

1934.  
NEW ZEALAND.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

REPORT OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DOMINION OF NEW ZEALAND ON THE FOURTEENTH  
ASSEMBLY OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, HELD AT GENEVA, IN THE YEAR 1933.

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*

FOURTEENTH ASSEMBLY OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

New Zealand Government Offices,  
415 Strand, London W.C. 2, 6th November, 1933.

SIR,—

I have the honour to advise that the Fourteenth Assembly of the League of Nations was opened on Monday, 25th September, by His Excellency Monsieur Mowinkel, delegate of Norway, who, at the same time, was Acting-President of the Council, then in session.

OPENING OF PROCEEDINGS.

It would not be just to describe M. Mowinkel's speech as entirely pessimistic in tone, for he was able to refer to matters in which the League had been very helpful during the year under review, and particularly to the award of the Permanent Court of International Justice on the Eastern Greenland case, but he mentioned in somewhat plain terms the want of positive achievements by the World Economic Conference and the Disarmament Conference, and spoke of the spread of disillusionment and discouragement: and there is disillusionment and discouragement even amongst the warmest supporters of the League. This feeling is not lessened when the financial position of the League is taken into consideration. M. Mowinkel's speech is available for all to read, and is well worth reading.

The proceedings of the first and second meetings of the Assembly followed the normal course. A committee was appointed to examine the credentials of the delegates, and after it had reported the President was elected. The Assembly chose to fill this important post with Mr. C. te Water, High Commissioner for South Africa in London and his country's principal delegate in Geneva. This is the second time that a representative of one of the Oversea Dominions has acted in the capacity of President.

Tributes were paid to the memory of the late Count Apponyi and M. de Aguero y Bethancourt, who had been associated with the League from its infancy.

The agenda was examined and adopted, and an Agenda Committee appointed with a view of deciding whether any new subjects proposed should be placed on the agenda. Six Vice-Presidents were elected, *i.e.* :—

Sir John Simon ..	..	..	..	..	..	United Kingdom.
M. Daladier ..	..	..	..	..	..	France.
Baron von Neurath ..	..	..	..	..	..	Germany.
Baron Aloisi ..	..	..	..	..	..	Italy.
M. Castillo Najera ..	..	..	..	..	..	Mexico.
Ali Khan Foroughi ..	..	..	..	..	..	Persia.

Six committees are usually appointed to deal with those items of the agenda which do not require consideration solely by the Assembly, but this year, as last, the Third Committee (which deals with disarmament) was not constituted in view of the fact that the Disarmament Conference was still

in being. The committees having met between the first and second meetings of the Assembly to elect their Chairmen, *i.e.*—

First Committee..	..	..	..	M. Motta (Switzerland),
Second Committee	..	..	..	Count Carton de Wiart (Belgium),
Fourth Committee	..	..	..	M. Fotitch (Yugoslavia),
Fifth Committee..	..	..	..	Mlle. Hesselgren (Sweden),
Sixth Committee	..	..	..	M. de Madariaga (Spain),

the so-called Bureau of the Assembly was complete. This Bureau consists of the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Chairmen of the five committees, and the Chairman to the Agenda Committee. You will be interested to learn that I was approached with a view to serving as Chairman of one of the committees, and thus becoming a member of the Bureau, but in view of the smallness of the New Zealand delegation, consisting of myself, my Private Secretary, and my personal assistant, and of the need for giving attention to work coming from London, I felt obliged to decline.

#### EUROPEAN UNION.

No comment is needed on the following resolution, which was passed by the Assembly on the afternoon of the 27th September:—

“The Assembly,—

“After consulting its General Committee as to the procedure to be followed in connection with Item 12 of the agenda of this session (Commission of Inquiry for European Union),

“Notes that circumstances have made it impossible for this Commission to meet since the last session:

“Decides, under these conditions, to renew for twelve months the term of office of the Commission of Inquiry for European Union and to include forthwith the report of this Commission in the agenda of its next session.”

(Document A. 28.)

#### ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.

It was at this meeting on the 27th September that the Chairman announced the accession of the Argentine Republic to the League of Nations. It will be recollected that the Argentine Republic was one of the original members of the League, but that its delegates left the first Assembly following the loss of a motion which it had proposed (Document A. 34).

#### SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPORT.

This year's discussion on the Report by the Secretary-General (A. 6 and A. 6 (a)) was short. It occupied but four sittings. In the course of the discussion motions were introduced, one by the German delegation, that papers in connection with the protection of minorities be referred to the appropriate Committee of the Assembly; there was also a motion on minorities introduced by the delegate from Haiti (Document A. 35); another of similar purport regarding mandates introduced by the Norwegian delegation; and yet another, introduced in the course of a speech by the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, has reference to the problems created by the flight of Jews from Germany. It reads as follows:—

“The Assembly,—

“Having regard to the situation created by the fact that a large number of German nationals have in recent months taken refuge in several countries;

“Considering that their presence in those countries constitutes, in proportion as means of assistance from private sources are exhausted, an economic, financial, and social problem, which can be solved only by international collaboration,

“Requests the Council to consider, as soon as possible, the methods of bringing about a practical arrangement for this purpose, and to take the necessary measures for the execution of any plans to which such consideration may give rise:

“Decides, in accordance with article 16A, paragraph 1, of its Financial Regulations, to include a special item for this purpose in the Budget for 1934.”

It had been hoped that the refugee work which has occupied the attention of successive Assemblies since 1920, and has been so costly to the League, would, in a few years, be completed. The additional work foreshadowed by the motion, a motion based on ample precedent, was proposed at a time when the reserves of the League are strained to the utmost. Further comment here is unnecessary, as the subject will be dealt with under the appropriate committee.

