

# LEAGUE OF NATIONS

*Official Journal*

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SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT No. 60

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## RECORDS

OF THE

EIGHTH ORDINARY SESSION

OF THE

## ASSEMBLY

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MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEES

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## MINUTES

OF THE

## SIXTH COMMITTEE

(POLITICAL QUESTIONS)

7

GENEVA, 1927

## CONTENTS

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	Page
LIST OF MEMBERS.....	5
AGENDA .....	7
<b>FIRST MEETING, September 6th, 1927, at 10 a.m. :</b>	
1. Election of the Chairman .....	7
2. Election of the Vice-Chairman .....	7
3. Publicity of the Meetings of the Committee .....	7
4. Agenda of the Session.....	7
<b>SECOND MEETING, September 13th, 1927, at 10 a.m. :</b>	
5. Nature of the Minutes of the Committee's Meetings .....	8
6. Agenda of the Session : Additional Items referred by the Assembly to the Sixth Committee.....	8
7. Slavery Convention : Annual Report by the Council : General Discussion.....	8
8. The System of the Single Transferable Vote and the Principle of Proportional Representation in General in Connection with the Problem of the Election of the Non-permanent Members of the Council : Question of Procedure..	10
<b>THIRD MEETING, September 14th, 1927, at 10 a.m. :</b>	
9. The System of the Single Transferable Vote and the Principle of Proportional Representation in General in Connection with the Problem of the Election of the Non-permanent Members of the Council : General Discussion....	10
<b>FOURTH MEETING, September 15th, 1927, at 3 p.m. :</b>	
10. Work of the Conference of Press Experts : General Discussion.....	13
<b>FIFTH MEETING, September 16th, 1927, at 3 p.m. :</b>	
11. Conditions of Certain Classes of Natives in Abyssinia : Letter from the Abyssinian Delegation .....	17
12. Work of the Conference of Press Experts : General Discussion ( <i>Continuation</i> )	17
13. Mandates : General Discussion .....	18
<b>SIXTH MEETING, September 17th, 1927, at 3 p.m. :</b>	
14. Slavery Convention : New Accession and Ratification.....	21
15. Slavery Convention : Annual Report by the Council : Draft Report of the Sixth Committee to the Assembly, presented by Sir Edward Hilton Young (British Empire).....	21
16. The System of the Single Transferable Vote and the Principle of Proportional Representation in General in Connection with the Problem of the Election of the Non-permanent Members of the Council : Draft Report of the Sixth Committee to the Assembly, presented by the Sub-Committee of the Sixth Committee.....	22
<b>SEVENTH MEETING, September 19th, 1927, at 3 p.m. :</b>	
17. Work of the Conference of Press Experts : Draft Report of the Sixth Committee to the Assembly, presented by M. de Brouckère (Belgium) ...	23
18. Mandates : Draft Report of the Sixth Committee to the Assembly, presented by Dr. Nansen (Norway).....	23
19. Close of the Session .....	25
ANNEXES .....	27

## LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE SIXTH COMMITTEE

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*Chairman :* His Excellency M. Joseph BECH (Luxemburg).  
*Vice-Chairman :* Count Albert APPONYI (Hungary).

*Members :*

- *Abyssinia :* His Excellency the Badjeronde ZELLAKA.  
Ato Woldé MARYAM (Substitute).
- Albania :*
- Australia :* Major-General the Honourable Sir Granville DE LAUNE RYRIE,  
K.C.M.G., C.B.  
Sir William Harrison MOORE, K.B.E., C.M.G., LL.D., B.A. (Substitute).
- Austria :* His Excellency M. Albert MENSdorFF-POUILLY-DIETRICHSTEIN.
- Belgium :* Viscount P. POULLET.  
M. DE BROUCKÈRE.  
M. O. LOUWERS (Substitute).
- British Empire :* The Right Honourable Sir Austen CHAMBERLAIN, K.G., M.P.  
The Right Honourable the Earl of ONSLOW, C.B.E.  
The Right Honourable Sir Edward Hilton YOUNG, G.B.E., D.S.O.,  
D.S.C., M.P. (Substitute).  
Mr. V. CAVENDISH-BENTINCK (Substitute).
- Bulgaria :* His Excellency M. Athanase D. BOUROFF.
- Canada :* The Honourable Philippe ROY, C.P., M.D.  
Mr. Walter A. RIDDELL, M.A., Ph.D.
- Chile :* His Excellency M. Enrique VILLEGAS.
- China :* His Excellency Dr. OUANG TING TCHANG.
- Colombia :* His Excellency Dr. Antonio José RESTREPO.
- Cuba :* His Excellency M. Orestes FERRARA.
- Czechoslovakia :* His Excellency Dr. Eduard BENEŠ.
- Denmark :* M. Peter MUNCH.
- Dominican Republic :* Dr. Tulio Franco FRANCO.  
His Excellency M. PARADAS (Substitute).
- Estonia :* His Excellency Dr. Friedrich AKEL.  
M. Karl TOFER (Substitute).
- *Ireland :* His Excellency M. Rafael ERICH.  
His Excellency M. Rudolf HOLSTI.  
M. Hugo VALVANNE (Substitute).
- France :* M. Lucien HUBERT.  
M. Robert SÉROT.  
M. Louis AUBERT (Expert).
- *Germany :* Dr. VON SCHUBERT.  
Dr. HOETZSCH.  
M. ASCHMANN.
- Greece :* His Excellency M. André MICHALAKOPOULOS.  
M. Jean POLITIS (Substitute)
- Guatemala :*
- *Haiti :* His Excellency M. Alfred NEMOURS.
- Hungary :* Count Albert APPONYI (Vice-Chairman).  
Baron DE VEST (Substitute).
- India :* Colonel His Highness the Maharaja of KAPURTHALA, G.C.S.I.,  
• G.C.I.E.  
Sir Basanta Kumar MULLICK.
- Irish Free State :* Mr. Diarmuid O'HEGARTY.  
Mr. Michael MACWHITE (Substitute).

<i>Italy :</i>	His Excellency M. Dino GRANDI. His Excellency Count Lelio BONIN-LONGARE. His Excellency M. Augusto ROSSO.
<i>Japan :</i>	His Excellency M. Isaburo YOSHIDA.
<i>Latvia :</i>	His Excellency M. Pierre SEYA.
<i>Liberia :</i>	M. Nicolas OOMS.
<i>Lithuania :</i>	His Excellency Professor A. VOLDEMARAS.
<i>Luxemburg :</i>	His Excellency M. Joseph BECH (Chairman). M. Albert WEHRER.
<i>Netherlands :</i>	His Excellency Count F. A. C. VAN LYNDEN VAN SANDENBURG. M. A. D. A. DE KAT ANGELINO (Substitute).
<i>New Zealand :</i>	The Honourable Sir James PARR, K.C.M.G. Mr. C. KNOWLES (Substitute).
<i>Nicaragua :</i>	His Excellency M. Tomas Francisco MEDINA. Dr. Antoine SOTTILE.
<i>Norway :</i>	Dr. Fridtjof NANSEN. M. Carl Joachim HAMBRO.
<i>Panama :</i>	His Excellency Dr. Eusebio A. MORALES. M. Fabian VELARDE (Substitute).
<i>Paraguay :</i>	Dr. Ramon V. CABALLERO.
<i>Persia :</i>	His Highness Mohammed Ali Khan FOROUGHI. Dr. Hussein Khan GHADIMY. Dr. P. KITABGI Khan.
<i>Poland :</i>	His Excellency M. Auguste ZALESKI. His Excellency M. Henri STRASBURGER. M. Mirosław ARCISZEWSKI (Substitute).
<i>Portugal :</i>	His Excellency General Alfredo FREIRE D'ANDRADE. M. Antonio Gomes d'ALMENDRA.
<i>Roumania :</i>	His Excellency M. Nicolas Petresco COMNÈNE. M. Nicolas DIANO (Substitute). M. B. STOICA (Substitute).
<i>Salvador :</i>	His Excellency Dr. J. Gustavo GUERRERO.
<i>Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes :</i>	His Excellency M. Milan RAKITCH.
<i>Siam :</i>	His Highness Prince VARNAIDYAKARA. His Highness Prince TONGTOR (Substitute).
<i>South Africa :</i>	Mr. J. S. SMIT.
<i>Sweden :</i>	Dr. T. M. HÖJER. Mme. Anna BUGGE-WICKSELL.
<i>Switzerland :</i>	M. Emile Louis GAUDARD. M. Walther BURCKHARDT.
<i>Uruguay :</i>	His Excellency Dr. Julio BASTOS. M. Hector R. GOMEZ.
<i>Venezuela :</i>	His Excellency M. C. PARRA-PEREZ. His Excellency M. Julio SARDI (Substitute).

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SIXTH COMMITTEE  
OF THE EIGHTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY  
(POLITICAL QUESTIONS)

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AGENDA

1. SLAVERY CONVENTION : ANNUAL REPORT BY THE COUNCIL.
  2. THE SYSTEM OF THE SINGLE TRANSFERABLE VOTE AND THE PRINCIPLE OF PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION IN GENERAL IN CONNECTION WITH THE PROBLEM OF THE ELECTION OF THE NON-PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.
  3. WORK OF THE CONFERENCE OF PRESS EXPERTS.
  4. MANDATES.
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FIRST MEETING

*Held on Tuesday, September 6th, 1927, at 10 a.m.*

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Chairman : M. BECH (Luxemburg).

**1. Election of the Chairman.**

M. BECH (Luxemburg) was appointed Chairman of the Committee on Monday, September 5th, at a meeting held at the Salle de la Réformation at 7 p.m.

**2. Election of the Vice-Chairman.**

The CHAIRMAN, after thanking the members of the Committee for the honour done to his country and for the confidence in him which they had all shown by electing him their Chairman, called upon the Committee to appoint a Vice-Chairman.

Sir Edward Hilton YOUNG (British Empire) proposed Count Apponyi (Hungary) as Vice-Chairman.

M. COMNÈNE (Roumania) seconded this proposal.

Count APPONYI *was elected Vice-Chairman by acclamation.*

**3. Publicity of the Meetings of the Committee.**

On the CHAIRMAN'S proposal, *the Committee decided that its meetings should be public unless a decision was taken to the contrary.*

**4. Agenda of the Session.**

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the only questions so far placed upon the agenda of the Sixth Committee were the following :

1. Slavery Convention : Annual Report by the Council.
2. The System of the Single Transferable Vote and the Principle of Proportional Representation in General in Connection with the Problem of the Election of the Non-permanent Members of the Council.

M. SÉROT (France) mentioned that Item 2 of the Committee's agenda was both legal and political in character. He reminded the Committee that, during the last session of the Assembly, this item had been placed on the agenda of the First Committee, and he suggested that a Sub-Committee should be appointed composed of members of the First and Sixth Committees, which should study the question in both its aspects.

Count BONIN-LONGARE (Italy) thought that it would be premature at the moment to set up a Sub-Committee. It was for the Committee first to consider whether the question was open to any objections on political grounds.

The CHAIRMAN, speaking from the point of view of procedure, said that Item 2 of the agenda had been submitted to the Committee by a decision of the Assembly. The First Committee had not so far been called upon to consider the question. It was therefore not possible at the present stage to set up a mixed Sub-Committee of members of the First and Sixth Committees.

He would refer the matter to the General Committee of the Assembly, and would inform his colleagues of any decision taken. On the substance of the question he said that he agreed with the Italian delegate's proposal.

M. SÉROT (France) accepted the proposed procedure.

*The Committee agreed to the Chairman's proposal and approved the agenda.*

## SECOND MEETING

*Held on Tuesday, September 13th, 1927, at 10 a.m.*

Chairman : M. BECH (Luxemburg).

### 5. Nature of the Minutes of the Committee's Meetings.

The CHAIRMAN, at the request of the General Committee of the Assembly, reminded the members of the Committee of the nature of the Minutes of the meetings. The delegates should not expect to find the complete text of their remarks in these Minutes, but merely a summary of the principal points of the discussion. The members of the Committee would, of course, have an opportunity of correcting the provisional Minutes.

*This communication of the Chairman was noted.*

### 6. Agenda of the Session : Additional Items referred by the Assembly to the Sixth Committee.

The CHAIRMAN stated that the Assembly, on September 9th, 1927, had referred the following matters to the Sixth Committee :

1. The proposal in which the Council, in communicating to the Assembly the resolutions adopted by the International Conference of Press Experts, had suggested that the supplementary credit necessary for the enquiries and work entailed by these resolutions should be inserted in the budget of the Organisation for Communications and Transit.

2. The following draft resolution proposed by the Portuguese delegation :

“The Assembly, following the precedent already established in previous years, decides to refer to the Sixth Committee the annual reports of the mandatory Powers, the reports of the Permanent Mandates Commission, and all other documents dealing with the mandates question which have been distributed to the Members of the League since the last ordinary session of the Assembly.”

### 7. Slavery Convention : Annual Report by the Council : General Discussion.

The Maharaja of KAPURTHALA (India) said he was glad that the Committee had an opportunity this year of devoting a short time to the consideration of what might be regarded as the most important single achievement of last years' session of the Assembly, an achievement which owed much to a distinguished League figure whose absence they all regretted.

He had asked permission to address the Committee primarily in order to correct a misunderstanding for which the Indian delegation was inadvertently responsible. The leader of that delegation had, in his speech on the Slavery Convention delivered at the seventh session of the Assembly, mentioned that the Kingdom of Nepal had recently completed the liberation of nearly 60,000 slaves; he had referred to this result as clear evidence of the influence of the League in the East. It had since been pointed out, however, that the intention to liberate the slaves was announced before the Nepalese authorities could have known that the League was taking up the question. He made that statement in order that the Government of Nepal might receive the credit to which it was entitled.

Two events of importance which had occurred during the last twelve months ought to be mentioned. First, the Khan of Kalat had, after many years of persistent effort, finally succeeded in abolishing all forms of private property in human beings. Secondly, the Government of Burma last winter had sent two expeditions to secure the liberation of slaves, into regions which were partly included in the areas excluded from the Convention of 1926. The severe and dangerous nature of the operations was shown by the fact that one British officer, one Indian non-commissioned officer and one Indian follower had lost their lives. The expeditions, however, had been successful, and slavery had practically ceased in Burma. In the case of Kalat (which had been dealt with in a report to the League), fresh information had recently been received regarding a tour which had been carried out to survey the effects of previous measures. The report was to the effect that it could now safely be said that slavery no longer existed in the Kalat State, that the transition from slavery to free labour had taken place without any undue disturbance of social or economic conditions and that there was no danger of a return to the former state.

Last year, Sir William Vincent, in signing the Convention, was obliged, for constitutional reasons, to make a reservation excluding the Indian States, but had added that the Government of India would not fail to bring to the notice of their rulers the provisions accepted for British India. This had now actually been done, and the speaker was sure that the ruling Princes would devote themselves to accelerating the removal of any vestiges of conditions akin to slavery that might still survive.

In conclusion, he said that his own State was one in which slavery and forced labour had been abolished for some time.

Dr. NANSEN (Norway) said that, according to Article 7 of the Slavery Convention, the signatories were expected to forward to the League copies of legislation enacted with a view to the abolition of slavery and analogous conditions. A special resolution adopted at the seventh ordinary session of the Assembly mentioned the possibility of other information also being communicated to the League. The Committee ought to express its gratitude to the British Government for having taken the lead in giving very full information as to what had been done on British territory. He regretted, however, that no other Power had followed that example. This was particularly regrettable in regard to Abyssinia, which was under special obligations to the League in this matter.

In view of the public attention which had been given to a recent Court decision concerning slavery in Sierra Leone, the delegate of the British Empire might perhaps welcome the occasion to give some information on this matter.

• Sir Edward Hilton YOUNG (British Empire) thanked Dr. Nansen for his remarks and said that he was equally grateful to him for raising the question of Sierra Leone, as it gave him an opportunity of explaining the position. It was a fact that, owing to a recent decision of the Supreme Court of Justice in the Protectorate of Sierra Leone, it had been discovered that there was a hiatus in the legislation of that Protectorate which made it possible to say that the status of slavery was, in certain conditions, recognised. That decision had come to the Imperial Government as a disagreeable surprise. Immediate measures were taken by calling a special meeting of the Legislative Body of the Protectorate of Sierra Leone, in order to repair this breach as soon as possible.

Sir Edward Hilton Young wished to associate himself with Dr. Nansen's remarks about Abyssinia. He hoped that information would soon be received regarding the ratification of the Slavery Convention by that country and regarding the progress of the work which the Slavery Convention was intended to stimulate. It would be gratifying to the members of the Committee, and in the interests of Abyssinia itself, if it could be made clear that certain unsatisfactory reports which were sometimes heard as to the situation of slavery in Abyssinia were unfounded and that there was no reason for any misgivings.

Count APPONYI (Hungary), Vice-Chairman, pointed out that the Committee had not only to deal with slavery but with forced labour. Two articles of the Convention related to forced labour, but there was nothing in the documentation before the Committee on that subject, and this would seem to be a regrettable omission.

Hungary had signed the Convention, although it would have little practical result, as his country was not responsible for any territory whatever in which either slavery or forced labour existed.

General FREIRE D'ANDRADE (Portugal) drew the attention of Dr. Nansen to the fact that not only the British but also the Portuguese Government had sent in a report, which had been published in document A. 37(a). 1927.

As regards the question of forced labour, he would remind the Committee that a special Committee had been set up by the International Labour Office to study this matter and to prepare a draft of an international convention on the subject. In these circumstances, he would suggest that the Sixth Committee might await the results of the work of the expert Committee before taking any further steps.

Count BONIN-LONGARE (Italy) reminded the Committee that the question of forced labour had given rise to long debates during the sixth and seventh sessions of the Assembly, both in the Sixth Committee and in the Sub-Committee of which he had been a member. He could speak perfectly freely about this matter because the Italian Government had never had recourse to or tolerated forced labour in any of its territories. He realised, however, that the sudden abolition of this practice might cause serious economic disturbances in other territories, where it was firmly rooted. It was, nevertheless, necessary for the prestige of the League of Nations that effective action should be taken as soon as possible. He agreed entirely with the Hungarian delegate and thought that all Governments should be urged to take immediate steps without waiting for the result of the work of the Committee set up by the International Labour Office or any other Committee.

• Dr. NANSEN (Norway) expressed the hope that the Slavery Convention might soon become a universally accepted document. Norway had not yet ratified it, but he would insist on his Government doing so, and he hoped that the rest of the members of the Committee would do likewise with their Governments. The Convention had been communicated to sixty-nine States. For the moment, only thirty-nine signatures and eleven ratifications had been registered.

M. LOUWERS (Belgium) informed the Committee that ratification by Belgium would take place very shortly. •

He wished to utter a word of warning against the illusion that the signatories would be able to furnish every year a report containing interesting information on the application of the Convention. It should be remembered that, in 1924, detailed information as regards slavery and the measures taken to abolish it in various countries had been communicated to the League and published. The States which were convinced that the legislative and administrative measures already taken were sufficient to bring about the result desired would not in the future be able to communicate much new information. Furthermore, this was a matter in which evolution was necessarily rather slow and where it was difficult to state what definite progress had taken place within a single year.

Count VAN LYNDEN VAN SANDENBURG (Netherlands) said that his Government had recommended to the Chambers the ratification of the Convention and hoped to be in a position to notify ratification within the current year.

Dr. HOETZSCH (Germany) associated himself with the remarks of Dr. Nansen and hoped that every State would ratify the Convention.

As regards Germany's ratification, a Bill would be introduced during the present session of the Reichstag.

General FREIRE D'ANDRADE (Portugal) agreed with Dr. Nansen that it was important that as many States as possible should ratify the Convention. The Portuguese Government had just ratified it, but the formal notice to the Secretariat had not yet been made.

As regards the documentation to be forwarded under the Convention, General Freire d'Andrade agreed with the Belgian delegate; it would be difficult to present a new report every year. In any case, the Governments should always send to the Secretariat the texts of the various laws promulgated concerning the question of native labour. These laws often contained a descriptive and historical part which gave interesting information.

The speaker again drew attention to the work undertaken by the International Labour Office and particularly to the remarkable study of the question of forced labour prepared by Mr. Grimshaw, of that Office.

M. Lucien HUBERT (France) said that the French Government had signed the Slavery Convention. It had been submitted to Parliament, and it was hoped that ratification would shortly take place. Meanwhile, instructions had been given by his Government to the Colonial officials in the sense indicated by the Convention.

With regard to the periodicity of the reports, he agreed with the remarks of the Belgian delegate. It was quite impossible, in view of the great distances and the limited staff, to send in reports every six months or every year.

Count BONIN-LONGARE (Italy) said that, although he had no definite instructions from his Government as to ratification, he was sure that ratification would meet with no difficulties in his country and that delay was only due to constitutional formalities. The Italian Government would certainly not be among the last to ratify.

On the proposal of the CHAIRMAN, Sir Edward Hilton YOUNG (British Empire) was appointed *Rapporteur on the question of slavery.*

#### **8. System of the Single Transferable Vote and the Principle of Proportional Representation in General in Connection with the Problem of the Election of the Non-permanent Members of the Council : Question of Procedure.**

The CHAIRMAN recalled that, during the previous meeting, the appointment of a Sub-Committee, composed of members of the First and Sixth Committees, had been suggested. The General Committee of the Assembly had been consulted concerning the question of procedure raised by this proposal, and had stated that there was no objection to the two Committees agreeing, if necessary, to appoint this joint Sub-Committee.

The First Committee was ready to examine, if desirable, the legal aspect of the question.

The Chairman proposed to let the matter rest there for the time being and to begin the general discussion.

*This proposal was adopted.*

Dr. NANSEN (Norway) requested the Committee not to begin the general discussion until M. Hambro should be present, in order to give him an opportunity of submitting the Norwegian proposal himself.

*The Committee consequently decided to adjourn the discussion.*

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### THIRD MEETING

*Held on Wednesday, September 14th, 1927, at 10 a.m.*

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Chairman : M. BECH (Luxemburg).

#### **9. System of the Single Transferable Vote and the Principle of Proportional Representation in General in Connection with the Problem of the Election of the Non-permanent Members of the Council : General Discussion.**

M. HAMBRØ (Norway) said that the general principles of proportional representation were so well known that they required no explanation. He would merely point out why the system had been introduced into Norway in 1918-19 for parliamentary elections. It was at that time already in use for municipal elections. There was no idea of discarding this principle.



He pointed out that the Inter-Parliamentary Union had adopted a recommendation, some years before, advocating that there should be established in every Parliament a Committee of Foreign Affairs, based on the principles of proportional representation. The Assembly last year had also adopted a system which was in a sense akin to that of proportional representation. It had been tacitly agreed that the American States should be given three representatives on the Council, and this gave a certain group of States a definite number of representatives. It was, however, only a moral obligation.

The adoption of the system would have the advantage of getting rid of electoral wire-pulling and of enabling elections to be carried through by means of a single ballot.

He proposed to conduct a practical experiment in the Committee itself to show the value and simplicity of the system.

He did not think that the system would introduce any element of instability in the Council seeing that only three Members were elected annually. Moreover, the Assembly, by a two-thirds majority, could at any time ask for a new election of the non-permanent Members of the Council.

M. FERRARA (Cuba) said that he could not agree with the Norwegian proposal, although the same system was in force in Cuba, and although he had himself supported it in the past.

The system originally applied in Cuba had proved far from satisfactory. A law had subsequently been enacted to organise parties and electoral procedure. Experience had therefore shown that the working of the proportional representation system required the existence of well-organised parties, and this was not the case in the League of Nations.

Sir Granville RYRIE (Australia) said he was afraid that the practical experiment proposed by M. Hambro would take too much time.

M. HAMBRO (Norway) replied that this apprehension was unwarranted. Neither did he share M. Ferrara's opinion. His proposal was expressly intended to prevent the formation of groups in the Assembly.

M. MUNCH (Denmark) said he thought the question very important. He pointed out that it had been considered as early as the first session of the Assembly but that no definite decision had been reached. The elections to the Council continued to be arranged in private conversations.

He did not consider that the Norwegian proposal necessitated the organisation of groups, since the Members of the Assembly, that was to say, the electors, were few in number. He referred to the system in force in Denmark and Belgium, and considered that the experiment proposed by M. Hambro would be highly instructive.

M. Munch, emphasised the importance of all groups being represented on the Council, since the relations between the Assembly and the Council were not regulated. For example, when the general report was discussed in the Assembly, many delegates who were members of the Council spoke on behalf of their respective countries, but none spoke on behalf of the Council.

One of the difficulties with which the application of proportional representation would meet under present conditions was that three Members only were to be chosen at each election, and that, consequently, twelve votes were required to elect one candidate. Elections would therefore probably have to be held only every two years.

As the question did not appear to be ripe, the speaker proposed that it should be examined by a special Committee, appointed for the purpose by the Council, and that the results of its work should be submitted to the Assembly at its next ordinary session.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Council had already rejected a similar proposal. He was therefore afraid that there was little hope of the present one being accepted.

M. Lucien HUBERT (France) stated that experience of the system in France had led to its being speedily abandoned.

•• He shared the views of his Cuban colleague and thought that the existence of parties was necessary before the system of proportional representation could be applied. In the Assembly, however, there should only be one preoccupation, and that should be peace.

Moreover, the elections to the Council were not intended to reflect the composition of the Assembly but to appoint an executive body. He was not aware that there was in any country an executive body elected by proportional representation whose decisions had to be taken unanimously. Accordingly, he was not in favour of the system recommended, but would be prepared to agree to further investigations.

• Count BONIN-LONGARE (Italy) considered that the investigation of the political aspect of the question involved its examination from a practical point of view. Objections at once presented themselves. He had never been a supporter of proportional representation, which, although outwardly attractive, led to the splitting up of parties. Moreover, the system presupposed the existence of political parties, of which, however, there were none in the Assembly of the League of Nations. In that body, only temporary groupings for special questions could arise. It was only possible to visualise one single, stable and permanent group, and that was a group embracing continents or regions. The Assembly, however, had always endeavoured to arrange for an equitable representation of continents on the Council.

