

LATIN AMERICAN BUREAU ATTACHED TO THE SECRETARIAT.

This Bureau was suggested by the committee of experts (which inquired into the organization of the Secretariat and the International Labour Office in accordance with a resolution of the First Assembly) as a means of keeping in close contact with South American States. It will be seen at once that the creation of the Bureau has established the dangerous principle of differentiation of treatment. The representatives of the South American States, whose ability to vote *en bloc* on any matter concerning their common interests has to be considered, were unanimous for the Bureau, which began to function in 1923. Last year's Assembly suggested reorganization of the Bureau, and requested the Secretary-General to prepare a plan. He made a report (Document A. 5), which was before the Fourth Committee for consideration. Examination of the plan was entrusted to a small committee, which produced a report (Document A. 84) submitted to the Assembly on the 29th September. One point especially the report makes clear—that Latin America cannot be accorded exceptional treatment. The only solution is to fill vacant positions in the various branches of the Secretariat with nationals of South American States up to the number warranted, and by this means dispense with the Bureau. This change, however, can only be gradual. For some time to come the League must accept the Bureau as a normal, if temporary, part of its organization, and hope that the plan constituted by the series of resolutions passed by the Assembly will result in the abolition of the Bureau as speedily as is consistent with a proper regard for Latin American susceptibilities.

ALLOCATION OF THE EXPENSES OF THE LEAGUE.

The documents are A. 14 and A. 24, whilst A. 102 is the Report of the Fourth Committee to the Assembly. The first paragraph of the last mentioned sums up the difficulties of this problem, which was raised in the First Assembly, and which year by year has grown more and more acute. Whatever may be the ultimate solution, it cannot give satisfaction to all States. The provisional scale established in 1923, and continued last year, has again been fixed as the basis for the calculation of contributions in 1925.

It will be noted from the resolutions which were passed by the Assembly on the 25th September that the rebate of twelve units granted to Japan last year by reason of the suffering and loss sustained through the earthquake in that country is to be maintained for another year, and also that the scale of contributions will be modified in favour of some countries, since there are thirty-five units, plus the contributions of Santo Domingo, admitted to the League by the Assembly, available for distribution owing to the resumption of payments by the Argentine Government. The duty of distributing this available reserve amongst deserving States is left to the Committee on the Allocation of Expenses. The number of units payable by New Zealand is ten.

CONTRIBUTIONS IN ARREARS.

This is an outstanding question of a delicate nature which has never been really faced. The Fourth Committee sat with closed doors when considering the matter, and there was some plain speaking.

The decision regarding Luxemburg is based on an injustice. For each of the years 1921 and 1922 the contribution demanded was quite four times that demanded for each of the years of 1923 and 1924, but all demands have been met, with the exception of the amount of 50,983·89 gold francs, the balance of the contribution for 1922. There is no doubt that the rates for the years 1921 and 1922 were fixed without proper consideration of all the facts involved, and the Fourth Committee was unanimous in recommending the cancellation of the debt.

The cancellation of the Persian debt is based on the attitude of the Persian delegate of the Second Assembly, not only to refuse to accept the new scale which had been proposed, but to refuse to pay a contribution exceeding 125,000 gold francs. The Persian Government has, however, accepted the scale dating from 1924.

With regard to the debts of certain American States, the resolution proposed in the Fourth Committee was weakened by a modification supported by several delegates. Whether the representations to be made in accordance with the resolution will have better results than have former representations remains to be seen.

The document concerning the matter is A. 109, and the resolutions contained therein were passed by the Assembly on the 26th September.

CLAIM OF PANAMA FOR A REFUND OF CONTRIBUTIONS.

Panama has regularly paid her contributions to the League. The claim is based on the First Assembly's decision that States too heavily charged should be entitled ultimately to a refund, with retrospective effect. Panama is not alone in this respect, but she argues that her claim is strengthened by reason of the specific protest always maintained against the scale in force prior to 1923. To have admitted her claim would have been to open the door to a number of other claims, amounting in all to 9,500,000 francs—half the League's normal Budget. It was proposed to the Fourth Committee not to entertain the claim, but the exertions of representatives of South American States in committee resulted in modification of the draft resolution, and the hope is now held out that the claim may be considered by a future Assembly.

The documents are A. 78 and A. 110, and the resolution with which the latter concludes was passed by the Assembly on the 26th September.