

1925.

## NEW ZEALAND.

# PROTOCOL FOR THE PACIFIC SETTLEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES AND PROPOSALS FOR A PACT OF SECURITY.

WHITE PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS DEALING WITH—(a) CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT AND THE DOMINIONS ON THE SUBJECT OF THE GENEVA PROTOCOL; (b) PROPOSALS FOR A PACT OF SECURITY.

## STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER (HON. J. G. COATES).

IN 1923 the League of Nations appointed a Committee to draft and propound a Treaty of Mutual Assistance, and by formal resolution recommended the nations members of the League to agree to that treaty. The object and effect of that treaty was to enlarge and define in many respects the obligations of the various nations signatories to the Covenant of the League, and to create what are technically called sanctions—namely, express penalties upon nations transgressing the peace provisions of the Covenant, and providing for the imposition of such penalties practically by armed force of the other nations. The majority of the principal nations rejected that treaty. Included among the Governments rejecting was His Majesty's Government of which Mr. Ramsay Macdonald was Prime Minister. The proposals, therefore, of 1923 produced no result.

In 1924 Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and Monsieur Heriot, Prime Minister of France, attended the Assembly at Geneva, and proposed an alternative scheme of sanctions and enforcement thereof under the direction of the Council of the League of Nations. Those speeches were made on the 4th and 5th September, 1924. The Assembly of the League on the 6th September passed resolutions directing consideration of those speeches by two Committees, which Committees met, and three weeks after, on the 1st October, presented the draft Protocol, which the Assembly adopted for the consideration of the nations.

The White Paper on the subject of the Protocol contains the comments on the Protocol by the several Dominions, including New Zealand. Each Dominion objected to the terms and effect of the proposals, and the Committee of Imperial Defence was equally emphatic in condemning it. The Dominions and His Majesty's Government agreed that some form of compulsory arbitration between nations should be ultimately adopted, but each objected to a scheme which extended widely the obligations of the signatories to the League of Nations and practically conferred upon the Council of the League powers to drag the nations into war. As the Protocol could not take effect without the consent of the principal nations this project also failed.

Then the German Government came upon the scene with a suggestion that the principal nations should agree to what is called a Pact of Security. Friendly negotiations have since taken place between France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, and England, and there is room for hope that such negotiations may lead to a definite result securing methods of peaceful determination of international questions. It seems undesirable to express an opinion upon these actually pending negotiations. The New Zealand Government is satisfied that such negotiations can best be conducted by His Majesty's Government without interference, subject to the opportunity, which is given constantly, to the Dominions of offering comment upon the several separate proposals.