The essential point was that there should be rotation, and that would appear at present to be the established rule.

Further, reforms should not succeed each other too rapidly. The latest reform in the composition of the Council was too recent for all its consequences to be appreciated, and it was necessary to wait for the results of somewhat longer experience.

He thought that the proposal should not be rejected offhand, but that it should be held over for future consideration.

Mr. SMIT (South Africa) said he was in favour of the system of proportional representation. His country had employed this system for the past seventeen years in elections for the Senate, and also in elections for the Executive Council of the Provincial Administrations, which was a body similar to the League of Nations Council, in that it could not be dissolved. The results of the system as applied in the case of an electoral college had been excellent.

It had been objected that the system would not work in the Assembly owing to the absence of political parties. The argument, however, did not hold good, since the League as an electoral college was a small body voting for countries and not for persons. There were no political parties in the Council, and the proposed system would prevent groups being formed.

Mr. Smit did not think the system was complicated.

Sir Basanta MULLICK (India) said he agreed with Mr. Smit. His Government was in favour of the Norwegian proposal for two reasons: (1) the Assembly would be more fairly represented on the Council; and (2) the practical difficulties urged by the opponents of the system need not be feared in so small, so competent and so calm an electoral college as the League of Nations.

Dr. RIDDELL (Canada) said he was perfectly familiar with the system, and could therefore confidently state that M. Hambro's proposal was worth investigating. He hoped that the Committee, which had the same composition as the Assembly, would try the system, as had been suggested.

Sir Edward Hilton YOUNG (British Empire) stated that he was doubtful of the advantages of the system, particularly as there were no definite parties in the League. He was afraid that the electors' intentions would not be accurately reflected in the results of the elections.

The League had just created a new system for the election of the Council, and time must be allowed to try that system before it was again modified. He therefore proposed that the members of the Committee should all examine the question individually before the next session.

M. VALVANNE (Finland) said he supported the system of proportional representation. It was a just system. No doubt there were no parties, in the strict sense of the term, in the League of Nations, but the League consisted of geographical groups, which might be represented in rotation. Although the system might appear to be too complicated to be put into force at once, the Finnish delegation would support any proposal for further study and for its reference to the next ordinary session of the Assembly.

M. HAMBRO (Norway) said he realised the force of the objections and the apprehensions of the delegates of Italy, France and the British Empire. He would not, therefore, ask for an immediate decision, but he proposed to request the Council to instruct a small Committee to examine the question.

Sir Edward Hilton Young's proposal did not, however, appear to him to go far enough. The constitution of an *ad hoc* Committee would certainly be more effective.

M. Lucien HUBERT (France) also considered that investigation was necessary, but, if the proposal to set up a special Committee appointed by the Council should be accepted, it ought to be understood that its investigation would be of a purely technical character, and would not imply acceptance of the principle.

This Committee should take into account the essential difference between the various systems of proportional representation at present employed, the object of which was, as a rule, to elect assemblies taking their decisions by a majority vote, and the system which it was proposed to set up for the election of a body taking its decisions unanimously. Moreover, the organisations elected by proportional representation were legislative assemblies, whereas the Council was an executive body.

In any case, since the South African delegate had told the Committee that certain bodies taking unanimous decisions were elected by this system in his country, the Committee of enquiry should pursue its investigations especially in this direction.

M. MUNCH (Denmark) said he thought the difference between the two systems was not what it was believed to be. Everyone was agreed that the various continents and the various nationalities should be represented on the Council, but such representation already existed. The only difference was that the system of proportional representation would make this composition of the Council a certainty. The difficulty of securing unanimity in a Council elected in that way would not be greater than at present, for the most serious differences of opinion would always be those between the great Powers, which were permanent Members of the Council.

It was the general view, however, that the question was not yet ripe for settlement. The only point for consideration at present was how the matter should be investigated. It was said that the Council had already rejected the idea of a special Committee. Under these circumstances, M. Munch proposed that a Sub-Committee should be appointed from among the members of the Sixth Committee—a Sub-Committee which could work in association with the Council.

Sir Edward Hilton YOUNG (British Empire) said he was not sure that there were precedents for the appointment of a Sub-Committee by the Assembly, which would be instructed to confer with the Council. He pointed out that, if the Sixth Committee accepted the Norwegian proposal, it would be asking the Council to reconsider a *res judicata*.

The CHAIRMAN thought that his colleagues wished to appoint a Sub-Committee of the Sixth Committee, which would be instructed to examine the proposals made and to report to the plenary Committee.

Dr. HOETZSCH (Germany) supported the Norwegian delegate's suggestion and also the ideas expressed by the Canadian delegate.

He could not agree with the British delegate's statement that the question was a *res judicata*. The question of the application of the system of proportional representation to the method of rotation introduced last year had not yet been investigated.

He noted a point of difference between the Norwegian and the Danish proposals. The first referred to the appointment by the Council of a Committee of Enquiry to frame draft regulations for proportional representation in the case of Council elections. The second, on the other hand, only proposed the appointment of a Sub-Committee of the Sixth Committee. The speaker was doubtful as to the practical utility of the Danish proposal.

The CHAIRMAN said he thought that the two proposals were not inconsistent with each other. M. Hambro's proposal was that a Committee of Enquiry should be appointed by the Council, whereas the Danish proposal was to set up a Sub-Committee of the Sixth Committee. Should the Sub-Committee find that a Committee of Enquiry ought to be appointed, and should the Assembly accept this finding, M. Hambro's proposal would in that way be accepted by the Assembly. One proposal, therefore, did not exclude the other.

Prince VARNVAIDYAKARA (Siam) supported the appointment by the Sixth Committee of a Sub-Committee of Enquiry. He stated that a distinction of principle should be made between the numerical representation and the regional representation of minorities. The Council was not only an executive Committee: it was also an organ of observation, for it was the duty of the Council to guard against any threat of war which might arise at any place on the globe. It should therefore be noted that proportional representation might favour numerical representation to the prejudice of regional representation.

On the proposal of the CHAIRMAN, the Committee decided to appoint a Sub-Committee of Enquiry, consisting of the following members: M. BECH (Luxemburg), Mr. SMIT (South Africa), M. FERRARA (Cuba), M. MUNCH (Denmark), M. Lucien HUBERT (France), Count BONIN-LONGARE (Italy), M. HAMBRO (Norway), and Prince VARNVAIDYAKARA (Siam).

On Count BONIN-LONGARE's proposal, the Committee decided that M. BECH (Luxemburg) should be Chairman of the Sub-Committee.

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#### FOURTH MEETING

*Held on Thursday, September 15th, 1927, at 3 p.m.*

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Chairman : M. BECH (Luxemburg).

#### 10. Work of the Conference of Press Experts : General Discussion.

The CHAIRMAN called upon M. de Brouckère, who had been asked to submit a report to the Council on the work of the Conference of Press Experts, to make a statement to the Committee on this question.

M. DE BROUCKÈRE (Belgium) recalled the fact that the Conference of Press Experts had been convened in pursuance of a proposal made by the Chilian delegation to the 1925 session of the Assembly. Twenty-three months had passed before effect had been given to this apparently simple recommendation by convening a Conference; this was because the problem, when it came to be examined, was found to be particularly complicated and delicate.

The task of the Conference as proposed by the Chilian delegate was :

- “1. To enquire into the means of ensuring more rapid and less costly transmission of Press news with a view to reducing the risks of international misunderstanding.
- “2. To discuss all technical problems the settlement of which, in the opinion of experts, would be conducive to the tranquillisation of public opinion in various countries.”

It was therefore concerned with material questions, which had, however, to be studied with a view to a moral purpose. This task was liable to wound the susceptibilities of journalists, who, as everyone knew, were particularly jealous of their independence. The Press must be free, if its judgments were not to have an official character making it necessary to accept them with caution.

Some apprehension might have been felt as to whether the proposed Conference did not aim at setting up a kind of laboratory to manufacture the official truth about the League. But experience had shown that neither on the part of the League of Nations nor on the part of the initiators or organisers of the Conference was there any idea of propaganda, and the sole purpose was to endeavour to improve the means at the disposal of journalists for the collection and transmission of news, whether favourable or unfavourable to the League.

It was already known, added M. de Brouckère, that on this point the Conference of Press Experts, at which nearly every country, whether it was a Member of the League or not, was represented, had been crowned with success. After a few day's discussion, the Conference had achieved the almost unexpected result that every resolution, except one or two of minor importance, had been adopted unanimously. This result imposed on the League of Nations the obligation of not merely ratifying the decisions thus adopted, but of giving them practical effect.

A first group of resolutions relating to purely technical questions concerning the facilities of communication had already been referred by the Council to the Communications and Transit Organisation, which would submit them in its turn to its experts. The Committee might therefore confine itself to approving the Council's decision.

The examination of these questions would take a long time. In order to give effect to the recommendations adopted, the international agreements concluded between the telephone and telegraph administrations would have to be modified. These modifications, however, could not take place until 1930, when the next World Conference of these administrations was due.

The resolution relating to the question of the transport of newspapers had also been referred to the Transit Organisation, which would submit it to a special Sub-Committee.

The resolution concerning postal subscriptions to newspapers would only require the League's intervention to remind the different countries of the expediency of adhering to the International Convention governing this question.

As regards the resolution on the protection of Press news, M. de Brouckère pointed out that it entered upon an entirely new sphere. It touched upon one of those aspects of intellectual property which was the most difficult to define. It had taken a long time to provide really effective protection for literary property. The protection of news constituted a still more complicated problem. M. de Brouckère quoted examples showing how legitimate it would be to protect the journalist's work in seeking for news and the production of the latter. The majority of national legislations, however, made no provision of this kind, and those which had taken steps in this direction had not gone very far. No general principles had yet been formulated. Hence it would be premature to arrange for an international convention. Perhaps the best course would be to submit the journalists' recommendation to the attention of the Governments, asking them to consider whether they could introduce reforms of this kind into their national legislation.

M. de Brouckère also emphasised the importance of the resolution relating to professional facilities for journalists and particularly passport visas for journalists.

Turning to the question of censorship in peace-time, M. de Brouckère recalled the fact that journalists of every shade of opinion and of every country attending the Conference of Press Experts had asked that censorship should not be exercised in peace-time. He added that they had also asked that, if they could not be given satisfaction on this point, censorship should at least be exercised in circumstances rendering it less disastrous than at present to the useful exercise of journalism and to the defence of the cause of peace. He was aware that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, for the League of Nations to find a positive solution for this question. It was not indeed the League which organised the censorship. The League was not a super-State able to pronounce a law abolishing censorship. The Governments alone had the power to take measures of this kind. Hence the League of Nations must confine itself to drawing the attention of Governments to this point by sending them not only the recommendations of the Conference of Press Experts but also the Minutes of the discussions which had taken place.

M. HAMBRO (Norway), who had very attentively studied the resolutions of the Conference of Press Experts, said that, in a general way, he agreed with M. de Brouckère.

He nevertheless wished to make certain reservations. Some of the resolutions of the Conference were of great practical value. They testified to the state of mind of the Press of the whole civilised world. Certain others were, in his opinion, less valuable. The resolutions having been adopted unanimously, it was probably because the Conference had only superficially considered various general questions concerning journalism.

The Press was no longer a timid plant needing protection; it was, on the contrary, a powerful tree with strong roots, so powerful, indeed, that it tended to encroach on other spheres.

The difficulties against which the Press had to contend did not reside in the means of obtaining news but rather in the existence of great interests controlling it. The Committee would be getting more to the root of the matter if it considered also the manner in which certain news agencies utilised their information and distributed it. M. Hambro considered that there was a danger of public opinion being influenced or even of news being suppressed by certain agencies because certain countries—Norway was not one of them—had great difficulty, by reason of an existing monopoly, in making themselves heard.

M. Hambro was in favour of some of those special facilities which the Press desired. He did not think, however, that journalists should be granted any other prerogatives than those enjoyed by the general public. It was set forth in one of the resolutions of the Conference that foreign journalists should enjoy the same travelling facilities as national journalists. In Norway, no publicist was allowed to travel free on the railways. They were all subject to the customary charges, and the Press did not ask for a reduction.

M. Hambro, who had himself been a journalist for many years, explained that the Telegraphic Agency in Norway, like that of Sweden, was the property of the national Press. The latter could therefore verify the source of news.

He said he was not qualified to speak on behalf of the Norwegian Press. The Press Association of his country had, however, appointed a Committee of two—himself and M. Oftedal, member of the Fourth Committee—to study certain modifications that could be introduced into the Norwegian legislation regarding the Press. M. Hambro believed that his remarks expressed the views of many at all events of the members of the Norwegian Press.

Attention had already been given in the new Norwegian law to the question of the ownership of Press news. An endeavour had been made to solve the problem by allowing the right of ownership for twenty-four hours. After the lapse of this period, a piece of news lost all its commercial value and only retained an educational value. The Norwegian journalists had the impression that the arrangement made on this basis would mark a step in the right direction.

In Norway, which had a large area and a sparse population, and in which private persons only utilised the cables in cases of emergency, any priority granted to the Press for the transmission of telegraphic communications would offend the public sense of justice and equity. Hence it would be impossible to support the resolution recommended by the Conference of Press Experts.

For the last century, there had been no censorship in Norway.

M. Hambro recognised the difficulties of the Press in a number of countries, but he doubted if a series of resolutions could bring about any improvement. It would be an illusion to think so. Moreover, many practical improvements might be realised by means of international conventions and the daily work of the journalists themselves.

For a long time past, journalists had been fighting for freedom. He recalled the opinion expressed in the *Neue Freie Presse* by Mr. Hilaire Belloc, who had said: "When I entered journalism, newspapers were directed by editors who were gentlemen who dined out; now they are directed by lords, who get nervous when they meet a gentleman". This paradox contained, in M. Hambro's opinion, some truth that threw light on the present position.

M. Hambro concluded by saying that it must not be forgotten that journalists ought to be loyal servants of information and not try to become its masters.

M. DIANO (Roumania), who had taken part in the Conference of Press Experts, considered that M. de Brouckère's statement gave an exact summary of the views adopted by that Conference, both in the technical and in the professional branch of journalism.

He believed that he would be faithfully representing the sentiments of the members of the Conference of Press Experts and of the journalists accredited to the League by thanking M. de Brouckère for having enhanced the prestige of the Conference by his presence.

The Conference had expressed the almost unanimous desire that the Press should continue to be the foremost champion of the noble and generous ideas whose triumph, through the League of Nations, they all so earnestly desired.

He recalled the fact that the Conference resolution relating to moral disarmament had been described to the Council of the League of Nations by Sir Austen Chamberlain as the most important resolution which had been adopted. Indeed, in M. Diano's opinion, this text pointed out the way which led to better times.

M. Diano also emphasised the importance of the resolution concerning regional Press understandings which aimed at the general recognition by journalists of the principles which were the basis of the Geneva Protocol. Several regional Press understandings, which had been created a few years ago, had already given good results.

He concluded by expressing the hope that the various resolutions of the Conference of Press Experts might be examined by the Committee in a sympathetic spirit.

M. RESTREPO (Colombia) said that he also had had experience as a writer, but at a time which was already far distant. Since then, he had noted that the Press, owing to the continual increase of its special privileges, had become the fourth estate of the realm.

In Colombia, the Press was absolutely free. It paid only half the telegraph charges and no postal charges.

M. Restrepo was under the impression that the journalists who had met at Geneva were not real journalists, but persons in the service of great enterprises, conducting paid publicity throughout the whole world. They were concerned with a business, with an international concern which affected very closely the vital interests of modern society.

Nowadays, public opinion was set in motion by the Press. The time to which Beaumarchais had referred in the *Mariage de Figaro*, when he spoke of the foundation of a "public paper", was still far away. As complete liberty was enjoyed by the Press in Spain, he wished to profit by it by creating "the useless sheet" in which he would be able to print anything, on condition that he did not speak of the authorities, or of religion, or of the Church, or of morality, or of the powers that be, or of anything at all. He could print everything subject to the inspection of two or three censors. The liberty of the Press had made progress since then. It was true that at the present time there were politicians who tried to muzzle the Press, but, thanks to all the means which human intelligence had placed at its service so that it could speak the truth, the Press could snap its fingers at those who tried to control it, to muzzle it, or to suppress it.

While expressing his good will towards the Press, M. Restrepo wished to make certain reservations concerning the resolutions proposed by the Conference of Press Experts. Formerly, journalists were the leaders of peoples and parties. To-day, newspapers and agencies were only anonymous organisations. If a journalist wrote an article of his own inspiration, it was not unusual for the editor, the moneyed man, to tone it down, to refuse the article, or at least to mutilate it. M. Restrepo agreed with M. de Brouckère that the Press had many relations with the truth, but it also had some relation with untruth, especially since it had become international and anonymous, and had modern and powerful means of action at its disposal. Formerly, it was great statesmen and great journalists who created opinion through the Press; to-day, it was machines, linotypes, roller-presses, cables, etc.

The League of Nations had nevertheless been well inspired in organising a Conference of Press Experts. The journalists should always support the League, and the League ought to assist them by recommending to its Council and to the Governments the resolutions taken by the Conference. But the Press must refrain from attacking the League if the latter should not satisfy all the wishes expressed by the Conference.

Finally, the speaker apologised for having intervened in the debate, but, having been a journalist himself, he had thought he ought to offer these few remarks on the subject of the Press, of which he knew all the usefulness as well as all the faults.

Mr. CAVENDISH-BENTINCK (British Empire) said that, as very little time had elapsed since the end of the Conference, his Government had not yet been able to examine with care the resolutions that had been adopted.

He wished, however, to make immediately some remarks on the conclusions of the Conference. As regards the problem of the protection of Press information, he could not yet make any pronouncement. The British Postal Administration considered that the questions of telegraph and telephone rates should be examined at a future date by the International Telegraphic Union and Universal Postal Union Congresses.

The speaker supposed that all the members of the Committee had read in the Minutes of the Council the declarations made relative to the work of the Conference of Press Experts. He drew their attention especially to the observations which had been made, particularly by Sir Austen Chamberlain, on the subject of the resolution on moral disarmament.

Mr. Cavendish-Bentinck could not agree with all the opinions expressed by the members who had already spoken. He felt that M. Hambro was far more competent than himself to speak about the Press, as he had appreciated his articles in the Norwegian Press from 1915 to 1918 but had unfortunately never been able to agree with their contents. However, with regard to M. Hambro's remarks, he thought he could say that Press agencies tried to obtain information wherever they could and that their sole desire was to publish it, as competition would not allow them to stop the publication of important news. This competition did not favour the employment of methods which, M. Hambro had alleged, were used by certain agencies and which, in M. Hambro's opinion, entailed the danger that public opinion would be influenced, paralysed or even suppressed.

M. Hambro had recalled the opinion expressed by Mr. Hilaire Belloc that "When I entered journalism, newspapers were directed by editors who were gentlemen who dined out; now they are directed by lords, who get nervous when they meet a gentleman". Mr. Bentinck thought that Mr. Belloc had perhaps expressed this opinion in a moment of annoyance, and he suggested to the Committee that it was a somewhat dangerous generalisation. Mr. Bentinck also expressed disagreement with the remarks made by the Colombian delegate in regard to the modern Press and journalists; in particular, with his statement that great statesmen and great journalists no longer created opinion through the Press.

M. HAMBRO (Norway) said that he had not wished in the least to create distrust of the news spread by certain agencies. What he had stated was that a ring of agencies had obtained an actual monopoly of news and that this monopoly had drawbacks, especially for small countries. Certain agencies allowed nationals of small countries to be employed in their offices in order to judge the value of the news for their country. But all agencies did not do this.

M. Hambro pointed out that he had merely mentioned facts without any intention to criticise. In his opinion, it was very difficult to discuss Press questions without speaking of agencies. He called attention to the fact that, in South America, a vigorous campaign had been conducted against the omnipotence of the agencies, and that one of the South American States had been able to break the power of the great news syndicate. The Norwegian delegate considered that it was most important that small countries should be able to acquire greater independence as regards Press information.

M. DE BROUCKÈRE (Belgium) had listened with interest and pleasure to M. Hambro's remarks, but his conclusions had rather disappointed him. If a news monopoly could be established, it would be thanks to the power of money, which M. Hambro had very rightly mentioned as a danger. But M. de Brouckère did not think that the Committee could form a united front against the power of money. If M. Hambro wished to propose any such action, M. de Brouckère would view it without displeasure, and he thought that M. Hambro had more authority than he to make such a proposal. But he did not believe in the practical value of discussions on such a subject, and he thought it was better to be content to note and pursue the really practical work of the Conference of Press Experts.

If successful effect could be given to the recommendations adopted by this Conference as regards the reduction of Press telegraph and telephone charges and as regards the facilities to be granted to journalists, a modest but real contribution would have been made to combating the monopoly dreaded by M. Hambro. They would have contributed to making news less expensive, its transmission easier and its diffusion freer. They would also have promoted useful competition between Press organisations, and would have done valuable work in the good cause of informing the public.

M. de Brouckère reminded the Committee that he had proposed that the Council should consider with all the attention it deserved the recommendation adopted by the Conference as regards peace-time censorship. This recommendation ought afterwards to be communicated to the Governments, so that each of them might consider what it could do. M. de Brouckère recognised that this measure was only a first step in the direction indicated by M. Hambro, but he would be glad if the delegate of Norway would give it his approval.

Referring to M. Hambro's quotation of Mr. Hilaire Belloc, M. de Brouckère said that, in the course of his life, he had come into contact with persons of every class of society who followed the most varied callings and that he had found that there were excellent people everywhere. There were even, he said—whatever M. Hambro might think—lords who were also gentlemen.

FIFTH MEETING

*Held on Friday, September 16th, 1927, at 3 p.m.*

Chairman : M. BECH (Luxemburg).

**11. Conditions of Certain Classes of Natives in Abyssinia : Letter from the Abyssinian Delegation.**

The CHAIRMAN announced that the Secretary-General had received a letter from the Abyssinian delegation, dated September 14th, 1927<sup>1</sup>, with reference to the conditions of certain classes of natives of Abyssinia, together with detailed statistics on the subject<sup>1</sup>.

**12. Work of the Conference of Press Experts : General Discussion (*Continuation*).**

Sir Granville RYRIE (Australia) said that he had listened with particular interest to the Norwegian delegate's statement and had been struck by the difficulties which certain small countries experienced in creating national agencies owing to the ramifications and the influence of the big Press agencies.

Australia had no complaint to make, the big agencies all working in perfect harmony with Australian agencies.

Speaking as an old politician and as a delegate taking part in the work of the League for the first time, Sir Granville Ryrie was of the opinion that there was too much talk. In particular, this discussion on Press questions, interesting in themselves, would lead to no useful results owing to the absence of any definite resolution. The Committee was departing too far from the original purpose of the League Assembly, which was intended to be a great World Conference.

Reverting to the question of local Press organisation, Sir Granville Ryrie declared that, if certain small countries had to complain of monopolies, they must try to organise their own Press agencies. Australia had done so, and, after a modest beginning, now possessed two large news agencies in London, whence Australian editors furnished the Australian public with information from the Australian point of view. Public opinion within a country must receive its information not only from foreign sources but from its own compatriots, who provided a guarantee of impartiality.

Sir Edward Hilton YOUNG (British Empire) said that he entirely agreed with M. de Brouckère as to the practical measures to be adopted.

The idea of the Conference had originated at Geneva, and it had been convened by the League. The Press would help to increase general interest in the work of the League by the rapid distribution of impartial news and accurate information concerning that work. The Press represented the collective efforts of all on behalf not only of material but of moral disarmament.

Each delegate could, of course, only speak for his own country; but he felt sure that—as regards Great Britain at any rate—journalists were every day becoming more conscious of their responsibilities, while their technical value and their fund of knowledge were continually increasing.

M. Hambro had said that he was not afraid of facts, which was certainly a proof of courage. Nevertheless, facts, although they need not be feared, must be carefully checked before they were reproduced.

Two main complaints had been made against certain Press agencies, the first being that they had a monopoly of news. In those countries with which he himself was familiar and on which he could therefore speak, he noted, on the contrary, a fierce competition between different agencies. If monopolies existed elsewhere, they were no doubt inevitable, and were due to the fact that the agencies enjoying them had proved the best and most effective.

The second complaint referred to the publication of biased and tendentious information. Such an accusation was easy to make and difficult to refute. Speaking generally, however, if enquiries were made concerning the persons uttering these complaints, it would be found that they were persons who themselves had tried, unsuccessfully, to influence the agencies in question.

In conclusion, the British delegate warmly thanked all those who had taken part in the Press Conference and contributed to its success.

M. Lucien HUBERT (France) observed that M. Hambro and M. Restrepo had drawn attention to the increasing importance of capital in the newspaper world. The time was past when the newspapers had only to provide a limited public with isolated items of news collected from that same limited public. The whole world now desired news, and the newspapers had to serve a more exacting and impatient public than formerly. It was not surprising, therefore, that capital should be playing an increasingly important part in the international Press and in the national Press of each country.

Side by side with this news Press, however, there was another Press not controlled by capital—the Press of opinion. He greatly admired this Press, because it had kept its independence and its traditions of loyalty and courage. It was entirely free—as politicians well knew.

<sup>1</sup> See *Official Journal*, November 1927, pages 1564-1578.

It might be said that the Press, like every other body, had its unworthy members; but his reply would be that of Figaro: "Only petty men take any account of petty writings".

He agreed with the very judicious remarks made by M. de Brouckère, who had pointed out that the Committee's business was to help journalists.