There were also interesting speeches, including one by the Swedish delegate and another by Sir John Simon, who touched on certain aspects of disarmament; but the fine oratory which some former Assemblies have enjoyed was not conspicuous this year.

#### ELECTION OF NON-PERMANENT MEMBERS TO THE COUNCIL.

The Assembly at its meeting on the 2nd October elected the following States to fill three non-permanent seats on the Council which had that day become vacant:—

Denmark received 52 votes.

Argentine Republic received 49 votes.

Australia received 47 votes.

The Assembly having already resolved to increase the number of non-permanent seats on the Council by one (see the section devoted to No. 1 Committee), it proceeded to the election of an additional member on the 9th October. There were two candidates, Portugal and Turkey. The former country was elected, receiving 30 votes, whilst Turkey obtained 20 votes.

The Assembly closed on the 11th October.

## COMMITTEE No. 1.

## ELECTION TO THE COUNCIL.

For some years there has been dissatisfaction amongst several nations with the methods which have governed the choice of candidates for election to the non-permanent seats of the Council. The right to claim re-eligibility for election during or at the end of the first period of service, coupled with the group system, which is influential in Geneva in more than one direction, has made it impossible for certain of the smaller nations not belonging to recognized groups to gain admission to the Council. This dissatisfaction has been voiced very strongly by Portugal, especially in 1931, when the Assembly by resolution asked the Council "to appoint a sub-committee to study the existing system of elections to the Council and to report to a future session of the Assembly on any reforms which may appear desirable."

Early in 1932 a special committee was appointed. Its composition is given in its report (Document A. 8). Its deliberations showed some diversity of opinion amongst the members, for obviously there were only two direct methods of ending the dissatisfaction: modification of the working of the group system or an increase in the number of non-permanent seats on the Council. Some members were strongly opposed to the creation of more seats, arguing that the Council was already too large, and one cannot help expressing sympathy with this view. On the other hand, it was suggested that the non-permanent seats should be increased by two. Eventually a compromise was effected, and the Special Committee recommended that "for the period commencing with the election of the non-permanent members of the Council at the Assembly's session of 1933, and ending with the election of the said non-permanent members in the year 1936, the number of non-permanent seats on the Council should be provisionally increased from nine to ten, on the understanding that, towards the end of that period, the question of the number of the members of the Council will be reconsidered and that all the members of the League will remain entirely free to propose any final solution of this question which they consider desirable."

The Special Committee also made a recommendation regarding method of nomination.

The First Committee was called together on the 26th September to consider the Special Committee's report. The proceedings were commendably brief. After the Chairman of the Special Committee had analysed the report, the recommendations embodied in it were unanimously approved without debate.

The report to the Assembly is Document A. 31, and the draft resolutions with which it concludes were passed by the Assembly at its meeting on the 2nd October. On the 4th October the Council passed a similar resolution.

## SIMPLIFICATION OF THE PROCEDURE OF THE ASSEMBLY.

There is no doubt that there is room for simplification of the procedure of the Assembly, and the Secretariat has been engaged in the examination of possible means to this end. Simplification would lead to saving not only of time but of money. In my opinion, however, the best method to adopt in order to shorten the proceedings would be for the Assembly and its committees to introduce a rule limiting the speeches. Unfortunately a tendency has sprung up to translate a speech that has been read, rather than to summarize it in that of the two official languages which have not been used by the speaker, but a discussion of the language question involves a consideration of fundamental principles, and, besides, there is no doubt that the use of both French and English is of great convenience; and, although the majority of the speeches are in French, several delegates having a knowledge of both languages prefer to use English.

The First Committee had before it a note by the Secretariat (A. 1/2, 1933, V.), together with a motion of the Chairman introduced to form a basis of discussion. Consideration of the document, and especially of the motion, led to a somewhat lengthy debate. The motion provided that the Fourth Committee (Finance) of the Assembly, which has the heaviest work and is usually the last to complete its labours, should be convened by the Secretary-General one week before the opening of the session of the Assembly. I understand that those who initiated the proposal thought that by this means the sittings of the Assembly could be shortened to a period of about two weeks. Such an arrangement, if possible, would of course lessen the expense, but there are objections of principle. Personally I was not favourably inclined, because I thought time could be saved in other ways, especially if the members of the Fourth Committee would limit their speeches, and, above all, avoid repetition; and, besides, it is impossible for the Fourth Committee to do some of its work until after the other committees have met.

New Zealand was by no means alone in her objection. However, the motion, with certain amendments, was carried on the understanding that it was to apply as an experiment next year. It was accepted by the Assembly in the following form at its meeting on the 11th October:—

"The Assembly decides that the following procedure shall be applied, as an experiment, at the ordinary session of 1934:—

- "(1) The President of the Council, after consulting the Chairman of the Supervisory Commission, may convene the Finance Committee for a date preceding by not more than one week the first meeting of the ordinary session of the Assembly. The Committee shall be composed of the representatives accredited for the purpose by the members of the League. It shall appoint its Chairman, who shall thereby become a member of the General Committee of the Assembly under the terms of article 7 of the Rules of Procedure. The establishment of the Committee shall be reported to the Assembly at the first plenary meeting of the Assembly.

- “(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

anxious not to reverse the procedure laid down in last year's resolution: indeed, so strong was the objection that the French delegate, in the hope of securing uniformity, intervened and proposed an amendment which, fortunately, gave satisfaction to the objectors, and a resolution was finally passed in the following terms:—

“The Assembly,—

“Having regard to the resolution voted by the Assembly on October 12th, 1932, on the question of the nationality of women;

“Having examined the suggestions made by the delegation of Chile in regard to this question which, at the request of the Chilean Government, had been placed on the agenda of the Assembly;

“Having regard to the fact that a certain number of States give in their law a very wide application to the principle of the equality of the sexes;

“Expresses the hope that, before the next session of the Assembly, the Governments will have put the Secretary-General in a position to communicate to the Council the information as to the effect which they have found it possible to give to recommendation No. VI of the Codification Conference.”

