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of the

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in 1940 and 1941**

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INTRODUCTION

With the outbreak of hostilities in September 1939, the life of the League entered upon a new phase marked by a certain inevitable decline in the intensity of its activities and a decrease in their volume.

As the League of Nations was not invoked and as it was impossible to arrange for the political organs to meet, the tasks assigned to them first decreased, and then their work was brought almost entirely to a standstill.

The technical activities too were, in a general way, though to a much lesser degree, affected by events which are still convulsing the world, and Europe in particular. These activities have been continued for the very reason that they are of definitely intrinsic value at the present time and will be even more so in the future, especially on the return of peace.

The cessation of political activities and the decrease in parts of the technical work were reflected in corresponding reductions in the staff of the Secretariat and in the budget of the League.

The very great reductions which were made in all sections of the budget of the Secretariat, for instance, reached the following proportions:

By comparison with the budget for 1940: 65.4 %

By comparison with the budget for 1939: 77 %.

As regards the staff of the Secretariat, it should be recalled that the Supervisory Commission, in its third and fourth

reports to the 1939 Assembly, made proposals for reducing the staff of the League organisations to the level appropriate to the present situation. In accordance with these proposals, which were approved by the Assembly, officials whose services were not regarded as indispensable were, at the end of December 1939, given the choice between the suspension of their contracts and resignation. Provision had to be made for certain compensation for those whose contracts were suspended or who resigned.¹

As the general international situation continued to grow worse as more countries became involved in the war, further reductions followed those carried out at the end of 1939. In May 1940, acting on the principle that it was the duty of the Secretary-General to ensure, as far as possible, that expenditure should not exceed estimated revenue, the Administration proceeded to make further reductions in the staff of the Secretariat. The table of staff reductions published in the report of the Supervisory Commission² shows that the reductions effected, taking the Secretariat as a whole, reached the proportion of about 78% towards the end of 1940.³

The administration of the International Labour Organisation, whose technical services have been transferred to America, also carried out staff reductions on a large scale. The Permanent Court of International Justice had had to leave The Hague some months after the occupation of the Netherlands and, in the circumstances, the Registrar of the Court reduced staff and other expenditure to a very low level.

This policy of retrenchments and economies in the Secretariat which was advocated in 1939 was carried out first by the then Secretary-General and, after his resignation at the

¹ See document C.152.M.139.1940.X.

² *Ibid.*, page 12.

³ In adopting the budget for 1941, which, in spite of heavy capital charges due to staff reductions and payments to the Pensions Fund, is 66% below the estimates for 1939, the Supervisory Commission expressed the opinion that the budget of the League (including, of course, the International Labour Organisation and the Permanent Court of International Justice) had now been "reduced virtually to the minimum consistent with the effective functioning of the League even on a reduced scale of activities and it considers that any further material reduction in expenditure would endanger the maintenance of the institution".

end of August 1940, by his successor. The transfer of duties to Mr. Lester was expressly confirmed by the President of the Council (M. Costa du Rels), the President of the Assembly (M. Carl Hambro), and by the Supervisory Commission, as well as by direct messages from Governments of States Members.

The Supervisory Commission's report¹ shows in what circumstances the Acting Secretary-General assumed his responsibilities. A budget had to be drawn up, the policy of economies had to be enforced more rigorously and, at the same time, the international character of the League had to be preserved and all the activities which the circumstances permitted had to be maintained.

Meanwhile, several Members of the League have given notice of withdrawal and the territories of many more States Members have been occupied. One result was that, after June 1st, 1940, the contributions were adversely affected. In this last respect, however, the situation is now steadily improving.

The Acting Secretary-General feels it is his duty to pay a tribute to those States which, although directly affected by the war, have not failed to carry out their financial obligations.

Documents C.152.M.139.1940.X and C.153.M.140.1940.X, which have been distributed, present the budget for 1941, drawn up on the basis of actual expenditure at the rate of 50 % of the 1940 budget. Constant efforts have been made to preserve intact all the activities that are compatible with present circumstances. In endeavouring to reduce demands on States Members, however, the Acting Secretary-General has had to make further reductions in the staff and further retrenchments in the services of the Secretariat. It has not always been easy to reconcile these actions with his equally constant desire to preserve the international character of the institution and to ensure that its essential activities shall be maintained intact.

