

vided that all treaties which are inconsistent with the terms of the Covenant must be modified or terminated without delay, and the nations parties to the Covenant agree that they will take such action in order to bring their international obligations into harmony with the terms of the Covenant. It is also provided that all treaties concluded in future must be filed or registered with the Secretary of the League, and such treaties are open to all the members of the League so that their contents may be known.

Mr. CANNON: Will the hon. minister permit me a question? Has this been done as far as the Anglo-Persian Treaty is concerned?

Mr. ROWELL: The Anglo-Persian Treaty was concluded before the League went into effect. But that Treaty must be brought into conformity with the terms of the Covenant, if it does not now actually conform to it. The Covenant provides for all cases of treaties concluded prior to its going into effect.

Mr. D. D. McKENZIE: Do I understand the minister to say that the treaty-making power of Great Britain is now made subject to the approval of the League of Nations and, to that extent, the independence of Great Britain taken away?

Mr. ROWELL: I would not put it in that way, but rather that Great Britain binds herself, as do all the other nations parties to the League, not to enter into international obligations inconsistent with the provisions of the Covenant. All treaties when entered into must, as I said, be filed or registered with the Secretary-General of the League, and they do not become valid until they are so registered.

Mr. BUREAU: I understand that past treaties also must be registered with the Secretary of the League?

Mr. ROWELL: Yes, past treaties must be either rescinded or amended so as to bring them into conformity with the Covenant.

Then the third method for attaining the objects of the League is the establishment of the firm understandings of international law, as the rule of conduct among governments. In other words, just as in all civilized communities where law is administered individuals are governed by the rule of law in their relations one with another, the Covenant of the League provides that the firm understandings of international law shall be recognized by the nations parties

to the League as binding upon them and as governing their conduct in relation to one another.

Then the fourth is the maintenance of respect for all treaty obligations. Mr. Speaker, hon. members will recall that at the outbreak of the war Germany laid down the principle that an international obligation should not be considered binding upon a nation longer than that nation considered it to be in its own selfish interest to so recognize it; when in the view of the nation it no longer served its purpose, it might repudiate, just as Germany repudiated her obligations under the treaty with Belgium. The principle that nations must respect their international obligations is embodied in this Covenant. The only way they can escape these obligations is by terminating the treaty in the manner provided in the treaty itself, or by a reconsideration of its terms under the provisions of the Covenant of the League.

Mr. BURNHAM: If it is regular, I wish to ask the hon. minister—at a somewhat inopportune juncture I admit—if the vote of Canada in the League of Nations is as part of the British Empire?

Mr. ROWELL: If my hon. friend has no objection I will come to that in due course and discuss it. I wish to deal with this in logical order.

Mr. CANNON: I would like to ask the minister if the reservations adopted by Switzerland when she decided to enter the League of Nations are not conflicting with the general principles just laid down and explained by him?

Mr. ROWELL: We have not yet received any official information as to the reservations adopted by Switzerland. I am therefore not in a position to give my hon. friend an answer to that question.

The organization of the League—and now I come to the question of the Council and the Assembly—consists of a Council, an Assembly, and a Secretariat. The Council, as hon. members will recall, is a body of nine, composed of the representatives of the five Great Powers, and four others representing the smaller powers, to be chosen by the Assembly when it meets. Pending the meeting of the Assembly the names are specified in the Treaty. As I now recall them they are Belgium, Brazil, Greece and Spain. When the Assembly meets it will be in a position to choose the four members who are to represent the members other than the five Great Powers.