our obligations as a State Member of the League, we have put those principles into practice by concluding regional agreements designed to ensure the maintenance of peace in the Middle East.

The report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Production of Opium in Persia, together with the observations on the subject which my Government submitted to the Council on March 4th, 1927, will come up for consideration before the Assembly.

I desire now, on behalf of my Government, again to thank the League for sending that Commission to Persia, and to thank the members of the Commission for the competent manner in which they accomplished their most difficult task. We are anxious to assist in the great humanitarian work assigned to us all by the Covenant, namely, to restrict the consumption of dangerous drugs throughout the world. Realising, as the Commission itself realised, the present economic difficulties in Persia, the Government, as stated in its memorandum, has submitted to Parliament a plan of action based on the Commission's suggestion. This is, in our opinion, the best that can be done in the circumstances.

I may add that the Persian nation is endeavouring consistently to carry out the suggestions of the mission of enquiry into health conditions in Persia, and to provide the country with the economic equipment the need for which we recognised even before the Commission of Enquiry on Opium. We realise in this and in all the efforts made — under the direction of our august Sovereign himself — with a view to reviving the ancient glories of our country, how closely our activities are bound up with those of all the other nations represented, and we feel the bond which unites us in our devotion to the cause of progress, liberty and peace.

The President : • •

Translation : Jonkheer Beelaerts van Blokland, first delegate of the Netherlands, will address the Assembly.

Jonkheer Beelaerts van Blokland (Netherlands) :

Translation : Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen — During the seven years of its existence the authority of the League of Nations has steadily grown, and the place it occupies in international life has become more and more important. The lines along which it has developed have not, however, escaped criticism, and it has in particular been blamed for having avoided big international questions capable of exercising a wide influence on world peace.

This point merits our special attention.

It would be highly regrettable from the point of view of the authority and prestige of the League if its Members decided to deal among themselves, and outside the scope of the League, with questions which, under the terms of the Covenant, come within the League's competence. It is primarily the duty of the Council to take cognisance of difficulties likely to bring about a rupture between Members of the League, and to endeavour to foresee and settle at the outset any conflicts which may arise on the international horizon. The Council must, so to speak, act as the world's conscience where international peace is concerned. The part which it has to play is admirably revealed in the discussions and report of the Committee of the Council on the application of Article 11 of the Covenant. The importance of the preventive duty of the Council in this field cannot be over-emphasised. For the fulfilment of this duty it would seem essential that the Council should meet at frequent and regular intervals, and I am therefore inclined to question whether it would not be dangerous to reduce the number of its meetings. I think that anything which might be interpreted by public opinion as lowering the Council's authority or as a sign of slackening in the work of the League as a whole ought to be avoided.

The other side of the question must not, however, be overlooked. Though the League's prestige may suffer if it is prevented from considering questions which come within its field of activity, it seems equally undesirable to create the impression that henceforth no dispute can be settled without the League's intervention. Relations between peoples have happily not reached a point when it is necessary to exclude at the outset the possibility of settling international disputes by direct negotiation between the parties concerned, without outside intervention. One of the great merits of the League is that, through these periodical meetings at Geneva, it has helped to strengthen personal contact between the statesmen at the head of the various countries, and has thereby facilitated the solution of the problems

with which they are faced. I think it is always best, whenever possible, to endeavour to settle a dispute by direct negotiation between the parties concerned, and to restrict intervention to cases where there seems no possibility of succeeding by direct negotiation.

Thus there is no article in the Covenant which requires the League to settle all disputes arising among its Members. One of the most delicate problems for the League to handle will always be that of deciding which questions call for its intervention and which should be left to the parties directly concerned.

It has been said that hitherto the Council has shown rather too much hesitation in this respect. There have, in fact, been a number of cases where the Council has refrained from intervening, even though the settlement of the dispute would not have been outside its competence. It must be admitted, too, that the solution of these questions has not always proved satisfactory from every point of view; but, before throwing the blame on the Council, it must first be ascertained that a better solution would have been obtained if the case had been referred to the Council. The Council would be wrong to adopt too reserved an attitude, but, on the other hand, it would be none the less disastrous if it over-estimated its strength and endangered the position of the League.

Nevertheless, those who think the Council over-cautious ought to make their voices heard whenever they think that Council intervention would serve the cause of international peace. In this way the Council would be led to examine even more carefully, in every individual case, whether it could risk the responsibility of standing aside. I do not myself consider that the manner in which the Council has fulfilled its task justifies a demand for a radical change in its policy. I venture to remind you that at the very outset the secondary States were uneasy lest the Council should usurp powers at their expense. But the Council has shown, by its fulfilment of its task, that this anxiety was unfounded and we cannot fail to realise the importance of that fact for the development of the League.