As the war has made it very difficult, if not impossible, for many of the organs of the League to meet, the Acting Secretary-General has thought it advisable to inform the States Members

¹ See document C.152.M.139.1940.X, page 6.

of the existing situation by giving in this report, apart from various problems and difficulties, a brief account of the present activities of the League.

I. ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND TRANSIT QUESTIONS

1. FISCAL COMMITTEE

Notwithstanding the difficulties of the moment, it was possible to carry through an appreciable part of the programme that the Fiscal Committee had drawn up at its session in June 1939. For the accomplishment of this work, two meetings were held—the first of a Sub-Committee which met at The Hague in April 1940, the second of a Conference of members and corresponding members of the Committee coming from seven countries on the American continent. This Conference was held, on the invitation of the Mexican Government, at Mexico City from June 3rd to 14th, 1940. Thanks largely to the facilities offered by the Mexican Government and to the careful preparation that it had made for the Conference, the meeting proved outstandingly successful.

The agenda submitted to the Sub-Committee and to the Conference were the same, covering prevention of international double taxation in the matter of income taxes and the technical principles of income taxation.

As a result of the discussions on the first item of the agenda, a new draft model convention was drawn up which brings up to date the model conventions for the prevention of double taxation in the field of income and property taxes framed by the Conference of Governmental Experts of 1928. It is understood that negotiations for several treaties between countries

of the Western Hemisphere have been initiated on the basis of the new model convention.

The work on the principles of income tax practice and legislation constitutes the first part of a systematic enquiry into the principles of direct taxation. The object of the Fiscal Committee is to set out, in the light of varying national experiences, the technical rules to which tax systems and the different types of taxes should conform. This work, which was originally undertaken at the request of the Mexican Government, is likely to prove of special usefulness to all Governments which are in the process of building up their tax systems or subjecting them to revision, as a number now are.

The Conference adopted for the purposes of its discussions a report drawn up by The Hague Sub-Committee. It proposed that the report and the model convention should be communicated unofficially to experts in different countries and that their observations should be considered at a later conference.

In the meantime, the Secretariat is making a study of the principles applying to property and land taxes. It is, further, drawing up a preliminary revision of the draft convention for the prevention of double taxation in the matter of death duties.

2. ECONOMIC INTELLIGENCE •

Although many Governments have greatly curtailed their economic statistics and information concerning financial conditions has also been much reduced, this very fact has increased the importance at this moment of the information available concerning the economic situation in different parts of the world. Moreover, peace, when it comes, will come to the world as we find it at that moment and not to the world that existed in 1939. Those responsible for the formulation of policy at that date, therefore, will require to know what have been the effects of the new economic tendencies and forces that have sprung up during the war. In spite of the very real difficulties that have presented themselves and still

present themselves, every effort is therefore being made to maintain the work of the Economic Intelligence Service.

Available material on most subjects is no longer complete enough to justify the preparation of specialised memoranda. Financial information is, however, generally more abundant than economic, and in the spring of 1940 a study of monetary policy and wartime finances was issued. It was felt, however, that, quite apart from the limitations set by the reduced volume of statistical and other information available, a general re-orientation of the work was required if it was to meet the real needs of the moment. The following plan of work has accordingly been adopted.

First, in place of the special memoranda dealing with world trade, production and prices, banking, public finance, etc., it is proposed to publish in the course of 1941 a single *World Economic Survey* dealing mainly with the principles of wartime finance and with those broad changes in economic tendencies which are making themselves apparent.

Secondly, two of the purely statistical publications — the League's *Statistical Year-book* and the *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics* — are being maintained.

Thirdly, a certain number of special studies devoted to selected subjects of immediate or ultimate importance have been or are being prepared. The object of these studies is at once to collect and digest the essential statistical material and in certain cases to make a critical analysis of it.

Two such studies have already been published. The first, which appeared in the spring of 1940, was designed to show the production of all the more important raw materials and food-stuffs country by country. It is a book of reference so designed that the total production of each commodity by any country, or, alternatively, all the main producers of any commodity, can be ascertained by reference to a single page. The second volume, published in the spring of 1941, was an analysis of Europe's trade, the purpose of which is to consider what was the part played by Europe in the trade of the world, how far Europe was dependent on external markets, how far one area in Europe was complementary to another, and also what was the part played by Europe in the international transfer of

funds. It is proposed to follow this analysis by a companion volume on the trade of the rest of the world.

