

So far as Russian refugees are concerned, the Fifth Committee was largely occupied with the suggestion, which emanated from the Council, to transfer the work from the Secretariat to the International Labour Office, a body claimed to be well suited to deal with such a matter, and able to do so with less expense. It is true that whilst the governing body of the International Labour Office had seemed disposed to view the suggestion favourably it had not given a definite decision, and in the course of the debates, especially those of the Fourth Committee when the credit was under discussion, more use was made than seemed warranted of the uncertainty whether the transfer could be effected. The problem is capable of partial if not complete solution, for, although few countries are able to take these refugees in any number, owing to bad economic conditions, especially unemployment, France, it is said, is in a position to assimilate population readily and easily. There is no unemployment in France, and for some time past she has been importing foreign labour. A glance at the figures quoted on page 39 of Document A. 8 will show this. Such being the case, there was every reason to seize the opportunity afforded for a solution of the problem, although some delegates had qualms as to the use thus to be made of the League's money.

In the Fourth Committee a rider was added to the grant of the credit of 203,000 francs asked for the purpose, expressing the view that the appropriation should disappear from the vote of the League for 1926. This was distasteful to the Fifth Committee, and when the question was reopened in the Fourth Committee, point was made of doing anything which would cause the governing body of the Labour Office to refuse to undertake the work. Ultimately the Fourth Committee passed a resolution granting a supplementary credit of 203,000 Swiss francs for the placing and employment of Russian refugees as "exceptional and temporary expenditure," and added a rider that "the credit should be regarded as temporary, and the Fourth Committee hopes it will be possible for the item to disappear from the Budget of the International Labour Office at the earliest possible moment."

When the Fifth Committee's report was discussed in the Assembly on the 25th September I felt bound to support the South African delegate by saying that I could not pledge the Government of New Zealand to financial support beyond 1925.

The suggestion to transfer Armenian refugees to the Caucasus came from the Greek Government. It is, however, extremely doubtful whether it is a solution of the Armenian question, and, indeed, whether the Caucasus is able to receive them. The Fifth Committee did not go beyond a proposal to set up an inquiry into the possibility of settling a substantial number of Armenian refugees in that country. For this purpose the Fifth Committee asked for a credit of 50,000 francs, but the Supervisory Commission recommended the Fourth Committee to refuse the money. Even those members of the Fourth Committee favourably disposed towards the inquiry felt some doubt and proposed that the inquiry should not be limited to the possibility of settling Armenians in the Caucasus only, but extended to other places. To my regret, the advice of the Supervisory Commission was not accepted, and ultimately the credit was voted, with the possible unfortunate result of fostering hope which may be dashed, either by the negative result of the inquiry, or, if it should not be negative, by the impossibility of finding the money necessary to carry out an ambitious scheme of settlement.

The resolutions on both subjects proposed by the committee were passed at the Assembly on the 25th September.

TRAFFIC IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

An account of the work of the Advisory Committee will be found on pages 74-78 of Document A. 8, whilst the Fifth Committee's report is numbered A. 83. The resolutions with which the latter document concludes were passed by the Assembly on the 25th September. It will be noted that the cost of the inquiry, resolved on last year, into the conditions under which the traffic in women is conducted is being met up to 75,000 dollars by the Bureau of Social Hygiene of the United States.

PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE NEAR EAST.

Document A. 8 (a) (page 32) contains a reference to this matter. The war in the Near East resulted in the breaking-up of many thousands of homes and the scattering of families. Women and children detained amongst nationalities other than their own are cared for and ultimately returned to their relatives or placed in the way of earning a livelihood under the scheme which is being supported financially by the League. Documents A. 46, A. 85, and another document attached to the latter, furnish an account of the work, towards the expenses of which the Assembly has voted a further sum of 75,000 francs.

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR MUTUAL ASSISTANCE IN THE RELIEF OF PEOPLES OVERTAKEN BY DISASTER.

This ambitious scheme of mutual assistance, of which the author is Senator Ciruolo, President of the Italian Red Cross, was brought under the notice of last year's Assembly, and was again brought up this year. Document A. 48 contains replies already received to a communication which, under last year's Assembly resolution, was addressed to Governments members of the League. Generally speaking, the replies are not encouraging; nevertheless, such was the interest taken in the scheme by many delegates that this year's Assembly decided on the 26th September to set up a preparatory committee to study the scheme, at a cost of 30,000 francs, one-third of which will be found by the Italian Red Cross Society. The Fifth Committee's report and the resolutions passed by the Assembly will be found in Document A. 105.