

acceptance of the Optional Clause and in February, 1929, had advised the other Members of the British Commonwealth of Nations that it considered signature desirable. On the 20th September, 1929, five days after the Irish Free State had signed without reservations, the representatives of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Union of South Africa, and India affixed their signatures to the Optional Clause subject, *mutatis mutandis*, to the reservations set out in the following declaration:—

“On behalf of His Majesty’s Government in Canada, and subject to ratification, I accept as compulsory *ipso facto* and without special convention, on condition of reciprocity, the jurisdiction of the Court in conformity with Article 36, paragraph 2, of the Statute of the Court, for a period of ten years, and thereafter until such time as notice may be given to terminate the acceptance, over all disputes arising after the ratification of the present declaration with regard to situations or facts subsequent to the said ratification, other than:—

‘Disputes in regard to which the parties to the dispute have agreed or shall agree to have recourse to some other method of peaceful settlement, and

‘Disputes with the Government of any other Member of the League which is a Member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, all of which disputes shall be settled in such a manner as the parties have agreed or shall agree, and

‘Disputes with regard to questions which by international law fall exclusively within the jurisdiction of the Dominion of Canada,

‘and subject to the condition that His Majesty’s Government in Canada reserve the right to require that proceedings in the Court shall be suspended in respect of any dispute which has been submitted to and is under consideration by the Council of the League of Nations, provided that notice to suspend is given after the dispute has been submitted to the Council and is given within ten days of the notification of the initiation of the proceedings in the Court, and provided also that such suspension shall be limited to a period of twelve months or such longer periods as may be agreed by the parties to the dispute or determined by a decision of all the Members of the Council other than the parties to the dispute’”.

While signing with these reservations, the representatives of Canada and South Africa indicated, that while in their opinion legal disputes between Members of the British Commonwealth might properly go before the Court, as a matter of policy they preferred to have them dealt with by other means.

In all some fifteen nations signed the Optional Clause at this session of the Assembly of the League. Among them, in addition to the Members of the British Commonwealth were France, Italy, and Czechoslovakia. Assuming that ratification by all fifteen signatories does follow, the total number of States which have voluntarily bound themselves to accept the Court’s jurisdiction in all appropriate cases is raised to thirty-two, which is more than half the membership of the League.

Another development of almost equal importance in the scope and authority of the Court is the approval by the Assembly of the Protocol embodying the agreement between League Members and the United States as to the conditions on which the latter country could join the Court. If and when the draft Protocol, thus approved by the Assembly is ratified by all States which have ratified the Protocol of December 16, 1920, and accepted by the Senate of the United States, that country will become a full member of the Court and her delegates will be present to sit with the Council and Assembly when it falls to these bodies to re-elect the bench of judges of the Permanent Court.

These extensions of the sphere and authority of the Court were accompanied by certain changes in its structure, which were foreshadowed at the Ninth Assembly of the League, when a Committee was appointed to revise the Statutes of the Court, not on any fundamental point, but on certain particular details, in the light of the experience of its seven years work. There were four main points regarding which changes in the existing Statutes were proposed and finally approved. In the first place the Court is now to regard itself as in