These volumes constitute in reality part of the fourth item in the present general plan of work, which is concerned with problems likely to arise for solution in the future. It will be recalled that, in December 1939, the Assembly approved the proposal to create a Central Committee to co-ordinate the work of the technical organisations of the League. Circumstances rendered it impossible to convene this Committee; but a meeting of an organising committee was held in February 1940 at The Hague, where it was possible for the Secretariat to discuss a preliminary plan of studies with some of its members.

Of these studies, two groups are concerned with the conditions of social security, a problem which, there is little doubt, will lie at the core of the social and economic issues of the future. Among the dynamic forces conducive to instability in the modern world are those that lead to fluctuations in economic activity, with their train of depressions, stagnation and unemployment, and those that have their origin in the demographic tendencies and pattern of society. As a result of decisions taken by the Assembly in 1937 and 1938, bodies of experts were appointed to suggest means by which depressions might be mitigated or avoided and to study the economic implications of demographic phenomena. The Secretariat has been pursuing a series of investigations along lines laid down, before the outbreak of war, by these expert bodies.

Another group of studies in progress, of no less importance, aims at analysing the causes that have contributed in the past to the failure of society to achieve stability and social security after the last war and led to the collapse of the '30's and the cleavage of the world into incompatible economic groups.

3. COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSIT

Although the League's work on questions of communications and transit has been very greatly restricted, certain activities of the Secretariat in this field must be recorded.

First, the enquiry conducted amongst Governments with regard to the question of the co-ordination of transport, the first results of which were published at the end of 1938, has continued to be of practical interest. Most States, whether belligerents or not, have, as a consequence of the war, been compelled to adopt measures for the regulation and control of transport, and the results of the experience of other countries are accordingly of value to them. For this reason, an addendum, based on information covering some forty countries which reached the Secretariat between the time of the publication of the first volume and the outbreak of the war, was published early in 1940.

Secondly, the results of the investigations into certain other problems which the Transit Committee had concluded just before the war have since been made available to Governments. The most important of these relates to the international rules concerning maritime tonnage measurement.

Thirdly, in pursuance of decisions taken by the Transit Committee, some new enquiries have been undertaken amongst Governments since the beginning of the war.

Finally, information concerning important developments in the sphere of communications continues to be regularly collected, analysed and recorded, month by month, by the Secretariat.

4. NATIONAL NUTRITION COMMITTEES

In October 1939, shortly after the outbreak of the war, a meeting of National Nutrition Committees was held at Buenos Aires. A report recently received from the Chairman—the Director of the Argentine National Nutrition Institute—testifies to the continuing effect of that meeting in stimulating official and unofficial action in favour of improving nutrition policies on the Latin-American Continent.

5. MISSION TO PRINCETON

In the early summer of 1940, the staff of the Economic, Financial and Transit Department was considerably reduced.

The same events that made this reduction necessary rendered communications between Geneva and the outside world increasingly uncertain. In June, an invitation was received from Princeton University, the Institute for Advanced Study and the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, suggesting that the technical services of the League might take up their work in Princeton and offering offices and other facilities. In response to this invitation, the director and part of the staff of the department were sent to Princeton in August, and there most of the work indicated above is now being carried on. New and valuable contacts have been established, old contacts renewed and, at a time when it is impossible to hold committee meetings in Europe and the great majority of official delegates have left Geneva, these contacts have proved of vital importance.

At the same time, the members of the department left in Geneva are in a position to follow economic developments within Europe and to co-operate usefully with their colleagues in America. Thanks to the provision which had been made for telegraphic and air-mail communication with non-European Governments, they have been able to continue part of the essential statistical work. The 1939/40 edition of the *Statistical Year-Book* of the League was published in Geneva in the late autumn of 1940, and in Geneva also the *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics* has continued to be compiled and issued month by month without interruption.