This resolution was adopted by the Assembly on the 11th October (see Document A. 48).

You may perhaps wish to refer to the debate in the First Committee. It is to be found on pages 124–127 of the Journal (issue dated 6th October, 1933). You will observe that I made a brief statement based on the instructions I had received.

## COMMITTEE No. 2.

### COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSIT.

Some of the work of the Communications and Transit Organization of the League, work which is specially provided for in the Covenant, is not of general interest to New Zealand, but the organization does and will continue to deal with matters with which New Zealand, by reason of her dependence on sea-borne trade, will be concerned. This year I propose to touch only briefly on one subject, and for information on the other subjects under review by the Second Committee I would refer you to that Committee's report to the Assembly (Document A. 41).

Whilst the work of the Communications and Transit Organization was under discussion the question of public works was raised. You will recollect that a report was submitted to the Monetary and Economic Conference held in London by the League of Nations Committee of Inquiry on Questions relating to Public Works and National Technical Equipment of the Organization for Communications and Transit (see Document C. 377, M. 186). There seems to be a fairly general desire that some action should be taken, and a few speakers expressed the view that information on the execution of programmes of national public works of various countries would be of value to States members of the League, and the Second Committee passed the following resolution:—

“The Second Committee recommends that the Committee which the Bureau of the London Economic Conference, on the proposal of the Economic Commission of that Conference, decided to set up to study the problem of public works and other means for reducing unemployment should be appointed and convened as soon as possible with the agenda fixed by the London Economic Conference itself.”

The delegate of Great Britain, whilst not opposed to the resolution, abstained from voting, on the ground, amongst others, that the President of the London Economic Conference was his own Prime Minister. Whether the London Economic Conference will ever resume its labours is a question which it is quite impossible to answer, and, even if the Committee mentioned in the resolution were set up and were able to produce a report of any value, I am wondering whether any recommendation of an international loan would be implemented in view of the disinclination of the average investor to put his money into anything but a trustee security. The Swedish delegate on the Second Committee, who was himself Rapporteur on the question, when giving an account of the programme of public works recently initiated in his country, was careful to stress the point that the capital necessary had been found at home. I have no doubt that much can be learned by the exchange of information, and there can be no objection whatever to Geneva acting as a clearing-house in regard to matters which have some international bearing, but I imagine that the experience of the League in connection with certain reconstruction loans floated under its auspices has not been such as to promote confidence amongst those with money to lend.

The Second Committee's report was adopted by the Assembly at its meeting on the 7th October.

### HEALTH ORGANIZATION.

For an account of recent work by the Health Organization I refer you to those sections of the report on the work of the League (Documents A. 6 and A. 6 (a)) bearing on health, to the admirable report of the Organization itself (Document A. 13), which, however, had not been considered by the Health Committee, and to the Second Committee's report to the Assembly (Document A. 38).

Many countries feel that they are not obtaining full value for the money they contribute to the League, and this is undoubtedly true of certain countries far removed from Europe. But it is also said, and with truth, that some countries do not make full use of the League. I cannot help thinking that there must be at least one field of activity covered by the League in which countries to which the criticisms mentioned above apply would find scope for their needs. Whilst hesitating to suggest that New Zealand has no very definite grievance, I would point out that the Health Organization would, I feel sure, be willing to consider any proposal for study or research emanating from New Zealand which would be of value from a public point of view. I do not anticipate that the Health

Department is faced with any problems of a vital nature, but there may be matters on which it would be glad to have expert advice, and, if so, the opportunity presented by the League of obtaining assistance should not be lost sight of.

The draft resolution with which the Second Committee's report to the Assembly concludes was passed by the Assembly at its meeting on the 7th October.

#### ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL QUESTIONS.

Your experience of the World Monetary and Economic Conference in London is so recent that it is unnecessary for me to dwell on the Conference, especially as you have without doubt formed an idea of the value of such Conferences and of the possibility of success in the welter of conflicting interests. Whether the Conference will reassemble or not no one can say. No sign has been given, but it has been felt advisable to provide the necessary credits for use in 1934 should occasion arise.

Apart from the work of the Economic and Financial Section of the Secretariat which was intimately concerned with the Conference, there is other work which has been in progress in some cases for years. Brief information is given in the Second Committee's report to the Assembly (Document A. 42).

It will be noted that new work is being undertaken in the shape of the appointment by the League of a Financial Adviser, whose duty it is to co-ordinate the work of experts appointed by the Roumanian Government. This is different from the schemes of financial reconstruction with which the League was so actively associated in its early years, since co-operation with Roumania does not involve financial assistance but expert advice.

The Second Committee's report, which was adopted by the Assembly on the 7th October, contains some interesting statistics, and I would draw attention to Table No. 5 relating to unemployment, the figures of which may, I think, be considered satisfactory, pointing, as they do, to improvement in the economic situation of several countries.

