

- “(2) (i) When the reports and resolutions submitted by the various committees of the Assembly are brought up for adoption in plenary session, the President, in the cases indicated below, shall read the titles of the reports and put forthwith to the vote the resolutions which are proposed.
- “(ii) The procedure provided for in paragraph (i) shall only apply in cases where the Committee has unanimously declared that it does not consider a discussion of the report in plenary session to be necessary and where no delegation has subsequently asked the President to open a discussion on the report. The report must be circulated to the delegations twenty-four hours before it is brought up in plenary session.”

GRADUAL UNIFICATION OF PENAL LAW AND CO-OPERATION OF STATES IN THE PREVENTION AND SUPPRESSION OF CRIME.

I share the view which it is reported so many hold in New Zealand “that the continual adoption of so many secondary spheres of activity on the part of the League and the International Labour Office has added too greatly to the League’s budget.” An example of some magnitude was the Conference for the Codification of certain Aspects of International Law, a Conference which in some respects was almost worthless. It involved expenditure of a large sum of money out of all proportion to the meagre results achieved. Had a few members of the Assembly not been sufficiently alert, the Assembly this year might have found itself faced with a motion to concern itself actively with the business of codifying the penal laws of the world, an impossible task when one reflects that the Swiss Federation has not yet succeeded in unifying the penal law which is in force in the various cantons of Switzerland.

From the outset of the discussion in the First Committee, I felt that those who opposed this addition to the League’s activities should make their force fully felt, and I actively interposed on more than one occasion with the object of reducing the League’s interests to limits which would not involve additional expenditure. I am glad to say that I succeeded. Mr. Pella, the representative of Roumania on the committee, a celebrated criminal lawyer, had been nominated Rapporteur on the subject. He met me in a most conciliatory spirit, with the result that it was agreed that the League of Nations might intervene in this matter only when several outside organizations now studying the subject could arrive at conclusions which might be submitted to the League for consideration. These organizations are therefore left to their own devices, and I sincerely hope that the Assembly will not be troubled again unless and until the organizations have discovered grounds upon which international action under the auspices of the League is desirable.

The report to the Assembly is Document A. 37, and the draft resolution with which it concludes was passed on the 7th October. (See also Documents A. 7, A. 7 (a), and A. 7 (b).)

NATIONALITY OF WOMEN.

I dealt at some length with this question in the report on the thirteenth Assembly, which passed a long resolution from which I quote four paragraphs:—

“The Assembly,—

“Expresses the hope that the States which have already signed the Hague Nationality Convention will introduce such legislation as may be necessary to give effect thereto, and will deposit their ratifications at an early date;

“Draws the attention of the States that have not yet passed the necessary legislative measures to give effect to the Convention to the possibility of enacting their internal legislative measures in a form more appropriate to meet the wishes of the women’s organizations;

“Instructs the Secretary-General from time to time to ask the Governments to give him information as to the effect which they have found it possible to give to recommendation No. VI of the Codification Conference;

“Requests the Council, on the basis of the information so obtained, to follow the development of public opinion on this important question, in order to determine when such development has reached a point at which further concerted international action would be justified.”

The countries of the British Commonwealth of Nations have not merely their individual interest to consider: there is the wider problem of British citizenship and the advisability of uniformity. Draft legislation is now before the Imperial Houses of Parliament, but progress has not reached a stage at which comment could usefully be made. Last year’s resolution of the Assembly had the advantage that it gave countries ample time to reflect on the position without the necessity of putting through hurriedly any legislation necessary to amend their laws. It was therefore rather unfortunate to find that the question had been inserted on the agenda of this year’s Assembly at the request of the Government of Chile (see Document A. 18). The question was brought before the First Committee, which devoted one sitting to its consideration. Quite early in the debate the Chairman stated as his opinion that a discussion on the substance of the question would at present be inconclusive. A formula had to be found which would take account of last year’s resolution. The sitting was suspended for the purpose of enabling the Chairman and others to draft a motion which might meet with general acceptance. A draft was produced, but it did not meet the point of view of several members who were