The Rockefeller Foundation has generously voted a grant of 50,000 dollars to aid the work of the department in Princeton, which has enabled it, *inter alia*, to engage necessary junior staff. This grant can be drawn upon during the years 1941-1942. Without this grant and other assistance afforded by the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton University and the Millbank Fund, the department would have found great difficulty in carrying out a considerable part of its programme.

However different the problems of the future may be from those with which the world has been familiar, the lessons of the past must surely be learned before there can be any hope of solving those problems; the changes that are taking place to-day in the economic structure of the world must be followed; essential data must be collected and analysed; those deep-lying economic forces that will survive all the destruction of the present conflict must be laid bare and their implications comprehended. Towards the fulfilment of this vast but supremely important task, the Economic, Financial and Transit Department, with the means at its disposal, is endeavouring to contribute.

II. QUESTIONS OF A SOCIAL AND HUMANITARIAN CHARACTER

The Secretariat continues to supply Governments with information the value of which has been recognised by many national administrations.

As a result of the war, questions relating to health, nutrition, housing, social assistance, the welfare of young people, assistance to refugees, the campaign against drugs, etc., have become, and will long continue to be, matters of grave concern. It is of vital importance that the means of international action in such matters should be maintained. In this connection, the experience gained by the League of Nations in the course of the past twenty years should be of the greatest value. International agreements have been concluded, methods of mutual assistance, examination, supervision and control have been worked out, and information has been kept up to date. The Secretariat is endeavouring to pursue such action and such international exchanges as are possible in the circumstances, and to preserve for the purposes of post-war reconstruction the results of efforts to which many nations, both Members of the League and non-member States, have contributed by their collaboration.

1. HEALTH QUESTIONS

At its last session (November 1939), the Health Committee defined the part which the Health Organisation of the League of Nations should play with a view to assisting in counteracting the effects of the war on public health: it is in a position to furnish practical aid, not only by providing information and guidance, but also by supplying health administrations with technical and material assistance; it is prepared to perform an essential function as an instrument of international co-ordination.

The Committee delegated its powers to an Emergency Sub-Committee and authorised the consultation of experts if circumstances should make this necessary.

This Sub-Committee met in March 1940 for the purpose of studying the health questions raised by movements of civilian populations. With the aid of experts, it drew up a short report setting forth, for the benefit of health administrations, the principles and measures that should be adopted in order to prevent the outbreak of epidemic diseases and to safeguard the health of civilian populations compelled to move in consequence of the war. This report, which was published as a pamphlet,¹ was appreciated by Governments and some of them applied for several hundred copies.

War creates conditions in which there is often grave danger of the spreading of infectious diseases. For that reason, the Epidemiological Intelligence Service has continued to follow very closely all developments in the situation with regard to epidemic diseases, more particularly in Europe.

As early as September 1939, this service devised special measures for overcoming difficulties caused by the slowing-up of postal and telegraphic communications and it took steps to increase the rapidity of its working. It did this by making greater use of wireless communications. It has thus been able to carry out the duties entrusted to it both at Geneva and at

its Far-Eastern Bureau at Singapore. It has continued to receive information concerning contagious diseases and reports with medical statistics, both from neutral countries and from countries at war.

In March 1940, on the basis of the information then available, the Emergency Sub-Committee of the Health Committee drew the attention of health administrations to the abnormal increase in the number of cases of cerebro-spinal meningitis in several European countries.

As from June 1940, as a result of the great reduction in staff, the service has suspended the publication of its monthly and annual reports, but it has continued its wireless broadcast service and the publication of the weekly bulletins at Geneva and at Singapore.

The control of serum standards may be mentioned as one example of work that is of very great importance in wartime. The Copenhagen Serological Institute has, notwithstanding certain difficulties, been able to continue the distribution of standards of sera. For the British Commonwealth of Nations, this distribution is carried out by the London Institute. In the case of standards of vitamins, hormones and certain other medicaments supplied by the London Institute, the distribution has also proceeded normally so far as most countries are concerned.

As the organisation of blood transfusions is of special importance in time of war, the Health Committee, in November 1939, drew the attention of the administrations concerned to the existence of an international nomenclature for blood groups, which was established by the League of Nations in 1928. It recommended the adoption of this nomenclature in order to obviate dangerous confusion. Its recommendation has, in general, been followed.