#### REFUGEES (JEWISH AND OTHERS) FROM GERMANY.

Quite early in this report I quoted the motion introduced by the Dutch delegation and referred by the Assembly to the Second Committee. Its discussion in Committee was protracted. Although the Dutch delegation and other delegations which supported the motion disclaimed any intention of criticizing the internal administration of Germany, averring at the same time that the motion aimed at providing the best possible arrangement for succouring the refugees, a work which had become a question of international importance, doubt was still apparently left in the minds of the German delegation, which succeeded in its efforts to provide an organization which would have as little to do with the League as possible. After much discussion a draft motion was sent to the Assembly. It suggested that the Council should nominate a High Commissioner to negotiate and direct international collaboration, and particularly to provide, as far as possible, work for the refugees in all countries able to offer it; requested the Council of the League to invite States, and, if it is thought advisable, private organizations best able to assist these refugees to be represented on a governing body of which the duty would be to aid the High Commissioner in his work, the High Commissioner having to submit periodical reports on the development and fulfilment of his task to the governing body, which would forward them to the States likely to be able to assist in the action contemplated; and suggested that the expenses of this collaboration and of the High Commissioner's office should be defrayed by funds contributed voluntarily from private or other sources.

(Fortunately, under this arrangement, the League is not called upon to bear any expense.)

Although this resolution, which was passed at the Assembly at its meeting on the 11th October, provides that the High Commissioner shall report to the governing body, thus avoiding possible discussion of German policy by the Council of the League, the German delegate thought it necessary to abstain when the motion was put to the vote (Document A. 53).

#### COMMITTEE No. 4.

##### ACCOUNTS FOR 1932.

The audited accounts for the year 1932 comprise a series of documents numbered 3. There was a surplus of receipts over expenditure in respect of the Secretariat, but deficits in respect of the International Labour Office and the Permanent Court of International Justice which were met by borrowings from the Working Capital Fund. After making provision for refund of this borrowed money, there is a net surplus of 1,275,657 francs. This amount is not to be returned to the contributing Governments, but is to be used in part as a refund to the Working Capital Fund of the sums withdrawn as recoverable advances to meet the cost of construction of the wireless station and in part for the creation of an Exchange Depreciation Fund, a very necessary step in these days of fluctuating currencies.

##### THE BUDGET.

The estimates for 1934 will be found in Document A. 4 (Secretariat), A. 4 (a) (International Labour Office), A. 4 (b) (Permanent Court of International Justice), A. 4 (c) (Nansen International Office for Refugees), and A. 4 (d) (Supplementaries). As presented to the Fourth Committee they made a grand total of 30,648,449 francs. In the course of the discussion two supplementary credits were voted, 335,900 francs for use in the event of the Monetary and Economic Conference reassembling, and 10,000 francs for the Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, an item on which I have offered some comments in the section of this letter devoted to the Sixth Committee.

Before proceeding to give an account of the work of the Fourth Committee, let me say that I came to Geneva more than ever resolved to do my best to co-operate with those who realized the

necessity for economy. Since my report on the Thirteenth Assembly, you personally have gained an invaluable experience of the conduct of an International Conference; you have become acquainted with the atmosphere of such Conferences; you know how strongly interests conflict and how large a part compromise plays. But an International Conference is not quite the same thing as the Annual Assembly of the League of Nations. A Conference is concerned with one aspect of international life, the Assembly deals with practically the whole range of the international work performed by the organs comprising the League; and further—and this is important—there is in Geneva an international staff many members of which are brilliant and able men and women whose influence is considerable. One may strive wholeheartedly to effect reductions in estimates and reforms in administration, knowing that he will have the support of other delegations, only in the long run to find influences, of which one is always conscious, making themselves felt in a way which is unpalatable. Again and again in the past—the tendency has not been so prominent this year—a motion for economy seemed to have every chance of success, when, on a vote being demanded, it was found that delegations who had taken no part in the discussion, or perhaps had not been represented at the time, had massed together to defeat the motion. It is true that defeat in Committee does not necessarily imply defeat in the Assembly, since the Rules of Procedure of Adoption of the Budget at Plenary Meetings of the latter contain provisions in the interests of economy and good administration. The Budget must be voted unanimously; but a delegation will not lightly embark on a campaign in the Assembly which would have the effect of holding up proceedings for days. Such a method of operation may one day become necessary; but let us hope that the economies effected this year and the promise of further economies to come will never occasion the use of some of the rules to which I have referred (see pages 14–16 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly).

A national administration estimates its expenditure and the receipts it hopes to derive from certain forms of taxation. If the former is likely to increase in the course of the financial year, or if the latter do not yield the results anticipated, or if there is a combination of both these processes, it is open to that administration to go to its legislature with proposals in the shape of supplementary credits. But the League cannot have recourse to this method. It must provide for all contingencies before the annual session of the Assembly. It is true there is a Working Capital Fund, but it is not large in amount, and it would soon break down were the difficulties with which the Secretariat has had to contend in recent years to multiply. One of these difficulties, and the major one, is the problem of unpaid contributions, and when preparing the estimates the Secretariat has to face this and to make provision accordingly. Consequently, hitherto, the preparation of the estimates has rested on an unscientific basis, and, although the Secretariat has always denied the charge of deliberate overestimating, the fact remains that in spite of unpaid contributions, resulting eventually in arrears, there have been surpluses of considerable sums. Therefore, whilst overestimating is due in part to uncertainties occasioned by various factors, it is also due in large measure to the necessity for making provision for money which will not be forthcoming in the ordinary way by contributions. It was this aspect of financial administration which was a major issue in this year's debate.

It was perhaps fortunate this year that the Fourth Committee was smaller in number, several delegations not being represented, although, at the same time, the absence of Mr. Hambro, the Norwegian delegate, except in the early days, was much to be deplored. He is a keen advocate of wise economy and good administration, and the knowledge he has gained as a member of the Supervisory Commission of the finances of the League, added to natural abilities of no mean order, have made him a most valuable member of the Fourth Committee.

This year there has been a change in the direction of the Secretariat. I make no comparison. The excellent work of Sir Eric Drummond is too well known to need comment from me. But it cannot be denied that his successor, M. Avenol, has the advantage of a financial training which I do not think it was the late Secretary-General's good fortune to enjoy.

