

the latter's accession to the London Naval Treaty of 1936. He pointed out, also, that the attitude adopted by the Japanese Government had made it impossible to maintain the 35,000-ton limit for capital ships laid down in the Naval Agreements, with the result that the Powers concerned have raised this limit to 45,000 tons. The United Kingdom was, however, not at present proposing to build ships of more than 40,000 tons and had expressed to the French, German and Soviet Governments the hope that they would take a similar line.

The representative of France stated that his Government had announced its intention not to build ships of more than 35,000 tons, so long as that limit was not exceeded by any other continental European Power.

The discussion on the first item of the Agenda, however, was not prolonged. The Committee observed with regret the intensified competition in armaments during the year and felt that the task of disarmament must be taken up again as soon as circumstances were such as to allow any chance of successful organization of international relations on a pacific basis. The Committee expressed its conviction that the principle of publicity of national defence expenditure must form an essential feature of any system of limitation of armaments and asked the Assembly to request those Governments which have not yet done so to communicate to the League the measures taken in their territory to supervise the manufacture of, and trade in, arms, ammunition and implements of war.

#### *Protection of Civilians Against Air Bombing*

Turning to the second item on its Agenda—the protection of the non-combatant civilian population against bombing from the air in case of war—the Committee heard Senor de Azcarate of Spain, whose government had brought the question before the League, outline the terrible experiences undergone by the people living in the territories held by the Government forces, experiences which staggered the imagination by their horror. The number of bombs dropped on civil populations had reached approximately twenty-four thousand; seven thousand non-combatant civilians had been killed and eleven thousand had been wounded. The property damage had also been enormous. Ten thousand buildings had been wholly or partially destroyed. The losses were becoming more serious with every passing day. The Spanish Government did not, he said, resort to reprisals. They felt, however, that they should bring the matter before the League and place at its disposal their own tragic experience in the hope of erecting a barrier against such catastrophes.

The United Kingdom delegate (Captain Wallace) pointed out that while the usages of land and maritime warfare had been codified there was, at the present time, no international code of law on which general agreement had been reached concerning aerial warfare. He put forward three principles, which, he suggested, might serve as the basis of a general codification. These principles, translated into terms of aerial warfare, might be stated as follows: First, the intentional bombing of civilian populations was illegal. Secondly, targets aimed at from the air must be legitimate objectives, and must be capable of identification. Thirdly, any attack on those legitimate objectives must be made in such a way that civilian populations in the neighbourhood would not be bombed through carelessness.

The practical application of these principles was, of course, a matter of great complexity and would demand most careful investigation. He hoped, however, that they would be adopted by the Assembly as a first step toward the goal of securing for the civilian population of the world the maximum possible protection against the horrors of aerial bombardment.

The French delegation associated itself with the British proposal.

The representatives of Greece (M. Politis) and of Haiti (M. Frangulis) argued that the bombing of civilian populations by any means whatsoever is already prohibited by International law, citing Article 25 of the Hague Convention of 1907, and contended that what is needed now is practical regulation designed to ensure the application of the law which already exists. In this