It has been necessary to adapt the working and the activities of the Health Organisation to the new conditions resulting from the war. Notwithstanding the reductions in the staff of the Secretariat, however, it has been thought advisable to continue certain studies of general and lasting interest, for which a unique body of material has been collected—material which would be practically wasted if the work were inter-

rupted. The work on the *Manual of International Lists of Causes of Death*, for instance, has been completed since the outbreak of war, and an essential instrument has thereby been provided for the comparison of the mortality statistics of different countries.

In regard to questions relating to nutrition—a matter which is everywhere recognised as being, more than ever before, of fundamental importance—the Health Organisation possesses a wealth of experience and material which are at the disposal of health administrations, although, in the circumstances, it has not been possible to continue to devote to these questions all the attention they deserve.

Various other enquiries undertaken before the war have not been broken off—*e.g.*: the preparatory work for the international unification of the different national pharmacopœiæ, the object being to unify the formulæ for the chief heroic and galenical medicaments; the analysis of the annual statistics for rabies, etc.

For want of the necessary means, the work of the Housing Committee has had to be postponed, as also has that of the Nutrition Committee and the preparation of a general report on the administrative and social organisation of the campaign against cancer. For the same reason, it has not been possible to undertake, as the Health Committee had requested, a study of the question of tuberculin reactions.

These postponements have been inevitable, but experience has clearly proved that the Health Organisation is in a position to continue to render great services. The number of requests for information received from health administrations has shown a distinct tendency to increase. The publication of the *Bulletin of the Health Organisation* continues on a reduced scale.

2. DRUG TRAFFIC

The activity of the League of Nations in regard to the control of the drug traffic has been maintained.

The Advisory Committee met for its twenty-fifth session in May 1940, seventeen members^o out of twenty-three being present. In its report, it recalled the fact that the war of 1914-1918 had led to a recrudescence of drug addiction and an increase in illicit traffic, owing to the lack of national and international legislative measures and of adequate systems of supervision and suppression. The Committee considers it essential that, in addition to the measures taken individually by Governments, the international organs should continue to carry on their duties. It asked Governments to enable these organs to continue their work by supplying them with annual reports, reports of drug seizures, estimates of national requirements and statistics.

The Permanent Central Board, which watches the international trade in narcotic drugs, on the basis of statistical information supplied by Governments, met in August and November 1939 and in May 1940.

The Supervisory Body, whose duty it is to examine the estimates of national drug requirements furnished annually by Governments, met in September and November 1939 and in May and September 1940.

These two organs of control have taken the necessary steps for carrying on their work even in the event of some of their members being unable to attend their meetings. They have asked the Governments to continue to supply all possible documentary material. A large number of Governments, both of Members of the League and of non-member States, have volunteered the assurance that they will continue to collaborate fully with these international organs.

The Drug Control Service of the Secretariat, which includes the secretariat of the Supervisory Body, continues to carry on its regular work. The same is true of the secretariat of the Permanent Central Board¹. The Secretariat distributes to Governments, whether or not they are parties to the international Conventions concerning opium and other dangerous drugs, all the official information it receives—annual reports

¹ Owing to difficulties of communication with certain countries, branch offices have been established in the United States.

on international traffic, reports on cases of illicit traffic, the texts of new laws and regulations, etc.

3. SOCIAL QUESTIONS

The staff reductions and the other circumstances mentioned above in the introduction have compelled the Secretariat to limit its activities in this field. As the Social Questions Committee has not been able to meet, the Secretariat has had to concentrate its efforts on carrying out the work entrusted to the Information Centre, viz.:

(a) *The constitution of documentation concerning measures taken in the different countries for the welfare of families and children.*

(b) *The communication of this documentation.* The Information Centre publishes a summary of the reports furnished by Governments concerning the measures taken by them for the purpose of increasing the welfare of families and children. It also publishes, either in the complete text or in the form of summaries, the chief enactments of a legal and administrative character promulgated for the protection of families and children and to combat prostitution. This documentation is communicated to Governments, to the members of the Advisory Committee on Social Questions, and to the organisations appointed by the Governments of Members of the League and non-member States to act as correspondents of the Centre. Lastly, it publishes informatory notes on questions likely to be of interest to those correspondents.

