

Sixth Committee:

Hon. C. H. Cahan
 Mr. H. F. Munro
 Mme. Charles Frémont

No Third Committee was constituted as all the questions which were submitted at previous sessions to that committee were being examined this year by the various organs set up by the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments.

PLENARY MEETINGS OF THE ASSEMBLY

Mr. de Valera, as President of the Council, opened the Assembly. He drew the attention of the Assembly to certain criticisms of the League's activities. There were suggestions that the action of the League in the economic sphere might be paralysed by the pressure of powerful national interests, and that if the hand that was raised against the Covenant was sufficiently strong it might strike with impunity. The one effective way of silencing that criticism was to show unmistakably that the Covenant was a solemn pact, the obligations of which no State, great or small, would find it possible to ignore.

M. Politis (Greece), in a brief presidential address, emphasized, as the President of the Council had done, the need for constant vigilance. The will for peace seemed to have been weakening. It was essential to complete and strengthen the guarantees for peace which the League had already inspired or created.

M. Motta (Switzerland), who continued the general discussion, expressed his surprise at the threats made in certain quarters to abandon the League if this or that thing desired was not done, and done at once. The destruction of the League of Nations would mean, for the small countries, that they would have to renounce the opportunity they now had of bringing their helpful influence to bear in international matters. For the great countries it would mean a return to the old system of alliances, rivalries, and bitter competition.

M. Herriot (France) also said that the League had given proof time and again of its usefulness. The League had made the Lausanne Conference possible, and it was the League that had convened the Disarmament Conference. In the matter of disarmament the doctrine which France supported was "the Covenant, the whole Covenant and nothing but the Covenant." For France, the Covenant was the law. Furthermore, it was a matter of encouragement to the friends of peace to know that the most enlightened minds in the United States were collaborating with the Members of the League in order to strengthen the Briand-Kellogg Pact. By the new methods of international discussion which the League afforded, it should be possible to overcome the evils of the old order of things, notably, secret diplomacy and the system of alliances and balance of power.

Lord Cecil, speaking on behalf of the United Kingdom delegation, thought that the charge of League extravagance was no doubt pressed beyond all reason and justice. The amount spent on the League was a mere fraction of what the nations were spending in preparations for war. But the main charge was that the League had shown itself inefficient. What was really meant was that in certain great international questions the League had been unable to reach a successful result. This was primarily not a charge against the League, but against its Members. Wherever League machinery had been fairly and genuinely applied without fear and without hesitation, it had produced admirable results. If the policies of France and Germany were fully guided by the principles of the Covenant, their disputes would automatically come to an end. No