

happen that they have to express an opinion which is not absolutely agreeable to the mandatory Powers. I believe we have reason, however, to be thankful for the work of the Mandates Commission and to congratulate them on the way they have carried out their duties, and on the courage they have shown when they have had to express views which may not always have been quite agreeable to the Powers affected. . . . The committee state that they have noted with great satisfaction the intention of the Commission to investigate further the question of indentured labour in the Pacific islands, and of the laws of land-tenure in the mandated territories, the liquor legislation, and the importation of alcoholic liquors in Africa, and the intention of the Commission to draw the attention of the mandatory Powers to the social, economic, and political effects of the Ruanda frontier. . . . Mention is then made in the report of some few points which were specially discussed, but I shall not take up your time by reading the resolutions arrived at. One of these dealt with the mandate for the Nauru Island, for which the mandatory Power is the British Empire. There are a few remarks under that head which I recommend you to read if you have not done so already; but I will not read them now, as they are not of very great importance."

Dr. Nansen then read the resolution agreed upon regarding sending in of petitions.

Madame Anna Bugge-Wicksell (delegate for Sweden) then delivered an address to the Assembly, containing the following extracts:—

"There is one point mentioned in the report about which I want to say only one word. It concerns the apprehension felt by the Mandates Commission with regard to the situation of the labourers in the Island of Nauru under the stipulation laid down in Article 13 of the Nauru Agreement Act. The report of the Mandates Commission says, concerning this article, that it is not clear what powers and means of control the Australian Administration possesses with regard to the business organization in charge of the phosphate deposits of this little island. The Australian High Commissioner in London, Sir Joseph Cook, who gave the Commission very valuable assistance in its work, makes some comments on the observations in the report of the Permanent Mandates Commission—that is the document referred to by Dr. Nansen, and which he recommends you to read together with the report of the Sixth Committee—which I would like to mention.

"Sir Joseph Cook states that the 'freedom of the Commissioners from governmental control in the business of working, shipping, and selling of the phosphates is not interpreted by the Governments concerned to include freedom of control in regard to conditions of labour, &c.' The Mandates Commission received Sir Joseph Cook's comments *only after our work was finished*, and that is why I want to say now expressly that this statement, as far as I understand, is exactly the explanation which the Commission wanted in order to set our minds at rest upon this point.

"As Dr. Nansen said, the mandatory system is something quite new. The Permanent Mandates Commission, I venture to say, has a keen sense of its responsibility as to the future and the success of this system. We feel it our duty to be watchful; we have to safeguard the interests of men and women who are not capable of defending themselves, who have very little knowledge of our ways and methods, and who very often do not understand those ways and methods, even when they are unquestionably meant for their benefit. We must try, as far as we can, to look with their eyes and their hearts, and sometimes both their eyes and their hearts are suspicious. We have to scrutinize every decree and every Ordinance given by the diverse Administrations, and see if there may not possibly be some loophole that will permit abuse. We have to look to it that the good and useful dispositions laid down in the Ordinances are also well and justly applied, for the application of the law is, indeed, still more important than the law itself. We have further to be careful that the Governments and Administrations do not, without thinking of it, introduce into the legal system of the areas confided to their care under mandate notions and conceptions to which they are used at home, but which are not always in strict conformity with this quite new mandatory system.

"All these things are difficult and delicate, and I am afraid the Governments will often think that the Commission is apt to present rather petty considerations. The Commission feel acutely that Governments are rather sensitive, and it is not always easy when you have a remark to make to find just the right word, the word that will explain and bring home what the Commission want to say without offending or wounding, which the Commission never want to do.

"I hope that it will not be found improper if I take this occasion, when representatives of all the mandatory Powers are sitting here, to ask them, when they read our remarks, to think of the difficulties of drafting which always present themselves to a body treading upon entirely new ground.

"I am not authorized by the Mandates Commission to speak on its behalf at all; I am speaking for myself and expressing my own feelings. But I only state a fact when I add that, as far as the experience of the Mandates Commission goes, the mandatory Governments are as anxious as we are to live up to Article 22 of the Covenant in letter and in spirit."

Sir Francis Bell, who followed, then read the following speech, which, in consideration of its importance, is here set out in full:—

"Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to preface what I have to say, and which I have been careful to put into writing, by stating that nothing that I may say has any reflection upon the present Mandates Commission or its report.

"We associate ourselves with the statement in the report of the Sixth Committee that the present Mandates Commission has done its work as it understood it with great care and with great impartiality.

"The subject of consideration of reports under the mandate provisions of the Covenant comes before the League for the first time this year. That part of the functions of the League has never been exercised before, and nothing now done should create a precedent unless this Assembly hereafter decides that the precedent is to be followed. A course convenient to the circumstances of to-day