It had also been said at the previous meeting that the Press had dealings with falsehoods as well as with truth. It was very difficult to distinguish between an intentional falsehood and a falsehood uttered in good faith. There was an old saying to the effect that to err was human, and he knew no better illustration of that than M. Hambro, who, in all good faith, had committed several errors in his speech. But there was another thing more difficult to observe—the truth. It was often said, and said with reason, that there were some truths that ought to be spread abroad, but others that were better left unspoken. Out of all this collection of truths and falsehoods, the journalist had to make his choice. D'Annunzio had once written in one of his books which he sent to Anatole France: "To Anatole France, for whom error and truth wear the same smiling countenance". For the journalist also, error and truth wore the same smiling countenance. That was why the journalist asked for help, for almost mechanical facilities, in transmitting good news. It was hardly an exaggeration to say that bad news transmitted itself.

In conclusion, M. Hubert pointed out that the journalists had been invited by the League to hold a Conference, and he asked the members of the Committee to refrain from any recriminations or expressions of dissatisfaction at their expense.

M. HAMBRO (Norway) said he had spoken because he was convinced of the importance of the problem that was being considered. He wished to make it clear that he had no intention of criticising special agencies; the facts he had mentioned might be well-known facts, but he thought it was worth while to emphasise them here. Of course, the agencies had been pioneers of the Press; some of them gave invaluable service, and it was not possible to do without them. What he wanted to point out was that it was extremely difficult to obtain, from certain parts of the world, news that was not seen through coloured spectacles. In other words, he did not insinuate that the news was tendencious, but he did wish to make it clear that only too often its value was not weighed by those who were best able to weigh it.

He believed in the power of the Press and trusted publicity more than politicians. He hoped that the resolutions of the Conference would be forwarded to the principal journalists' organisations, which would study them and make the experiences of every country accessible to others. It was not, he thought, in the Sixth Committee, nor even in the Council, that these problems could be solved. Efforts must be made in populous countries to do what had already been done in Australia, Sweden and Norway—to leave the control of news to the Press itself.

He had never suggested that the Press agencies should be crushed. He had simply expressed the hope that greater consideration might be given to the desires of certain nations which occupied special positions.

Count BONIN-LONGARE (Italy) feared that, on the subject of the reasonable needs of the international Press, the Sixth Committee could hardly pass a better judgment than the Press Conference itself. He thought that the Committee might close its discussions on this point by expressing its satisfaction at the fact that the Press Conference, which had been attended by representatives not only of every country but also of every shade of opinion, had arrived at unanimous conclusions, and had formulated its conclusions and recommendations, on subjects frequently of considerable delicacy, with the greatest restraint and tact.

He thought the Committee might terminate its debate by following, with regard to the conclusions of the Conference of Press Experts, the suggestions which had been made in the report to the Council and confirmed by M. de Brouckère in the Committee. Anything added or anything taken away would impair the value of the conclusions of the Conference.

The CHAIRMAN declared the general discussion closed, and proposed that M. DE BROUCKÈRE should be appointed Rapporteur.

*This proposal was adopted.*

M. DE BROUCKÈRE (Belgium) thanked the Committee and the Chairman for the honour conferred upon him. He imagined that he would be meeting the Committee's wishes if he drew up a report concluding with a draft resolution. The debate had seemed to show that the delegates were unanimous as to the action to be taken. He accordingly hoped that he would not find it too difficult to draft a text which would secure unanimous agreement without any long discussion.

### 13. Mandates : General Discussion.

The CHAIRMAN invited M. Van Rees, Vice-Chairman of the Permanent Mandates Commission, to take his place at the table of the Committee.

Dr. NANSEN (Norway) wished to offer a few general observations on the documents which had been submitted by the Council and the Mandates Commission.

The first question was that of the *legal relationship between the mandatory Powers and the mandated territories*. Various aspects of this problem had previously come up before the Commission and the Council. In the report adopted by the latter body, on the motion of the Netherlands representative on September 8th, 1927, this relationship was made clear by a general statement



made by the Council itself. This was a very satisfactory result, which would no doubt be as welcome and as useful to the mandatory Powers themselves as to the League as a whole.

Much confusion seemed to exist in various circles concerning the *right of petition* to the Mandates Commission. He had occasionally seen it stated that there was no such right, and, more frequently, that the Rules of Procedure were so rigid that they almost invariably nullified, in practice, the theoretical right which did exist. He had noted with interest, in the Minutes of recent sessions of the Commission, that all the rules with regard to petitions were being codified. He thought that the publication of a simple clear explanation of the existing practice ought to be useful in helping to dispel such misunderstandings as continued to exist on this point. It was a right of which advantage was clearly being taken. Twenty-four petitions were considered at the last session of the Commission.

Dr. Nansen called attention to a passage in the Minutes of the eleventh session of the Commission in which the Chairman mentioned certain petitions which, according to the petitioners, had been forwarded to the mandatory Powers for transmission to the League and which had not yet officially reached the Secretariat. It might be well if some explanation could be given on this point.

With regard to the *liquor traffic*, the Committee would remember that the Council, in July 1922, urged the Mandates Commission to give particular attention to that subject. There were some encouraging features in the report and some discouraging ones.

He was happy to note that the Mandates Commission had succeeded in defining the technical terms concerning liquor traffic, such as "spirituous liquors", "trade spirits" and "intoxicating beverages", which were found in the B and C mandates and in the St. Germain Convention of 1919. He understood that only one mandatory Power had yet expressed its definite acceptance of these definitions. Perhaps it might be useful if the Sixth Committee were to bring the matter to the attention of the other Powers.

On the other hand, it was discouraging to notice that, according to the statistics, the liquor traffic was steadily increasing in the mandated areas. The Mandates Commission might perhaps be asked to give its views on the causes of the increase and how it might be combated.

Since the last session of the Assembly, the Commission had examined for the first time a report concerning *Iraq*. The High Commissioner, Sir Henry Dobbs, had evidently made a favourable impression upon the Commission. His policy, as expressed below, would seem to summarise the purpose and meaning of those paragraphs of Article 22 of the Covenant referring to A mandates: "Iraq governed for the Iraqi and by the Iraqi, helped by small numbers of British advisers and instructors".

The Commission, at its tenth and eleventh sessions, examined annual reports on the situation in *Syria*, which had quietened down considerably so far as armed opposition to the rule of the mandatory Power was concerned. The mandatory Power had announced its desire to build up self-government as rapidly as possible. Dr. Nansen had, however, noted a somewhat pessimistic tone in the remarks of the accredited representative at the June-July session of the Commission regarding the possibility of securing any effective collaboration on the part of the native authorities in framing the constitutional organisation of the country. He hoped that this pessimism would not prove to be well founded, for he could not see how Article 1 of the mandate could be properly fulfilled without a genuine collaboration between these authorities and the representatives of the mandatory Power.

Dealing with *Western Samoa*, he said that the recent troubles to which reference had been made in the papers had fortunately not involved the use of arms. The delegate of New Zealand might perhaps wish to tell the Sixth Committee of the steps which, he understood, the mandatory Power had taken to give the Mandates Commission full information.

It would appear, from the examination by the Commission of disturbances of any note which had occurred, that one of the very important factors in such situations had been the type of official representing the mandatory Power in superior or secondary positions in the central and in the district administrations in those territories. On the other hand, where marked progress had been made, the Mandates Commission itself, as the result of personal encounters at its meetings with High Commissioners and Governors of the various territories in those parts of the world, had been able to appreciate the fundamental significance of the personal factor in the successful application of the principles of Article 22 of the Covenant. He believed that it was of the utmost importance that individuals having a sufficient background in general education and training to realise the importance of their mission should be chosen for those territories, that they should be instilled with a full understanding of the spirit and of the practical requirements of the mandates system, and that they should be encouraged to study, with the greatest possible thoroughness, problems of native administration, welfare and psychology.

Dr. Nansen wished to express appreciation of the value of the full *Minutes of the Sessions of the Mandates Commission*, perhaps the most valuable documents with regard to colonial administration that had ever been made available. For instance, the Minutes of the extraordinary session of the Commission held in February 1926, which dealt with *Syria* alone, constituted the most striking evidence of the conscientious way in which the Commission had carried out its duties under Article 22 of the Covenant in the case of the insurrection which broke out two years ago.

He had heard that the Fourth Committee had been attempting to do away generally with Minutes of the meetings of Committees, but he could not imagine that any zeal for economy

- would go so far as to include within a general ruling the suppression of the Minutes of the Mandates Commission, which was in a very special position. Article 22 of the Covenant instructed the Commission to "examine the annual reports of the Mandatories". The Minutes constituted a record of the fulfilment of that duty. The reports of the Commission did not do this; they simply gave the results and always referred the reader to the Minutes for full information. He therefore hoped that not only would the Minutes not be suppressed but that every effort would be made by the Publications Department of the Secretariat to advertise these Minutes as widely as possible in interested circles, in the Western countries, as well as in the mandated territories themselves. In this way, the work of the Commission would be more widely appreciated and some progress might also be made in meeting the wishes of the Fourth Committee by increased sales.

Dr. Nansen thought that the criticism that had been made with regard to the secrecy of the work of the Commission was largely unfounded, because the Minutes, which constituted an almost verbatim report, were published *in toto*. Nevertheless, provision was made in the Rules of Procedure for public meetings. Except for the opening meeting of each session, none had taken place for some time. He realised that it was hardly possible to hold public meetings when the Commission desired, as was natural, to have a full and frank discussion with the accredited representatives of the mandatory Powers concerning concrete problems peculiar to their respective territories. But when more general questions came up for consideration, he thought that the Commission might be able to meet in public more frequently than it had done during the past year. He believed he was expressing the views of the Sixth Committee, which held practically all its deliberations in public, when he said he hoped that the Mandates Commission would more frequently be able to follow its example.

Mr. KNOWLES (New Zealand) said that, since New Zealand had accepted the mandate in 1920, her administration of Western Samoa had elicited the approval of the Permanent Mandates Commission. It could not be denied, however, that in recent months there had been some agitation in the islands. According to the information received, this agitation had been stirred up by a few white people. The leader of the agitation was a merchant who was the largest buyer of copra from the natives, and who objected very strongly to the Administrator's action in improving the marketing of copra in the interests of the natives. Some of the European agitators were married to Samoan women and consequently had influence with some of the natives. Generally speaking, however, the large majority both of the white population and of the Samoans strongly approved of the administration.

In the meantime, he desired to state that a Royal Commission, of which the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in New Zealand was the Chairman, had been appointed by the Government to enquire into the alleged grievances and to furnish a report generally upon the administration. This Commission had reached Samoa and was now sitting. As soon as its report was available, it was the intention of the New Zealand Government to lay it before the Permanent Mandates Commission, which would, he presumed, examine it and report to the Council. In the circumstances, he suggested that it was premature to discuss the matter now.

Mr. SMIT (South Africa) thought that the thanks of the Committee were due to Dr. Nansen for the careful and impartial statement which he made each year on what had been done in the mandated territories. In his speech, however, there were two points which might give rise to misapprehension. In his view, Dr. Nansen had laid somewhat too much stress on the word "native". It must not be forgotten, particularly when dealing with such territories as South-West Africa, that the mandate was not given in respect of natives only but in respect of all the inhabitants. In South-West Africa there were whites, half-castes ("bastards" as they were called there) and natives.

He was not quite sure what Dr. Nansen had in mind when he stressed the word "colonial"; but in administering South-West Africa his Government did not look upon it as a colony to be administered in the interests of the colonising Power, but it was administered in the interests of the territory itself.

In conclusion, he welcomed on behalf of his Government the appointment of a German member on the Mandates Commission. He thought that this appointment would be not only to the benefit of the Commission but also of the mandated territories in general and of the territory which was under the administration of his Government in particular.

- M. VAN REES (Vice-Chairman of the Permanent Mandates Commission) thanked Dr. Nansen for his interesting and complete exposé and for the appreciation he had expressed of the work of the Mandates Commission. He was ready to give any information which the Committee desired, but, as he appeared before the Committee as representative of the Mandates Commission, he felt that it would be better for him not to take up all the questions raised by the Norwegian delegate but rather to answer those which referred directly to the Mandates Commission.

- With regard to petitions, it was true that a certain number of complaints which were said to have been forwarded to a mandatory Power for transmission to the League had not reached Geneva. This question, however, only concerned a few isolated cases, which had in fact been discussed with the accredited representatives of the Powers concerned, and M. Van Rees was convinced that the complaints in question would shortly be forwarded to the Mandates Commission with comments by the mandatory Power. It would probably be possible to examine these complaints at the next

session of the Commission. Under the circumstances, the Sixth Committee would perhaps be well advised not to insist on the point.

M. Van Rees agreed with Dr. Nansen that the Minutes of the Mandates Commission were of considerable interest. They contained not only what had been said by the members of the Commission but also the answers to questions addressed to the accredited representatives of the mandatory Powers. These representatives were responsible to their Governments and to the public for the information and explanations which they gave to the Committee, and it was quite natural that these representatives should greatly desire that the Minutes should reproduce exactly what they said. It was this particular aspect of the Minutes which led the representatives, as well as the members of the Commission, to a careful revision of the account of their speeches and to object to the suppression of the Minutes. In the future, these Minutes would constitute an indispensable source of information regarding the execution of the mandates and the steady development of the mandated territories. M. Van Rees felt that it would perhaps be useful if the Sixth Committee would state that it not only desired that the Minutes should continue to be published but that it considered that these Minutes should be complete.

The publicity of the meetings of the Mandates Commission was a delicate point which had been repeatedly discussed ever since the formation of the Commission. In 1921, at its first session, the Commission had decided that its discussions with the accredited representatives should not be made public until the Council had had an opportunity of taking note of the Minutes. This decision had happily been maintained hitherto.

M. Van Rees agreed with Dr. Nansen that certain questions of general interest might with advantage be discussed in public. The difficulty was, however, to find general questions which were sufficiently ripe for such a discussion and at the same time of sufficient interest to attract the public. In the few cases where an attempt had been made, the result was not quite satisfactory. This did not mean that the publicity of the meetings should be renounced, but the question must be discussed at each session of the Commission and the answer depend upon the items on the agenda and the probability of their being appreciated by the public.

M. Van Rees repeated that, if any delegate desired further information on other points, he would be glad to give full explanations.

The CHAIRMAN proposed that the writing of the report should be entrusted to Dr. NANSEN, who was the traditional and well-qualified Rapporteur on the question.

*This proposal was adopted.*

Dr. NANSEN thanked the Committee for the compliment it had paid him by electing him Rapporteur. He did not anticipate that his work would be difficult, as he thought that all the members of the Committee were agreed upon the substance of the matter. He suggested that his colleagues should communicate to him any special points they might wish to see dealt with in the report.

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## SIXTH MEETING

*Held on Saturday, September 17th, 1927, at 3 p.m.*

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Chairman : M. BECH (Luxemburg).

### 14. Slavery Convention : New Accession and Ratification.

The CHAIRMAN announced that the Secretary-General had been informed of the ratification of the Slavery Convention by Spain and of the accession to it by the Sudan.

*This communication was noted.*

### 15. Slavery Convention : Annual Report by the Council : Draft Report of the Sixth Committee to the Assembly, presented by Sir Edward Hilton Young (British Empire).

Sir Edward Hilton YOUNG (British Empire), Rapporteur, read his draft report (Annex 1). He suggested the following amendment to complete the paragraph referring to Abyssinia :

“A report was subsequently received from the Abyssinian Government giving certain lists of persons freed from slavery and of persons convicted of offences against the slavery laws of that country.”

He also suggested that the number of ratifications mentioned in the following paragraph should be increased from eleven to thirteen in view of the statement just made by the Chairman.

COUNT VAN LYNDEN VAN SANDENBURG (Netherlands) said that the following sentence in the draft report :

"It was happy to note, however, the statements made by the representatives of Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway and Portugal in the Sixth Committee that ratification by their Governments might be expected in the immediate future . . ."

read as if it depended merely on the good will of the Governments to ratify the Convention. That was not so; in the case of the Netherlands, at least, it depended on the action of Parliament. He suggested that the report should be amended to read :

"The Committee was happy to note the statements made by the representatives of . . . to the effect that the Governments of those countries hoped to be in a position to ratify the Convention . . ."

COUNT BONIN-LONGARE (Italy) and M. SÉROT (France) supported this amendment.

General FREIRE D'ANDRADE (Portugal) asked that this sentence should be altered so as to omit the name of Portugal from the list under discussion. He had already, at a previous meeting, informed the Committee that, although the instrument of ratification had not yet reached the Secretariat, ratification by the Portuguese Government had already been effected.

The CHAIRMAN said the wording of the paragraph was justified by the fact that the Secretariat had not yet received notification of this ratification. As the Portuguese delegate had stated that ratification had taken place, there would be no objection to changing the paragraph.

The Chairman also asked the Rapporteur whether, in view of the communication just received from the Abyssinian Government, the words "Government of Abyssinia" should not be inserted before the words "Government of India" in the draft resolution.

Sir Edward Hilton YOUNG (British Empire), Rapporteur, accepted this amendment, and also the amendments proposed by the delegates for the Netherlands and Portugal.

*These three amendments were adopted.*

M. LOUWERS (Belgium) proposed to substitute the following wording for the second paragraph of the draft report :

"The delegates of certain States pointed out that, in view of the fact that their legislation is already in conformity with the provisions of the Convention and had, moreover, been communicated to the Assembly in the report of 1924 on slavery, and considering that the progress anticipated as a result of the Convention will make itself felt in certain matters, in a continuous way but not very perceptibly, the parties to this Convention should not be expected to furnish every year a lengthy report on the subject."

Sir Edward Hilton YOUNG (British Empire), Rapporteur, accepted the wording proposed by the Belgian delegate.

M. SÉROT (France) supported the amendment proposed by M. Louwers.

COUNT BONIN-LONGARE (Italy) was in agreement with the modification proposed by the Belgian delegate, but suggested that to speak of progress which was not very perceptible would convey an impression to the reader that no real progress was being made. Would it not be better to say "progress slow but steady"?

M. LOUWERS (Belgium) was afraid that this did not quite express what he meant. In certain matters there might be continual and slow progress in the social conditions of a population which could not be ascertained materially and technically; it might be impossible to prove such progress, at any rate, in a report. However, if the amendment moved by the Italian delegate was acceptable to the Committee, he would not press for his own wording.

*The amendment of M. Louwers, as amended by Count Bonin-Longare, was adopted.*

*The draft report as amended was adopted as a whole.*

The CHAIRMAN asked the Rapporteur to present the report in that form to the Assembly.

#### **16. System of the Single Transferable Vote and the Principle of Proportional Representation in General in Connection with the Problem of the Election of the Non-permanent Members of the Council : Draft Report of the Sixth Committee to the Assembly, presented by the Sub-Committee of the Sixth Committee.**

The CHAIRMAN read the following draft report by the Sub-Committee set up at the third meeting :

"The Sixth Committee has had under consideration the system of the single transferable vote and the principle of proportional representation in general as applicable to the election of the non-permanent Members of the Council.

"It agrees with the authors of the proposal in thinking that, were the principle of proportional representation to be adopted, the single transferable vote system would be a form of proportional representation which could be applied to the Council elections. It is, however, of opinion that the present system should be given a fair trial, and that the method of balloting now employed should not be changed until it should appear opportune to do so.

"In that eventuality, the study which has taken place of the system of the single transferable vote would prove to have been of great value.

"The Sixth Committee is therefore of opinion that the documentation which has been collected on the subject should be reserved for future study if the necessity should arise. Any Members of the League wishing to complete the above-mentioned documentation may, with advantage, send such information for this purpose to the Secretariat.

"The Sixth Committee submits the following resolution to the Assembly :

"The Assembly adopts the report of the Sixth Committee."

*The draft report was adopted.*

On the proposal of Count BONIN-LONGARÉ (Italy), M. BECH (Luxemburg), Chairman of the Committee, was appointed *Rapporteur* to the Assembly for this question.

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## SEVENTH MEETING

*Held on Monday, September 19th, 1927, at 3 p.m.*

Chairman : M. BECH (Luxemburg).

### 17. Work of the Conference of Press Experts : Draft Report of the Sixth Committee to the Assembly, presented by M. de Brouckère (Belgium).

M. DE BROUCKÈRE (Belgium), *Rapporteur*, submitted his draft report and resolution (Annex 2).

*The draft report and resolution were adopted.*

*The Committee appointed M. DE BROUCKÈRE (Belgium) as Rapporteur to the Assembly.*

### 18. Mandates : Draft Report of the Sixth Committee to the Assembly, presented by Dr. Nansen (Norway).

Dr. NANSEN (Norway), *Rapporteur*, submitted his draft report (Annex 3) and said that it had been drawn up on the basis of discussions in the Committee.

He had said nothing in the report concerning petitions which, according to the petitioners, had been sent to the mandatory Powers for transmission to the League but had not arrived at Geneva, nor concerning the question of the publicity of the meetings of the Mandates Commission. In both cases, the Vice-Chairman of the Commission had given information which seemed to dispose of the points, at least for the moment.

Dr. Nansen proposed that his report should be discussed paragraph by paragraph, and asked his colleagues to submit any observations they wished to make.

*Paragraphs 1 and 2.*

*These paragraphs were adopted without discussion.*

*Paragraph 3.*

Dr. NANSEN (Norway), *Rapporteur*, said that, in accordance with a suggestion made by M. Freire d'Andrade, the word "systematically" in the first line should be altered to "separately".

*Paragraph 3 was adopted as amended.*

*Paragraph 4.*

M. FREIRE D'ANDRADE (Portugal) said that Dr. Nansen's excellent report showed perfect knowledge of the work of the Mandates Commission, which he had followed with great sympathy for a long time. The members of the Commission were very grateful to him for what he had done in this respect.

M. Freire d'Andrade would suggest a slight amendment in the text where it referred to "native psychology". He thought it would be better to speak of the psychology of the "inhabitants", as that was the word used in the Covenant. In some of the mandated territories there was a certain proportion of non-native inhabitants, and the welfare of those inhabitants had also to be considered.

Dr. NANSEN (Norway), *Rapporteur*, said he thought this term would be an improvement.

*Paragraph 4 was adopted as amended.*

*Paragraph 5.*

With regard to the paragraph concerning the increase in the liquor traffic, Dr. NANSEN (Norway), Rapporteur, said that the delegate for South Africa had suggested that it was not quite accurate to speak of "West Africa". He therefore proposed to use the words "Togoland and the Cameroons".

Dr. Nansen pointed out that he had thought it best to insert the footnote to this paragraph in order to show the increase in the traffic, which was alarming.

M. SÉROT (France) said he had no precise information at his disposal, as he did not know that this question was going to be discussed and had not procured the necessary documents. He did not know whether the Mandates Commission had approved the figures given in the footnote; if not, he wondered whether the Committee ought to mention them in its report.

Dr. NANSEN (Norway), Rapporteur, pointed out that the figures were taken from the official reports of the French Government. He did not wish to insist on their inclusion, but thought the figures quoted formed a good illustration of the development of the traffic.

M. SÉROT (France) said he was sorry to have to press his point, but he did not think the Committee ought to make an assertion which was not based on an official document of the League of Nations.

M. FREIRE D'ANDRADE (Portugal) agreed with the actual facts mentioned in the paragraph, but pointed out that the Mandates Commission had often dealt with the question of the liquor traffic and had called the attention of the mandatory Powers to this matter. Therefore the hope expressed in the paragraph that they would give "more serious consideration" might be misinterpreted. He suggested that a drafting alteration might be made.

Dr. NANSEN (Norway), Rapporteur, suggested that M. Freire d'Andrade's point would be met by expressing the hope that the Mandates Commission and the Powers concerned would "continue" to give serious consideration to the matter.

Mr. SMIT (South Africa) suggested that the words "to its results for the natives" be deleted. An enquiry into this matter would not seem to be within the province of the Mandates Commission. Moreover, it would be materially impossible for the Commission to make such an enquiry, which must necessarily take place on the spot.

Dr. NANSEN (Norway), Rapporteur, agreed that the Mandates Commission should examine what had been done and not what should be done in the future. He agreed to amend the paragraph to meet the wishes of the delegate of South Africa, and read the following text, which he thought would also give satisfaction to M. Freire d'Andrade :

"The increase in the liquor traffic, particularly in the mandated territories of Togoland and the Cameroons, is of such proportion that the Commission believes the Assembly should bring this matter formally to the attention of the Council, with the hope that the Mandates Commission, in collaboration with the mandatory Powers, will continue to give serious consideration, during the forthcoming year, to the causes of this increase and to the steps which have been taken to deal with the problem."

He also agreed that the footnote might be left out.

*The amendments proposed by M. Sérot (France), M. Freire d'Andrade (Portugal) and Mr. Smit (South Africa) were adopted.*

*Paragraph 5 was adopted as amended.*

*Paragraph 6.*

*Paragraph 6 was adopted without discussion.*

*Paragraph 7.*

*This paragraph was adopted, the words "not only in Western countries but also in the mandated territories themselves" being deleted on the suggestion of M. FREIRE D'ANDRADE (Portugal).*

*Draft Resolution.*

*Introduction.*

*The introduction was adopted without discussion.*

*1. Liquor Traffic.*

Sir Edward Hilton YOUNG (British Empire) expressed the satisfaction of his delegation at the deliberations of the Mandates Commission, which had enabled it to arrive at the definitions given. He added that his Government would be glad to further the work of the Mandates Commission by accepting the definitions as they stood.

Mr. SMIT (South Africa) suggested that the words "and of the results for the natives" should again be deleted.

Dr. NANSEN (Norway), Rapporteur, agreed.

*Paragraph 1 was adopted as amended.*

**2. Minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission.**

*This paragraph was adopted without discussion.*

*The report as a whole was adopted as amended.*

Count BONIN-LONGARE (Italy) wished, on behalf of the Italian delegation, to express particular appreciation of the zeal and the wisdom which had been shown both by the Mandates Commission and by the Council in the supervisory work they were carrying out in order to secure the regular functioning of the new institution of the mandates, in accordance with the terms of the Covenant and with the legal principles on which this institution was based.

