

ELECTION OF NON-PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.

It will be remembered that political considerations arising out of the German application for admission to the League made it advisable in 1926 to increase the number of non-permanent members of the Council to nine. Also in that year election rules to meet the new circumstances were approved and applied in the election of nine non-permanent members, divided into groups of three, with mandates of three, two, and one years respectively. This year the seats held by Columbia, the Netherlands, and China fell vacant.

Early in 1926 Spain aspired to retain as permanent the Council seat which she had occupied since the creation of the League. Her aspirations were, however, not realized, and she gave two years' notice of her intention to withdraw from the League. But Spain changed her mind, and in response to an appeal by the Council she has decided to continue membership, and was represented in this year's Assembly by a full delegation. In connection with this retention of membership should be read the item (24 of the agenda) proposed by the British, French, and German Governments:—

“Maintenance in force, as an exceptional measure, for the 1928 elections to the Council of the temporary provisions (Article 4, paragraph 2) attached to the rules adopted by the Assembly on 15th September, 1926, for the election of a non-permanent member of the Council.”

This item was referred to the General Committee of the Assembly, and its report (Document A. 44) came before the Assembly on the 7th September, when the following resolution was passed:—

“The Assembly, having in mind the discussions which took place at the session of 1926 resulting in the unanimous adoption of the rules of procedure for the election of non-permanent members of the Council, decides, in virtue of its powers under Article 4, paragraph 2 *bis* of the Covenant, that the temporary provisions for the elections of 1926, contained in Article 4, paragraph 2, of the resolution of the Assembly of 15th September, 1926, shall also apply to the elections of 1928. In application of Article 14, paragraph 2, of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly, this resolution is adopted without reference to a Commission.”

There were four dissentients, amongst whom were the Swedish and Norwegian delegations, who protested against the application this year of election rules which they contended had been made only for the purpose of overcoming exceptional difficulties in 1926. One speaker referred to the system of proportional representation known as the “single transferable vote”—a subject which was introduced in the Assembly of 1926.

Paragraph 2 of Article 4 of the rules referred to in the resolution reads as follows:—

“Of the nine members thus elected in 1926 a maximum of three may be immediately declared re-eligible by a decision of the Assembly taken by a special vote by secret ballot, a separate ballot being held for each member and adopted by a majority of two-thirds of the number of votes cast. Immediately after the announcement of the results of the election the Assembly shall decide upon the requests for re-eligibility which have been presented. Should the Assembly have before it more than three requests for re-eligibility, the three candidates having received the largest number of votes in excess of two-thirds of the votes shall alone be declared re-eligible.”

In the light of the foregoing it is interesting to note what has now taken place.

China, which was elected in 1926 to a seat on the Council, with a mandate for two years, put forward a request for re-eligibility under the first part of Article 2 of the rules passed by the Assembly on the 15th September of that year. This request was put to the vote on the morning of the 10th September. Fifty States took part in the voting. China obtained twenty-seven votes, but as these did not constitute a two-thirds majority she did not succeed in her request.

On the afternoon of the 10th September the Assembly proceeded to elect three non-permanent members of the Council to fill the seats vacated by China, Columbia, and the Netherlands. The countries elected were—Spain, which received forty-six votes; Persia, which received forty votes; Venezuela, which received thirty-five votes. Immediately after the election Spain put forward a request to be declared re-eligible under the rule referred to above, and the Assembly at once voted on this point, with the result that Spain was declared re-eligible, thirty-seven of the forty-seven votes cast being in her favour.

VACANT JUDGESHIP OF THE PERMANENT COURT OF INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE.

Owing to the resignation of Mr. J. B. Moore it was necessary for the Council and the Assembly to proceed to the election of his successor. A list of the candidates nominated by the various national groups is given in Document A. 32, and it will be observed that the Hon. Charles Evans Hughes, formerly Secretary of State of the United States, was nominated by no less than thirty national groups. The election by the Council and the Assembly took place on the afternoon of the 8th September. Mr. Hughes received in the Assembly forty-one votes, whilst the Council voted unanimously in his favour. He was consequently declared to have been elected.

Early in the session the Assembly was informed of a further vacancy, due to the death of M. Andre Weiss, Vice-President of the Court.

When the session was well advanced the question of the Armenian refugees and the Republic of Erivan was raised and referred to the Sixth Committee.

Towards the end of the Assembly it was announced that Spain had accepted the compulsory jurisdiction of the Permanent Court of International Justice for ten years, and that Costa Rica would return to the League, subject to Congress voting the necessary credit.

A proposal of the Venezuelan delegation recommending the Council to consider appropriate measures to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Assembly next year was subsequently withdrawn.

The Assembly held its last sitting on the 26th September. Necessarily much of its time must usually be given to matters of routine, but often one or more subjects give rise to interesting debates.