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THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

REPORT OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DOMINION OF NEW ZEALAND ON THE TENTH ASSEMBLY OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, HELD AT GENEVA, IN THE YEAR 1929.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

TENTH ASSEMBLY OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

New Zealand Government Offices,
415 Strand, London W.C. 2, 1st October, 1929.

SIR,—

I have the honour to inform you that the Tenth Assembly of the League of Nations opened at Geneva on the morning of the 2nd September.

Before dealing in detail with the proceedings, I feel that it would be appropriate that I should give you some impression of the outstanding features of the Conference.

One can say with confidence that it was the most active and important gathering of the League for many years past. There was exhibited an enthusiasm, a confidence, and a faith that I have not before witnessed. The League, indeed, gave evidence of an unsuspected vitality. Two reasons may account for this new development: Firstly, the nations have begun to comprehend the real importance of the Briand-Kellogg Pact, outlawing all wars, which was signed at Paris a year ago. The fact has at last sunk in among the peoples that the United States of America are now in virtual copartnership with the League of Nations in the great business of preventing wars and keeping the world peace. Then, secondly, there was another reason for the new vigour of the League. The British delegation, strong in both numbers and personnel—for the Prime Minister himself (Mr. J. Ramsay MacDonald), the Foreign Secretary, and the Minister for Trade on this occasion all attended the Assembly—exhibited the greatest initiative and energy of all the great national delegations. The British Prime Minister's declaration in favour of the acceptance of the optional clause, Mr. Arthur Henderson's claim that the gap in the Covenant permitting of some classes of war should be stopped, and Mr. Graham's remarkable address on the economic situation of the nations made a deep impression on the assembled delegates. Lord Cecil (also a member of the British delegation) made a speech on disarmament which received considerable support from the smaller nations and occasioned general comment throughout Europe. As a result of the British pronouncement in favour of the acceptance of the compulsory jurisdiction of the Permanent Court of International Justice, many nations, great and small, joined with the British during the Assembly in signing the optional clause.

And now, with this brief general preface, I would deal more specifically with the proceedings of the Assembly.

OPENING OF PROCEEDINGS AND ELECTION OF PRESIDENT.

In accordance with custom, the chair was occupied, in the first instance, by the Acting President of the Council then in session, and the proceedings began with a speech by the principal Persian delegate, who was representing his country on the Council.

The credentials of the delegates having been examined, the Assembly proceeded to elect its Chairman; its choice fell on M. J. G. Guerrero, the principal delegate of Salvador. It had been suggested that the Tenth Assembly would be fittingly presided over by M. Hymans, who filled the office of President so admirably in 1920; but the suggestion came to nothing, and the only other candidate whose name was before the delegates (M. Guerrero) received forty-three votes. M. Guerrero's figure is familiar in Geneva; he is greatly respected and occupies a high position amongst statesmen of Latin America.