Further, many Governments have sent to the Secretariat the reports they have undertaken to furnish annually concerning the traffic in women and children and obscene publications. A summary of these reports is about to be published.

(c) *Replies to requests for information.* Notwithstanding difficulties of communication, requests for information reach the Secretariat, and replies are duly transmitted.

4. INTERNATIONAL INTELLECTUAL CO-OPERATION

As a result of circumstances, the Secretariat confines itself to dealing, so far as is possible, with correspondence concerning intellectual questions. The Executive Committee of the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation has not met since December 1939 and the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation in Paris ceased functioning in June 1940.

5. INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES

International assistance to refugees, as provided for in the Assembly resolution of September 1938, has continued although, owing to the way in which the war has affected the activities of the High Commissioner, a certain number of new problems have arisen. In the reports which he sent to the League (in July and October 1939, April 1940 and January 1941), the High Commissioner has described the various aspects of the work he is carrying on in present circumstances, both from the humanitarian standpoint and also in regard to the legal protection of refugees and their emigration. The latter, although considerably restricted, continues along the lines laid down by the Assembly. The private organisations, whose activities have necessarily been reduced, have given very valuable assistance, especially in the case of many refugees who, as a result of the war, have been placed in tragic conditions.

6. TECHNICAL COLLABORATION WITH CHINA

This work continued during the whole of 1940, although, owing to circumstances, on a reduced scale when compared with the activities of previous years.

Two medical experts were in China; they had been placed at the disposal of the Chinese Government as advisers. One of these two experts was working in close collaboration with the Chungking National Health Administration and, in addition, undertook tours of inspection in various regions. The other expert resided at Kweiyang, where he was chiefly concerned with research work in regard to bacteriology and serology. Both were assisted by an auxiliary staff recruited on the spot.

In addition to these medical experts, there was in China an engineer, an expert in river conservancy, who was appointed in May 1940 and who, at the request of the Chinese authorities, drew up reports on the navigability of certain rivers and on other related questions.

Unfortunately, increasing difficulties of various kinds prevented the above-mentioned activities from being continued after the beginning of 1941, and they were accordingly wound up by the end of January of this year. On that occasion, a considerable quantity of medical supplies, together with motor vehicles and other material purchased by the League for its work in China, was handed over to the Chinese authorities for further use in the campaign against epidemics.

7. SETTLEMENT OF THE ASSYRIANS OF IRAQ

During 1940, the application of the scheme for rendering the Khabur Settlement in Syria self-sufficing and for placing it on a permanent basis was actively pursued by the Trustee Board and, by the end of the year, this work was practically completed, only certain formalities concerning naturalisation and the issue and registration of individual title-deeds to the land still remaining to be carried out.

The special régime in the colony was accordingly brought to an end and replaced, as from January 1st, 1941, by the local administration. Provision has, however, been made for the supervision of the colony by the Trustee Board to be continued during the transition period.

The latest reports from the Board show that, from the point of view of health, material welfare and relations with their neighbours, the situation of the colonists has remained highly satisfactory.

III. QUESTIONS OF A LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHARACTER

1. REGISTRATION AND PUBLICATION OF TREATIES

Many Governments have continued to send for registration the treaties concluded by them. The *Monthly List of Treaties registered* in accordance with Article 18 of the Covenant has been published regularly. As regards the publication of the actual text of the treaties thus registered, with English and French translations, volumes CXCIV, CXCVI, CXCVII, CXCVIII and CXCIX of the *Treaty Series* have appeared since January 1st, 1940, the last of these having just been published. It is intended that the publication of this series should be continued in future within the limits of the financial possibilities of the League.

2. SIGNATURES, RATIFICATIONS AND ACCESSIONS IN RESPECT OF TREATIES CONCLUDED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, INCLUDING LABOUR CONVENTIONS

The Secretariat continues to deal with signatures, ratifications and accessions communicated to it by Governments. It notifies Governments in each case.

3. LEGAL STUDIES

In addition to such studies as are necessary in regard to questions which have a legal aspect, a comprehensive enquiry into the legal status of women, which was decided upon by the Assembly in 1937, is in progress. The International Institute for the Unification of Private Law, which undertook to carry out the most important part of the enquiry—*i.e.*, the part relating to private law—has completed its work.

