

nations, to keep up a navy or an army which they would not maintain otherwise. It was made clear that no country would be obliged to enter into the system, and so this source of opposition disappeared.

It is quite clear that the difficulties in the way of such a scheme are enormous. But if either Germany or the United States joined such a system these difficulties would be reduced to a fraction of what they are otherwise. If both join, the scheme will be so much easier still. It is possible that the very production of the plan and the knowledge that steps are being taken to work it out may induce Germany to join, but it would be rash to make any prophecy.

Debts and Reparations.—At its final sitting, before that at which the report to the Assembly was passed finally, the committee considered the question of debts and reparations. The reason for so doing was that the continued unrest due to this question being unsettled was the greatest factor in preventing a willingness to disarm. The resolution adopted by the Assembly on this subject ends with the recommendation :—

“That the Council shall devote constant attention to every effort made in this direction by the Governments concerned, it being understood that it can only usefully assist in the solution of these problems if requested to do so by the Governments in question.”

At first sight this has the appearance of nothing better than a pious aspiration. There is, however, a good deal of significance in the fact that it was proposed by the French delegate and accepted by the British delegate. It is, of course, abundantly true that the question of debts and reparations is an open sore that prevents the recovery of Europe, both morally and materially. It is also an accepted fact that the British and French Prime Ministers cannot “get on” with one another. The resolution, therefore, points, albeit tentatively, to a way out through the meditation of the Council of the League. The debate gave an opportunity, also, for the representatives of smaller nations to say frankly to the Great Powers that while the solution of the problem lay with them alone among those represented at the League, yet not only they but all alike were sufferers from their inability to settle the question.

The committee's report was introduced into the Assembly on the morning of the 26th September, and the debate occupied two sittings and a large part of a third. At the conclusion of the debate, which was of considerable interest, the representative of Brazil rose and stated that his Government associated itself with the resolution relative to the reduction of naval armaments provided that regard was had to Article 8 of the Covenant. All the resolutions proposed by the committee were adopted unanimously by the Assembly at its meeting on the 27th September, together with an amendment proposed by the Spanish Delegation, that referring to the Pan-American Conference at Santiago. This amendment, which took the form of an addition to the resolution, is to the effect that the Council is recommended to authorize the expert services of the League of Nations to lend their co-operation to the Pan-American Conference should necessity arise.

COMMITTEE No. 4.

Unpaid Contributions.—This question strikes at the very foundation of the League. The unpaid contributions amounted at the end of September, 1922, to 14,764,468 gold francs, and non-payment is having the effect of placing the League in serious financial difficulties. Leaving out of consideration altogether contributions which have been long in arrears, even if those expected to be paid in the near future are paid, it will be necessary to borrow £150,000 from the bank during the first three months of next year to keep the League going, and there will still be a deficit. It is unfortunate that it has not been possible to establish a scheme of payment, alternative to the Postal Union scale, acceptable to all Governments. It is hoped, however, that the new provisional scale will be adopted, and thus lead to the creation of an attitude of conciliation in quarters where it has hitherto not prevailed. This in itself should have the effect of speeding-up payment by some of the States, although whether the suggestions contained in the Fourth Committee's Report (Document No. A. 145), approved by the Assembly at its meeting on the 29th September, will have any effect remains to be seen.

Regulations for Financial Administration.—It became clear during the course of the discussions on the Budget in the Fourth Committee of the First Assembly that a series of regulations should be devised if the administration of the finances of the League was to be established on a satisfactory footing. The task of compiling such regulations was entrusted to the Commission of Control set up by the Second Assembly, and their preparation is perhaps the most important work accomplished by the Commission (Document No. 54 (2)). They were introduced by the Fourth Committee in a brief report (Document No. A. 153), and the resolution with which this report concludes was passed by the Assembly at its meeting on the 29th September.

Budget of the League and International Labour Office.—The estimates as passed by the Fourth Committee for submission to the Assembly are Documents Nos. A. 3 (1) and A. 12 (1). The original estimates, of which copies were sent to New Zealand some months ago, were the subject of careful investigation by the Commission of Control, which held two sessions, in May and in August of the present year, and issued two reports (Documents Nos. A. 7 and A. 7 (b)). These reports show that the Commission dealt exhaustively with the finances of the League, effected improvements in the method of administration, and considerable reductions in the estimates. Generally speaking, the Commission's recommendations were accepted by the Fourth Committee. There were, however, a few exceptions which have been noted in the Fourth Committee's report (Document No. A. 140). Probably the most important exception was a further reduction in the library estimates; and a resolution providing for a small committee to inquire into the administration of the libraries of both