

PENSIONS FOR THE ORDINARY JUDGES AND REGISTRAR OF THE PERMANENT COURT OF
INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE.

The right to pension is accorded in Article 32 of the Statute of the Court. The question was considered by the Supervisory Commission, which made a report and drafted a series of regulations (Document A. 38) which were referred to a sub-committee of the Fourth Committee. It was desired that the Registrar should be included in the category of higher officials of the Secretariat of the League who are not included in the staff pension scheme, but the First Committee, to which the question was referred, decided that the Statute of the Court gave the Registrar right to pension. The sub-committee of five included myself, but, as other work prevented me from attending its meetings, I had to arrange for representation. My representative put forward a number of proposals making for economy, but in almost every instance he found himself in a minority of one, although he was successful in helping to prevent a movement towards greater generosity. In the Fourth Committee, however, efforts were made towards economy, and some modifications in drafting were made; but the scheme is substantially that which was submitted by the sub-committee. The regulations approved by the Assembly on the 30th September are contained in Document A. 132.

COMMITTEE No. 5.

INTER-MUNICIPALITY.

The Fourth Assembly decided to refer to the Fifth Assembly the following proposal:—

“Whereas the maintenance of direct relations between the important municipalities of the various countries is a new form of co-operation between peoples which will contribute largely to diffusing the ideals which led to the creation of the League of Nations and which guide its work:

“The Assembly decides to accept with the greatest sympathy the principle of closer municipal relations which the Santiago Conference recommended to the members of the Pan-American Union for adoption.”

It was considered by the Fifth Committee, which drew up the report (Document A. 74) considered by the Assembly on the 20th September. Whilst under consideration by the committee it was made clear that whilst many delegates saw no real objection to direct relations being established between the municipalities of one country and another, there was a natural fear of such relations encroaching on national sovereignty. My own opinion is that this matter is beyond the functions of the League. The resolution passed by the Assembly was quite harmless in form; it merely voiced the opinion that inter-municipality will help realize the objects of the League, and requests the Secretary to draw up a report on inter-municipal co-operation for consideration next year.

OPIUM AND OTHER DANGEROUS DRUGS.

The documents are A. 8 (pages 78-81), A. 32, A. 45, and A. 67. A. 32 is a report to the Council by the Advisory Committee on Traffic in Opium and other Dangerous Drugs on the work accomplished during the sixth session of the Advisory Committee, and is well worth study. Two points stand out in this report—the unsatisfactory position in regard to China, and the steps now being taken by Switzerland to comply with the provisions of the Opium Convention. Full information regarding the former will be found in Annexes 3 and 4 of Document A. 32. The Chinese delegate endeavoured to cast a certain amount of blame on the foreign Powers, since, he said, if the poppy were cultivated in China its manufacture into drugs took place abroad; but he who studies the information available can form his own conclusions. As to Switzerland, every one desirous of combating drug-taking habits must rejoice that that country, which occupies so important a position amongst drug-manufacturing countries, is at last taking efficient steps to comply with the spirit as well as the letter of the Convention.

It will be noted that before consideration is given to the proposal that Indian hemp should be treated as a habit-forming drug, information on its production and use is to be sought.

Following resolutions passed by the Fourth Assembly, the Council of the League has convened two conferences to be held in November of this year; the first will deal with Far Eastern territories, and the second will be one of a more general nature.

The Assembly at its meeting on the 20th September passed a series of resolutions (Document A. 88), including one requesting the Council to ask the Advisory Committee whether it would not be advisable to prepare a scheme of propaganda to acquaint the masses of the terrible consequence resulting from the use of dangerous drugs.

REFUGEE QUESTIONS, AND TRANSFER OF ARMENIAN REFUGEES TO THE CAUCASUS.

It will be convenient if I deal with these two matters at the same time, for, although they were considered as distinct subjects in committee, they were taken together in the Assembly.

The documents concerning refugees are A. 8 (pages 82-85), A. 8 (a) (pages 33 and 34), with annexes on pages 39-43, and A. 81; whilst the Armenian question is dealt with on pages 36 and 37 of Document A. 8 (a) and in Document A. 104.

The work of providing for refugees, victims of the war, in such a way as to make them self-supporting is well deserving of sympathy. New Zealand has been second to none in the voluntary help, particularly financial, which her citizens have given to these unfortunate people. The excellent work done by Dr. Nansen, first on behalf of the prisoners of war, and latterly on behalf of civil refugees, is beyond praise; but each Assembly has been asked to vote considerable credits, and the time has now arrived for asking whether these credits should not come to an end.