

MAINTENANCE ORDERS.

The question of the execution of maintenance orders abroad was recognized by the Child-welfare Committee as one not exclusively relating to child-welfare, though having an undoubted bearing on it. It therefore decided to ask the Council to appoint a temporary special committee, on which leading immigration and emigration countries will be represented, to consider this question, together with that of treatment of foreign minors, which cannot well be separated altogether from the larger question of treatment of foreigners generally. This special Committee will not meet before October, 1932.

The subjects of illegitimate children and the protection of children from injury through undesirable cinematograph films were held over by the Child-welfare Committee for consideration at its 1932 session, and were, therefore, scarcely touched on in the discussions in the Fifth Committee.

CHILDREN'S COURTS.

The value of Children's Courts, wherever they have been adopted, was stressed by a number of speakers. This, however, is obviously a national rather than an international matter, and it has to be borne in mind that it is really only the international aspects of child-welfare which rightly fall within the province of the League's committees to consider. This sufficiently explains why there is usually little to report on the subject of child-welfare, despite the keen interest taken in the subject in New Zealand, as the matter only arises there in its *national* aspect and as a subject for purely internal action.

The report of the Fifth Committee on this subject (Document A. 71) was adopted by the Assembly at its meeting on the 23rd September.

TRAFFIC IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

In Document C. 267, M. 122, 1931, will be found the report of the Traffic in Women and Children Committee on its work during the past year. It shows that a little progress has been made in obtaining additional signatures to the 1921 convention on the subject, but the total number of States who have ratified the convention is still only thirty-eight, and among the States which have not done so are to be found a considerable number of those in which there is reason to fear that the evil exists on a considerable scale. An effort has been made during the year to obtain the accession to the convention of States which are not members of the League, but it is rather early yet to estimate the probable results.

"SOUTENEURS."

The principal step of any note in connection with this subject during the past year has been the drawing-up of a protocol to supplement the 1921 Convention. This protocol, which appears as an appendix to Document C. 267, M. 122, deals with the punishment of "Souteneurs"—i.e., persons living wholly or partly on the immoral earnings of women—and the resolution contained in the report to the Assembly (Document A. 72) on this point commends the protocol to the attention of all Governments. There was a strong feeling amongst members of the Fifth Committee that the laws of many countries provided quite inadequate penalties for such offenders, and it was hoped that States generally would take steps to provide a maximum penalty of not less than five years.

OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS.

When the financial position admits of such a course, it is proposed to print and circulate to Governments a compilation of the laws of various States on this subject. Meanwhile, particular attention is called to the system in operation in Belgium, whereby a protective zone is established round all schools, within which zone particularly stringent regulations are enforced with regard to the exhibition of anything of a nature likely to disturb the imagination of a child.

Stress was also laid, during the committee's discussions, on the harmful effects liable to result, owing to crude methods of presentation, from the exhibition of films ostensibly prepared as propaganda against venereal disease, prostitution, &c.

WOMEN POLICE.

Each year great emphasis is laid by various speakers on this committee (principally women) upon the success attained by women police in connection with the fight against the "white slave" traffic.

The report on this whole subject (A. 72) was adopted by the Assembly at its twelfth session, on the 23rd September.

PENAL AND PENITENTIARY QUESTIONS.

On this subject the committee had before it two reports from the Secretary-General of the League (A. 25 and A. 25 (a)) and a typewritten memorandum (N. 200/19/0/1) from the International Labour Office dealing particularly with the question of prison labour. The two first-mentioned documents cover observations by various Governments on the "Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners," which were circulated after last Assembly, and also communications from the International Prison Commission at Berne and from various private organizations, such as the Howard League for Penal Reform, which was principally instrumental in getting the question of penal administration taken up by the League.

The report of the committee (Document A. 70) was adopted by the Assembly on the 23rd September, after a further protest had been made by the British delegate against the introduction, without notice, of subjects not included on the agenda of the Assembly and on which delegates had no opportunity of obtaining instructions from their Governments.