He was particularly glad to note the passage in the report of the representative of the Netherlands to the Council which, on the basis of the Covenant, of the Treaty of Versailles and of a series of decisions taken by the Council itself, made clear the legal relations between the mandatory Powers and the mandated territories.

He noted with satisfaction the conclusions of the report, which seemed to be entirely in conformity with the spirit of the League of Nations and its great task of civilisation.

The CHAIRMAN expressed the thanks of the Committee to Dr. Nansen, and proposed that he should act as Rapporteur to the Assembly.

*This proposal was adopted.*

**19. Close of the Session.**

The CHAIRMAN stated that the Committee's agenda was now exhausted. He thanked all the members for their valuable co-operation.

Count BONIN-LONGARE (Italy), on behalf of his colleagues, congratulated the Chairman upon the manner in which he had presided over the Committee's work and expressed the gratitude of all the members.

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LIST OF ANNEXES

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	Page
1. Slavery Convention : Annual Report by the Council : Draft Report of the Sixth Committee to the Assembly, presented by Sir Edward Hilton Young (British Empire) .....	28
2. Work of the Conference of Press Experts : Draft Report of the Sixth Committee to the Assembly, presented by M. de Brouckère (Belgium) .....	28
3. Mandates : Draft Report of the Sixth Committee to the Assembly, presented by Dr. Nansen (Norway) .....	29

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ANNEX 1.

A.VI/1.1927.

SLAVERY CONVENTION : ANNUAL REPORT BY THE COUNCIL.

DRAFT REPORT OF THE SIXTH COMMITTEE TO THE ASSEMBLY.

Rapporteur : Sir Edward Hilton YOUNG (British Empire).

The Sixth Committee has considered the information which was communicated to the League of Nations by different Governments concerning the progressive abolition of slavery and conditions analogous thereto, in accordance with the resolution adopted by the Assembly on September 25th, 1926. This information consisted of documents from the British Government, the Government of India, the Portuguese Government and the Government of the Sudan, and of supplementary statements made orally to the Commission by representatives of India and of the British Empire.

Representatives of certain States observed that, as fresh measures are no longer frequently taken or required for the abolition of the evils dealt with in the Slavery Convention of 1926, the parties to this Convention should not be expected to furnish every year a lengthy report on the progress made.

Attention was drawn to a recent decision of the Full Court of Sierra Leone which suddenly revealed a regrettable deficiency in the legislation of that Protectorate respecting slavery. The Committee was glad to learn that an ordinance was being urgently prepared to remedy this unfortunate hiatus in the legislation of the Protectorate and that a special session of the Legislative Council of Sierra Leone had been convened to bring the ordinance into effect.

Hope was expressed that the Abyssinian Government would see its way to furnish the League with information on the steps taken to abolish slavery and the slave trade in Abyssinia and on the measure of the success which these steps have in fact achieved.

The Committee noted that, although the Slavery Convention had been opened to the participation of fifty-six Members of the League and fourteen other States, it had only up to the present time been ratified or adhered to by eleven States : Australia, Austria, British Empire, Bulgaria, Denmark, Haiti, Hungary, India, Latvia, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa. It was happy to note, however, the statements made by the representatives of Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Portugal in the Sixth Committee that ratification by their Governments might be expected in the immediate future. I beg to propose the following resolution :

"The Assembly :

"Notes the report from the Council regarding slavery and the communications made on this subject by the Government of India, the Government of the Sudan, the British Government and the Portuguese Government which are contained in that report ;

"And, in view of the limited number of ratifications of the Convention of September 25th, 1926, which have been deposited up to the present :

"Expresses the hope that the States which have signed will ratify the Convention as soon as possible."

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ANNEX 2.

A.VI/4.1927.

WORK OF THE CONFERENCE OF PRESS EXPERTS.

DRAFT REPORT OF THE SIXTH COMMITTEE TO THE ASSEMBLY.

Rapporteur : M. DE BROUCKÈRE (Belgium).

The Sixth Committee has carefully examined the work of the Conference of Press Experts which was held at Geneva from August 24th to 29th, 1927, and the deliberations of the Council at its meeting on September 2nd.

When, in 1925, the Assembly, during its fifth ordinary session, at the instance of the Chilean delegation, adopted a resolution to convene a Conference of Press Experts, it was at first perhaps not thought that twenty-three months would elapse before the Conference could meet.

Close examination of the question revealed its great complexity. The 1925 resolution requested the Conference to seek means of ensuring the more rapid and less costly transmission of Press news, with a view to reducing risks of international misunderstanding. The difficulty consisted in dealing with this problem—which, though undoubtedly a technical one, has nevertheless an important moral bearing—and at the same time carefully avoiding any interference to which the Press, always jealous of its independence, might justly have taken exception.

It was therefore necessary to allow the Press itself, in preliminary work which extended over nearly two years, to decide in the first place as to the advisability of holding this Conference, then to settle the agenda, and finally to examine it in three preliminary meetings which included heads

of agencies, journalists and directors of Press bureaux. This careful preparation enabled the Conference to work rapidly and to complete its task in less than a week.

The Conference met at Geneva on August 24th. Sixty-three delegates, thirty-five technical advisers and twenty assessors, coming from thirty-eight States Members and non-Members of the League, and representing telegraphic agencies, newspapers, international organisations of journalists and official Press bureaux, took part in the work. Lord Burnham, the distinguished President of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association of Great Britain, who was asked by the Council to preside over the Conference, could say in his closing speech, without exaggeration, that the Conference constituted the most important Press meeting which had ever been held.

It is noteworthy that this Conference, which brought together such varying interests and so many different countries, should on almost every question have adopted unanimous resolutions. These resolutions, therefore, are of great value.

The Assembly should not only convey its thanks to the representatives of the Press who accomplished this work but also express a desire that the Governments should direct their competent authorities to examine the suggested improvements in the most sympathetic spirit.

In taking note of these resolutions, the Council grouped them into two categories : on the one hand, those which, in the opinion of the Conference itself, require further thorough technical study; and, on the other, those which can now be submitted to the Governments.

The Council has already referred to the Organisation for Communications and Transit the resolutions of the first class, and, in particular, those dealing with telegraphic and telephonic rates, telegrams in cipher, improvement of communications, the conveyance of newspapers, and identity cards for journalists. We express the hope that the technical enquiries necessary for giving effect to these resolutions will be carried through promptly and with the assistance of special committees if required.

Consideration of the resolutions of the second class, which deal with the question of subscriptions to newspapers through the post, the ownership of Press news, various professional facilities for journalists and censorship in time of peace, has been postponed by the Council till its session in December next. These resolutions can thus be carefully studied by the Members of the Council before the latter decides whether these questions should be submitted to the Governments. Your Committee considers that you might recommend the Council to undertake this investigation with the sympathetic attention which these resolutions deserve.

Finally, the Council, giving effect to two other resolutions of the Conference, has stated under what circumstances it would be prepared to lend the assistance of the League organisations in the study of Press problems. The Assembly will doubtless wish to associate itself with this decision.

In conclusion, I have the honour to propose the following resolution :

"The Assembly,

"Noting the success of the Conference of Press Experts, conveys its thanks to the representatives of the Press for their collaboration;

"Expresses its satisfaction that the Council has considered the steps required for promptly giving the necessary effect to the resolutions of the Conference;

"Trusts that the technical organisations to which the Council has submitted a number of these resolutions will undertake as soon as possible the special enquiries relating in particular to the questions of telegraphic and telephonic rates, the improvement of communications, the conveyance of newspapers, identity cards for journalists and visas for journalists' passports;

"Trusts that the Council, at its December session, will take the most suitable measures to enlist the sympathy of Governments for the other resolutions adopted by the Conference in order that effect may be given to them; and

"Notes with satisfaction that the Council, taking into account the recommendation made by the Conference, has declared that, should it at some future time appear necessary and should developments in the technical international problems which affect the Press make it seem desirable to those concerned, it will in principle be willing to lend the assistance of the Organisations of the League for the study of these questions, and to organise a consultation or call a Conference for this purpose."

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### ANNEX 3.

A.VI/3.1927.

#### MANDATES.

#### DRAFT REPORT OF THE SIXTH COMMITTEE TO THE ASSEMBLY.

Rapporteur : Dr. Fridtjof NANSEN (Norway).

The Sixth Committee has considered a series of questions concerning the execution of the provisions of Article 22 of the Covenant during the past year and was assisted in its deliberations by the Vice-Chairman of the Permanent Mandates Commission, M. Van Rees.

The Commission was happy to note that, on September 8th, 1927, the Council had approved a report by the Netherlands representative which explained in general terms the nature of the legal relationship between the mandatory Powers and the territories under their mandate, and it feels that the Assembly might well congratulate the Council on having thus so satisfactorily cleared up an important point which has in the past given rise to certain complications of a novel character.

No attempt was made to deal systematically with the situation in the different territories under mandate, but certain features of the state of affairs in Iraq and Syria were called to the attention of the Commission, and it was glad to note the statement made by the representative of New Zealand concerning the special steps which the Government of that country is taking in order to provide the Mandates Commission with full information in regard to the recent difficulties in Western Samoa.

It is hoped that the mandatory Powers and the Mandates Commission will continue to give special attention to the great importance of having in the mandated territories officials who have had the special training required for their responsible work as the executors on the spot of the provisions of the Covenant and the Mandates, and who appreciate the necessity of a sympathetic study of native psychology as well as native administration and native welfare, in order that these provisions may be most effectively fulfilled.

The increase in the liquor traffic, particularly in the mandated territories of West Africa,<sup>1</sup> is of such proportions that the Commission believes the Assembly should bring this matter formally to the attention of the Council, with the hope that the Mandates Commission, in collaboration with the mandatory Powers, will give even more serious consideration during the forthcoming year than it has at its recent sessions to a study of the causes of this increase, to its results for the natives, and to the steps which might be taken to deal with the problem. After the success achieved by the Commission in defining the more important terms concerning the liquor traffic which are used in the B and C mandates and in the Convention of St. Germain of September 10th, 1919, one may confidently expect some positive achievement in dealing with this larger problem, to which the Council called special attention in 1922 and which is mentioned in the Covenant itself.

The Commission noted with interest that the Rules with regard to petitions which have been set up by the Council and by the Mandates Commission are being codified by the latter in order that in future the various steps in the procedure which is followed in connection with such documents may be clearer to those concerned.

The Sixth Commission was impressed with the value of the Minutes of the meetings of the Mandates Commission which are circulated to the Members of the League and are put on sale. They have become increasingly important as the Administrators of the different territories have appeared more and more frequently before the Commission, and the Sixth Commission considers that such valuable material on colonial administration should be made known as widely as possible to all those who are interested in such problems, not only in Western countries but also in the mandated territories themselves.

#### *Draft Resolution.*

"The Assembly,

"Having taken note of the work accomplished since its last session by the mandatory Powers, the Permanent Mandates Commission and the Council in the execution of Article 22 of the Covenant:

"Renews the expression of confidence voted last year and adopts the following resolution on certain specific points:

#### *"1. Liquor Traffic.*

"(a) The Assembly congratulates the Permanent Mandates Commission on its success in defining the important terms concerning the liquor traffic used in the B and C mandates and in the Convention of St. Germain of September 10th, 1919, and expresses the hope that all the mandatory Powers will soon be able to indicate their acceptance of these definitions;

"(b) It asks the Council to request the Permanent Mandates Commission, in collaboration with the mandatory Powers, to make a special study of the causes and of the results for the natives of the increased importation of spirituous liquors into the territories under B mandate, particularly in West Africa, and to indicate what additional measures, if any, might be taken to deal with this problem.

#### *"2. Minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission.*

"The Assembly expresses its appreciation of the value of the Minutes of the meetings of the Permanent Mandates Commission, which constitute the record of the fulfilment by the Commission of its duties under Article 22 of the Covenant, and which are communicated at the request of several of the mandatory Powers to a considerable number of their officials in the mandated territories."

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<sup>1</sup> "Boissons alcooliques" imported into French Togoland and French Cameroons: 258,024 litres in 1922; 554,702 litres in 1926 (annual reports by the French Government to the League of Nations on the administration of these territories).

"Spirituous beverages" imported into the Gold Coast (including British Togoland) and Nigeria (including British Cameroons): 646,952 gallons in 1922; 1,353,308 gallons in 1926 (annual reports by the British Government issued under the St. Germain Convention of 1919).

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### of Minutes and Annexes of Committee No. 6

	Pages		Pages
Agenda of Committee .....	7, 8	Members of Committee, List of.....	5-6
Chairman of Committee		Minutes of Committee	
Election .....	7	Nature of.....	8
Close of Session .....	25	Press	
Council of League		Capital, importance of .....	16, 17
Non-permanent members : System of single transferable vote and principle of proportional representation		Censorship in peace-time.....	14, 15, 16, 29
Discussion, General .....	10-13	Conditions in Norway .....	14-15
Draft report of Sub-Com.		Conference of Press Experts : Work of	
Adopted by Committee .....	23	Discussion, General.....	13-16, 17-18
Text.....	22-3	Draft report and resolution of Committee	
Procedure <i>re</i> examination.....	7, 10	Adopted.....	23
Rapporteur to Assembly .....	23	Text .....	28-9
Sub-Com. of Enquiry to examine question		Statement by M. de Brouckère.....	13-14
Chairman : Appointment.....	13	Journalists	
Composition .....	13	Professional facilities for.....	14, 16, 18, 29
Proposed and discussed .....	7, 10, 12, 13	Moral disarmament.....	15, 16
Report of		News	
<i>See above</i> Draft report, etc.		Monopoly by large agencies ...	14, 16, 17, 18
Forced Labour		Protection of.....	14, 16, 29
<i>See under</i> Slavery, etc.		Tendencious.....	14, 16, 17, 18
Mandates		Newspapers	
Discussion, General .....	18-21	Postal subscriptions to.....	14, 29
Commission, Permanent		Transport of.....	14, 29
Appointment of German member .....	20	Organisations of League, Assistance of .....	29
Minutes of sessions : Value of..	19-20, 21, 30	Rapporteur to Assembly .....	18, 23
Publicity of meetings.....	20, 21, 23	Regional Press understandings.....	15
Draft report and resolutions of Committee		Report and resolution of Committee	
Discussion and amendments .....	23-5	<i>See above</i> Conference, etc. : Draft report, etc.	
Text .....	29-30	Technical questions referred to Organisation for Transit and Communications.....	14, 29
Iraq		Telegrams in cipher .....	29
Report examined for first time by Assembly .....	19, 30	Telegraphic and telephonic rates..	14, 15, 16, 29
Legal relationship between Mandatory Powers and mandated territories ....	18-19, 25, 29	Publicity of Meetings of Committee.....	7
Liquor traffic		Slavery and Analogous Conditions in Abyssinia	
Definition of terms used in B and C mandates and in St. Germain Convention, 1919 .....	19, 24, 30	Lack of information from .....	9, 28
Request to Mandates Commission to make special study <i>re</i> increase..	19, 24, 30	Letter from Abyssinian delegation, Sept. 14, 1927, with detailed statistics <i>re</i> conditions of certain natives..	17, 21
Officials of Mandatory Powers : Qualifications needed.....	19, 30	Convention	
Petition, Right of		Accession by Sudan .....	21
Codification of rules <i>re</i> .....	19, 30	Annual report of Council	
Enquiry <i>re</i> petitions forwarded to Mandatory Powers not yet arrived at Secretariat.....	19, 20-1, 23	Discussion, General.....	8-10
Rapporteur to Assembly.....	21	Draft report of Committee	
Report and resolutions of Committee		Discussion and amendments .....	21-2
<i>See above</i> Draft report, etc.		Text .....	28
Samoa, Western		Resolution of Committee .....	28
Disturbances in .....	19	Annual reports by signatories..	9, 10, 22, 28
Royal Commission of Investigation <i>re</i> .	20, 30	Ratification by Spain .....	21
Statement of New Zealand member <i>re</i> .	20, 30	Ratifications and adhesions	9, 10, 21, 22, 28
Statement by Dr. Nansen.....	18-20	Forced labour	
Syria		Procedure to be taken <i>re</i> .....	9, 10
Question of self-government.....	19, 30	in India (Burma, Kalat, Nepal) .....	8
		Rapporteur to Assembly .....	10
		Report of Committee	
		<i>See above</i> Convention : Annual report of Council : Draft report, etc.	
		Resolution of Committee .....	28
		in Sierra Leone : Deficiency of legislation <i>re</i>	9, 28
		Vice-Chairman of Committee	
		Election .....	7

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

---

**INDEX**

8

TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

OF THE

**RECORDS**

OF THE

**EIGHTH ASSEMBLY** (ordinary)

PLENARY MEETINGS  
AND COMMITTEES

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GENEVA 1927

## REFERENCES

P = Plenary Meeting ; C = Committee  
T<sub>AMS</sub> : C I = Committee No. 1,  
C II = Committee No. 2, *etc.*

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## ABBREVIATIONS

Addl. = Additional.  
Art. = Article.  
Cl. = Council.  
Com. = Committee.  
Conf. = Conference.  
Govt. = Government.  
I. L. O. = International Labour Office.  
Int. = International.  
Perm. = Permanent.  
Prelim. = Preliminary.  
Prov. = Provisional.  
Resol. = Resolution.  
Sec.-Gen. = Secretary-General.  
Suppl. = Supplementary.  
Temp. = Temporary.  
U. S. A. = United States of America.

*Note.* — A numerical list of all documents published in the Records of the Eighth Assembly (ordinary) is appended to this index (see p. 52).

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# INDEX

## TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

### OF THE

## Records of the Eighth Assembly (ordinary)

### PLENARY MEETINGS AND COMMITTEES

---

#### A

#### Abyssinia

- DELEGATION . . . . . P: 11  
 SLAVERY in, situation . . . . . C VI: 9, 28; P: 135

#### Adatel, Minelteiré

- Delegate of Japon . . . . . P: 16  
 ARBITRATION, Compulsory: Draft optional convention  
     C I: 22, 24, 25, 27, 29, 30, 30-1, 31, 32, 33  
 ARMAMENTS, reduction . . . . . P: 53-4  
 CONFERENCE HALL and new buildings for use of Secretariat . . . . . P: 194  
 ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . P: 53  
 INTERNATIONAL LAW: Codification: Proposal of Paraguay . . . . . C I: 12  
 REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 53-4  
 TREATIES, etc.: Accession given subject to ratification . . . . . C I: 8, 10

#### Administrative Tribunal for Staff of League

- ADMINISTRATIVE and financial questions (Statute, Arts. VI, X) . . . . . C IV: 254, 256, 257  
 BUDGET ESTIMATES for 1928 . . . . . C IV: 254  
 COMPENSATION granted by and expenses of . . . . . C IV: 187, 188, 254  
 COMPLAINTS against decisions taken after Dec. 31, 1927 . . . . . C IV: 254, 257  
 COMPOSITION (Statute, Art. III). . . . . C IV: 252  
 CONDITIONS, preliminary, before consideration of complaint (Statute Arts, VII, VIII) . . . . . C IV: 252-3, 256  
 JUDGES and deputy judges  
     Subsistence allowances and travelling expenses . . . . . C IV: 254  
 JURISDICTION (Statute, Art. II) . . . . . C IV: 251-2, 255-6  
 PROCEDURE (Statute, Arts. III, IV, V, VI, XI) . . . . . C IV: 253, 256, 257  
 RELATIONS with Court of Int. Justice . . . . . C IV: 249  
 REMEDIES which can be given by (Statute, Arts. II, IX) . . . . . C IV: 253-4, 255, 257  
 REPORTS of  
     Committee No. 4 . . . . . P: 478  
     Supervisory Commission . . . . . C IV: 12, 250-5 (*text*)

#### Administrative Tribunal for Staff of League (*continued*)

- RESOLUTION of Assembly, Sept. 26, 1927 . . . . . P: 201  
 STATUTE (draft) . . . . . C IV: 256-7  
     Adopted by Com. No. 4 . . . . . C IV: 36  
 SUB-COM. of Com. No. 4  
     Appointment and composition . . . . . C IV: 11  
     Report . . . . . C IV: 35-6, 250

#### Aerial Navigation

- COMMUNICATIONS with Geneva in times of emergency . . . . . P: 235, 242, 244-5  
 FACILITIES for landing at Geneva . . . . . P: 236, 291  
 IDENTIFICATION of aircraft working for League . . . . . P: 236  
 INT. COM. for . . . . . P: 311  
 INT. ORGANISATION of air traffic . . . . . C II: 96; P: 480

#### Africa

- CENTRAL: Tropical diseases in . . . . . C II: 21  
 SLEEPING sickness in . . . . . C II: 89; P: 125  
 SOUTH WEST  
     *See under* Mandates  
 UNION of South Africa  
     *See* South Africa

#### Age of Consent

- See that title under* Children and young people, etc.

#### Agenda of Assembly

- COMMITTEE  
     Appointment and composition . . . . . P: 31  
     Chairman, appointment as member of General Com. . . . . P: 31  
 DISTRIBUTION of items among Committees. . . . . P: 31-2  
 EXAMINATION and adoption . . . . . P: 29-31  
 ITEMS, lists of  
     as adopted, Sept. 5, 1927 . . . . . P: 9-10  
     as circulated. . . . . P: 219-24

#### Agreements and Conventions

- See under* Treaties, etc.

#### Agriculture

- HEALTH control applied to products . . . . . C II: 44  
 ORGANISATION of sale and production, etc.  
     C II: 35, 41, 44, 45-6, 109; P: 37, 143, 148, 150, 341, 449  
 RELATION to industry, commerce and customs . . . . . C II: 38, 43; P: 37, 342

**Agriculture (continued)**

REPRESENTATION of agriculturists on Economic Consultative Committee  
C II: 59, 60, 61, 109; P: 144, 155, 449

**Agüero y Bothancourt, Aristides de**

Delegate of Cuba . . . . . P: 13

BUDGET, 1928, Tenth financial period  
Secretariat and Special Organisations  
Liaison with Latin-America . . . . . C IV: 47  
Transit and communications, collection of information *re* . . . . . C IV: 52

TRANSIT and communications . . . . . C II: 27; C IV: 52

**Akel, Dr. Friedrich**

Delegate of Estonia . . . . . P: 14

BANKING and currency reform in Estonia . . . . . P: 43

REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 43

**Alá, Hussein Khan**

Delegate of Persia . . . . . P: 18

ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . C II: 41-2; P: 148-9

INTELLECTUAL co-operation . . . . . C II: 14

OPIUM: Work of Commission of Enquiry in Persia . . . . . C V: 20, 27

TRANSIT and communications . . . . . C II: 27

**Albania**

DELEGATION . . . . . P: 11

**Alcoholism**

DISCUSSION in Com. No. 2 . . . . . C II: 29-32

PROCEDURE *re* study of question by Assembly Committees . . . . . C II: 9, 9-10, 10, 32

PROPOSAL of delegates of Finland, Poland, Sweden, etc.

Sept. 17, 1927 . . . . . P: 124

Sept. 21, 1927 . . . . . P: 43, 139

RAPPORTEUR of Com. No. 2 . . . . . C II: 10

REFERENCE of question to

Com. No. 2 . . . . . C V: 9, 10

Ninth Assembly . . . . . P: 139

RELATION to

Child welfare . . . . . P: 74, 303

Traffic in women and children . . . . . C V: 32, 35; P: 302

*See also* Liquor traffic

**Alfieri, Dino**

Substitute-representative of Italy . . . . . P: 16

ALCOHOLISM . . . . . C II: 30

**Allocation of Expenses of League**

DELAY in revising scale, causes . . . . . C IV: 18

EXPENSES of Committee . . . . . C IV: 17-18, 24, 59, 272; P: 474

**Anderson, Holger**

Substitute-representative of Denmark . . . . . P: 13

ALCOHOLISM . . . . . C II: 29

ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . C II: 42-3

ECONOMIC CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE: Constitution . . . . . C II: 61

HEALTH Organisation, Work of . . . . . C II: 24

**Angola**

*See* Frontiers: between Angola, etc.

**Annexes to League Building**

*See* Buildings at Geneva, etc. and Secretariat: Buildings

**Apponyi, Count Albert**

Delegate of Hungary . . . . . P: 15

ARBITRATION, security and disarmament . . . . . P: 66, 67-9

ECONOMIC CONF., INT., Work of . . . . . P: 66-7

FORCED labour . . . . . C VI: 9

REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 66-9

SLAVERY Convention, 1926 . . . . . C VI: 8

**Arbitral Awards, Execution of Foreign**

*See* Commercial arbitration: Foreign, etc.

**Arbitral Tribunals**

GERMAN-POLISH Mixed Tribunal: Appointment of President  
Report of Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 228

POSITION of . . . . . C I: 23

**Arbitration, Commercial**

*See* Commercial arbitration

**Arbitration, Compulsory**

*See* Arbitration, security, etc.: Compulsory arbitration

**Arbitration, Court of**

ESTABLISHMENT proposed in place of Administrative Tribunal . . . . . C IV: 250

**Arbitration, Security and Pacific Settlement of International Disputes**

in Com. No. 3  
Discussion and documents  
C III: 10, 11, 20, 21, 24, 25, 29, 30-1, 33, 35, 38, 40, 47-8, 52-7, 78-84, 59, 63, 65, 66, 70

Report . . . . . C III: 79-84; P: 453-6

in Plenary Meetings  
Discussion and documents . . . . . P: 26, 45, 46, 47, 56, 58, 60-2, 66, 67, 71, 72, 77-8, 80-1, 82-3, 93, 94, 97-8, 100, 113, 114, 156-72, 172-8, 212-13, 232-3, 321, 453-6

Resolutions, Sept. 26, 1927 . . . . . P: 176-8

ART. 13 of Covenant, Arbitration under  
C I: 23, 24, 25; C III: 18, 30-1; P: 159

COMMITTEE ON SECURITY to be convened by  
Preparatory Commission . . . . .

