

The Council then went into public session for the purpose of considering the following :—

PERMANENT CENTRAL OPIUM BOARD : REPORT ON THE STATISTICS OF NARCOTICS FOR THE YEAR 1937
AND THE WORK OF THE BOARD DURING 1938.

The report to the Council of the Permanent Central Opium Board is Document C. 482, M. 325, 1938, XI. It is largely composed of statistics, which are prefaced by a valuable and interesting report of some twenty pages. The more important aspects of the report are stressed by the Rapporteur, the representative of Greece, in his own report to the Council (Document C. 38, 1939, XI). The control of the drug traffic has not escaped the difficulties created by the political changes which are taking place, and there seems little doubt that traffickers will take advantage of this. The Council was merely called upon to take note of the report of the Board, which is, of course, an independent organization created by Convention to control the legitimate traffic and to detect illegitimate traffic, which is still rampant.

INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES.

Both the British and French Governments had sent notes to the Secretary-General requesting him to lay before the Council a proposal that the functions of the High Commissioner for Refugees should be extended to refugees coming from areas ceded by Czechoslovakia to Germany. In the words of the Rapporteur, the representative of Bolivia, such refugees are those who, having possessed Czechoslovak nationality and not now possessing any nationality other than German, have been obliged to leave the territory which was formerly part of the Czechoslovak State—that is, the territory known as the Sudetenland—where they were settled and which is now incorporated in Germany. They consist of persons who have been or who are obliged to leave the said territory and who do not enjoy the protection of either the German or the Czechoslovak Governments.

The High Commissioner for Refugees having stated that he could discharge these new duties without asking for further credits, the Council, on the advice of its Rapporteur, passed the following resolution :—

“ The Council—

“ Having taken note of the report submitted by its Rapporteur concerning refugees coming from territories ceded by Czechoslovakia to Germany,

“ Approves the conclusions submitted by him,

“ Authorizes the High Commissioner to act in accordance with the present report until a final decision has been taken in the matter by the Assembly at its next session.”

It is understood that the High Commissioner will present to the next Assembly a report on the situation and on the results of his consultation with the Governments concerned (see Documents C. 26, 1939, and C. 50, 1939, XII).

PERMANENT MANDATES COMMISSION : REPORT ON THE WORK OF ITS THIRTY-FIFTH SESSION.

The minutes of the thirty-fifth session of the Permanent Mandates Commission and the Commission's report are contained in a volume numbered C. 418, M. 262, 1938, VI. During that session the Commission examined, in the presence of the accredited representative of New Zealand, the report by the New Zealand Government on the administration, during the year ended 31st March, 1938, of the Territory of Western Samoa. A report on this examination has already been made to you. At the session of the Council Western Samoa was not specifically mentioned either in the Rapporteur's report (Document C. 42, 1939, VI) or in the debate, and there seemed no occasion for me to speak. The more important points which emerged from the Commission's report are stressed in the report to the Council by the representative of Latvia, and of these points considerable space is allotted to the administration of Syria and Lebanon. The political changes which these countries are undergoing are familiar to you. Syria and Lebanon have been governed for nearly two decades by the French under an “ A ” Mandate, and have at length reached the stage when they have to prove that they are fit for self-government. Control by France has been relaxed considerably, and as a consequence there have emerged certain aspects which may give rise to future problems.

Unfortunately, Japan was not represented during the examination by the Commission of the Report on the Administration of the Islands under Japanese Mandate, and the Commission was at a considerable disadvantage. During the discussion in the Council Mr. Wellington Koo, the representative of China, again raised the question of the effect on the indigenous population of the islands of the recent Japanese law on military service, and he reserved his right to comment pending the receipt of information on the point from the Japanese Government. This question had already received the attention of the Permanent Mandates Commission, as will be seen on reference to pages 178-181 of the Minutes.

The Administration of Palestine was not considered by the Commission during its session, but in view of recent developments the representative of the United Kingdom made a statement in the Council during which he briefly traversed recent history in that country culminating in the invitation to representatives of Palestinian Arabs and Arabs of adjacent countries and to representatives of the Jewish Agency to a conference in London. The United Kingdom representative felt that if the Council were called upon to deal with Palestine during its May session in the form of modifying the terms of the mandate or in some other way it might be advisable to have the views of the Permanent Mandates Commission, and he asked that, should necessity arise, the Commission should be called together in extraordinary session before the Council met. The Council's Rapporteur agreed that steps should be taken to this end.