

The Third Committee again dealt with the question of publication of details of armament manufactured by private firms, a subject which has been discussed in former Assemblies, and upon which agreement could not be reached owing to the fact that in some countries, notably France, most of the war material is manufactured in Government arsenals and factories, whereas in England the Government manufacture a very small proportion of the nation's requirements, and nearly all British war material is the product of private enterprise. Under these circumstances publication of armaments manufactured privately would be an inadequate and unfair comparison between countries concerned. After considerable discussion it was agreed that the Council be requested to ask the various Governments to publish the details of both private and Government manufacture of armaments, and in such a manner as to enable fair comparison to be made.

Another matter dealt with by the Third Committee was the establishment of a wireless station at Geneva for the League of Nations. The discussion revealed that this question had not been sufficiently considered from the technical point of view. Apart from the doubt as to whether it is a useful or necessary expenditure, it would be of little benefit to communicate with distant countries unless a very powerful station were erected, and it was apparent that this involved a large initial expenditure and a fairly large annual recurring deficit. The British Government is opposed to this station, on the grounds that it is not really necessary. The proposal was also opposed by Japan and India, on the grounds that it would involve additional wireless installation in those countries, involving expense which the Governments concerned were not prepared to incur.

The following is a summary of the results obtained by the Third (Disarmament) Committee at the ninth session of the Assembly, viz. :—

- (1) To defer the establishing of a League of Nations wireless station at Geneva pending further investigation :
- (2) To recommend that details of both Government as well as private manufacture of armament be made public :
- (3) To draft a general Act for use in place of bilateral treaties on arbitration and security :
- (4) To fix a period within which the next meeting of the Preparatory Commission on Disarmament is to be held.

The A papers are Nos. 20, 22, 23, 31, 43, 60, 63, 67, 68, 75, 83, and 86.

FOURTH COMMITTEE.

The Committee Accounts for the ninth financial period (1927) are represented by Document A. 3. This was passed in committee without discussion.

Before consideration was given to the Budget of 1929 there was a general discussion, based on the reports of the Supervisory Commission (Documents A. 5, A. 5 (a), A. 5 (b)). Parts of the second and third of these documents deal with the proposed alterations to the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly, and to the Financial Regulations necessary in order to give effect to a resolution of last year's Assembly suggesting an improvement in the system of considering supplementary credits.

Delegates were quick to raise objection to the proposed addition to No. 14 of the Rules of Procedure, contending that its provisions went too far. After a discussion, in the course of which it was mentioned that other amendments to the rules lacked precision in drafting, it was decided to send the drafts to a small sub-committee.

Document A. 38, showing the financial position of the League on the 31st August, 1928, gave rise to a change of views regarding arrears of contributions, and a suggestion was put forward, but received little support, that some means should be found for rewarding those States which paid their contributions promptly.

The Fourth Committee was afforded an opportunity of asserting its rights, of which it is extremely jealous, when Paper A. 36 (New Work entailing New Expenditure on the Part of the League) was under discussion. The Council had given directions for improvements to be made in the Council Chamber. Now, it is the custom to report to the Assembly details of any unforeseen expenditure which has been incurred by the Council, and for which a sum of 500,000 francs is annually placed at the disposal of that body. The cost of improvements, instead of being charged to this special vote, was debited against the Building Fund. To this the Chairman of the Supervisory Commission, who sits on the Fourth Committee as delegate for Czecho-Slovakia, objected, and at the same time he charged the Secretary-General with not having brought the matter under the notice of the Supervisory Commission. The Secretary-General conclusively showed that in reporting direct to the Assembly a well-established rule had been followed; but he stated he had no objection, and, indeed, he would welcome, a direction to report to the Supervisory Commission items of unforeseen expenditure as they arose. As to his method of charging the item, he recalled to the committee the promise he had made that the vote "Unforeseen expenditure" would be drawn upon only for high political purposes. The Fourth Committee, with a view to avoiding similar occurrences in the future, decided to refer the matter to the Supervisory Commission, whose advice to repay the money to the Building Fund was accepted.

BUDGET FOR 1929.

The Budget for the eleventh financial period (1929), as submitted to the Fourth Committee, is contained in Documents A. 4, A. 4 (a), and A. 4 (b). A comparison of the figures with those of the previous year shows an increase of 924,166 francs in respect of the Secretariat, of 528,810 francs in respect of the International Labour Office, and of 84,451 francs in respect of the Permanent Court of International Justice. It is clear that these increases of about 9 per cent. on the Budget for 1928 much disturbed the Supervisory Commission, whose report (Document A. 5) is worthy of study. In that report the Commission gives expression to the feeling that "the financial position alone has now made it imperative for the Commission to invite the Assembly to consider the extent of the functions