Proposed constitution and work . . . . . C I: 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 51; C III: 52, 53-4, 56, 59, 63, 65, 66, 70, 78, 79, 81, 83; P: 162, 163, 164, 168, 169, 170, 171, 173, 178, 453, 454, 456

COMPULSORY arbitration  
Draft optional convention: Norwegian proposal  
Discussion and documents . . . . . C I: 42-7, 28-33, 50-2; C III: 27-8, 32, 33, 34, 35, 40, 41, 42, 43, 56, 64, 69-70, 80; P: 158-9, 162, 174-5, 453-4

Flexibility of convention [C I: 30, 33, 51, 52; C III: 70, 80; P: 454

Procedure *re* study of . . . . . C III: 40, 41, 43, 56, 64, 70

Rapporteur of Com. No. 1 . . . . . C I: 51

Reference to Com. No. 1  
Resolution of Com. No. 3, Sept. 17, 1927 . . . . . C I: 50

Reports of  
Com. No. 3 . . . . . C III: 80; P: 453-4

Sub-Com. of Com. No. 1  
C I: 28-33, 51 (*text*)

Statement by Dr. Nansen . . . . . C III: 27



**Arbitration, Security and Pacific Settlement of Int. Disputes (continued)**

- COMPULSORY arbitration (continued)**  
 Draft optional convention: Norwegian proposal (continued)  
 Study of question by Com. on Security  
     C I: 24, 26, 29, 30, 31, 32, 51  
 Sub-Com. of Com. No. 1 to study  
     Appointment and composition C I: 27, 51  
     Rapporteur . . . . . C I: 51  
     Report . . . . . C I: 28-33, 51 (text)  
 Terms of reference of Com. No. 1 *re* C I: 24, 25  
 Text of proposal . . . . . C I: 50; C III: 27-8  
 Amendments . . . . . C I: 22, 23, 28  
 Views of Com. No. 1 *re*  
     C I: 51-2; C III: 70, 80; P: 453-4  
 applied to Industrial questions . . . . . P: 94  
 Swedish proposal of 1925  
     C I: 22; C III: 34-5, 42; P: 174
- CONCILIATION**  
 Recommendation of Com. No. 1 *re*  
     C I: 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, 51, 52;  
     C III: 70, 80; P: 454
- COUNCIL mediation** C I: 22, 23, 24, 28, 31, 51, 52  
     C III: 70, 80; P: 39, 46-7, 59, 72, 454
- GUARANTEES of security for States**  
     C III: 29, 38-9; P: 67, 72
- LOCARNO Agreements** . . . . . C III: 10, 21, 22, 24, 31  
     P: 38, 39, 44, 60-1, 67, 71, 80-1, 96, 97, 98, 159
- PACIFIC Settlement of int. disputes**  
 Compulsory arbitration, *see that title above*  
 Declaration of Polish delegation *re*  
     wars of aggression and  
     *See War, etc.*: Prohibition of wars  
     of aggression, etc.
- PROTOCOL (Geneva) 1924** C I: 22; C III: 17, 21, 24,  
     31, 35, 39, 43, 54; P: 39, 44, 55, 60-1, 66, 71,  
     76, 77, 84, 92, 94, 98, 110, 113, 160, 162, 167, 174  
 List of signatures . . . . . P: 400  
 Study of principles of  
     *See below* Study of principles of  
     Covenant, etc.
- RAPPORTEUR of Com. No. 3** . . . . . C III: 57
- RELATION to other questions**  
     Disarmament C III: 17, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 28,  
     32, 35, 36, 37, 38, 48, 53, 61; P: 26, 39, 45,  
     47, 56, 62, 81, 83, 157, 159, 162, 163, 168,  
     171, 173, 212  
     Financial assistance for States victims  
     of aggression . . . . . C III: 61  
     Int. law . . . . . P: 60, 62-3, 69, 77-8, 82, 99, 213
- REPORTS of**  
     Com. No. 3  
     Draft submitted by M. de Brouckère  
         C III: 78-9  
     Discussed and amended . . . . . C III: 65-70  
     Final text . . . . . C III: 79-84; P: 453-6  
     Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 232-3, 321
- RESOLUTIONS and draft resolutions**  
     Assembly resolutions, Sept. 26, 1927 . . . . . P: 176-8  
     French draft resolution  
         *See below* Study of principles of Cove-  
         nant, etc.  
     German draft resolution  
         *See below* Study of principles of Cove-  
         nant, etc.  
     Netherlands draft resolution  
         *See below* Study of principles of Cove-  
         nant, etc.  
     Norwegian draft resolution  
         *See above* Compulsory arbitration:  
         Draft optional convention, etc.
- SECURITY COMMITTEE proposed**  
     *See above* Committee on Security to  
     be convened, etc.

**Arbitration, Security and Pacific Settlement of Int. Disputes (continued)**

- STUDY of principles of Covenant, etc., to develop arbitration, security and disarmament: French, German and Netherlands proposals**  
     French proposal . . . . . C III: 39-40  
     German proposal . . . . . C III: 47-9  
     Netherlands proposal  
         Discussion and documents C III: 10, 17-19,  
         21-2, 29, 30, 33, 37, 51, 52-3, 54, 55, 56, 71,  
         81, 83-4; P: 40, 41, 52, 57, 61, 66, 71, 94,  
         98, 100, 103-4, 107, 110, 114, 159, 161,  
         169, 454-5, 456  
         Draft text . . . . . P: 41, 104  
         Final text . . . . . C III: 10; P: 104, 107  
         Statement by M. Loudon . . . . . C III: 21-2  
     Procedure *re* study of  
         C III: 10, 40, 41, 42, 49, 51; P: 104, 107, 159  
     Report of Com. No. 3 . . . . . G III: 81; P: 454-5  
     Resolutions and draft resolutions  
         Assembly resolution (V), Sept. 26, 1927  
             P: 177-8  
         Draft resolution (V) of Com. No. 3  
             C III: 83-4; P: 164-5, 169-70, 456  
         Draft resolution of Sub-Com. of Com.  
         No. 3  
             Discussion . . . . . C III: 53-7  
             Text . . . . . C III: 52-3  
             Amendment . . . . . C III: 65
- TREATIES and conventions, etc.**  
     Conciliation and arbitration treaties con-  
     cluded C I: 25, 26; C III: 21, 30; P: 38, 85,  
     100, 110, 114  
     Locarno Agreements C III: 10, 21, 22, 24, 31;  
     P: 38, 39, 44, 60-1, 67, 71, 80-1, 96, 97, 98, 159  
     Request to Secretariat to prepare survey  
     of treaties concluded . . . . . C I: 26, 30, 31, 32  
     Special and collective agreements pro-  
     posed C I: 24-5, 29, 30, 31, 32, 51; C III: 52,  
     53, 54, 70, 80, 81, 83, 84; P: 159, 165, 167-8,  
     169, 171, 174-5, 175-6, 177, 178, 453, 454, 454.456
- WAR or threat of war, see that title**
- Argentine Republic**  
     INT. HEALTH centre for infant welfare,  
     Establishment at Buenos Aires C II: 91, P: 425  
     PARTICIPATION in work of League . . . . . P: 24  
     RELATIONS with League . . . . . C IV: 47
- Armaments, Reduction and Limitation**  
     in Com. No. 3  
         Discussion and documents  
             C III: 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 19, 22, 23, 25, 27, 32,  
             33, 35, 37, 41, 47-8, 52-7, 78-84  
         Report . . . . . C III: 79-84; P: 453-6  
     in Plenary Meetings  
         Discussion and documents  
             P: 25-6, 39-40, 42, 45-6, 47, 52-3, 53-4, 56,  
             56-7, 67-8, 71-2, 81, 83, 90-1, 96-7, 113,  
             114, 156-72, 172-6, 212-13, 234,  
             236, 276, 432, 453-6  
         Resolutions, Sept. 26, 1927 . . . . . P: 176-8
- AIRCRAFT, Civil and military**  
     C III: 12; P: 158, 173-4, 236  
     Belgian proposal . . . . . C III: 50 (text) 50-1, 51-2  
     Report of Com. No. 3 . . . . . C III: 80, P: 453  
     Resolution (I) of Assembly and Com.  
     No. 3 . . . . . C III: 82; P: 176-17, 455
- BUDGETS, National**  
     Limitation . . . . . C III: 26  
     Single model statement for C III: 12; P: 236
- CHEMICAL warfare** . . . . . C III: 12, 27  
     Protocol: List of ratifications, etc. . . . . P: 396-7
- COMMITTEES for disarmament sitting during**  
     1926 and 1927 . . . . . C IV: 208.

**Armaments, Reduction and Limitation (continued)**

- CONFERENCE on disarmament  
See Disarmament Conference
- CONVENTION, Future  
Draft drawn up by Preparatory Commission C III: 12, 14, 15, 23, 24; P: 53, 166, 173
- DISARMAMENT Conference, *see that title*
- DISARMED countries, Position of  
C III: 25; P: 68, 163, 164
- DOCUMENTATION of question . . . . . C III: 13
- ECONOMIC factors: Relation to disarmament  
C III: 11; P: 40, 47, 65, 88, 161
- INFORMATION from Members of League *vs*  
scale of armaments, etc.; Art. 8 of  
Covenant . . . . . C III: 18, 33
- INVESTIGATION: Budget estimates 1928  
C IV: 23, 83, 200
- MORAL disarmament  
C III: 13, 29, 36, 46; C VI: 15, 16, 17;  
P: 39, 40, 41, 68, 87, 112, 114, 156
- NAVAL Three-Power Conference C III: 13, 22-3, 37;  
P: 25, 26, 85, 91, 96, 161-2, 166
- PERM. ADVISORY Commission  
Constitution: Art. 9 of Covenant  
C III: 18; P: 173
- PREPARATORY Commission for Disarmament  
Conference  
See *under* Disarmament Conference
- REDUCTION as well as limitation to be dealt  
with . . . . . C III: 14, 17, 27
- RELATION to other questions  
Arbitration and security  
C III: 17, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 28, 32, 35, 36, 37,  
38, 48, 53, 61; P: 26, 39, 45, 47, 56, 62, 81,  
83, 157, 159, 162, 163, 168, 171, 173, 212  
Economic questions  
C III: 11; P: 40, 47, 65, 88, 161  
Private manufacture of arms and am-  
munition . . . . . C III: 13-14, 19, 44
- REPORTS of  
Com. No. 3  
Draft submitted by M. de Brouckère C III: 78-9  
Discussed and amended . . . . . C III: 65-70  
Final text . . . . . C III: 79-84; P: 453-6  
Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 232-50, 321-4
- RESOLUTIONS and draft resolutions  
Assembly resolutions, Sept. 26, 1927 P: 176-8  
Draft resolutions of Com. No. 3 . . . . . C III: 82-4
- RIGHT of investigation in virtue of Peace  
treaties  
Report of Council and Secretariat P: 249-50, 323-4
- SECTION of Secretariat  
Budget estimates for 1928  
C IV: 23, 77, 173, 199-200  
Suppl. credits . . . . . C IV: 46, 263-4, 268  
Work and publications . . . . . C IV: 208
- VOLUNTARY disarmament . . . . . C III: 17
- WORK of League in field of . . . . . P: 39-40
- YEAR-BOOK, Military  
Declaration by Count Bernstorff . . . . . C III: 57-9  
Publication . . . . . P: 250

**Armenian Refugees**

See *Refugees: Armenian and Russian and Armenian*

**Arms and Ammunition, etc., Private Manu-  
facture and Publicity of Manufacture of**

- in Com. No. 3  
Discussion and documents  
C III: 13, 17, 19, 26, 32, 44-5, 49-50, 76-7  
Report . . . . . C III: 76-7; P: 451-2

**Arms and Ammunition, etc. Private Manufacture and  
Publicity of Manufacture of (continued)**

- in Plenary Meetings  
Discussion and documents  
P: 156, 247-9, 322-3, 451-2  
Resolution, Sept. 24, 1927 . . . . . P: 156
- BUDGET, 1927-28 . . . . . C III: 50; C IV: 77
- CONFERENCE of 1925, Failure of . . . . . C III: 14
- CONVENTION proposed *vs.* . . . . . C III: 44, 77; P: 452
- PRODUCING and non-producing countries  
See *below* State manufacture, etc. o
- PROPOSAL of M. Guerrero  
C III: 41, 44 (*text*), 44-5, 49-50
- RAPPORTEUR of Com. No. 3 . . . . . C III: 57
- RELATION to other questions  
Disarmament . . . . . C III: 13-14, 19, 44  
Traffic in arms . . . . . C III: 14
- REPORTS of  
Com. No. 3  
Draft submitted by M. Guerrero . . . . . C III: 76-7  
Discussed and amended . . . . . C III: 64-5  
Final text . . . . . P: 451-2  
Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 247-9, 322-3
- RESOLUTION of Assembly, Sept. 24, 1927. . . . . P: 156
- STATE manufacture and private manufacture,  
Control of  
C III: 14, 17, 19, 26, 32, 44, 45, 49, 77; P: 452

**Arms and Ammunition, Traffic in**

- CONVENTION, 1925  
List of ratifications, etc. . . . . P: 394-7
- RELATION to private manufacture of arms  
and ammunition, etc. . . . . C III: 14
- STATISTICAL Year-book: Publication . . . . . P: 250

**Arts and Letters**

- CASTS, Int. Agreement proposed *vs*  
C II: 16; P: 130, 133
- POPULAR Arts  
Congress  
Credits . . . . . C IV: 78  
Date of meeting and organisation  
C II: 12, 15, 16, 69; P: 130, 131-2, 133, 134, 361  
Exhibition proposed  
C: II: 12, 15, 16, 69-70; P: 130, 134, 361
- WORK of Sub-Com. . . . . P: 361

**Arts Yearbook, Int. . . . . P: 361**

**Assembly of League**

- AGENDA, *see that title*
- CLOSE of session: Speech by President P: 212-14
- COMMITTEES of Assembly, *see that title*
- DELEGATES and delegations, *see that title* o
- EXTRAORDINARY session, expenses . . . . . C IV: 309, 111
- MAINTENANCE of order in Assembly Hall . . . . . P: 33-4
- OPENING of session  
Speech by M. Villegas, acting President  
of Council . . . . . P: 23-7
- PRESIDENT  
See Guani, Dr. Alberto
- PRESS summary of proceedings prepared by  
Information section . . . . . C IV: 217
- SEATING and platform accommodation P: 27, 33-4, 54
- SESSIONS  
between 1920 and 1926: Statistical table  
C IV: 211  
Budget estimates . . . . . C IV: 14, 75, 171, 174, 263  
Prolongation proposed . . . . . C IV: 45
- TELEGRAM of convocation . . . . . P: 8

Assembly of League (continued)

VICE-PRESIDENTS

- Election . . . . . P: 32-3
- List . . . . . P: 21

Assembly Hall (Salle de la Réformation)

- ARRANGEMENTS for improvement. . . C IV: 56, 263
- MAINTENANCE of order, seating and platform accommodation . . . . . P: 27, 33-4, 54
- See also Conference Hall under Buildings at Geneva

Audit of League Accounts for 1926 (Eighth Financial Period)

- ADOPTION by
  - Assembly . . . . . P: 195
  - Com. No. 4 . . . . . C IV: 12, 270, 273; P: 472
  - Supervisory Commission . . . . . C IV: 73-4
- APPROPRIATIONS in aid, method of showing in League accounts . . . . . C IV: 74, 153, 154
- ASSETS and liabilities as at Dec. 31, 1926
  - Court of Int. Justice (balance sheet) C IV: 133-4
  - General statement (balance sheet) C IV: 135-6, 146-154
  - Labour Organisation . . . . . C IV: 125-8
  - Secretariat (balance sheet). . . . . C IV: 103-6
- BALANCE SHEETS, Uniform arrangement advocated . . . . . C IV: 153
- DEPRECIATION Reserve Fund . . . . . C IV: 74, 147
- EARLY date of preparation . . . . . C IV: 74, 152
- MONETARY units used for accounts of League organisations. . . . . C IV: 73-4, 152-3
- PROCEDURE . . . . . C IV: 12
- REPORTS of
  - Auditor . . . . . C IV: 137-154
  - Com. No. 4 . . . . . C IV: 270
  - Supervisory Commission . . . . . C IV: 73-4
- STATEMENT of accounts
  - Court of Int. Justice . . . . . C IV: 129-134
  - Labour Organisation, Int. . . . . C IV: 115-128
  - Secretariat and Special Organisations C IV: 91-114

Australia

- See also Moore, Sir William Harrison
- Moss, Mrs. I. H.
- Ley, The Hon. Thomas John
- Pearce, Sir George Foster
- Ryrie, Sir Granville de Laune
- DELEGATION . . . . . P: 11

Austria

- See also Leitmaier, Dr. Markus
- Mensdorff-Pouilly-Dietrichstein, Albert
- Pauli, Dr. Leo di
- Pfögl, Emerich
- DELEGATION . . . . . P: 11
- FINANCIAL reconstruction
  - Advance made to M. Rost van Tonningen C IV: 110
  - Continued progress C II: 56-7, 57; P: 282, 349

Aviation

- AERIAL navigation, see that title
- CIVIL and military aircraft
- See Armaments, etc.: Aircraft, etc.

Ayyar, Sir C. P. Ramaswami

- Delegate of India . . . . . P: 15
- ADMINISTRATIVE Tribunal: Establishment C IV: 36
- AGRICULTURE in India . . . . . P: 37

Ayyar, Sir C. P. Ramaswami (continued)

- BUDGET, 1928, Tenth financial period
  - New work involving new expenditure C IV: 13
  - Secretariat and Special Organisations
    - Allocation of Expenses, Com. on . . . C IV: 24
    - Health Organisation . . . . . C IV: 22
    - Liaison with Latin-America . . . . . C IV: 46-7
    - Publications Dept. . . . . C IV: 16
    - Transit and communications, collection of information *re* . . . . . C IV: 53
    - Unforeseen expenditure . . . . . C IV: 13
- CONFERENCES of League
  - Contribution to expenses by non-Members of League represented at . . . . . C IV: 13
- ECONOMIC CONFERENCE, Int.: Work of C II: 9; P: 36-7
- ECONOMIC CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
  - Constitution . . . . . C II: 60
- ECONOMIC SITUATION of India . . . . . P: 37
- EXPENDITURE incurred in settlement of disputes: Payment by parties concerned C IV: 21
- HEALTH ORGANISATION, work of C II: 24; P: 124-5
- HEALTH QUESTIONS of interest to India . . . P: 36
- INDIA
  - League questions of special interest to P: 36-7
  - Relations with League and development of int. attitude in . . . . . P: 35-6
- PUBLICATIONS of League . . . . . C IV: 14, 16
- REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat P: 35-7
- TRANSIT and communications C II: 26; C IV: 53

B

- Bandoeng Broadcasting Station. . . . . P: 294
- Bastid, Paul
  - Assistant delegate of France . . . . . P: 14
  - ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . C II: 43-4
- OPIMUM
  - Central Board, Permanent. . . . . C V: 41
  - Convention . . . . . C V: 28
  - Work of Commission of Enquiry in Persia C V: 25, 27
- REFUGEES
  - Armenian, Settlement of . . . . . P: 189-90
  - Russian and Armenian . . . . . C V: 17
- RELIEF Union, Int. . . . . C II: 56
- TRANSIT and communications . . . . . C II: 27
- Bastos, Dr. Julio
  - Delegate of Uruguay . . . . . P: 20
- ARBITRATION, Compulsory: Draft optional convention . . . . . C I: 24
- Beauties of Nature, Protection of . . . C II: 15; P: 361
- Beck, Joseph
  - Delegate of Luxemburg . . . . . P: 17
  - COUNCIL, election of non-perm. Members
    - System of single transferable vote and proportional representation . . . . . P: 135
- Beelaerts van Blokland, Jonkheer F.
  - Delegate of Netherlands . . . . . P: 17
  - ARBITRATION, security and disarmament . P: 39-41
  - Study of principles of Covenant, etc. P: 40-1, 104

- Beelaerts van Blokland, Jonkheer F. (continued)**  
 COUNCIL, reduction of number of meetings and settlement of disputes by . . . . . P: 39  
 DISPUTES, settlement by Council or by direct negotiation . . . . . P: 39  
 ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . P: 40  
 INTERNATIONAL LAW: Codification . . . . . C I: 49, 50  
 PRESS Conference, work of . . . . . P: 40-1  
 REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 39-41
- Belgium**  
*See also* Brouckère, Louis de  
 Janson, P.-E.  
 Louwers, O.  
 Rolin, Henri  
 Vandervelde, Emile
- DELEGATION . . . . . P: 11-12  
 RE-ELIGIBILITY as non-perm. Member of Council . . . . . P: 41-2, 115
- Beneš, Dr. Eduard**  
 Delegate of Czechoslovakia . . . . . P: 13  
 ARBITRATION, security and disarmament C III: 10, 56  
 DISARMAMENT Conference: Preparatory Commission . . . . . C III: 13, 15  
 PROCEDURE in Com. No. 3. . . . . C III: 15, 33-4, 40, 41  
 TRIBUTE to M. de Madariaga . . . . . C III: 71  
 WAR or threat of war  
 Financial assistance for States victims of aggression . . . . . C III: 63
- Bernstorff, Count**  
 Substitute-representative of Germany . . . . . P: 15  
 ARMAMENTS  
 Reduction and limitation . . . . . C III: 14, 33, 36, 66  
 Yearbook . . . . . C III: 57-9  
 ARMS and ammunition, Private manufacture of . . . . . C III: 44  
 WAR or threat of war  
 Prohibition of wars of aggression, Polish declaration *re* . . . . . C III: 46
- Bibliography**  
 EXTENSION of research to pre-Graeco-Roman antiquity . . . . . C II: 14; P: 360  
 SCIENCES, Co-ordination of bibliography on . . . . . C II: 12, 16, 69; P: 87, 130, 133, 360
- Bills of Exchange** . . . . . C II: 101; P: 37, 275-6
- Birke, P. M. L.**  
 Delegate of Denmark . . . . . P: 13  
 ARBITRATION, security and disarmament C III: 55  
 WAR or threat of war  
 Financial assistance for States victims of aggression . . . . . C III: 60
- Black, Guillermo de**  
 Secretary-General, delegation of Cuba . . . . . P: 13  
 DOCUMENTS, Despatch to members of Com. No. 4 . . . . . C IV: 24
- Belli, Colonel Beat Henri**  
 Delegate of Switzerland . . . . . P: 20  
 INTELLECTUAL co-operation . . . . . C II: 15-16
- Bonin-Longare, Count Lello**  
 Delegate of Italy . . . . . P: 16  
 COUNCIL, election of non-perm. Members  
 System of single transferable vote and proportional representation C VI: 7, 11, 13  
 FORCED labour . . . . . C VI: 9  
 MANDATES Commission, work of . . . . . C VI: 25  
 PRESS Experts Conference, work of . . . . . C VI: 18  
 SLAVERY Convention, 1926 . . . . . C VI: 10, 22  
 TRIBUTE to chairman of Com. No. 6 . . . . . C VI: 25
- Bouroff, Athanase D.**  
 Delegate of Bulgaria . . . . . P: 12  
 ARBITRATION, security and disarmament C III: 40-1
- Branch Offices of Secretariat**  
*See under* Budget, etc.: Secretariat, etc.: 1928, etc. *and* Secretariat
- Brazil**  
 EDUCATIONAL centre at Rio de Janeiro C II: 91-2; P: 426  
 LEPROSY research centre in . . . . . C II: 92; P: 426  
 PARTICIPATION in certain work of League . . . . . P: 24
- Breitscheid, Dr.**  
 Substitute-representative of Germany. . . . . P: 15  
 CINEMATOGRAPH, Educational: Int. Institute C II: 25  
 ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of C II: 39-40; P: 152-3  
 ECONOMIC CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE: Constitution . . . . . C II: 50, 61  
 HEALTH Organisation, Work of . . . . . C II: 23  
 INTELLECTUAL co-operation . . . . . C II: 15, 16; P: 130
- Briand, Aristide**  
 Delegate of France . . . . . P: 14  
 ARBITRATION, security and disarmament . . . . . P: 90-3  
 REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat P: 88-93
- British Empire**  
*See also* Cadogan, The Hon. Alexander  
 Cavendish-Bentinck, V.  
 Chamberlain, Sir Austen  
 Elliot, Major Walter  
 Hurst, Sir Cecil James Barrington  
 Lyttelton, The Hon. Mrs. Alfred  
 Onslow, Earl of  
 Rowe Dutton, E.  
 Young, Sir Edward Hilton
- DELEGATION . . . . . P: 12
- Brookes, Edgar Harry**  
 Delegate of South Africa . . . . . P: 20  
 ARBITRATION, Compulsory: Draft optional convention . . . . . C I: 23, 27, 28-9  
 CHILD Welfare Committee, Work of . . . . . C V: 13  
 OPIUM: Permanent Central Board . . . . . C V: 45  
 TRAFFIC in women and children . . . . . C V: 31, 37, 38
- Brouckère, Louis de**  
 Delegate of Belgium . . . . . P: 11  
 ALCOHOLISM. . . . . C II: 10, 31  
 ARBITRATION, security and disarmament C III: 16-19, 53-4, 55, 57, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69; P: 156-61  
 Draft optional convention for compulsory arbitration . . . . . C III: 43, 56, 70; P: 158-9

