

officials were originally fixed), and that it ignored altogether the fact that the increases granted to the lower-paid officials on account of the high cost of living were at a far higher rate than in the case of the highly paid ones, and that instead of being a democratic proposal, as claimed by the mover, it was the very opposite, and that in the event of the cost of living in Geneva rising instead of falling it would have a very injurious effect upon the lower-paid members of the staff. The immediate result of the proposal, of course, was to still further diminish the reduction which will be made in the salaries of the staff as from the 1st January next on account of the fall in the cost of living.

With a view to rectifying this matter I moved the following amendment during the sitting of the Assembly on the morning of the 28th September:—

“That the Assembly, having considered very carefully the proposals of the Supervisory Commission as regards a modification of the percentage of the variable portion, and after examining the documents placed at its disposal, decides that the fixed and variable portion of the salaries should be established as follows:—

Salaries. Francs.	Variable Percentage.	Variable Portion. Francs.	Fixed Portion. Francs.
7,000	30.0	2,100	4,900
20,000	22.5	4,400	15,600
40,000	20.0	8,000	32,000

“For salaries above 40,000 francs the fixed portion of the salary should amount to 80 per cent. and the variable portion to 20 per cent. For salaries of 7,000 francs and less of members of the staff not locally engaged, 70 per cent. shall constitute the fixed portion and 30 per cent. the variable portion.”

Owing to a misunderstanding and, I think, wrongful ruling by the President, against which I protested, my amendment, however, was not put before the Assembly.

A further anomalous procedure decided upon by the committee was that in calculating future variations the figure to be taken as the basis should be, not the original variable portion of the salary, but the variable proportion *as reduced by reductions previously adopted*. In this instance, however, I was successful in getting the matter put right when the report of the committee was being considered by the Assembly.

Rents in Geneva.—During the investigations of the sub-committee regarding the cost of living in Geneva it was ascertained that, although the cost of living had fallen considerably in most respects, there had been no fall in rents or cost of flats, and that this was principally due to the existence of a ring of house agents who have, under local laws, peculiar powers of controlling rentals. Most of the house property in Geneva is owned by the banks, with whom house agents co-operate in keeping up the rents. At the request of the committee I made a public reference to the matter in the Assembly at its seventeenth sitting. A similar protest with regard to excessive hotel charges which I made at the First Assembly proved immediately effective, and I hope that the same result may follow in this instance.

Pensions.—After considering Documents A. 1, A. 1 (a), A. 1 (b), and A. 121, the sub-committee decided to recommend the inauguration of a compulsory contributory provident scheme covering the staff of the International Labour Office and Court of International Justice, as well as the Secretariat, to come into operation from the 1st January, 1924.

COMMITTEE No. 5.—SOCIAL AND GENERAL QUESTIONS.

This committee had a large and varied list of subjects allotted to it, viz:—

Traffic in women and children.

Report on work in connection with protection of women and children in the Near East.

Traffic in opium and dangerous drugs.

Intellectual co-operation.

Validity in all States of certain secondary-education diplomas and the establishment of an international university.

Refugee question.

There is very little need for me to say much regarding the subjects dealt with by this committee, as nothing of special interest to New Zealand arises out of any of them.

Traffic in Women and Children.—The documents regarding this subject are A. 36 and A. 75. The basis of the committee's discussions was the report of the Advisory Committee on this subject, and the resolution of the Council regarding the same (*vide* Document A. 36). The recommendations of the Advisory Committee included one that “pending the abolition of the system of State regulation [of vice], no foreign woman should be employed or carry on her profession as a prostitute in any licensed house.” It was round this recommendation that most of the discussions centred. The French delegate had strongly opposed it in the Advisory Committee on the ground that it was a matter of purely domestic concern and not an international matter. The Advisory Committee, however, considered that it had a very direct bearing on the question of traffic in women and children, which is an international matter. The matter was fought out again by the French delegate in the Council, and, as a result, the Council, while endorsing the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on other points, only forwarded the resolution on this subject to States “for information.” A number of enthusiastic reformers in No. 5 Committee endeavoured to secure, in the resolutions to be adopted by the Assembly, stronger support for the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on this point, but, as will be seen from Document A. 75, the French delegates were ultimately successful in carrying their point.