Personally I felt that too much stress could not be laid upon the differences shown between the estimates for 1934 and the actual expenditure in 1932 on many items, for it would be all to the good that the system of overbudgeting should be fully brought to light and condemned. I also felt that any movement for reduction in estimates which would not affect the vital work of the League would have your hearty support, so I resolved to attend personally the meetings of the Fourth Committee whenever possible, and, indeed, I attended practically every meeting. I spoke very plainly on more than one occasion, and I was not alone in this respect. I think the results have justified the means, and that it is now apparent to those who control the finances of the League that economy in working must be effected. Of course, economy is not effected solely through improved administration. Decisions of the Assembly play a great part, and I am glad to think that more than one ambitious scheme involving expenditure was so modified in Committee that the items of supplementary credits were reduced to the two mentioned above.

The original estimates as submitted by the Secretariat to the Supervisory Commission underwent considerable pruning at the hands of the latter. This is made clear in the reports of the Supervisory Commission (a series of documents numbered 5). But the Fourth Committee could not rest content with that. The campaign for economy began with an attack on the system of overestimating, and the strength of the attack was such that its effect was soon felt. After an interval of a day or two the Secretary-General proposed that he should reduce the estimate by 150,000 francs, the reduction to be effected by modifications of various items in consultation with the Supervisory Commission. The amount of reduction suggested was not large—it was hoped that it would be at least double that sum—but, at any rate, it was a token of good will, and, coupled with the Secretary-General's promise "to examine with the Supervisory Commission in time for a report to be submitted to the 1934 Assembly the budgetary methods in force," represented a distinct advance on the *non possumus* attitude which has sometimes been adopted in the past.

Seeing that considerable economies had already been effected, and that the rationalization of the Secretariat is still proceeding, it was felt unwise to offer much criticism on items which were in the course of modification, but an attempt was made to reduce still further other items, and I proposed a motion to reduce the estimate for entertainment allowances by 20,851 francs, in order to make the vote correspond with the actual expenditure under this head in 1932. Unfortunately, much of this expenditure rests on a contractual basis, and in view of this, and also in view of certain explanations given, I did not think it advisable to press my motion to the vote.

Salaries were, of course, the subject of discussion, but the considerable reductions which might be immediately effected are prevented by the contractual nature of the appointments, and, except in the matter of temporary posts, reductions are possible only as contracts expire. On the other hand, I think I should state, in fairness to the staff, that the cost of living in Geneva does not decrease.

The estimates of the International Labour Office show careful preparation and a desire on the part of those who frame them to effect economy. I am glad to think that Mr. Butler, its able Director, and the governing body of the organization have shown such wisdom in connection with financial administration.

The estimates of the Permanent Court of International Justice do not require comment.

The minutes of the Committee are not yet available, and the Journal does not give a complete picture of the discussion, but when you receive the printed minutes I think you will find they repay study.

The results obtained in the committee in the direction of economy have been good: not so good as one would wish, but the promise for the future is distinctly encouraging.

As rationalization in both the Secretariat and the International Labour Office, particularly the former, is still going on, I will not offer any comments. You will find some particulars in the reports of the Supervisory Commission to which I have referred, but the document giving the fullest information is that numbered A. 10, entitled "Technical Concentration of the Activities of the League of Nations and Rationalization of the Services of the Secretariat and International Labour Office." May I draw your attention to some sections of this latter document—i.e., the section on page 4 devoted to the activities of the League, and paragraph 14 on the same page which deals with the "representation" of various nations in the different administrations of the League.

Whilst I am sorry that the suggestion I made last year—that there should be a centralization of League statistics—has not found favour, I am glad to think that my motion to abolish the Branch Offices is still being studied, and that if not subsequently abolished they will at any rate undergo a process of modification which will make for economy.

The total Budget for 1934 as presented to and passed by the Assembly on the 11th October amounts to 30,827,805 francs, showing a reduction of 2,601,327 francs on the Budget of the current year.

The Fourth Committee's report to the Assembly (Document A. 58) gives an excellent account of the tendencies displayed in the debate in Committee, and it contains some pertinent references to aspects of finance and financial administration on which I have not touched: for instance, the financial position of the League (see also Documents A. 21 and A. 21 (a)) and the Staff Pensions Fund (see also Document A. 9). It is unfortunate that there have been losses on investments made on behalf of this fund, and also a loss in respect of the new building fund (see page 5 of Document A. 5 (a)), but losses are almost inevitable in these days of crisis.

I should draw your attention to section 4, entitled "Collection of Contributions," of the second supplementary report by the Supervisory Commission to the Assembly (Document A. 5 (b)). The recommendations made in the section have been accepted by the Assembly.

#### CONTRIBUTIONS IN ARREARS.

I am glad to say that the problem created by contributions in arrears was attacked this year with great resolution, and, although achievement is meagre, the methods adopted will surely have effect. Of these methods the most important is publicity. It is true that the sub-committee to which, as is usual, the matter was referred met in secret, but its report was presented at a public sitting of the Fourth Committee, and for the first time in the history of the League the report is made public as an annex to the Fourth Committee's report to the Assembly. Not only this, but the report to the Assembly is a report of the debate in the Fourth Committee and on the decisions taken, and not merely a brief introduction to a draft resolution.

I myself spoke very strongly on this problem of unpaid contributions, and referred in no measured terms to a passage in the sub-committee's report to the effect that "*there was not one of the defaulting States which could not have paid at least a part of its contributions.*" I have long felt that, whilst some States have found difficulty in meeting their foreign payments, others have made no real attempt to pay even a portion of their contributions to the League, and I referred to this in a letter I wrote to the Minister of Finance on the 2nd August last. I now find that the opinion I then held, and had long held, is confirmed by the sub-committee.