**Brouckère, Louis de (continued)**

- ARMS and ammunition, Private manufacture  
of . . . . . C III : 44-5
- AVIATION, Civil and military . . . . . C III : 50, 52 ; P : 158
- CINEMATOGRAPH, Educational: Int. Institute . . . . . C II : 19
- NEWS, monopoly and peace-time censorship . . . . . C VI : 14, 16
- PRESS Experts Conference, work of . . . . . C VI : 13-14, 16, 18 ; P : 135
- REFUGEES
  - Armenian, Settlement of . . . . . P : 188, 189
  - Russian and Armenian . . . . . P : 188-9
- TELEGRAPH and telephone charges . . . . . C VI : 16
- TRANSIT and communications . . . . . C II : 26, 27, 64 ; P : 201-2
- WAR or threat of war
  - Financial assistance for States victims of aggression . . . . . C III : 61, 63
  - Prohibition of wars of aggression, Polish declaration *re* . . . . . P : 157

Budapest, Public Health College in . . . . . C II : 22

**Budget of League**

- 1926, Eighth financial period
  - Audited accounts
    - See Audit of League accounts, 1926
  - Surplus of income over expenditure
    - Disposal of . . . . . C IV : 12, 37, 74, 79, 84
    - Total surplus for Secretariat and Court . . . . . C IV : 145, 151-2
- 1928, Tenth financial period
  - Appropriations in aid . . . . . C IV : 76, 203
  - Comparison with former budget estimates . . . . . C IV : 12
  - Court of Int. Justice, Perm., *see that title below*
  - General summary . . . . . C IV : 170
  - Increase, amount and causes of . . . . . C IV : 13, 14, 75, 270-1 ; P : 472-3
  - Labour Organisation, Int., *see that title below*
  - Modifications proposed by Com. No. 4 . . . . . P : 476-8
  - Reports of
    - Com. No. 4 . . . . . C IV : 270-3 ; P : 472-6
  - Supervisory Commission, *see that title*
  - Resolution of Assembly, Sept. 26, 1927 . . . . . P : 195
  - Secretariat and Special Organisations, *see that title below*
  - Statement of income and expenditure . . . . . C IV : 169
  - Total estimates adopted by Assembly . . . . . C IV : 195
- APPROPRIATIONS in aid
  - Interest on sums not required added to . . . . . C IV : 83
- ASSETS and liabilities of League as at Dec. 31, 1926
  - General statement . . . . . C IV : 135-6, 146-154
- AUDIT of League accounts, *see that title*
- BUILDINGS at Geneva
  - Building Fund
    - Accounts for 1926 . . . . . C IV : 148-9
    - Annual reimbursements . . . . . C IV : 79, 80
    - Total as at Aug. 31, 1927 . . . . . C IV : 162
  - Conference Hall and new Secretariat offices
    - Credits voted by Assembly . . . . . P : 192
    - Estimates, procedure *re* . . . . . C IV : 153
    - Furnishing fund to be withdrawn from surplus, 1926 . . . . . C IV : 74
  - General statement of assets and liabilities, Dec. 31, 1926 . . . . . C IV : 146, 150
  - Labour Office Annex: Cost of equipment . . . . . C IV : 84
  - Secretariat: New temp. annex
    - Estimates 1928 . . . . . C IV : 55, 262
    - Expenses charged to Building Fund . . . . . C IV : 73

**Budget of League (continued)**

- COURT of Int. Justice, Perm.
  - 1926, Eighth financial period
    - Appropriations in aid . . . . . C IV : 142
    - Surplus of income over expenditure . . . . . C IV : 145, 152
    - Transfers in budget . . . . . C IV : 132
  - 1928, Tenth financial period
    - Discussion . . . . . C IV : 31-3, 59
    - Estimates: text . . . . . C IV : 245-9
    - General observations . . . . . C IV : 245
    - Items of expenditure
      - Administrative expenses . . . . . C IV : 31, 79, 246, 249
      - Bank charges . . . . . C IV : 31, 246
      - Contribution to Carnegie Foundation . . . . . C IV : 31, 246
      - Duty and subsistence allowance of judges . . . . . C IV : 247
      - Exchange, Profit and loss on . . . . . C IV : 31, 246
      - Furniture and instalment of addl. fittings . . . . . C IV : 31, 79, 247
      - General services . . . . . C IV : 31, 245, 246
      - Library . . . . . C IV : 31, 247
      - Pensions for staff, contribution to fund . . . . . C IV : 31, 245, 246
      - Printing . . . . . C IV : 31, 79, 246
      - Removal expenses of Members of Court . . . . . C IV : 246
      - Salaries, annual . . . . . C IV : 79, 248
      - Salaries of temp. staff and overtime pay . . . . . C IV : 31-3, 35, 59, 247, 248, 272
      - Sessions of Court . . . . . C IV : 31, 245, 246, 247
      - Taxis for staff use during night work . . . . . C IV : 247
      - Travelling expenses of judges and temp. staff . . . . . C IV : 247, 248
      - Travelling expenses of registrar and officials of registry . . . . . C IV : 31, 79, 246
      - Unpaid Liabilities Fund for 1927 . . . . . C IV : 31, 746
      - Welfare of staff . . . . . C IV : 247
  - Audited accounts for 1926
    - See Audit of League accounts
- CREDITS for new work undertaken by League
  - See below New work, etc.
- Expenditure incurred on behalf of individual Members, payment . . . . . C IV : 13, 21, 22, 47
- FIDELITY Guarantee for officials in charge of funds . . . . . C IV : 187, 88
- FINANCIAL position, Aug. 31, 1927
  - Report by Sec.-Gen. . . . . C IV : 13, 160-7
- LABOUR Organisation, Int.
  - 1926, Eighth financial period
    - Appropriations in aid . . . . . C IV : 141
    - Reductions effected and deficit . . . . . C IV : 74, 78, 87, 145, 152
    - Transfers in budget . . . . . C IV : 121-4
  - 1928, Tenth financial period
    - Discussion in Com.
      - General . . . . . C IV : 25-7, 56, 59
      - Items . . . . . C IV : 27-31
    - Estimates: text . . . . . C IV : 222-244
    - Increase: Causes of . . . . . C IV : 25, 26, 78
    - Introductory note . . . . . C IV : 222
    - Items of expenditure
      - Administrative Tribunal, contribution towards . . . . . C IV : 188, 254
      - Commissions . . . . . C IV : 28, 78, 225, 239
      - Conference sessions . . . . . C IV : 27, 224, 226
      - Correspondents' Offices and collection of information . . . . . C IV : 29, 78, 225, 239-244
      - Indian office . . . . . C IV : 26
      - Suppl. credits Berlin and Paris offices . . . . . C IV : 263
    - Enquiries and investigations . . . . . C IV : 28, 225, 239
    - Entertainment allowances . . . . . C IV : 27-8, 225, 237
    - Exchange, Profit and loss on . . . . . C IV : 31, 22-9

**Budget of League (continued)**

**LABOUR Organisation, Int. (continued)**  
 1928, Tenth financial period (continued)  
 Items of expenditure (continued)

- Furniture, fittings and addl. equip-  
ment . . . . . C IV : 31, 225, 244
- General office expenses C IV : 28, 225, 238
- Governing Body, sessions of C IV : 27, 224, 226
- Library, books, cards, etc. C IV : 31, 225
- Premises of Rome office . . . C IV : 31, 225
- Printing . . . . . C IV : 28, 78, 225, 237
- Property account: Maintenance of  
Geneva office . . . . . C IV : 28, 225, 237
- Refugees, Armenian and Russian  
C IV : 25, 29-31, 59, 79, 84-5, 225, 244, 272 ;  
P : 474
- Suppl. credits . . . . . C IV : 25, 263
- Salaries, wages and allowances  
C IV : 27, 224, 227, 228-236
- Special staff charges C IV : 28, 78, 225, 238
- Supervision of revenue and expend-  
iture . . . . . C IV : 28, 225
- Travelling expenses of officials  
C IV : 26, 27, 224, 236
- Typewriters, calculating machines,  
duplicators, etc. . . . . C IV : 31, 225
- Unforeseen expenses  
C IV : 27, 29, 31, 79, 224, 225, 244.
- Unpaid Liabilities Fund . . . C IV : 28, 225
- Modifications in budget proposed by  
Com. No. 4 . . . . . P : 477, 478
- Supervisory Commission . . . . C IV : 223
- Reductions effected. . . . . C IV : 26
- Suppl. credits requested by I. L. O.  
C IV : 56, 263, 268

Audited accounts for 1926  
 See Audit of League accounts

Correspondents' Offices  
 Capital expenditure of . . . . . C IV : 82  
 Margin in future budgets, need of C IV : 26, 78

**NEW WORK involving new expenditure**  
 Body to consider proposals *vs* new work  
and settle question of priority  
C IV : 13, 14, 60, 271 ; P : 473

Procedure *vs* granting. . . . . C I : 8

Reports of  
 Com. No. 4 . . . . . C IV : 270, 271, 472-3  
 Council and Governing Body of I. L. O.  
C IV : 13, 167-8 (text)
- Supervisory Commission C IV : 12, 44-5, 267
- See also International law, etc. : Credits

**OPIMUM : Perm. Central Board**  
 Estimates proposed (1928) C IV : 72, 266-7, 268  
 Expenses : Question of inclusion in budget  
C IV : 9-10, 39-42, 54-5, 59, 60, 61, 70-1, 260-1,  
272-3

**RECOVERABLE advances**  
 See below under Working Capital Fund

**REPORTS of**  
 Committee No. 4  
 Discussion . . . . . C IV : 58-60  
 Text . . . . . C IV : 270-3 ; P : 472-6
- Council and Secretariat . . . . . P : 230-2, 320-1
- Supervision Commission, see that title

**SECRETARIAT and Special Organisations**  
 1920 to 1926 (first to eighth period)  
 Estimates . . . . . C IV : 214

1926, Eighth financial period

- Appropriations in aid . . . . . C IV : 141
- Depreciation Reserve Fund . . . C IV : 147
- Miscellaneous receipts . . . . . C IV : 142
- Surplus of income over expenditure  
C IV : 145, 151, 152
- Transfers in budget . . . . . C IV : 74, 111-114
- Unforeseen expenses subject to special  
Council vote . . . . . C IV : 74, 109, 111
- Working Capital Fund, recoverable  
advances from . . . . . C IV : 12, 109, 110

**Budget of League (continued)**

**SECRETARIAT and Special Organisations (continued)**  
 1927, Ninth financial period  
 Unforeseen expenditure . . . . C IV : 82-3

1928, Tenth financial period

Discussion  
 General . . . . . C IV : 13-14, 58, 59-60, 270-1  
 Items C IV : 14-17, 17-24, 38-43, 44-56, 58,  
60, 61-6
- Estimates : text . . . . . C IV : 169-204
- General summary . . . . . C IV : 170

Items of expenditure

- Administrative Commissions and  
minorities questions C IV : 18-19, 58, 76,  
172, 189-190, 271-2 ; P : 473
- Administrative Tribunal, Contrib-  
ution towards . . . . . C IV : 188, 254
- Allocation of expenses, Com. on  
C IV : 17-18, 24, 59, 272 ; P : 474
- Armaments, reduction of  
C IV : 23, 77, 83, 173, 199-200
- Suppl. credits . . . . . C IV : 46, 263-4, 268
- Assembly sessions C IV : 14, 75, 171, 174, 263
- Branch offices C IV : 15, 76, 171, 182-3
- Central services . . . . . C IV : 175, 180-1
- Council sessions . . . . . C IV : 14, 171, 174
- Economic and financial organisation  
C IV : 19-21, 76-7, 172, 190-2, 264, 272 ;  
P : 474
- Development (including suppl.  
credits)  
C IV : 21, 46, 77, 83, 172, 192, 265, 268
- Exchange, Profit and loss on C IV : 16, 173
- Frais de représentation C IV : 16, 171, 184
- Furniture, equipment, etc. C IV : 17, 78, 173
- General office expenses  
C IV : 16, 55, 76, 172, 186-7, 262
- Health organisation  
C IV : 22-3, 33, 77, 172, 195-7
- Information section  
C IV : 34, 55, 175, 177, 262
- Berlin Office (suppl. credits) C IV : 55, 262
- Intellectual co-operation, Int. Bu-  
reaux, etc. C IV : 23, 78, 173, 201-2
- Interest charges : Bank account  
C IV : 16, 172
- Internal Administrative Services  
C IV : 175, 178-180
- Int. law, codification of  
Experts' Com. and Preparatory  
Com. of Conference  
C IV : 23, 78, 173, 202 ; P : 195-201
- Suppl. credits  
C IV : 48-51, 60, 62-6, 265, 267, 268
- Latin-American States  
Liaison with. . . . . C IV : 15, 76, 171, 182
- Suppl. credits  
C IV : 46-8, 55, 262, 265, 267, 268
- Legal adviser's Branch . . . . . C IV : 175, 177
- Legal assistance for the poor  
C IV : 23, 173, 202
- Library . . . . . C IV : 13, 173
- Mandates . . . . . C IV : 21, 83, 172, 193-4
- Political section . . . . . C IV : 175, 176
- Press Conference, advisory work  
arising out of . . . . . C IV : 46, 264
- Press Experts, Com. of . . . . . C IV : 173
- Property account: Maintenance  
C IV : 16, 76, 172, 184-5
- Property, Additions to . . . . . C IV : 16, 173
- Publications Dept.  
C IV : 16, 58, 76, 172, 185-6, 271 ; P : 473
- Suppl. credits . . . . . C IV : 55-6, 262-3
- Relief Union, Int. . . . . C IV : 23-4, 173, 203
- Salaries, wages and allowances  
C IV : 15, 171, 175, 176-181
- Slavery Convention, Int. C IV : 23, 173, 202
- Social questions C IV : 23, 77, 172, 197-9
- Special staff charges C IV : 16, 76, 172, 187

**Budget of League (continued)**

**SECRETARIAT and Special Organisations (continued)**  
 1928, Tenth financial period (continued)  
 Items of expenditure (continued)  
 Staff Provident Fund, Contribution  
     C IV : 15, 171, 182  
 Supervision of revenue and expenditure . . . . . C IV : 16, 172  
 Transit organisation C IV : 21-2, 172, 194-5  
     Suppl. credits  
     C IV : 33, 51-3, 53-4, 55, 62, 77, 264,  
     265-6, 268 ; P : 475  
 Travelling expenses of officials  
     C IV : 15-16, 80, 171, 184  
 Unforeseen expenditure  
     of Secretariat . . . . . C IV : 16, 83, 172  
     Subject to special Council vote  
     C IV : 14-15, 83, 168, 171, 174  
 Unpaid Liabilities Fund C IV : 16, 172, 189  
 Modifications in budget proposed by  
     Com. No. 4 . . . . . P : 476-7, 475  
 Statement of income and expenditure C IV : 169  
 Suppl. credits requested by Sec.-Gen.  
     C IV : 55-6, 262-3, 268  
 Audited accounts for 1926  
     See Audit of League accounts  
 Supplementary Credits  
     Procedure . . . . . C IV : 14  
     Transfers in budget. . . . . C IV : 74, 271  
**SUPERVISORY COMMISSION, see that title**  
**SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET** to be submitted in  
 Sept. to regularise suppl. expenditure  
 (proposal) . . . . . C IV : 83  
**SUPPLEMENTARY CREDITS**  
 Report of Supervisory Commission  
     Discussion C IV : 14, 43, 44-56, 59-60, 60, 61-6  
     Text . . . . . C IV : 262-8  
     Time-limit for examination of proposals  
     and procedure in event of disputes P : 195, 475  
**TREASURER of League**  
     Appreciation . . . . . C IV : 24  
     Salary . . . . . C IV : 175, 177  
**UNFORESEEN expenditure**  
     Methods of excluding from budget proposed.  
     . . . . . C IV : 83  
     Payment by Members concerned for investigations  
     made on their behalf  
     C IV : 12, 13, 21, 22, 47, 271 ; P : 473  
**WORKING CAPITAL FUND**  
     Account for 1926. . . . . C IV : 148  
     Contributions . . . . . C IV : 203  
     Increase of Fund in order to exclude  
     unforeseen items. . . . . C IV : 83  
     Recoverable advances made from fund  
     C IV : 12, 73, 109, 110  
     Repayment to Fund of advance made to  
     Labour Organisation . . . . . C IV : 74  
     Total as at Dec. 31, 1926 . . . . . C IV : 107-8, 161

**Buildings at Geneva for League of Nations**

**CONFERENCE HALL and new Secretariat Offices**  
 Committee appointed to deal with building  
 operations . . . . . C IV : 74  
 Committee of Five to choose plan  
     C IV : 58 ; P : 192, 194, 467  
 Credits voted by Assembly . . . . . P : 192  
 General Committee  
     Reference of question to, and proposals  
     P : 32, 106  
 Proposal of Netherlands delegation re  
 number of plans to be finally examined  
     C IV : 57-8 ; P : 183-4, 193, 194  
 Rapporteur to Assembly . . . . . C IV : 60  
 Reports of  
     Council and Secretariat . . . . . P : 365-6  
     Special Committee and Com. No. 4  
     Discussion . . . . . P : 182-5, 192-4  
     Text . . . . . P : 466-7, 467

**Buildings at Geneva for League of Nations (continued)**

**CONFERENCE HALL and new Secretariat Offices (cdt.)**  
 Resolution of Assembly, Sept. 26, 1927 . . . . . P : 192  
 Secretary-General's : report examined . . . . . C IV : 56  
 Special Committee to examine question  
     Members and terms of reference . . . . . P : 106, 466  
     Report . . . . . P : 466-7  
**HÔTEL NATIONAL and Villa Armleder**  
 Procedure re offers for purchase C IV : 38, 259-260  
**LABOUR OFFICE, annex to new building**  
     Cost of equipping . . . . . C IV : 84  
**NEW temp. annex**  
     Budget estimates (1928) . . . . . C IV : 55, 262  
     Cost charged to Building Fund. . . . . C IV : 73  
 See also : Budget : Buildings at Geneva

**Bulgaria**

See also Bouroff, Athanase D.  
 Molloff, Wladimir  
**DELEGATION** . . . . . P : 12  
**DISPUTE** between Greece and Bulgaria, see  
 that title  
**LOAN ISSUED**  
 See under Refugees : Bulgarian, etc.  
**REFUGEES**  
 See Refugees : Bulgarian, etc.

**Buoyage**

See Maritime navigation : Buoyage and  
 lighting of coasts

**Burkhardt, Walther**

Substitute-representative of Switzerland . . . . . P : 20  
**ALCOHOLISM** . . . . . C II : 32  
**OPIUM traffic** . . . . . C V : 26

**Bureaux, International**

**BUDGET ESTIMATES** for 1928 . . . . . C IV : 201, 202  
**LEAGUE co-operation with.** . . . . . P : 310-11  
**PUBLICATIONS** . . . . . P : 311

**Burma, Slavery in** . . . . . C VI : 8

**Butler, H. B.**

**ADMINISTRATIVE Tribunal** . . . . . C IV : 36

**C**

**Caballero, Dr. Ramon V**

Delegate of Paraguay . . . . . P : 18  
**ARBITRATION and conciliation** . . . . . P : 100  
**INTERNATIONAL LAW : Codification**  
     Proposal of Paraguay C I : 21 (statement) P : 99,  
     210-11 (statement)  
     Questions to be codified . . . . . C I : 12  
**REPORT** on work of Council and Secretariat P : 99-100

**Caclamanos, Demètre**

Delegate of Greece . . . . . P : 15  
**REFUGEES : Greek : Settlement and financial  
 reconstruction scheme** . . . . . C II : 62

**Cadogan, The Hon. Alexander**

Secretary-General, delegation of British Empire . . . . . P : 12

**WAR or threat of war**  
     Financial assistance for States victims  
     of aggression . . . . . C III : 60

**Calboli Barone, Marquis Paulucci di**  
 TRIBUTE of Committee No. 4 . . . . . C IV: 37, 61

**Campbell, Sir John** (Chairman of Advisory  
 Committee on Opium)  
 OPIUM: Permanent Central Board . . . . . C V: 42

**Canada**  
*See also* Dandurand, The Hon. Raoul  
 Riddell, Walter A.  
 Roy, The Hon. Philippe  
 DELEGATION . . . . . P: 12

**Captains and Crews of Ships, Treatment of** . . . . . P: 289

**Cassin, René**  
 Assistant delegate of France . . . . . P: 14  
 ARBITRATION, security and disarmament C III: 69, 70  
 Draft optional convention for compulsory  
 arbitration . . . . . C III: 43  
 ARMS and ammunition, Private manufacture  
 of . . . . . C III: 45

**Casts** . . . . . C II: 16; P: 130, 133

**Cavazzoni, Stefano**  
 Substitute-representative of Italy . . . . . P: 16  
 BUDGET (1928)  
 Labour Organisation, Int. . . . .  
 Refugee Service . . . . . C IV: 59  
 Suppl. credits . . . . . C IV: 44-5  
 CHILDREN and young people, Protection of . . . . . P: 73-4  
 CONTRIBUTIONS of States to League  
 Increase possible . . . . . C IV: 44  
 DOCUMENTS of League, Excessive number of . . . . . C IV: 45  
 LEAGUE of Nations  
 Competence to extend sphere of activities  
 . . . . . C IV: 44-5  
 OPIUM  
 Perm. Central Board: Expenses . . . . . C IV: 39-40,  
 41-2, 55, 59; C V: 40-1, 45-6; P: 75  
 Traffic in . . . . . P: 75-6  
 RELIEF Union, Int. . . . . C II: 55-6  
 REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 72-6  
 SALARIES of staff at Geneva, adjustment . . . . . C IV: 56-7  
 SECRETARIAT  
 Publications . . . . . C IV: 45  
 Transfers of officials from one section to  
 another . . . . . C IV: 45  
 TRAFFIC in women and children . . . . . P: 74-5

**Cavendish-Bentinck, V.**  
 Secretary, delegation of British Empire . . . . . P: 12  
 MORAL disarmament . . . . . C VI: 16  
 PRESS: Agencies, protection of information  
 and work of Press Conference . . . . . C VI: 16  
 TELEPHONIC and telegraphic rates . . . . . C VI: 16

**Chaleographic Exhibitions** C II: 12, 15, 69; P: 131, 309

**Chamber of Commerce, Int.**  
 APPROBATION of recommendations of Int.  
 Economic Conference . . . . . C II: 39; P: 25, 40, 47  
 CO-OPERATION with Economic Consultative  
 Committee . . . . . C II: 53, 109; P: 144, 450, 451

**Chamberlain, Sir Auston**  
 Delegate of British Empire . . . . . P: 12  
 ARBITRATION, security and disarmament . . . . . P: 96-9  
 REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 95-9

**Chemical Warfare**  
*See under* Armaments, reduction, etc.

**Children and Young People, Protection and  
 Welfare of**  
 in Com. No. 5  
 Discussion and documents . . . . . C V: 11-14, 55-6  
 Report . . . . . C V: 55-6; P: 419-20  
 in Plenary Meetings  
 Discussion and documents  
 . . . . . P: 73-4, 123, 302-4, 419-20  
 Resolution, Sept. 20, 1927 . . . . . P: 423  
 Age of consent and of marriage  
 . . . . . C V: 12-13, 14, 30, 34, 35, 55, 99; P: 121, 122,  
 123, 300, 301, 303, 418, 420  
 ALCOHOLISM in relation to child welfare . . . . . P: 74, 303  
 BIOLOGICAL education . . . . . C V: 13, 35  
 BLIND children . . . . . C V: 55; P: 123, 303, 420  
 BUDGET ESTIMATES for 1928 . . . . . C IV: 198-9

**CHILD WELFARE COMMITTEE**  
 Consultation *vs* establishment of Int.  
 Educational Cinema Institute C II: 19; C V: 12  
 Extension of activities to national ques-  
 tions . . . . . C V: 12  
 Minutes of discussion in Com. No. 5 to  
 be communicated to . . . . . C V: 13, 14  
 Rapporteur of Com. No. 5 . . . . . C V: 10, 14  
 Reports on work of 3rd session  
*See below* Reports  
 Rules of procedure, Changes in . . . . . P: 303  
 Sub-Committees  
 Agenda: Creation and work of  
 . . . . . C V: 55; P: 302, 304, 419  
 Legal: Work of . . . . . C V: 56; P: 303, 420  
 Liaison: Consideration of report of . . . . . P: 302

**CINEMA**  
 Harmful effects and promotion of good  
 films . . . . . C V: 12, 13, 14, 55; P: 123, 302, 419  
*See also above* Child welfare Com.: Con-  
 sultation, etc.

**FAMILY allowances** . . . . . C V: 55; P: 123, 303, 420

**GRANTS, Employment of** . . . . . P: 304

**ILLEGITIMATE children**  
 . . . . . C V: 12, 13, 14, 55; P: 73, 123, 304, 419

**INFANCY**  
*See* Infant welfare, etc.

**JUVENILE COURTS: Int. Prison Commission  
 enquiry** . . . . . C V: 55; P: 303, 420

**LEGISLATION in Africa, Italy, Norway** . . . . . C V: 13

**MAINTENANCE, Execution of judgments *vs***  
 . . . . . C V: 56; P: 123, 303, 420

**MINUTES of Com. No. 5 discussion to be  
 communicated to Child Welfare Com.** C V: 13, 14

**RAPPORTEUR of Com. No. 5** . . . . . C V: 10, 14

**RECREATION, Mental and physical**  
 . . . . . C V: 55; P: 123, 302, 420

**REPATRIATION and relief of minors**  
 . . . . . C V: 56; P: 123, 420

**REPORTS of**  
 Com. No. 5  
 Draft submitted by M. Janson . . . . . C V: 55-6  
 Discussed and amended . . . . . C V: 11-14  
 Final text . . . . . P: 419-20  
 Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 302-4  
 RESOLUTION of Assembly, Sept. 20, 1927 . . . . . P: 123  
 SLUMS, Campaign against . . . . . C V: 13; P: 74

**Chile**  
*See also* Iñiguez, Pedro F.  
 Mackenna, Dr. Luis Calvo  
 Quezada, Arnando  
 Villegas, Enrique  
 DELEGATION . . . . . P: 12



**China**  
 BRITISH policy in . . . . . P: 250-1  
 CONTRIBUTION to League in arrears: Proposed  
 action . . . . . P: 137  
 DELEGATION . . . . . P: 13

**Cholera** . . . . . P: 294

**Clelens, Felix**  
 Delegate of Latvia . . . . . P: 17  
 ARBITRATION, security and disarmament . . . . . P: 44-6

**Cinematograph**  
 CONGRESS, Paris and Basle . . . . . C II: 15, 70  
 EDUCATIONAL CINEMATOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE, Int.  
 Consultation of competent organisations of League  
 vs powers, duties and organisation  
 C II: 17, 18, 19, 25; C V: 12, 14  
 Offer of Italian Govt. made by Count  
 Cippico . . . . . P: 34-5  
 Proposal referred to Agenda Com. and  
 report of Agenda Com. . . . . P: 48, 70  
 Rapporteur of Com. No. 2 . . . . . C II: 25  
 Reports of  
 Sub-Com. submitted by M. Gallavresi C II: 93  
 Discussed and amended . . . . . C II: 17, 25  
 Final text as adopted by Com. No. 2 P: 137, 428  
 Study by Institute of Intellectual Co-  
 operation . . . . . C II: 15-16, 18, 70; P: 132, 362  
 Sub-Com. of Com. No. 2  
 Composition . . . . . C II: 19  
 Report  
 See above Report of Sub-Com.  
 EFFECT on children . . . . . C V: 12, 13, 14, 55  
 See also above: Educational, etc.

