

You will note it is proposed to make a slight change in the text of Article 16, paragraph 1.

There were a few who deplored what they considered to be a waste of time and the missing of a golden opportunity, but I cannot range myself with the number. Action in this matter has been far too hasty. Governments situated at a great distance from the League had not the time to consider carefully the report of the Committee of Eleven and to instruct their delegates. The Covenant is the Constitution of the League. Serious consequences might be involved in amending it. A delegate can but represent his country's views. He cannot, without precise instructions, bind his Government to something which may involve questions of national policy. Time has not been wasted. We have now a text, evolved in the light of a discussion entered into by the representatives of a large number of Governments, and if that text does not meet all points of view it is, at any rate, in some respects an improvement on that which it displaces.

All Governments now have the opportunity, which some did not possess before, of careful consideration and sufficient time within which to make their observations.

COMMITTEE No. 2.

HEALTH ORGANIZATION.

It has been said that the creation of the League of Nations was worth while, if only to provide a central clearing-house for the reception and dissemination of information. However that may be, it is certainly in the field of health that the League has found scope for work truly international and of the greatest value. Many of the reports issued by the Health Organization make the heart of the specialist rejoice, and the opportunities afforded for co-operation between various national administrations cannot but make for understanding.

The report of the Rapporteur, Miss Susan Lawrence, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, serves as a useful introduction to the work of the organization, whilst the Annual Report of the Health Organization (Document A. 9) and the additional information contained in Documents A. 6 and A. 6 (a) give in some detail an account of the past year's work.

There is no need here to mention the numerous activities of the organization, but I would draw your attention to the brief reference on pages 24 and 25 of Document A. 9 to the survey of health conditions in certain islands of the Pacific.

The Report of the Second Committee (Document A. 56) came before the Assembly at its meeting on 29th September, when the following resolution was passed:—

“ The Assembly, recognizing the importance of the work of the Health Organization to the League as a whole, and the value of that work in connection with problems of development in all countries—

“ Expresses the hope that the experience gained by this organization may be made available in increasing measure to member States of the League ;

“ Notes with satisfaction that the activities of the Health Organization continue to extend to countries in all parts of the world, and that during the past year they have been specially exercised in certain countries which have invited the technical advice of the League in the development of their public-health services ;

“ Approves the work carried on by the organization since the last session of the Assembly ; and

“ Expresses its appreciation to the members of the Health Committee, as well as to the different health administrations and individual experts who have contributed in so large a measure to the success of their activities.”

The proposal regarding international reciprocity in the care of the sick (Item 26 of the agenda) was referred to the Health Organization of the League.

CONFERENCE WITH A VIEW TO CONCERTED ECONOMIC ACTION.

This Conference, convened by resolution of the Assembly of 1929, was held in Geneva in February and March, 1930, and may be said to have been almost negative in its results so far. It is true that a convention was drawn up and signed by a small number of States ; but that convention provided for no more than a relative stabilization of the tariff situation, as it merely involved an undertaking to prolong until April, 1931, existing commercial agreements. A protocol supplementing the convention contains a programme of future negotiations which shall begin before the 31st March, 1931. Meanwhile the crisis has grown in magnitude. Tariffs continue to rise, and it is even stated that there is more frequent administrative evasion of the most-favoured-nation clause—such, for instance, as the imposition of increased Customs duties on wheat and other agricultural products, the increase being adjusted by the admission of special quotas at the old rate. Great Britain will ratify the convention, but there appears to be little likelihood of its coming into force. It is understood that ratification will not prejudice any negotiations in the economic sphere which may be undertaken during the Imperial Conference.

It should be understood that the “ Tariff Truce ” Conference was entirely a European Conference. Nevertheless, in the final Act which it adopted, recognition is given to the importance of overseas markets for the economic life of Europe ; and the Economic Organization of the League is recommended to study the means whereby close co-operation may be established between Europe and overseas countries.

A brief account of the Conference will be found on pages 57-60 of Document A. 6, and it was this which was before the Second Committee of the Assembly.