Will publicity have its effect? I hope so; but it may ultimately be necessary to examine the problem from the constitutional aspect, as I suggested might be the case when I spoke in Committee. At any rate, a forward step has been taken, and the world is now put in possession of the facts.

Since the Fourth Committee's report to the Assembly (Document A. 56) was printed, Columbia has made a payment of 30,000 dollars on account of arrears, which stand at well over 21,000,000 francs in respect of countries owing arrears.

It will be observed that the resolution (on page 5 of the report) which was passed by the Assembly at its meeting on the 11th October includes a decision to excuse the Dominican Republic from payment of its contribution for 1931 (see also Document A. IV/2).



New Zealand's outstanding balance of the contribution for 1933 has been reduced since the Fourth Committee's report was printed. Payment is being made quarterly, but the position has become a little complicated by reason of the United States having abandoned the gold standard. This is a point on which I have communicated with you. It has nothing to do with the problem of arrears, which, strictly speaking, are contributions owing for periods to the end of the year 1932.

#### COMMITTEE No. 5.

##### PENAL AND PENITENTIARY QUESTIONS.

The Report of the Fifth Committee to the Assembly (Document A. 44) gives the essentials necessary to an understanding of this question, which, in my opinion, should never have been brought before the Assembly, at any rate in the form in which it was originally presented, although there are certain aspects of the question, such, for instance, as the care and repatriation of foreign prisoners after discharge, which had an international bearing. The International Penal and Penitentiary Commission has been engaged for some time in drawing up a set of standard rules for the protection of prisoners. The work is now complete, and the new rules are embodied in Document A. 26, 1933, which was before the Fifth Committee, together with the Secretary-General's report (Document A. 23) on the activities of certain technical organizations which deal with penal and penitentiary questions.

The attitude of the various Governments whose delegates thought it necessary to take part in the Fifth Committee's debate will be found in section 11 of the report to the Assembly, whilst the third section touches on procedure which the Assembly might find it advisable to follow. Fortunately, the procedure suggested does not include the creation of a special League organization to deal with the question. The rules are to be transmitted to Governments of States members or non-members of the League with a request to state whether, in view of their existing or proposed laws and regulations, they are in a position to consider the approval and the practical application of the rules in whole or in part. The replies of the Governments will be communicated to the Fifteenth Assembly for further action.

The question as to the necessity of an international convention on the treatment of prisoners was raised, but, if I may express a personal opinion, I would say that it is much to be hoped that attempts, of which this is an example, to regulate matters which are national in character will be brought to an end, and that the League will in future more and more concern itself only with those tasks provided for in the Covenant.

The Fifth Committee's report includes other recommendations, but they are not of a character to cause any misgivings, and there was no reason for your delegate to intervene.

It may be noted that the consideration of unessential matters taken up enthusiastically by other Assemblies in more prosperous times is not being pursued to the point originally contemplated, with a result which cannot but be gratifying to those supporters of the League who realize the value of international co-operation where such co-operation will make for peace and good-fellowship throughout the world. The relegation to a back shelf of these minor questions will, it is hoped, bring about a concentration on more important subjects.

The Assembly accepted the Fifth Committee's report at its meeting on the 7th October.

##### TRAFFIC IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

You may recall that for some time the Traffic in Women and Children Committee of the League had been actively concerned with the preparation of a draft protocol for the suppression in the traffic of women of full age. This is embodied in Document A. 24, 1933. In this connection I would refer you to the draft additional protocol to the International Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children (C. 267, M. 122, 1931), and to a letter which you addressed to the Secretary-General on the 5th April, 1932. The principle enunciated in the concluding paragraph of your letter would seem to apply to article 1 of the draft protocol presented to the Fifth Committee this year. This article has been reproduced in a draft convention which was the work of a sub-committee specially appointed by the Fifth Committee (Document A. V/10).

The Fifth Committee passed a resolution recommending the Assembly to convoke a diplomatic Conference to consider the text of the Convention during the session of the Assembly, and this resolution was endorsed by the Assembly on the 7th October (see Document A. 47). As I had not received any definite instructions from you, and in view of your letter above referred to, I did not deem it necessary to suggest to you that I take part in the Conference, especially as if, eventually, the Government finds itself able to accept the provisions of any convention drawn up by the Conference it will be easy for New Zealand to adhere.

On the 11th October the Assembly considered the Report of the Fifth Committee on the Traffic in Women and Children, and to this Document (A. 50) I refer you for information in brief on the work done during the past year by the Traffic in Women and Children Committee. The Assembly passed the resolution with which it concludes.

##### PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

Document A. 57 is a report by the Fifth Committee on the reorganization of the Advisory Commission for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People. This was approved by the Assembly at its meeting on the 11th October. It will be observed that the Child Welfare Committee is to submit to the Assembly, if possible next session, a plan of work which will enable it to continue to the fullest extent the task contemplated at the time of its foundation.

I now turn to the Fifth Committee's report on Child Welfare (Document A. 54). In my report on last year's Assembly I made some remarks under the heading "Protection of Children" on the tendency of League organs to venture into fields which might be considered national rather than international. The position needs watching. In various directions economies have been effected this year, but efforts must be maintained and not relaxed.

The Child Welfare Committee of the League has continued its examination of various questions affecting blind children, illegitimacy, and the effects of the economic crisis and of unemployment on the young. Particulars are contained in Document C. 247, M. 129, and in the Fifth Committee's report to the Assembly, which passed the three resolutions with which it concludes on the 11th October.