**Cippico, Count Antonio**  
 Substitute-representative of Italy . . . . . P: 16  
 CINEMATOGRAPHIC Institute offered by Italian  
 Govt. . . . . P: 34-5

**Ciraolo, Senator**  
 TRIBUTE to . . . . . C II: 56; P: 76, 136, 442, 443

**Classification of Diplomatic Agents, Revision of**  
 See Diplomatic Agents, Revision, etc.

**Coasting Trade** . . . . . P: 53

**Codification of International Law**  
 • S<sup>A</sup> International law, Codification of

**Colban, Erik**  
 BUDGET of Secretariat and Special Organisa-  
 tions (1928)  
 • Administrative Commissions and minor-  
 ities questions . . . . . C IV: 18

**Columbia**  
 See also Gaitán-Hurtado, Dr. Efraín  
 Restrepo, Dr. Antonio José  
 Urrutia, Dr. Francisco José  
 DELEGATION . . . . . P: 13

**Commerce**  
 "ENTENTES" . . . . . C II: 47  
 LIBERTY of  
 See: Import and export prohibitions, etc.  
 NATIONAL, Protection . . . . . P: 340  
 REPRESENTATION of experts on Economic  
 Consultative Committee see under Eco-  
 nomic and financial organisation: Con-  
 sultative Committee

**Commerce (continued)**  
 TREATIES, Commercial  
 Duration . . . . . C II: 36, 39, 40, 44; P: 149, 339  
 Franco-German C II: 40, 42-3, 48; P: 79, 144  
 Most-favoured-nation clause *see that title*  
 See also under Customs: Tariffs: Col-  
 lective conventions, etc.

**Commercial Arbitration**  
 FOREIGN arbitral awards, Execution of  
 Convention  
 Committee of jurists vs study of Govt.  
 observations  
 Composition . . . . . C II: 18, 88  
 Draft Protocol . . . . . P: 275  
 Rapporteur . . . . . C II: 10, 63  
 Reports of  
 Com. of jurists . . . . . C II: 81-4  
 Adopted . . . . . C II: 63  
 Com. No. 2 . . . . . P: 179, 457-60  
 Resolutions  
 of Assembly, Sept. 26, 1927 . . . . . P: 180  
 Legal experts, April 1927 to Econo-  
 mic Committee . . . . . C II: 81  
 Sub-Com. of jurists of Com. No. 2 C II: 84  
 Signatures . . . . . P: 401  
 Text, as proposed by Com. of jurists C II: 84-87  
 Discussed and amended in Com. No. 2  
 C II: 62-3  
 Text submitted to Assembly  
 New text submitted by British  
 Govt. . . . . C II: 71-4  
 Observations, etc., proposed by var-  
 ious Govts. . . . . C II: 75-8  
 Legislation in various countries vs C II: 79-81  
 vs INTERPRETATION, etc. of treaties of com-  
 merce . . . . . C II: 48; P: 40, 340  
 PROTOCOL, 1923: Ratification C II: 100-1, 102; P: 401

**Commercial Corporations**  
 NATIONALITY and question of diplomatic  
 protection . . . . . C I: 47-8, 49  
 RECOGNITION of legal personality of foreign  
 C I: 47-8, 49

**Commercial Policy and Treaties**  
 See under Customs: Tariffs and Most-fav-  
 oured-nation clause

**Commercial Property**  
 See under Industry: Industrial property

**Committees of Assembly**  
 CHAIRMEN, list of . . . . . P: 32  
 COMMITTEE No. I  
 Agenda  
 Adoption of . . . . . C I: 7  
 Items . . . . . C I: 6  
 Procedure for discussion . . . . . C I: 7  
 Chairman . . . . . C I: 4  
 Close of session . . . . . C I: 37  
 Liaison Sub-Com. of Coms. Nos. 1 and 4  
 See that title below  
 Members, List of . . . . . C I: 4-5  
 Minutes of meetings . . . . . C I: 7-8  
 Publicity of meetings . . . . . C I: 7  
 Rapporteurs . . . . . C I: 7, 34, 37, 51  
 Reports  
 on International law: Codification of P: 484, 489  
 on Treaties, etc.: Accession given  
 subject to ratification . . . . . P: 447  
 See also below under Sub-Coms. on  
 subjects concerned

**Committees of Assembly (continued)**

**COMMITTEE No. 1 (continued)**

- Sub-Committees on:
- Compulsory arbitration : Draft optional convention
    - Appointment and composition C I : 27, 51
    - Rapporteur . . . . . C I : 51
    - Report . . . . . C I : 51
  - International Law : Codification of
    - Appointment and composition C I : 21 ; P : 484, 489
    - Reports . . . . . C I : 53-8 ; P : 484-8, 489-90
    - Treaties, etc. : Accession given subject to ratification
      - Appointment and composition C I : 8, 10 ; P : 447
      - Report . . . . . C I : 52 ; P : 447-8
    - Vice-chairman, Election of . . . . . C I : 7

**COMMITTEE No. 2**

- Agenda . . . . . C II : 7
- Chairman . . . . . C II : 5, 9
- Drafting Committee (Economics)
  - Constitution and members . . . . . C II : 55
  - Resolution . . . . . C II : 58-9
- Members, List of . . . . . C II : 5-6
- Mixed Com. of Coms. Nos. 2 and 4 . . . . .  
*See that title below*
- Programme of work . . . . . C II : 9-10, 13-14
- Publicity of meetings . . . . . C II : 9
- Rapporteurs . . . . . C II : 9, 10, 17, 25
- Reports
  - Economic Committee, Work of C II : 99-102 ; P : 430-3
  - Economic Conf., Int., Work of C II : 108-10 ; P : 448-51
  - Financial Committee, Work of C II : 103-5 ; P : 443-5
  - Health . . . . . C II : 88-90 ; 90-3 ; P : 421-4, 424-7
  - Intellectual co-operation C II : 68-70 ; P : 433-6
  - Refugees
    - Bulgarian : Settlement, etc. . . . . C II : 93-4
    - Greek : Settlement and financial reconstruction . . . . . C II : 105-8 ; P : 437-9
    - Relief Union, Int . . . . . C II : 102-3 ; P : 442-3
    - Transit and communications C II : 95-9 ; P : 479-83
- Sub-Committee on execution of foreign arbitral awards . . . . . C II : 18, 88
- Vice-chairman, Election of . . . . . C II : 9

**COMMITTEE No. 3**

- Agenda . . . . . C III : 7, 8-9
- Chairman . . . . . C III : 5
- Speeches at opening and close of session . . . . . C III : 9, 70-1
- Close of session . . . . . C III : 70-2
- Members, List of . . . . . C III : 5-6
- Minutes of meetings . . . . . C III : 16
- Procedure *re* work C III : 9-10, 15, 33-4, 40, 41-2, 57
- Proposals not covered by credits for 1928, Information requested *re*. . . . . C III : 16
- Rapporteurs . . . . . C III : 57
- Reports on
  - Arbitration, security and disarmament . . . . . C III : 79-84 ; P : 453-6
  - Arms and ammunition, etc., Private manufacture of . . . . . C III : 76-7 ; P : 451-2
- Sub-Committee
  - Appointment and composition . . . . . C III : 47
  - Vice-chairman, Election of . . . . . C III : 9

**COMMITTEE No. 4**

- Agenda . . . . . C IV : 9, 69
- Annexes to minutes, list . . . . . C IV : 67
- Chairman
  - Speeches at opening and close of session . . . . . C IV : 9, 61
- Correspondence received or despatched by . . . . . C IV : 10

**Committees of Assembly (continued)**

**COMMITTEE No. 4 (continued)**

- Liaison Sub-Com. of Coms. Nos. 1 and 4, *see that title below*
- Members
  - Changes during session . . . . . C IV : 61
  - List . . . . . C IV : 6-7
- Mixed Com. of Coms. Nos. 2 and 4, *see that title below*
- Publicity of meetings . . . . . C IV : 9
- Rapporteurs . . . . . C IV : 13, 60
- Reports on
  - General questions . . . . . C IV : 270-3 ; P : 472, 6
  - Resolutions referred to, by Com. No. 2 *re* credits . . . . . C II : 61
  - Resolutions submitted to Assembly. C IV : 273
- Room for meetings . . . . . C IV : 10-11
- Sub-Committees
  - Constitution . . . . . C IV : 10
  - on Adjustment of salaries of League staff
    - Appointment and composition . . . . . C IV : 37
  - on Administrative Tribunal
    - Appointment . . . . . C IV : 11
    - Report . . . . . C IV : 250
  - on Contributions of States in arrears
    - Appointment . . . . . C IV : 11
    - Report examined. . . . . C IV : 35
  - Tribute to the Marquis Paulucci di Calboli Barone . . . . . C IV : 37
  - Tribute to M. Luis Waddington . . . . . C IV : 44
  - Vice-chairman, Election of . . . . . C IV : 9

**COMMITTEE No. 5**

- Agenda
  - Adoption . . . . . C V : 9
  - Items . . . . . C V : 7
- Chairman, Opening speech by . . . . . C V : 9
- Close of session . . . . . C V : 47
- Members, List of . . . . . C V : 5-6
- Minutes of meetings
  - Approval of . . . . . C V : 10
  - Nature of . . . . . C V : 44
- Publicity of meeting . . . . . C V : 10
- Rapporteurs, C V : 9-10, 10, 11, 14, 18, 27, 28
- Reports on
  - Children and young people, Protection and welfare of . . . . . C V : 55-6 ; P : 419-20
  - Opium
    - Commission of Enquiry to Persia C V : 93-6 ; P : 414-17
    - Perm. Central Board, Expenses of C V : 100-2
    - Work of Advisory Com. C V : 96-7 ; P : 413, 14
  - Refugees : Russian and Armenian C V : 56-9 ; P : 467-71
  - Traffic in women and children C V : 97-8 ; P : 417-19
  - Women and children in Near East, Protection of. . . . . C V : 50 ; P : 410-1
- Sub-Committees on Permanent Central Board *re* opium . . . . . C V : 44, 46, 47
- Vice-chairman : Election . . . . . C V : 9

**COMMITTEE No. 6**

- Agenda . . . . . C VI : 7, 8
- Chairman
  - Election. . . . . C VI : 7
- Close of session . . . . . C VI : 25
- Members, list of . . . . . C VI : 5-6
- Minutes of meetings, nature of . . . . . C VI : 8
- Publicity of meetings . . . . . C VI : 7
- Reports on
  - Council, procedure *re* election of non-perm. Members. . . . . P : 440
  - Mandates . . . . . C VI : 29-30 ; P : 446-7
  - Press Experts Conference C VI : 28-9 ; P : 441-2
  - Slavery . . . . . C VI : 28 ; P : 439-40

**Committees of Assembly (continued)**

- COMMITTEE No. 6 (continued)  
 Sub. Committee of Enquiry  
     Appointment . . . . . C VI: 13  
     Report . . . . . C VI: 22-3  
     Vice-chairman, election of . . . . . C VI: 7  
 CONSTITUTION . . . . . P: 31  
 CREDENTIALS Committee  
     See under Credentials of delegates  
 DISTRIBUTION of items of agenda among . . . . . P: 31-2  
 GENERAL Committee  
 ● Chairman of Agenda Com. appointed as member . . . . . P: 20, 31  
     Constitution . . . . . P: 20  
     M. Motta appointed as hon. member . . . . . P: 31  
     Reference of question of alcoholism for procedure *re* study of . . . . . C II: 9, 9-10  
 LIAISON Sub-Committees (Coms. Nos. 1 and 4)  
     Appointment . . . . . C IV: 49, 50  
 MIXED Committees  
     of Committees Nos. 1 and 3  
         Constitution . . . . . C III: 56, 57  
     of Committees Nos. 2 and 4 *re* transit questions  
         Constitution and report . . . . . C II: 64, 65  
 PROGRAMME of meetings . . . . . P: 33

**Committees and Commissions of League**

- For individual Committees see the subjects concerned*  
 MINUTES of Committees and Sub-Committees: Printing . . . . . C IV: 38  
 PRESS communiqués *re* proceedings prepared by Information section . . . . . C IV: 217  
 REDUCTION of number and convocation at longer intervals . . . . . C IV: 45  
 SECRETARIAT work in connection with . . . . . C IV: 209-10  
 STATISTICAL table showing Committees between 1920 and 1927 . . . . . C IV: 211  
 SUBSISTENCE allowances for members  
     C IV: 38, 81-2, 83, 258, 268-9 (*text of scale*)  
 SUPPLEMENTARY credits requested by  
     See Budget: Suppl. credits

**Communications**

See Transit and communications

**Comnène, Nicolas Petresco**

- Delegate of Roumania . . . . . P: 19  
 ARBITRATION, security and disarmament  
     C III: 28-9, 66; P: 171  
 AVIATION: Belgian proposal *re* . . . . . C III: 52  
 REFUGEES, Russian and Armenian . . . . . P: 191  
 WAR or threat of war  
     ● Financial assistance for States victims of aggression . . . . . C III: 62

**Compulsory Arbitration**

See under Arbitration, security, etc.

**Conference Hall and New Buildings for Use of Secretariat**

See under Buildings of League at Geneva

**Conferences of League**

*For individual Conferences see the subjects concerned*

- QUESTIONS affecting non-Member States: payment of contributions towards expenses . . . . . C IV: 13, 14, 271; P: 473

**Conferences of League (continued)**

- SECRETARIAT, work in connection with . . . . . C IV: 209-10  
 STATISTICAL table showing Conferences between 1920 and 1926 . . . . . C IV: 211  
 SUPPLEMENTARY credits requested by  
     See Budget: Suppl. credits

**Conferences, Procedure of Int.**

See Procedure of Int. Conferences, etc.

**Constantinople**

- FURNITURE of Neutral House in . . . . . C IV: 38-9, 260; P: 357-8

**Consular Academy at Vienna. . . . . C II: 14**

**Consuls, Legal Position and Functions of**

- QUESTIONNAIRE *re*, sent to Govts. . . . . C I: 48

**Consumers' Co-operative Societies**

- CO-OPERATION with Economic Consultative Committee . . . . . C II: 110; P: 450

**Contributions of States to League**

**ARREARS**

- Payments made between 1926 and 1927 . . . . . C IV: 139-141  
     Report of Com. No. 4. . . . . P: 445  
     Resolution of Assembly, Sept. 22, 1927 . . . . . P: 137-8  
     to form Special heading in budget . . . . . C IV: 12, 73  
     Statement showing arrears (Jan. 1-Aug. 31, 1927) . . . . . C IV: 165-7  
     Sub-Com. of Com. No. 4  
         Appointment and Composition . . . . . C IV: 11  
         Report examined. . . . . C IV: 35  
         Total arrears for 1920-1926 . . . . . C IV: 160-1, 164-5  
 INCREASE anticipated . . . . . C IV: 44  
 LEGAL position of States which do not pay. . . . . P: 229  
 MAXIMUM limit of individual contributions  
     C IV: 13, 271; P: 473  
 SUMS paid and balances due as on Aug. 31, 1927 . . . . . C IV: 160, 163; P: 194  
 UNITS of contribution of States in 1926, 1927, 1928 . . . . . C IV: 60

**Conventions-**

See under Treaties, etc.

**Convocation of Assembly**

- TELEGRAM from Dr. Stresemann, Acting President of Cl. . . . . P: 8

**Co-operation, Int. Economic . . . . . C II: 41, 43**

**Co-operative Societies, Agricultural**

See under Agriculture: Organisation, etc.

**Copyright . . . . . C II: 12, 15, 69; P: 361**

**Correspondence Offices of Int. Labour Office**

See that title under Labour: Labour Office, Int.

**Cosío, Pedro**

- Delegate of Uruguay . . . . . P: 20  
 ALCOHOLISM . . . . . C II: 30  
 ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of. . . . . C II: 46

**Cost of Living and Adjustment of Salaries of League Staff**

- ITALIAN proposal *re* prov. readjustment . . . . . C IV: 57  
 LABOUR office staff, resolution adopted by, Feb. 14, 1927 . . . . . C IV: 69

**Cost of Living and Adjustment of Salaries of League Staff (continued)**

- MEMO. by two members of Supervisory Commission . . . . . C IV : 87-9
- New enquiry to be undertaken by Salaries Adjustment Com. . . . . P : 194
- REPORTS OF
  - Committee No. 4 . . . . . P : 471-2
  - Supervisory Commission C IV : 79-80, 85-6, 261-2
- RESOLUTION of Assembly, Sept. 26, 1927. . . . . P : 194
- SECRETARIAT staff, resolution adopted by, Jan. 1927 . . . . . C IV : 89
- STATISTICAL tables showing cost of living prepared by Labour Office. . . . . C IV : 261
- SUB-COMMITTEE
  - Appointment and composition C IV : 11-12, 37
  - Report . . . . . C IV : 43, 56-7, 270 (last)

**Council of League**

- ACTION in times of emergency and facilitation of meetings
  - See War, etc. : Council action, etc.
- APPEAL to Council by Secretariat staff rescinded . . . . . C IV : 255 ; P : 201
- ELECTION of non-perm. Members
  - Date . . . . . P : 55
  - Members elected and procedure . . . . . P : 116
  - Open procedure advocated . . . . . P : 58
  - Re-eligibility of Belgium
    - Request from Belgian delegate and result of ballot . . . . . P : 41-2, 115
  - Reservation of right of candidature of Persia. . . . . P : 116-17
  - System of single transferable vote and proportional representation
    - Discussion in Committee No. 6 C VI : 10, 10-13
    - Mixed Sub-Com. of Coms. Nos. 1 and 6
      - Proposed . . . . . C VI : 7, 13
      - Procedure *vs.* . . . . . C I : 7
      - Rapporteur to Assembly . . . . . C VI : 23
    - Reports of
      - Com. No. 6 . . . . . P : 440
      - Council and Secretariat . . . . . P : 252-3
    - Resolution adopting report, Sept. 22, 1927 . . . . . P : 135
    - Sub-Committee of Enquiry
      - Appointment . . . . . C VI : 13
      - Report . . . . . C VI : 22-3
- ESTABLISHMENT of Economic Consultative Committee C II : 50, 51, 51-2, 53, 54, 59, 60
- INACTIVITY *vs.* political questions of importance . . . . . P : 58, 59, 72
- MEASURES Member States prepared to take in time of emergency to support recommendations of . . . C III : 53, 54, 55, 67-8, 81, 84 ; P : 160, 162, 165, 169, 178, 455, 456
- MEDIATION of, in disputes
  - C I : 22, 23, 24, 28, 31, 51, 52 ; C III : 70, 80 ; P : 39, 46-7, 59, 72, 454
- NON-PERMANENT Members, Election of
  - See above Election, etc.
- PRESS summary of proceedings prepared by Information Section . . . . . C IV : 217
- REDUCTION of number of sessions proposed P : 39, 58
- REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat
  - Discussion . . . . . P : 35-41, 42-8, 49-54, 55-69, 71-8, 79-86, 86-103, 109-114
  - Text of report, suppl. report and annex P : 225-317, 318-366, 367-412
- RESOLUTION, June 16, 1927 *vs.* report of Economic Conference . . . . . P : 342
- SECRET procedure and private deliberations P : 46-7, 57-8

**Council of League (continued)**

- SESSIONS
  - between 1920 and 1926 : Statistical table C IV : 211
  - Budget estimates. . . . . C IV : 14, 171, 174
- Counterfeit Currency . . . . . C II : 56, 57 ; P : 286, 351
- Court of International Justice, Permanent
  - AUDITED accounts for 1926
    - See under Audit of League accounts
  - BUDGET
    - See Court of Int. Justice under Budget of League
  - CONFERENCE of States signatories of Protocol Expenses . . . . . C IV : 109, 111
  - Final Act, 1926 : List of signatures . . . . . P : 400
  - EDITING secretary : Creation of new post C IV : 249
  - ENLARGEMENT of accommodation for credits C II : 38, 259, 273, 475-6
  - JUDGES
    - Duty and subsistence allowance . . . . . C IV : 247
    - Travelling expenses. . . . . C IV : 247, 248
  - JUDGES, DEPUTY
    - Substitution for titular judges and remuneration . . . . . C IV : 12, 37, 79, 86-7
  - OPTIONAL Clause (Art. 36 of Statute)
    - Ratifications, etc. . . . . P : 57, 81, 93, 399
    - Recommendations of Com. No. 1 *vs.* C I : 22, 29, 30, 31, 32, 51 ; C III : 70, 80 ; P : 453
  - PRESIDENT
    - Removal expenses of retiring and newly appointed Presidents . . . . . C IV : 249
  - PRESS, Liaison between Court and . . . . . C IV : 32, 35
  - PROTOCOL of signature
    - List of ratifications, etc. . . . . P : 399
  - REGISTRAR and registry officials
    - Travelling expenses. . . . . C IV : 31, 246
  - RELATIONS with Administrative Tribunal. . . . . C IV : 249
  - SALARIES
    - Annual of members. . . . . C IV : 248
    - of Temp. staff, etc. C IV : 31-3, 35, 59, 247, 248, 272
  - SESSIONS
    - Budget estimates, 1928 C IV : 31, 245, 246, 247
  - SPECIAL section for arbitration *vs.* commercial treaties proposed . . . . . C II : 48 ; P : 40, 340
- Courts, Competence of, in regard to Foreign States
  - QUESTIONNAIRE *vs.*, sent to Govts. C I : 48 ; P : 208
- Covenant of League
  - AMENDMENTS, Protocols of
    - List of ratifications, etc. . . . . P : 404-11
    - Report of Council and Secretariat . . . . . P : 320
  - ART. 3
    - See League, etc. : Sphere of activities, etc.
  - ART. 4
    - Amendment : Ratifications (including list) and entry into force . . . . . P : 320, 404
    - See also League, etc. : Sphere of activities, etc.
  - ART. 6 : Amendments
    - List of ratifications, etc. . . . . P : 405-6
  - ART. 8
    - Par. 5 : Private manufacture of arms, etc. C III : 17
    - Par. 6 : Information from League members *vs.* scale of armaments, etc. C III : 18, 33
    - See also Armaments, reduction, etc.

**Covenant of League (continued)**

- ART. 9  
Perm. Advisory Commission  
*See under* Armaments, etc.
- ART. 10  
Obligations of League Members under,  
in case of aggression  
*See War, etc.*: Aggression, etc.
- ART. 11  
*See War, etc.*: Council action, etc.:  
Application, etc.
- ART. 12: Amendment  
List of ratifications, etc. . . . . P: 406
- ART. 13  
Amendment: List of ratifications, etc. P: 407  
Arbitration under  
C I: 23, 24, 25; C III: 18, 30-1; P: 159
- ART. 15: Amendment  
List of ratifications, etc. . . . . P: 407
- ART. 16  
Amendments  
List of ratifications, etc. . . . . P: 408-9, 411  
Non-entry into force . . . . . P: 320  
*See also under War, etc.*: Economic and  
financial relations, etc.: *and* Financial  
assistance, etc.
- ARTS. 18 and 20  
Treaties, League action *re* . . . . . C III: 18
- ART. 26: Amendments  
List of ratifications, etc. . . . . P: 410-11  
Non-entry into force . . . . . P: 320
- PARAGRAPHS of articles, Numbering of. . . . . P: 229
- PREAMBLE and Articles 3 and 4: Inter-  
pretation *see* League, etc.: Sphere of  
activities, etc.
- RELATION to Polish declaration *re* wars of  
aggression . . . . . P: 85-6
- STUDY of principles of: Netherlands proposal  
*See under* Arbitration, security, etc.

**Credentials of Delegates to Assembly**

- COMMITTEE on verification of  
Appointment and composition . . . . . P: 27  
Reports . . . . . P: 27-8

**Credits**

- AGRICULTURAL *see under* Agriculture:  
• Organisation, etc.
- for INTERNATIONAL LAW Codification  
*See under* Int. Law, etc.
- for NEW WORK undertaken by League  
*See* Budget: New work, etc.

