

The Assembly is composed of representatives of the members of the League. Each member of the League is entitled to send three delegates to the Assembly, but each member has only one vote. The Council will under normal conditions be the working body of the League. Its powers are set forth in the Covenant. It has all the powers of Assembly, with but few exceptions. It has the power to do the important work of the League.

The Assembly has all the powers of the Council, and it has also certain specified prerogatives. One of the most important is that of choosing the representatives on the Council of the powers other than the Great Powers. It must decide on the admission of new members to the League. Under certain conditions it has power upon reference from the Council, to investigate and pass upon matters originally referred to the Council.

The actual working operations of the League are carried on by the Secretariat. That is, an international organization acting under the instructions of the Council carries on the work between the meetings of the Council and is the real working instrument of the League.

It is important to bear in mind, Mr. Speaker, that except as otherwise expressly provided in the Treaty, all decisions of both the Council and the Assembly must be unanimous. The cases where unanimity is not required are relatively few. In other words, the great bulk of the work of the League can only be done if the members of the Council or the Assembly are unanimous. Some objection has been urged from some quarters to unanimity being required. The answer—which, I submit, is a good one—is that it is essential that public opinion should support this great international experiment, the greatest which the statesmen of the world have ever tried. After all, the success or failure of the League will depend upon the public opinion and the moral sentiment of the world. If public opinion and the moral sentiment of the world—the sentiment for justice, for peace and good international relations—are not sufficiently strong to back up the decisions of the Council and the Assembly, the League must fail, as other international experiments have failed. Therefore in the great majority of cases the decision must be unanimous.

I now come to the question of the status of Canada and the other self-governing dominions. I pointed out a moment ago that the Council was composed of representatives of the five great powers and of

[Mr. Rowell.]

four others to be chosen by the Assembly. The question was raised overseas whether Canada and the other Dominions were entitled to be chosen as members of the Council, or whether by reason of their relation to Great Britain as part of the British Empire they were disqualified from being so chosen. A reading of the terms of the Covenant makes it perfectly clear, I should say, that they have exactly the same rights as all other members and are entitled to be chosen members of the Council.

Mr. FIELDING: Who raised the question? Who raised any doubt whatever about the matter, when a reading of the terms of the Covenant clearly shows that there is no question about it?

Mr. ROWELL: I understand that the question was raised in some quarters at Paris; I am not in a position at the moment to say who were the parties who raised it. But in order to prevent any misunderstanding so far as the great powers were concerned, the Prime Ministers of Great Britain and France and the President of the United States signed a statement, which was submitted to the House last session, in which they affirmed that that was their interpretation of the provisions of the Treaty and that it was clear that Canada and the other Dominions were entitled to be chosen among the nations to nominate members to the Council.

Mr. FIELDING: Eligible.

Mr. ROWELL: Yes, they are eligible.

Mr. BURNHAM: Shall we have that statement laid before the House?

Mr. ROWELL: It was laid before the House at the last session. My hon. friend will find it in the address made by the Secretary of State (Hon. Mr. Sifton) with regard to the Treaty.

Mr. CANNON: Is that document an official interpretation or simply a personal opinion?

Mr. ROWELL: It is the opinion—it could not be anything more—of the Prime Ministers of Great Britain and France and of the President of the United States. I assume that should any question arise in the Council with regard to the matter, the representatives of these nations would not depart from that interpretation. But my own view is the same as that of the member for Shelburne and Queen's (Mr. Fielding), that on the reading of the Covenant itself it is clear that Canada and the other Dominions are eligible for election to the Council. The