

*Protection of Women and Children in the Near East.*—Documents A. 69 and A. 103 give particulars of the good work on behalf of women and children refugees carried on in Constantinople and Aleppo under the auspices of the League of Nations. When the credit for this work was considered by No. 4 Committee it was decided that the amount granted this year for work during the first nine months of 1924 should terminate the assistance granted from League funds for this work. After that date it will have to be supported entirely by private philanthropy.

*Opium and Dangerous Drugs.*—The recommendations of the committee with regard to opium, &c., will be found in Document A. 101. It was decided that two conferences should be held during 1924, the first one composed of representatives of Far Eastern countries, and of countries having territories in the Far East, to consider the possibility of reduction in the amount of raw opium still permitted to be prepared for purposes of smoking, and a second, of a more general character, to follow immediately after the conference just referred to, in order to consider the question of limitation of manufacture of dangerous drugs. A notable feature of the meetings of the committee was the participation of representatives of the United States of America, which country is apparently desirous of actively assisting the work of the League in regard to suppression of opium and control of dangerous drugs.

Progress in regard to this question appears to be steady, if somewhat slow, but it is being retarded by the failure of certain countries (notably Switzerland and Persia, which are of considerable importance in this connection) to ratify the Opium Convention, while a considerable number of States have not yet introduced the import-certificate system. Full details will be found in the report of the Advisory Commission (Document A. 13).

*Refugees.*—Document A. 30. Dr. Nansen's report on the work during the past year of his organization for relief of refugees gives very full details of the splendid work accomplished in this connection, and it is sincerely to be hoped that he does not carry out his threat to refuse to take any further responsibility for the work, owing to the smallness of the credit which the Assembly considered it possible to vote him for its continuance. The Fifth Committee's report on the work of the High Commissioner is contained in Document A. 107.

*Intellectual Co-operation.*—Documents A. 31, A. 66, and A. 102. This subject occupied the committee for the greater part of eight sessions, but I do not consider it of sufficient practical importance to merit any lengthy mention here. A glance through the terms of the eight resolutions proposed by the committee and adopted by the Assembly (*vide* Document A. 102) will sufficiently indicate what a variety of subjects the Committee of Intellectual Co-operation has now interested itself in—most of them, in my opinion, subjects quite outside the proper sphere of the League. Acting under my instructions, Mr. Burdekin urged at one of the meetings of the committee the undesirability of attempting to deal with such a large number of miscellaneous subjects, almost all involving the League in a certain amount of expense, but few of the delegates took this view.

Several stormy incidents marked the discussion on this subject, particularly arising out of the jealousy of nations not represented on the Committee of Intellectual Co-operation set up by the Council in accordance with the resolutions of the Second Assembly.

The Resolution No. 1 put forward by the committee and accepted by the Assembly represents an endeavour to conciliate those nations which seem to feel a particular grievance on account of their national culture not being represented on the committee.

*Validity in all Countries of Secondary-education Diplomas; Establishment of International University, &c.*—Documents A. 34 and A. 96 give particulars of proposals of the Spanish Government regarding these matters. I do not think that the League should attempt to deal with such questions.

*Protection of Scientific Ideas.*—Full details of Senator Ruffini's scheme (referred to in Resolution 6—Document A. 102) will be found in Document A. 38. In the committee, and also in the Assembly, the Swedish delegate endeavoured to amend the wording of the resolution on this subject in order to confine the Assembly's action to "noting with interest" instead of "approving the principle of" this scheme. Unfortunately, this eminently sensible suggestion was not adopted. . . .

*Relief of Peoples overtaken by Disaster.*—Particulars of this ambitious and decidedly novel insurance scheme will be found in Document A. 67. I hardly imagine there is much likelihood of its general acceptance, at any rate in the immediate future.

*Travelling Facilities for Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, &c.*—Document A. 122. A harmless but unimportant matter.

#### COMMITTEE No. 6.—POLITICAL QUESTIONS.

This committee considered the following questions: Admission of new States; slavery; Polish-Lithuanian dispute; protection of minorities; Eastern Carelia.

*Admission of New States.*—As already mentioned, the applications of the only two States which asked for admission this year—the Irish Free State and Abyssinia—were both approved. In the case of Abyssinia, however, owing to the existence of slavery in that country, this decision was only arrived at after long discussion and on certain conditions, and remained in some doubt up to the last.

*Slavery.*—Documents A. 18 and A. 117. As this is not a matter of direct interest to New Zealand, and as no very definite conclusions were arrived at, I will refrain from any comment.

*Polish-Lithuanian Dispute.*—Documents A. 7 and A. 138. As will be seen from the latter document it was decided, at the request of the Lithuanian Government itself, to postpone consideration of the question until the Fifth Assembly.

*Protection of Minorities.*—The only point dealt with in the committee in regard to minorities was one of procedure in regard to the circulation to States of copies of any petitions received by the League, together with the remarks thereon of the Government concerned.