

Some references by the Argentine delegate to the part played by his country in promoting peace between Paraguay and Bolivia let loose a flood of reference to the subject from delegates from South America. It was satisfactory to know that the efforts of the Argentine Government in this direction were appreciated in full measure by various South American Republics.

Before concluding these somewhat brief references to the debate I must write a few words on the speeches delivered by M. Litvinoff (the principal delegate from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) and M. del Vayo (one of the Spanish Delegates) which appear in the *Journal*. M. Litvinoff was ruthlessly candid in his analysis of the situation. He said that even to-day the League was strong enough, by collective action, to avert or arrest aggression, but the time might come when aggression had grown so strong that the League, or what remained of it, would be powerless, even if it desired, to take action.

Naturally, M. del Vayo's speech dealt in the main with his own country (Spain). It was but a prelude to the discussion which would take place in the Sixth Committee, for the Spanish delegation had already requested that the section of the Secretary-General's report dealing with the situation in Spain should be referred to that Committee. He reviewed the various cases of aggression which had taken place and had led to the crisis which then dominated Europe, the responsibility for which, in his opinion, fell on those nations which, while proclaiming their respect for the sovereignty of States and sounding the praises of peace, had neglected their duty.

But the most dramatic intervention which the Spanish delegation made at Geneva was the announcement which Senor Negrin, the Spanish Prime Minister, made on the 22nd September immediately after the close of the general discussion on the report of the Secretary-General. After denying the charge that his Government desired a general conflagration as a solution of its difficulties, he said that that Government had decided on the immediate and complete withdrawal of all non-Spanish combatants taking part in the struggle on the Government side, the withdrawal to apply to all foreigners irrespective of nationality, including those who had acquired Spanish nationality after the 16th July, 1936.

With this end in view, he asked the League of Nations to set up immediately an international commission for the purpose of making any investigations and inquiries it might consider necessary in order to satisfy States comprising the League, and world opinion, that the decision to withdraw was being fully complied with. He introduced a brief draft resolution which the President sent to the Agenda Committee.

At the Agenda Committee, of which New Zealand was a member, and in contrast with its usually altogether formal proceedings, there was a difference of opinion as to whether the subject should even be allowed to be discussed. Though the proceedings were secret and would therefore in the ordinary case not be alluded to in my report, I conceive it proper to make on this occasion a passing reference to them, for the sufficient reason that the representative of the delegation that pressed the objection to allowing discussion referred later in public proceedings to the objection raised. I do no more than supplement his reference by saying that Portugal's objection received no support in the Agenda Committee. The question was whether the Assembly should be recommended to add the subject to its agenda and to refer it to the Sixth ("Political") Committee. The objections made by Portugal were that (1) as to procedure, the "exceptional circumstances" required by the Assembly's rule of procedure No. 4 (4) were not present; and (2) in point of substance, with the London Non-Intervention Committee in being, the creation of a new organ would be a disavowal of that Committee.

These points were rebutted by at least four (including New Zealand) of the Committee's seven members, thus giving the required majority, on the grounds that (i) the Spanish Government's statement did constitute an "exceptional circumstance" justifying inclusion of the new item, although the Assembly was already in being, and (ii) the proper place to discuss the question of substance was not in the Agenda Committee, but in the Sixth Committee. The Assembly was therefore recommended to place the question on its agenda and to refer the draft resolution to its Sixth Committee; and this recommendation the Assembly adopted on the following day, 23rd September.

In the course of the Assembly meetings several draft resolutions were introduced by delegations and referred to the Agenda Committee or the General Committee of the Assembly. An account of the subsequent action taken thereon will be found in the sections of this report devoted to the work of the Assembly Committees. However, it should be noted here that the Assembly itself disposed of the following without asking for a report from one of its main Committees:—

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY FOR EUROPEAN UNION.

This is a hardy annual which bloomed for the first time when the late Aristide Briand was one of the great figures in Geneva. On the 23rd September the Assembly decided to renew for one year the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry. Of course, the Commission of Inquiry never meets (Document A. 50, 1938).