#### OPIMUM.

Your attention is invited to the following documents: Report to the Council on the Work of the Sixteenth Session of the Advisory Committee on Traffic in Opium and Dangerous Drugs (C. 385, M. 193), the Minutes of the Session (C. 480, M. 244), the Report of the Permanent Central Opium Board (C. 495, M. 250), and the Fifth Committee's report to the Assembly (A. 55)—an excellent piece of work.

I think the League is to be congratulated on the results obtained. Progress has been steady, the responsible organs of the League have profited from the experience gained, Governments on the whole have been exceptionally helpful, and, finally, the Convention for Limiting the Manufacture and Regulating the Distribution of Narcotic Drugs has at length come into force. Thus has been forged a weapon which will be of considerable use in the combat against the drug trafficker and the drug habitue.

The Assembly considered the Fifth Committee's report on the 11th October, and passed the resolution with which it concludes.

There is one aspect of this question of opium on which I will briefly touch—its administration. As you are aware, there are two sections of the Secretariat dealing with the suppression of the opium traffic. One may be forgiven for expressing doubt whether it was of vital necessity to create the second. When the Permanent Central Opium Board was set up it was thought advisable to do so, and there I will leave the matter. But I fear there may be overlapping, with its corollary of wasteful expenditure, and although I have not felt it possible, in the absence of definite proof, to raise the question, I feel that the situation needs watching. Perhaps the process of rationalization which the Secretariat is undergoing will leave its mark on these two sections, but I fear influences are too strong at the present time to effect that amalgamation of sections which, with good will, I think could be arranged.

#### COMMITTEE No. 6.

##### COLLABORATION OF THE PRESS AND THE ORGANIZATION OF PEACE.

This question, involving the application of methods of preventing the spread of false information which may threaten the peace of the world, occupied the attention of the Assembly last year, and this year it was referred to the Sixth Committee. It need not detain us for more than a moment, as the Spanish Government has convened a Conference of Press Representatives which is to open in Madrid on the 7th November, when no doubt the subject will be discussed in all its bearings.

The Sixth Committee's report is Document A. 36, and it came before the Assembly on the 9th October, when a resolution noting that the Conference was to be held, and expressing the hope that it would be successful, was passed.

#### MANDATES.

The discussion this year on mandates was mostly concerned with points which have little or no interest to New Zealand, viewed from the angle of the administration of Western Samoa, although they are of general interest.

Mr. Lange, the Norwegian delegate, opened the debate. He touched on the British proposal for the political and constitutional union of certain territories in Africa, a proposal which had been abandoned for one of administrative co-operation and co-ordination; and he also referred to the principle of economic equality guaranteed under the A and B mandates, and to the administration of Palestine, amongst other matters.

The representative of the United Kingdom, Mr. Ormsby Gore, who was once a member of the Permanent Mandates Commission, made an able reply, in which he justified the steps taken for closer administrative co-operation in Africa, but the latter part of his speech was of more importance, viewed in the light of the motion introduced by the Dutch delegation regarding Jewish refugees from Germany, a motion which had been referred to the Second Committee.

Mr. Ormsby Gore stated that Jewish immigration into Palestine had increased substantially within recent years: indeed, during the first half of the present year more than 15,000 Jewish immigrants had entered Palestine, almost three times as many as the number which had entered in the first half of 1932. He stated, in reference to Jewish refugees from Germany, that the quota having been fixed by the High Commissioner of Palestine it was for the Jewish Agency to deal with the numerical distribution of the immigrants from the various countries of origin, and that the Mandatory Power could not stop immigration from countries other than Germany.

The rest of the discussion largely dealt with Palestine, but there is no need to summarize it.

Western Samoa not having been mentioned, I decided to remain silent, especially as the last annual report on the administration of the territory was due to be examined by the Permanent Mandates Commission about the end of October.

The Sixth Committee's report to the Assembly is Document A. 45, and the draft resolution with which it concludes was passed at the Assembly's meeting on the 7th October.

## REFUGEES.

I do not think comment from me is necessary. A brief account of the work of the Nansen International Office for refugees is given in the Sixth Committee's report to the Assembly (Document A. 39). This work is in process of liquidation, although other work of a somewhat similar nature is contemplated as a result of the resolution of the Assembly regarding migrant Jews from Germany. This latter question, however, is dealt with in the section of this letter devoted to the work of the Second Committee. The Assembly approved Document A. 39, and passed the resolution with which it concludes at a meeting on the 7th October.

## INTELLECTUAL CO-OPERATION.

I invite your attention to the Sixth Committee's report to the Assembly (Document A. 46), which very fairly represents the intellectual co-operation point of view. Other documents are A. 12 and A. 14.

It will be convenient to deal here with a matter which was ultimately fought out in the Fourth Committee.

On the 5th October the Sixth Committee passed the following resolution:—

“The Sixth Committee, having approved the conclusion of the report of M. Mistler on the work of the International Organization for Intellectual Co-operation, and having regard to the special importance of the work of the Committee on Arts and Letters for the purpose of pooling international thought, unanimously requests that this work should be continued.

“It requests the Fourth Committee to restore for that purpose in the budget of the forthcoming financial period the credits allotted to the Committee on Arts and Letters.”

An appropriation of 10,000 francs for the Committee on Arts and Letters had appeared in the original estimate submitted to the Supervisory Commission, but was rejected by the Commission in agreement with the Secretary-General. The Supervisory Commission on reconsideration, and in view of the unanimous recommendation of the Sixth Committee—on which, by the way, it was impossible for New Zealand to be represented at that particular time owing to the smallness of the delegation—withdrew its opposition to the inclusion of the credit. Strong objection was taken by members of the Fourth Committee to the insertion of the item. Unfortunately, however, the hour was late and the Committee was depleted, so that the motion to reject was lost.

