

(b) International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation.

By a note of the Secretary-General, (C. 9, 1939, XII) the Council was informed that it would be called upon to fill a number of vacant seats on the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation, and he drew attention to a new situation which would arise as a result of the International Act of December, 1938, referred to above. The Rapporteur, the representative of France, contented himself for the time being with proposing the renewal of the term of office of certain members and the appointment of new members, leaving four seats to be filled by the Council during its May session. The Rapporteur's proposals were agreed to by the Council, and the list of members appointed will be found in the report (Document C. 51, 1939, XII).

The final meeting of the Council, first in private and then in public, took place on the morning of the 20th January. At the private meeting the following items connected with appointments were considered :—

(a) Committee for Communications and Transit.

The Rapporteur, the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, presented his report (C. 54, 1939, VIII). The new Statute of the Organizations for Communications and Transit has been in force about a year. In 1938 the Assembly fixed at eighteen the number of seats on the Committee for Communications and Transit, and it was the duty of the Council at its present session to appoint the members in agreement with the Governments concerned. The Rapporteur proposed fifteen names, and stated that neither Spain nor Italy had submitted names, and that his own Government did not propose to avail itself for the time being of the right to provide a member. The Rapporteur's report was adopted, and the fifteen names, which will be found in the report, were approved. The new members will serve for three years.

(b) Permanent Technical Hydraulic System Commission of the Danube.

The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics also acted as Rapporteur on this question. Under the Treaty of Trianon it is the duty of the Council to appoint the Chairman of the Permanent Technical Hydraulic System Commission of the Danube. The present Chairman has served for three periods of five years, and his present term of office will expire in March next. Postponement of the new appointment was advocated by the Rapporteur as negotiations with the Governments concerned are proceeding. The Council concurred. As the Council does not meet until May the post will be vacant for a few weeks. Should, however, circumstances render the appointment of a Chairman desirable in the interval, the President of the Council has authority, in agreement with the Rapporteur, to make an appointment (see Document C. 53, 1939, VIII).

At the conclusion of the private meeting the Secretary-General asked leave to make a statement on economies to be adopted as the result of the report of the Economics Committee set up by the Council at the request of the Assembly in 1938. The report of the Economics Committee has already been issued, and it will be considered by this year's Assembly. Political changes and secessions from the League will cause a serious diminution of income, and unless States members are prepared to provide an increase in their contributions, which is hardly likely, income will be insufficient to meet expenditure on the present scale. Inevitably, economies are necessary. Unfortunately, these will include reduction of staff. Some indication of the policy to be adopted is given in the Secretary-General's statement to which I invite your attention. I spoke a few words of regret at the necessity for dismissing members of the staff, and of fear lest the humanitarian work of the League should be hampered. It is true to say that for a while it will be practically only by its humanitarian and technical work that the League will be kept alive. Nothing, therefore, should be done which would cause this work to suffer, for it is to be hoped that in the not distant future the League will once again be able to operate in the sphere for which it was primarily created.

APPEAL OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT.

This item figured on the agenda because in the past the representative of China has always insisted that the Council should remain seized of the question. At the public meeting of the Council held on the 17th January, Mr. Wellington Koo, the Chinese representative, addressed his colleagues. His speech, which is reported in full in the minutes, may be divided into three parts—a brief account of the military position as it existed, with a suggestion of the trend of future operations; a statement of the aims of those governing Japan and the reactions thereto of certain Governments, notably that of Great Britain, which, a few days before, had addressed a strongly worded note to the Japanese Government; and a request to the League for specific action, including the creation of a Committee of Co-ordination in order that the measures taken by Governments should produce the maximum effect, whether of assistance to China or of pressure against Japan. Much of the information which Mr. Wellington Koo furnished was already known to his hearers, such as difficulties experienced by the Chinese Government in obtaining supplies of arms and ammunitions, due in part to Japanese military operations and in part to the action of some Governments in refusing facilities, such as transit. But one point not new, but which stood out strongly from the rest, was the account of the deplorable condition of the refugees from territory occupied by Japan. These refugees are said to number some thirty millions, and, in the opinion of the British Ambassador to China, the misery is of such magnitude that the difficulties raised are without precedent.

As no other member of the Council desired to speak the President adjourned consideration of the question to a future meeting.