The vital question before the League is and remains that of the reduction and limitation of armaments. It is a question which of late has excited throughout the world a feeling of apprehension calling for serious and careful consideration by this Assembly.

In order to show clearly this feeling of disappointment which has invaded public opinion, I venture to trace briefly and in broad outline the steps taken by the League in this field.

In its early days the League of Nations strove to find a solution for the problem of the reduction of armaments independently of the problem of guarantees, that is to say, the problem of security and arbitration. The efforts made in this direction, however, at once encountered obstacles. The conclusion reached was that the nations had to be assured of a sufficient degree of security before they could be asked to consent to a reduction of their armaments. The plan for a Pact of Mutual Guarantee was based on this conception. I need not remind you how it failed.

After that we saw the birth of the Geneva Protocol, which was inspired by the formula: arbitration, security, disarmament. As you know, that scheme was not realised; but it was found possible to apply its basic ideas in a much more restricted field — that of the Locarno Treaties. The conclusion of these Treaties, which are of incontestable importance for European peace, encouraged a hope that moral disarmament was sufficiently advanced to enable the problem of the

reduction of armaments to be approached anew.

Nevertheless, despite the untiring efforts and complete devotion displayed during the past year by the Preparatory Commission and all its technical organs, we are forced to recognise that the real reduction of armaments is still no more than a distant ideal.

It could certainly be said with justice that an important step had been taken, since vague formulas had given place to a definite plan; but the nearer we approach to concrete formulas the more we are forced to realise that the whole problem of material disarmament is conditioned by the problem of moral disarmament.

As moral disarmament progresses, the work of the Preparatory Commission will have more prospect of success. For this reason, the Assembly must realise its serious responsibility in regard to Article 8 of the Covenant, and must exert the whole weight of its authority to help the Preparatory Commission at its next session. On this subject my colleague, M. Loudon, yesterday put forward a draft resolution, which I propose to include in the resolution that I shall have the honour to submit to the Assembly.

Although it appears impossible at the moment to achieve any appreciable reduction in armaments, the work of the Preparatory Commission might at least bring about a limitation which would preclude any return to the disastrous competition in armaments. That is an aim which can and should be pursued from now onwards.

Nevertheless, the slight progress made since the last Assembly in the reduction of armaments plainly shows that moral disarmament is not sufficiently advanced at the present moment to allow of the realisation of this aim, which, though prescribed by Article 8 of the Covenant, is far from easy of attainment. Until the time comes when international relations are based upon mutual confidence, any attempts to achieve an appreciable reduction of armaments are liable to be frustrated, and may only cause further disappointment. Yet, must we assume that, since the way to the reduction of armaments is blocked, we must fold our hands and wait for moral disarmament to descend upon us like a gift from Heaven? No. In order to achieve moral disarmament, public opinion must be brought into play. Peoples and Governments must act together and make a supreme effort. The Assembly — and after all, by the Assembly we mean the various countries represented there — must undertake to do its utmost to make moral disarmament a reality.

The Geneva Protocol was inspired by this lofty aim. And here I would remind you of the words spoken by the first delegate of the Netherlands at the sixth ordinary session of the Assembly:

“The Protocol is not dead; it is most certainly not buried; it but slumbers. Do not let us seek now to remodel or perfect it: rather let it rest.”

These words were fully justified and entirely reasonable at the time when they were spoken, that is to say, on the eve of the conclusion of the Locarno Treaties. Nevertheless, despite the progress achieved by the conclusion of those Treaties, I think that, if this state of rest were to be prolonged, it might degenerate into lethargy, and we must therefore push forward along the road on which we set out with such high hopes.

We must continue the study not only of the Protocol itself in all its details, but of the important principles underlying it. I shall venture to submit to you shortly a draft resolution with this object in view. We must realise that public opinion in different countries is moving in this direction and that, particularly in overseas

countries, there is a growing current of opinion which has adopted as its watchword "the outlawry of war". Has not the moment come, I ask, to resume our efforts to bridge the gap in Article 15 of the Covenant by excluding legitimate warfare in the future and by stigmatising a war of aggression as an international crime? The principle of compulsory international jurisdiction, moreover, is a necessary complement of these ideas. But if this end is to be achieved, the Great Powers must not continue to shirk obligations.

