

The second point related to the locally recruited staff. The remuneration of most of these is that which they could command in Geneva; consequently it does not include "expatriation allowance." Their pensions, based on such remuneration, would therefore be lower than those of officers of similar rank not natives of Geneva or the adjoining French territory, and injustice would result. A formula had to be found to meet the case. The sub-committee recommended that local officials of the Second Division should be allowed to contribute on the basis either of their actual emoluments or of the emoluments of an international official of corresponding rank, and the recommendation of the sub-committee was approved by the majority of the Fourth Committee.

The Staff Pension Regulations as amended by the Fourth Committee are set out in Document A. 25 (1). When the last paragraph was reached the Swiss delegation moved that the regulations be recommended to the Governments for favourable consideration, with a view of the Twelfth Assembly coming to a final decision, on condition, however, that the scheme, if approved, should have retrospective effect from the 1st January, 1931. I felt considerable sympathy with the motion. The Committee of Thirteen, although appointed by last year's Assembly, did not report until the 28th June, 1930. As the report was not despatched until the middle of July, it could not have been received in New Zealand until the middle of August, and the Assembly opened on the 10th September. How can States situate at a great distance from Geneva be expected to give careful consideration to important schemes, far-reaching in their effects, when so little time is afforded? But the principle of pensions had been conceded; indeed, it was the New Zealand delegate who, in 1920, had initiated the proposal to grant them, and it would not have become New Zealand to support an action which would have delayed the putting into force of a measure promised ten years ago. The motion was lost.

The pensions scheme involves considerable expenditure. Provisional figures will be found in the report of the Committee of Thirteen. It seemed to me that already the Fourth Committee had been generous—more generous than the financial situation of many countries warranted. When, therefore, Chapters 5 and 6 came up for consideration my representative on the Fourth Committee felt that a halt should be called, and he made the following brief speech:—

"I will detain the Committee only a minute. The New Zealand delegation has voted for the pension scheme, and has done so gladly, for I well remember (having been present at the First Assembly) that it was the New Zealand delegate who, in 1920, initiated the proposal to grant pensions. But I now wish to point out that the report of the Committee of Thirteen is dated the 28th June, and that it was despatched from Geneva under cover of a note dated the 15th July. The document could not have reached New Zealand before the third week in August, when any delegation proceeding from New Zealand would already have left for Europe. Yet the Government of a State situate twelve thousand miles from Geneva is apparently expected to give careful consideration to a report containing recommendations of a far-reaching character, and to instruct in time for the Assembly its delegates, who at the date of the receipt of the report are already far from their home-land. It is true that the New Zealand delegation came from London, but that does not alter a position which is almost intolerable.

"We in New Zealand are suffering in consequence of the economic crisis. The Fourth Committee has been sufficiently generous for one year. I will not put in a formal motion, but I suggest that it would meet the convenience of far-distant countries to postpone until next year the consideration of those sections of the report, not already dealt with, which entail additional expenditure."

The Chairman then asked my representative whether he desired to move the previous question. My representative replied that he would press his proposal only in so far as recommendations involving an increase of expenditure were concerned. He was prepared, however, to consider purely administrative proposals, even those involving a slight expenditure.

The paragraphs of the report were taken one by one. Some were reserved for consideration next year, but others, necessitating additions to the Budget, were voted by the majority of the committee although my representative had the support of several countries. Chapter 8 having been considered and approved, and the Director of the International Labour Office having given an undertaking that the structure of the International Labour Office would be adapted to any decisions of the Fourth Committee regarding the Secretariat, my representative did not press for a vote to be taken on Part III, as he felt that advantages conferred on the staff of the Secretariat by the Fourth Committee could not be denied to the staffs of the International Labour Office and the Permanent Court of International Justice. There is no doubt that there were injustices requiring to be remedied, but I cannot help deploring the prevalence of an attitude which at a time like the present can only be characterized as one of extravagance.

I think the Government should remind the Secretariat that New Zealand is not part of Europe, and state that proposals requiring decision by the Assembly or other competent body should be in the Government's hands from two to three months before the date of the meeting at which the proposals are to be considered.

The Fourth Committee's report (Document A. 86) was approved by the Assembly on the 3rd October.