

ELECTION OF THREE NEW NON-PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.

The term of office of Poland, Roumania, and Ecuador had run its course and it became necessary for the Assembly to proceed to the election of three new non-permanent members to the Council to replace them. Poland, which for some years had occupied a seat of a semi-permanent nature, having invoked the re-eligibility rule, gave notice of her intention not to stand for re-election, so that the issue became clear. There were no active candidates other than those ultimately elected; indeed, the election was little more than a formality. Forty-three States voted, thirty-nine for Yugoslavia and thirty-eight each for Greece and the Dominican Republic.

PERMANENT COURT OF INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE: ELECTION OF A JUDGE.

On the 26th September the Assembly proceeded to the election of a Judge for the Permanent Court of International Justice to fill the vacancy caused by the death of M. Ake Hammarskjöld.

The rules governing the election of Judges of the Permanent Court require the Council and the Assembly to meet at the same time, the former in secret session, and for each body to vote separately. To be elected, an absolute majority of votes is required. To obtain such a majority in respect of any one person it was necessary on this occasion to have three ballots. The result of the third ballot in the Assembly showed that M. Erich (Finland) had received thirty votes, the next in favour, M. Hansson (Norway), having received seventeen votes. As the third ballot of the Council showed that M. Erich was favoured by that body, he was declared elected.

FIRST COMMITTEE: CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL QUESTIONS.

New Zealand Delegate: Mr. W. J. JORDAN. Substitute: Mr. C. A. KNOWLES.

The Chairman, M. Pella, has been a member of the Roumanian delegation for many years, and has taken an active part in the deliberations of the Assembly, and especially in those of its First Committee. He brought to the task of Chairman a long experience of League procedure. Nowadays the First Committee's work is reduced to manageable proportions. I understand that in the early years of the League it was one of the most hard-worked Committees of the Assembly.

When the Committee met for the first time on 14th September there was placed before it an agenda of two items, although, of course, the Committee was always faced with the possibility of being asked for legal opinion or for advice by any other Committee of the Assembly.

WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE UNIFICATION OF PRIVATE LAW.

This is one of the few organizations set up in past years on the motion of individual Governments, the maintenance expenses of which are being paid in whole or in part by the Governments who proposed their creation. This type of organization, with headquarters removed from Geneva but over which the mantle of the League has fallen, is not liked by several countries. Its forerunner was the Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, which was founded on the proposal of the French Government at a time when resistance to such a policy was difficult, and its foundation was viewed with some misgivings. The fears proved to be unfounded.

The International Institute for the Unification of Private Law was established on the proposal of the Italian Government, which gave certain undertakings regarding its foundation and maintenance. However, Italy has given notice of her withdrawal from the League, and she has denounced her undertakings in respect of the Institute with effect from the 20th April, 1940. The future of the Institute must be the subject of discussion by next year's Assembly. In the meantime, all the Assembly, through its First Committee, had to do this year was to review the work of the Institute as briefly outlined in the Secretary-General's report on the work of the League (pages 181-185, Document A. 6, 1938).

The task of the First Committee was lightened by the early preparation by its Rapporteur, a representative of Greece, of a draft report which, with some amendment, was eventually adopted as the First Committee's report to the Assembly (Document A. 42, 1938, V). This came before the Assembly on the 26th September, when the following resolution was passed:—

“The Assembly takes note of the report of the First Committee on the work of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law, and congratulates the Institute on the remarkable work it has accomplished.”

I do not think there is any need to give details of the work of the Institute, as sufficient information is furnished in the documents mentioned above. I might, however, mention that one of the matters which the Institute is studying concerns the legal status of women. There had not been time for the organization to submit a report, but,