Another method which is of primary importance in facilitating and preparing for moral disarmament is economic disarmament. An important step in this direction was taken by the International Economic Conference, which condemned protectionism and emphasised the importance of freedom of trade for world peace. Its resolutions were endorsed by the International Chamber of Commerce at its recent Congress at Stockholm and have already been officially approved by several Governments. All these are hopeful signs, but we cannot help feeling some uneasiness when we find that recent international economic developments have not shown any clear tendency to conform to the principles adopted by the Conference.

The Netherlands Government considers that the conclusions relating to trade which were adopted by the Conference should be accepted *en bloc* in order to ensure that they are applied in their entirety. The abolition of import prohibitions and restrictions should be accompanied by a reduction of import duties, which to a certain extent are imposed with the same object in view. The important question of Customs tariffs deserves special attention, particularly with reference to the study of Customs nomenclature, in order to avoid discrimination to the prejudice of one country and specialisation for the benefit of another.

The obvious method of avoiding these dangers would appear to be a plurilateral convention. The best foundation for the restoration of international freedom of trade would seem to be the unreserved and unconditional application of the most-favoured-nation clause. The settlement of disputes concerning the interpretation or application of treaties should be entrusted to the Permanent Court of International Justice.

The Netherlands Government gives its full adherence to the conclusions and resolutions adopted by the Conference, not only on its own behalf but on behalf of the Dutch East Indies, Surinam and Curaçao. It does so the more readily as its economic policy has always been inspired by these principles.

But what is true of the economic policy of the Netherlands Government is also partly true of its attitude towards reduction of armaments. No State can act alone. Unless other States support it, it may eventually have to decide whether it will not be obliged to take measures dictated by its national interests and to conform, much against its wishes, with the exigencies of a policy which it considers to be disastrous and which has been condemned by the League.

Any efforts to carry out the principles advocated by the League must be accorded the invaluable support of the Press, which moulds and guides public opinion. The Netherlands Government, therefore, closely followed the work of the Conference of Press Experts and is especially glad, in studying the resolutions adopted by that Conference, to find that the Press fully realises the great responsibility it would incur if it hampered the growth of mutual understanding among peoples. necessary for the promotion of world peace by the publication of obviously inaccurate, highly

exaggerated and deliberately distorted articles. My Government associates itself fully with the heartfelt appeal addressed by the Conference to the Press of the world earnestly requesting the latter to contribute by every means at its disposal to the consolidation of peace, to combating hatred between nationalities and between classes as the greatest danger to peace and to preparing the way to moral disarmament.

Every country, every Government must realise how far it will be answerable to the world if it refuses to take part in the sacred mission of establishing mutual confidence. Unless moral disarmament is achieved we shall, despite all the guarantees contained in the Covenant, find ourselves involved in fresh wars. It is the policy adopted by the nations on the question of moral disarmament which will decide the fate of the world.

The draft resolution which I had the honour to mention to you runs as follows:

"The Assembly,

"Convinced that, without reopening the discussions on the Geneva Protocol of 1924, it is desirable to consider whether the time has not come to resume the study of the principles on which that Protocol was based;

"And considering it of the highest importance that the Assembly should give an impulse to the work of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference;

"Decides to refer the study of the fundamental principles of the Geneva Protocol and the conclusions of the report of the Preparatory Commission to the appropriate Committees."

The President:

Translation: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution submitted by the Netherlands delegate, which has just been read. This draft resolution will be printed and communicated to the delegations and published in the *Assembly Journal*.

I propose at a later meeting of the Assembly to put forward suggestions as to the disposal of the motion.

21. — APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE DELEGATES TO THE GERMAN DELEGATION: LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE DELEGATION.

The President:

Translation: Before adjourning the meeting I wish to read a letter dated September 6th, 1927, which I have received from the German delegation:

"As first delegate of the German Government to the eighth ordinary session of the Assembly of the League of Nations, I have the honour to inform you that, in accordance with Rule 6, paragraph 1, of the Rules of Procedure of the League of Nations Assembly, I have appointed as substitute delegates the following:

Count BERNSTORFF, Member of the Reichstag, Ambassador, unattached;

Dr. BREITSCHIED, Member of the Reichstag;

Dr. HOETZSCH, Professor of Law, Member of the Reichstag;

Dr. KAAS, Professor of Theology, Member of the Reichstag, Canon and Domestic Prelate to His Holiness the Pope;

Baron von RHEINBADEN, Member of the Reichstag, former Secretary of State.

"I would beg you to be good enough to note the above. (Signed) STRESEMANN."

The Assembly rose at 6.30 p.m.