Further, the Acting Secretary-General has received a memorandum concerning Indian law, drawn up by an Indian jurist who had been asked to report on this aspect of the question.

4. MANDATES (ARTICLE 22 OF THE COVENANT)

The Mandates Commission met in December 1939. Since then, the Secretariat has continued to classify and study the documentary material transmitted by the mandatory Powers (legislative texts and other official documents concerning the mandated territories). Thus certain annual reports prepared by mandatory Powers have been received at the Secretariat and transmitted to the Mandates Commission. No date has been fixed for the meeting of the Commission. The abundant documentary material at the disposal of the Secretariat concerning mandates and colonial problems could be usefully consulted when, at the end of the war, statesmen will be called upon to ensure a satisfactory solution of these controversial problems.

5. SLAVERY

The Secretariat has continued to receive communications from Governmental sources concerning this question. These communications are being added to the documentary material already submitted to the Advisory Committee of Experts on Slavery. No resumption of the work of this Committee is expected as long as the present situation continues.

6. INFORMATION CONCERNING ARMAMENTS

For fifteen consecutive years, two year-books entitled respectively the *Armaments Year-Book* and the *Statistical Year-Book of the Trade in Arms and Ammunition* have been published each year, in accordance with a decision taken by the Council in execution of the last two paragraphs of Article 8 of the Covenant. For reasons of economy, it was not possible

to publish the *Statistical Year-Book of the Trade in Arms and Ammunition* in 1940, but the Secretariat was able to produce and publish in an abridged form the fifteenth and final volume of the *Armaments Year-Book*. A comparative study of these volumes makes it possible to construct a graph illustrating the armaments policy of the different countries of the world during the fifteen years which preceded the war of 1939.

IV. LIBRARY

The Library, the development of which is due, in large measure, to the generosity of Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and acquisitions for which come, on the one hand, from purchases and, on the other hand, from gifts and exchanges, now possesses more than 300,000 volumes.

The Governments, both of Members of the League and of non-member States, continue to send it their official publications. Although the total number of publications received has declined by comparison with previous years, it has been possible to maintain exchange relations with all countries and the publications they have sent to the Library have been duly received.

It has been found possible to resume the publication of the *Monthly List of Selected Articles*, which was interrupted in May 1940. This is a current bibliography of recent articles compiled from abstracts made of about 800 of the most important periodicals appearing in all parts of the world. It is now the only publication of this kind issued in Europe.

The publication of the *Chronology of International Treaties and Legislative Measures* and the *List of Books catalogued in the Library* continues to be suspended.

Heavy economies have had to be made on staff and on purchases and subscriptions, and binding, as well as on the publications of the Library, so that efforts might be concentrated on the task which seemed essential—i.e., the keeping up to date of the collections, some of which are unique in

Europe, and in which it would in many cases be impossible to fill up gaps at a later date.

This task has so far been accomplished, and this may make it possible for this international centre of documentation to render very great services as soon as there is a return to normal conditions.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

This brief survey covers useful activities in important technical fields in the midst of an ever-extending war of devastation. These activities continue both at the headquarters in Europe and on the other side of the Atlantic. They can and will be preserved with the support of States Members until the time comes when Governments can consult and can explore the prospects of future international collaboration in the light of the experience gained during the first attempt at organising international relations. So far, that attempt has not always been successful, but the moment has not yet come to review the recent history of the League of Nations and the causes of the failure to use it successfully for the maintenance of peace. Nevertheless, in the words of Mr. Cordell Hull, Secretary of State of the United States of America, the League "has been responsible for the development of mutual exchange and discussion of ideas and methods to a greater extent and in more fields of humanitarian and scientific endeavour than any other organisation in history".

There is in the organisations of the League of Nations not only a heritage which should be safeguarded during the crisis but a continuing and active system of services which should, indeed, be strengthened for new and greater tasks. For those new tasks of national reconstruction and for a healthier international life, the first and essential requirement will be greater security and stability in the world; that implies both international justice and law, as well as the means and will to maintain peace. Once more, the nations have failed to avert

a ruinous war, but, when it is over, there will be the future with all its problems calling for solution. Statesmen will then be faced with the responsibility of so reconstructing and organising the machinery of international life as to prevent the recurrence of such a disaster.