The report (Document A. 46) was before the Assembly at its meeting on the 9th October, when the draft resolution with which it concludes was passed.

## SLAVERY.

You will remember that the Thirteenth Assembly passed a resolution providing for the constitution of an Advisory Committee of Experts to deal with slavery under powers defined in that resolution which was passed by the Assembly in 1932 on the 12th October. Nothing further was done then, as the Fourth Committee found itself unable to provide the necessary appropriations. Since, considerable pressure has been applied by those who felt that this question of slavery, which is still of immense international importance, should be more energetically examined by the League, and support was such that the Fourth Committee this year sanctioned credits. A sum of only 1,790 francs was required, as there was already a considerable sum of money available, the balance of gifts received. Doubtless before this letter reaches you the Council will have appointed the Advisory Committee. A short report from the Sixth Committee, to which the matter was referred, was considered by the Assembly at its meeting on the 11th October, when the resolution with which the report concludes was passed (see Document A. 51).

## MINORITIES.

No debate in Committee is more animated or is followed with closer interest than the yearly discussion on “Minority” questions by the Sixth Committee, and although the smallness of the New Zealand delegation, coupled with the necessity to devote all time possible to matters of more importance to New Zealand, made it impossible for your delegate to be present at the whole discussion, I am yet able to state, and my statement is based on personal observation, that this debate which reached a high level this year shows that the League is by no means dead or even dying. For some years past many delegations have felt that the procedure for dealing with petitions from minorities should be strengthened, and the delegation of the United Kingdom introduced a motion which, if passed, would have provided that,—

- (1) Petitioners should be informed of the reasons why their petitions were declared non-receivable:
- (2) The Minorities Committee of the Council should explain to the Council the reasons for placing particular questions on its agenda:
- (3) When the Minorities Committee decided to close the examination of a question without submitting it to the Council, it should be entitled to publish its decision and to offer such explanations as were considered desirable.

It will be convenient to deal at once with the fate of this motion, which, with others presently to be referred to, was sent to a sub-committee. The motion was withdrawn, the delegation of the United Kingdom substituting for it a proposal that the Assembly should request the Secretary-

General to inform the Council of the discussion that had taken place in the Sixth Committee on the question of the procedure followed in regard to the protection of minorities. Even this proposal was amended, and it was ultimately passed in the following form :—

“The Assembly requests the Secretary-General to inform the Council of the discussion that has taken place in the Sixth Committee on the problem of minorities as a whole.”

It will thus be seen that nothing of striking value was accomplished.

Of even greater interest was that part of the discussion which centred on other motions. The first, introduced by the French delegation, that—

“(1) The Assembly should reaffirm the recommendation adopted on 21st September, 1922, and proclaim that States which are not bound by any legal obligations to the League with respect to minorities must, nevertheless, observe in the treatment of their own racial, religious, or linguistic minorities at least as high a standard of justice and toleration as is required by any of the treaties and by the regular action of the Council :

“(2) The Assembly considers there is no justification for any interpretation of the minorities treaties or of the foregoing recommendation which would exclude certain categories of citizens from the benefit of the provisions which in those treaties refer to all nationals ‘without distinction of race, language or religion’.”

The second motion, emanating from the Polish delegation, that the Assembly should request the Council to appoint a Committee of inquiry to study the problem of the general application of the system of minorities protection, and submit to the next session of the Assembly a draft general convention on the protection of minorities involving the same obligations for all States members of the League.

The third motion, by the delegate of Haiti, that the Assembly should express the hope that a World Convention ensuring the protection and respect of the rights of man and of citizens would be drawn up under the auspices of the League of Nations.

You will see that these motions embraced minorities as a whole, and are not restricted to the minorities whose welfare is provided for in the various treaties.

For information on the treatment which these proposals received at the hands of the sub-committee I would refer you to the Sixth Committee's report to the Assembly (Document A. 52), which concludes with the following draft resolution :—

“1. The Assembly reiterating the recommendations which it passed on September 21, 1922, expresses the hope that the States which are not bound by legal obligations to the League with respect to minorities will nevertheless observe in the treatment of their own racial, religious, or linguistic minorities at least as high a standard of justice and toleration as is required by any of the treaties and by the regular action of the Council.

“2. The Assembly considers that the principles expounded in resolution 1, which reaffirms the recommendation of 1922, must be applied without exception to all classes of nationals of a State that differ from the majority of the population in race, language, or religion.

“3. The Assembly requests the Secretary-General to inform the Council of the discussion that has taken place in the Sixth Committee on the question of minorities as a whole.”

The Sixth Committee's report came before the Assembly on the 11th October, when the German delegate stated that, whilst accepting the first and third paragraphs, he would vote against the second.

As to be effective the resolution required a vote, the President wisely decided to separate the controversial and non-controversial parts and to put each part separately to the vote. The first and third paragraphs of the motion were carried unanimously, the second was lost. Perhaps it is well to offer no further comment and to leave this Jewish question at the point to which the Second Committee has brought it.

If I have dealt at some length with a matter which is, strictly speaking, of only academic interest to New Zealand, I do so because this annual debate in the Sixth Committee is a good illustration of the value of Geneva as a meeting-place for the nations of the world to discuss matters of common interest: further, the protection of minorities is a task imposed on the League by the Covenant.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

THOMAS M. WILFORD,  
High Commissioner for New Zealand.

The Right Honourable the Prime Minister, Wellington, New Zealand.

*Approximate Cost of Paper.*—Preparation not given; printing (400 copies), £10.

By Authority: G. H. LONEY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1934.

Price 6d.]