**Cuba**

- See also* Agüero y Bethancourt, Aristides de  
Blanck, Guillermo de Ferrara,  
Orestes Portela, Ramiro Hernán-  
dez
- DELEGATION . . . . . P: 13

**Currency**

- BANKING and currency reform in Estonia  
*See under* Estonia
- COUNTERFEIT . . . . . C II: 36, 57; P: 286, 351

**Customs**

- CONVENTION for simplification of formalities  
*See below* Formalities, etc.
- FALSE declarations . . . . . C II: 100, 102; P: 275

**Customs (continued)**

- FORMALITIES: Convention for Simplification,  
1923  
Application . . . . . C II: 100, 102; P: 274-5  
Ratifications (including list) C II: 100; P: 274, 402
- NOMENCLATURE, Unification C II: 40, 41, 43, 45,  
100, 102; P: 40, 142, 143, 150, 154, 339, 345, 346
- TARIFFS  
Bilateral agreements, *see below under* . . . . .  
Collective conventions  
Collective conventions *re*: Swedish pro-  
posal C II: 42, 58; P: 40, 153, 154, 339, 450  
*See also* Most-favoured-nation clause, etc.  
Persian customs policy. . . . . C II: 41-2; P: 149  
Protective . . . . . C II: 39, 44; P: 37, 71, 151  
Reduction and stabilisation of rates  
C II: 35-6, 36, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 48  
P: 37, 142, 149, 152, 152-3, 339  
Work of Economic Committee *re* C II: 100, 102

**Czechoslovakia**

- See also* Beneš, Dr. Eduard  
Osuský, Dr. Stephan  
Veverka, Dr. Ferdinand
- DELEGATION . . . . . P: 13

**D**

**Dandurand, The Hon. Raoul**

- Delegate of Canada. . . . . P: 12
- ARBITRATION, security and disarmament P: 112-13
- ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . P: 113
- RELIEF Union, Int. . . . . P: 105
- REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat P: 112-13

**Danzig, Free City of**

- FINANCIAL reconstruction loan  
C II: 57, 104-5; P: 137, 284-5, 349, 444-5
- REPORT of Council and Secretariat  
P: 259-60, 284-5, 328-9, 349

**Death, Causes of**

- REVISION of int. list of . . . . . P: 295

**Delano, F. A. (Chairman of Opium Commission of Enquiry)**

- OPIUM: Work of Commission of Enquiry in  
Persia . . . . . C V: 18-19, 26

**Delegates and Delegations to Assembly**

- CREDENTIALS of delegates, *see that title*
- FINNISH substitute delegates, appointment P: 48
- GERMAN substitute delegates, appointment P: 41
- LIST of . . . . . P: 11-20
- ROUMANIAN substitute delegate, appointment P: 185
- SEATING arrangements for . . . . . P: 27, 33-4
- SWISS delegation: Expert attached to 2nd  
Committee . . . . . C II: 10

**Denmark**

- See also* Anderson, Holger  
Birke, P. M. L.  
Forchhammer, Henni  
Moltesen, Laust  
Munch, Peter  
Oldenburg, Andreas  
Zahle, Herluf
- DELEGATION . . . . . P: 13-14

**Deputy Secretary-General**

BUDGET ESTIMATES for salaries, etc. (including office) . . . . . C IV: 175

**Diane, Nicolas**

Expert, delegation of Roumania . . . . . P: 19  
 Press Experts Conference, work of . . . . . C VI: 15

**Diplomatic Agents, Revision of Classification of**

QUESTIONNAIRE *re*, sent to Govts. . . . . C I: 48

**Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities**

QUESTION recommended as ripe for int. agreement . . . . . C I: 11, 12, 45, 54; P: 203  
 URGENCY of question doubted  
 C I: 11, 45-6, 46, 54; P: 203, 207

**Disarmament Conference**

CONVENING of . . . . . C III: 13, 48, 52, 53, 78; P: 163  
 COST of preparatory work. . . . . C IV: 83, 200

**PREPARATORY COMMISSION**

Committee on Security to be convened by  
*See* Arbitration, security, etc.: Committee on Security, etc.  
 Date of meeting proposed C III: 12-13, 14, 14-15, 26, 29, 66; P: 47, 57, 159, 162-3  
 Draft convention drawn up by  
 C III: 12, 14, 15, 23, 24, 26; P: 53, 166, 173  
 Minutes, Importance and circulation of  
 C III: 13, 23, 25, 28

**Work of**

Discussion C III: 10, 11-13, 15, 16, 17, 19-20, 22-5, 28, 29, 32, 35, 48, 53; P: 67-8, 71-2, 83, 157-8, 162, 164, 166, 173

**Reports of**

**Com. No. 3**

Draft submitted by M. de Brouckère . . . . . C III: 78-9  
 Discussed and amended C III: 65-70  
 Final text . . . . . C III: 79-84; P: 453-6  
 Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 233-6, 321-2  
 Resolutions of Assembly, Sept. 26, 1927 P: 176-8  
 Statement by M. Loudon . . . . . C III: 11-13

WORK of Com. No. 3 in relation to . . . . . C III: 37-8  
*See also* Armaments, Reduction and limitation.

**Disaster, Relief of Peoples overtaken by**

*See* Relief Union, Int.

**Disease, Prevention of**

*See* Health, epidemics and prevention of disease

**Dispute between Greece and Bulgaria**

ADVANCE of funds to Swedish officers . . . . . C IV: 110  
 CONCILIATION Commission: Nomination of Chairman . . . . . P: 253

**Disputes between Members of League**

SETTLEMENT by Council or direct negotiation  
 P: 39, 46-7, 59

**Disputes, Settlement of**

COMPULSORY arbitration  
*See under* Arbitration, security, etc.

CONCILIATION  
*See under* Arbitration, security, etc.

COUNCIL mediation  
*See under* Arbitration, security, etc.

PACIFIC settlement of  
*See* Arbitration, security and pacific settlement of int. disputes

PAYMENT of expenses by parties to dispute  
 C IV: 13, 21, 22

by TRANSIT Committee: Procedure C II: 96; P: 480

**Djouritch, Djordje .**

Delegate of Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes . . . . . P: 19

ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . C II: 45-6

ECONOMIC CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE: Constitution . . . . . C II: 60

FINANCIAL Committee, Work of . . . . . P: 137

**Documents**

DISTRIBUTION to Governments and members of Committees . . . . . C IV: 24, 24-5, 44, 55-6, 68

EXCESSIVE number of League documents C IV: 45

STATISTICS showing no. of League documents dealt with, 1920-26 . . . . . C IV: 206-7, 212, 213

Domicile, Conflicts of Laws on . . . . . C I: 48

**Dominican Republic**

DELEGATION . . . . . P: 14

**Drugs**

STANDARDISATION of insulin . . . . . C II: 22; P: 297  
*See also* Opium, etc.

**Drummond, Sir Erie**

ASSEMBLY sessions: Prolongation . . . . . C IV: 45

**BUDGET, 1928, Tenth financial period**

Increased estimates, causes . . . . . C IV: 14

Int. law, codification of (item) . . . . . C IV: 64

New work involving new expenditure  
 C IV: 13, 14

**Secretariat and Special Organisations**

Administrative Commissions and minorities questions . . . . . C IV: 19

Branch offices . . . . . C IV: 15

Disarmament . . . . . C IV: 23

Economic and financial organisation C IV: 21

Health Organisation: Singapore Bureau . . . . . C IV: 22

Information Section and Branch offices  
 C IV: 15, 55

Int. law, Progressive codification of  
 C IV: 23, 60, 65

Liaison with Latin-America . . . . . C IV: 47, 48

Mandates . . . . . C IV: 21

Publications Dept. . . . . C IV: 16, 27

Relief Union, Int. . . . . C IV: 23

Transit and communications, collection of information *re* . . . . . C IV: 53

Travelling expenses of officials . . . . . C IV: 16

Unforeseen expenditure subject to special Cl. vote . . . . . C IV: 14, 15

Suppl. credits . . . . . C IV: 43, 45-6

**CONFERENCES of League**

Contribution to expenses of non-Member States represented at . . . . . C IV: 14

**CONTRIBUTIONS of States to League**

Units of contribution in 1926, 1927, 1928  
 C IV: 60

DOCUMENTS: Despatch to members of Committees . . . . . C IV: 24, 56

ECONOMIC CONFERENCE  
 Suppl. expenditure incurred . . . . . C IV: 13

EXPENDITURE incurred for special investigations: Payment by parties concerned  
 C IV: 21, 22

FINANCIAL position on Aug. 31, 1927  
 C IV: 160-7 (memo)

OPIMUM: Permanent Central Board Expenses  
 C IV: 9-10, 70-1 (memo)

**Drummond, Sir Eric (continued)**

- SALARIES of League staff at Geneva, adjustment . . . . . C IV: 57
- SECRETARIAT
  - Conditions of work C IV: 13, 205-14 (report)
  - Information section, work of C IV: 17, 215-221 (memo)
  - Publications . . . . . C IV: 14, 46
  - Transfer of officials from one section to another . . . . . C IV: 45-6
- SUPERVISORY Commission, work of . . . . . C IV: 13
- \*TRIBUTE of thanks by Committee No. 4 . . . . . C IV: 61

**Dutton, E. Rowe**

See Rowe Dutton, E.

**Duzmans, Charles**

- Substitute-representative of Latvia . . . . . P: 17
- INTERNATIONAL LAW: Codification . . . . . C I: 19-20
- TREATIES, etc.: Accession given subject to ratification . . . . . C I: 28

**E**

**Earthquakes**

- in JAPAN: Sympathy expressed and tribute of thanks . . . . . C II: 23, 33

**East**

See Far East and Near East

**Economic Barometers. . . . . P: 276**

**Economic Barriers**

- MODEL showing (proposed) . . . . . C II: 42

**Economic Committee**

See under Economic and Financial Organisation

**Economic Committees, National . . . . . P: 147**

**Economic Conference, Int., Work of**

- in Com. No. 2
  - Discussion and documents C II: 9, 10, 33-55, 58-61, 62, 108-10
  - Report . . . . . C II: 62, 108-10; P: 448-51
- in Plenary Meeting
  - Discussion and documents P: 25, 36-7, 38, 40, 43, 47-8, 52, 53, 57, 63-6, 66-7, 79-80, 82, 94-5, 113, 141-54, 335-46, 448-51
  - Resolution, Sept. 24, 1927 . . . . . P: 154
- EXPENDITURE (suppl. incurred) C IV: 13, 271; P: 472
- HISTORICAL survey of prelim. work C II: 33-4, 108; P: 335-6, 448
- PRESS communiqués vs proceedings prepared by Information section . . . . . C IV: 217
- PROGRAMME and procedure . . . . . P: 335-7
- RAPPORTEUR of Com. No. 2 . . . . . C II: 10, 62

**Economic Conference, Int., Work of (continued)**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Adhesion of following countries to principles contained in:
  - Austria C II: 39, P: 342-3; Belgium C II: 38, P: 343-4; Bulgaria C II: 46, Czechoslovakia C II: 38, P: 344; Finland C II: 42, P: 43; Germany C II: 38, 40, P: 152, 344; Great Britain C II: 44, P: 151, 344; India C II: 39, P: 37; Italy C II: 41, P: 144; Japan C II: 41; Netherlands C II: 38, P: 40, 150, 345; Norway C II: 42, P: 57; Persia C II: 41-2, P: 144; Poland C II: 43, P: 152, 345; Portugal C II: 45; Roumania P: 148, 345; Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Kingdom C II: 45; Sweden C II: 39, P: 47, 345; Switzerland C II: 45
- Application
  - General . . . . . C II: 39, 40, 43, 49; P: 148
  - Govts. responsibility vs . . . . . C II: 38; P: 152
  - Organisation constituted by CL of League vs
    - See Economic and Financial Organisation: Consultative Com.
  - Credits for carrying out . . . . . C II: 61
  - Summary of govt. replies to be prepared C II: 58; P: 152
- Unanimity of vote C II: 33-4, 39, 47, 58; P: 154, 448, 450

**REPORTS of**

- Com. No. 2
  - Draft submitted by M. Loucheur C II: 108-10
  - Adoption . . . . . C II: 62
  - Final text . . . . . P: 448-51
  - Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 335-46

**RESOLUTIONS and draft resolutions vs**

- Assembly resol., Sept. 24, 1925 vs convening . . . . . C II: 33
- Assembly resol., Sept. 24, 1927 . . . . . P: 154
- Council, June 16, 1927 . . . . . P: 342
- Draft resolution vs economic position of world (Danish). . . . . C II: 46
- Resolution of drafting Committee of Com. No. 2 . . . . . C II: 58

**STATEMENTS by**

- M. Loucheur . . . . . C II: 46-50
- M. Theunis . . . . . C II: 33-8

**TRIBUTE to M. Theunis and M. Loucheur**

C II: 39, 42, 46; P: 154

**WORK reviewed by delegations**

- Australia (Pearce) . . . . . P: 94-5
- British Empire (Young) . . . . . P: 63-6
- Canada (Dandurand) . . . . . P: 113
- Chile (Villegas) . . . . . P: 25
- Denmark (Moltesen) . . . . . P: 52
- Finland (Erich) . . . . . P: 43
- Germany (Stresemann) . . . . . P: 79-80
- Hungary (Apponyi) . . . . . P: 66-7
- India (Ayyar) . . . . . P: 36-7
- Japan (Adatci) . . . . . P: 53
- Netherlands (Beelaerts van Blokland) . . . . . P: 40
- Norway (Hambro) . . . . . P: 57
- Persia (Foroughi) . . . . . P: 38, 40
- Poland (Sokal) . . . . . P: 82
- Sweden (Löfgren) . . . . . P: 47-8

**Economic Conferences**

**in 1928**

- Credits . . . . . C IV: 190
- Reduction to one . . . . . C IV: 77

**Economic Consultative Committee**

See Economic and Financial Organisation: Consultative Committee

**Economic Council, Int. . . . . P: 146**

**Economic Crises . . . . . C II: 102**

**Economic and Financial Organisation**

**BUDGET ESTIMATES for 1928**

Development . . . C IV: 19-21, 76-7, 172, 190-2  
C IV: 21, 46, 77, 172, 192, 268

**CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE** *re* work resulting from recommendations of Economic Conference

• Constitution and members  
C II: 49-50, 50-5, 58-9, 109; P: 143-4, 144-5, 146-7, 152, 155, 449, 450, 451  
• Procedure *re* presentation of report  
C II: 59; P: 155, 451  
• Report of Com. No. 2 as presented by M. Loucheur . . . . . C II: 62, 109-10  
Final text . . . . . P: 155, 451  
• Resolutions of  
Drafting Com. of Com. No. 2 . . . . . C II: 58-9  
Assembly, Sept. 24, 1927 . . . . . P: 154-5

**ECONOMIC COMMITTEE**

Collection of information *re* economics C II: 46, 109  
Economic correspondents in certain countries . . . . . P: 155, 449, 551  
Readjustment in view of carrying out of recommendation of Economic Conference . . . . . P: 53, 65, 155, 449, 451  
*See also above under* Consultative Committee, etc.: Constitution, etc.

**Work of**

**Reports of**

Com. No. 2  
Draft submitted by M. Gliwic C II: 99-102  
Discussed . . . . . C II: 27-8  
Final text . . . . . C II: 430-3  
Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 274-6, 345-7  
Resolution of Assembly, Sept. 20, 1927 P: 128  
**Work *re* Economic Conf.**  
Appreciation of preparatory work P: 154, 451  
Extraordinary session, July 12-14, 1927  
*re* . . . . . P: 345-6  
Rapporteur . . . . . C II: 10, 62

**FINANCIAL COMMITTEE, Work of**

Discussion . . . . . C II: 56-7  
Rapporteur . . . . . C II: 10, 57  
**Reports of**  
Com. No. 2  
Draft submitted by M. Djouritch  
C II: 103-5  
Discussed . . . . . C II: 56-7  
Final text . . . . . P: 443-5  
Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 276-87, 346-51  
Resolution of Assembly, Sept. 22, 1927  
C II: 105; P: 137  
Tribute of Com. No. 2 to experts. . . . . C II: 57

**PUBLICATIONS**

in 1927 . . . . . P: 287, 351-3  
*re* World trade and production: Danish proposal . . . . . C II: 46

**SUMMARY of Govt. replies *re* attitude towards recommendations of Economic Conf.**  
C II: 58; P: 152, 154, 450

**Economic Interdependence of States** P: 65, 146

**Economic Relations of States**

*See* War, etc.: Economic and financial relations of States, etc.

**Economic Situation of India** . . . . . P: 37

**Economic Statistics**

**CONFERENCE of Official Statisticians**  
Item of future expenditure . . . . . C IV: 168  
Proposed . . . . . C II: 102

• **UNIFICATION of** . . . . . C II: 101, 102; P: 276

**Economics, Information *re*** C II: 46, 109; P: 148

**Ecuador**

**PARTICIPATION in Transit Conference (Third General)** . . . . . C II: 26; P: 24

**Education**

**BIOLOGICAL, for children.** . . . . . C V: 13, 35  
**CO-ORDINATION of home education, religious training and training in schools.** . . . . C II: 14  
**INSTRUCTION of youth in aims and ideals of League, *see that title*** . . . . .  
**LEAGUE of Nations educational information centre, Proposed creation**  
C II: 14, 14-15, 17, 68; P: 87, 359, 433  
**NATIONAL and international culture.** . . . . C II: 14  
**in PERSIA.** . . . . . C II: 14  
**PHYSICAL.** . . . . . P: 298  
**SCHOLASTIC works: Correction of errors (proposed by M. Casares)** . . . . . C II: 11, 14, 15  
**in SEX matters** . . . . . P: 300

**Egypt**

**ASSOCIATION with work of League**  
C II: 26; P: 24, 36

**Electric Power Convention, 1923**

**LIST of signatures, ratifications and adhesions**  
P: 382-3

**Elliot, Major Walter**

Substitute-representative of British Empire . . . . . P: 12

**ALCOHOLISM** . . . . . C II: 31-2

**ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of** C II: 44; P: 150

**ECONOMIC CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE: Constitution.** . . . . . C II: 51, 61; P: 151

**HEALTH organisation, Work of**  
C II: 22, 24, 25; P: 125-6

**REFUGEES**

Bulgarian, Settlement, etc.. . . . . C II: 25; P: 127-8  
Russian and Armenian  
C V: 14-15, 17-18; P: 186-8

**TRANSIT and communications** . . . . . C II: 27, 64, 65

**Emigration and Immigration**

**IMMIGRATION in relation to standard of living** P: 95

**LIQUIDATION of emigrants' property in Greece and Bulgaria**  
Agreement, Dec. 9, 1927: Signatures . . . . . P: 368  
Report of Council and Secretariat  
P: 253, 260, 325, 329

**TRANSIT cards for emigrants** C II: 95; P: 291, 479  
*See also under* Traffic in women and children

**Epidemics**

*See* Health, epidemics, etc.

**Epidemiological Intelligence Service**

*See under* Health, etc.

**Erich, Rafael Waldemar**

Delegate of Finland. . . . . P: 14

**ALCOHOLISM** . . . . . P: 43

**ARBITRATION, security and disarmament.** . . . . P: 170-1

**ECONOMIC CONFERENCE, Work of.** . . . . . P: 43

**REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat** P: 42-3

**SLAVERY Convention, ratification by Finland.** P: 43

**WAR or threat of war<sup>o</sup>**

Financial assistance for States victims of aggression . . . . . P: 42



- Escalante, Diogenes**  
 Delegate of Venezuela. . . . . P: 20  
 TREATIES, etc.: Accession given subject to ratification . . . . . C I: 10
- Estonia**  
*See also* Akel, Dr. Friedrich  
 Laidoner, General Johan  
 BANKING and currency reform  
 Progress  
 C II: 56, 57, 105; P: 43, 137, 283, 349, 445  
 Protocol, 1926: Ratification . . . . . P: 404  
 DELEGATION . . . . . P: 14
- Eugenics, Study of.** . . . . . P: 298
- Exchange**  
 of GREEK and Turkish populations . . . . . P: 260, 329  
 of HEALTH officers and scientists  
*See* Health, etc.: Interchanges, etc.  
 of PROFESSORS and students . . . . . C II: 15
- Exhibitions**  
 CHALCOGRAPHIC . . . . . C II: 12, 15, 69; P: 131  
 POPULAR ARTS, Proposed C II: 15, 16, 69-70; P: 130
- Expenditure of League**  
 GENERAL statement of League expenditure in 1926 . . . . . C IV: 142-5  
 INCURRED for special investigations, Payment by Members concerned  
 C IV: 12, 13, 21, 22, 47, 271; P: 473  
 NEW WORK involving new expenditure  
*See under* Budget  
 SECRETARIAT expenditure 1920-1926 . . . . . C IV: 214  
 UNFORESEEN expenditure, Credits for  
*See that title under* Budget  
 SUPPLEMENTARY expenditure to be met by suppl. budget submitted in Sept. (proposal) C IV: 83  
*See also* Budget of League
- Exploitation of Products of Sea**  
 QUESTION recommended as ripe for int. agreement: Special procedure *vs*  
 C I: 11, 12, 13, 19, 37, 47, 54, 57; P: 49, 203
- Experts**  
 • *See* Imports and exports and Import and export prohibitions, etc.
- Eysinga, Jonkheer W. J. M. van**  
 Delegate of Netherlands. . . . . P: 17  
 ARBITRATION, Compulsory: Draft optional convention . . . . . C I: 23-4  
 ARMS and ammunition, Private manufacture of . . . . . C III: 49  
 AVIATION: Belgian proposal *vs*. . . . . C III: 50-1  
 BUDGET of Secretariat, 1928  
 Allocation of expenses, Com. on . . . . . C IV: 24  
 CONFERENCE HALL and new buildings for use of Secretariat . . . . . C IV: 57-8  
 CONTRIBUTIONS of States in arrears . . . . . P: 137-8  
 HEALTH  
 Singapore Bureau: Contribution of Govt. of Dutch East Indies . . . . . C IV: 34  
 LIBRARY of League: Rockefeller gift . . . . . P: 108-9  
 PUBLICATIONS of League  
 Economy proposed. . . . . C IV: 14
- Eysinga, Jonkheer W. J. M. van (continued)**  
 SECRETARIAT  
 Information section, work of . . . . . C IV: 34  
 TREASURER of League, Appreciation of . . . . . C IV: 24
- Far East**  
 HEALTH in . . . . . C II: 21
- Fazi-I-Hussain, Khan Bahadur Mian Sir**  
 Substitute-representative of India . . . . . P: 16  
 ALCOHOLISM . . . . . C II: 32  
 BUDGET, 1928, Tenth financial period  
 Com. on allocation of League expenses (item) . . . . . C IV: 59  
 Int. law, Com. of Experts for the codification of (item) . . . . . C IV: 64-5  
 FINANCIAL Committee, Work of . . . . . C II: 57  
 INTELLECTUAL co-operation . . . . . C II: 14  
 NEUTRAL HOUSE in Constantinople, Furniture . . . . . C IV: 38  
 OPIUM: Perm. Central Board: Expenses . . . . . C IV: 42
- Ferrara, Orestes**  
 Delegate of Cuba. . . . . P: 13  
 COUNCIL, election of non-perm. Members  
 System of single transferable vote and proportional representation . . . . . C VI: 11
- Fidelity Guarantee** . . . . . C IV: 188, 187
- Finance**  
 REPRESENTATION of experts on Economic Consultative Committee *see under* Economic and Financial Organisation: Consultative Committee
- Finances of League**  
*See* Budget of League
- Financial Aid for States Victims of Aggression**  
*See under* War or threat of war
- Financial Committee**  
*See under* Economic and Financial Organisation
- Financial Conference at Brussels, 1920**  
 EFFECT on financial reconstruction of Europe P: 64
- Financial Reconstruction of Various Countries**  
 METHODS of financial reform adopted by Financial Committee C II: 103-4; P: 137, 443-4  
*See also under the countries concerned*
- Finland**  
*See also* Erich, Rafael Waldemar  
 Hainari, Tiima  
 Holsti, Rudolf  
 Keto, J. W.  
 Valvanne, Hugo  
 Voionmaa, Väinö  
 DELEGATION  
 List . . . . . P: 14  
 Substitute delegates, appointment . . . . . P: 48
- Fiscal Evasion**  
*See* Taxation, etc.

**Flags**

DECLARATION recognising right to a flag of States having no sea-coast, 1921  
List of signatures, ratifications and adhesions . . . . . P: 378-9

**Forced Labour**

See under Slavery and analogous conditions

**Forehammer, Henni**

Substitute-representative of Denmark . . . . . P: 13  
TRAFFIC in women and children . . . . . CV: 30-1, 37, 38  
TRIBUTE to Miss Jeppe . . . . . CV: 11; P: 124  
WOMEN and children in Near East, Protection of . . . . . CV: 11; P: 123-4

**Foreigners: Responsibility of States re**

See Responsibility of States, etc.

**Foreign Nationals and Enterprises, Treatment of**

C II: 41, 100; P: 53, 149-50, 150, 275, 346

**Foreign States, Competence of Courts in regard to**

CI: 48; P: 208

**Feroughi, Mohammad Ali Khan**

Delegate of Persia . . . . . P: 18  
ARBITRATION, security and disarmament . . . . . P: 38, 176  
COUNCIL, election of non-perm. Members  
Reservation of right of candidature of Persia . . . . . P: 116-17  
ECONOMIC CONFERENCE, Int., work of . . . . . P: 38, 49  
INTERNATIONAL LAW: Codification of . . . . . P: 38  
OPIUM: Commission of Enquiry in Persia . . . . . P: 38, 120  
PRIVATE LAW, Int. Institute of  
Representation of Persian religious law . . . . . P: 38  
REGIONAL agreements concluded by Persia . . . . . P: 38  
REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 37-9

**Fotitch, Konstantin**

Assistant delegate of Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes . . . . . P: 19  
OPIUM: Expenses of Permanent Central Board . . . . . CV: 39-40, 43, 44  
REFUGEES, Russian and Armenian . . . . . CV: 17

**France**

See also Bastid, Paul  
Briand, Aristide  
Cassin, René  
Fromageot, M.  
Hubert, Lucien  
Jouhaux, Léon  
Labrousse, François  
Loucheur, Louis  
Pams, Jules  
Paul-Boncour, M.  
Plaisant, Marcel  
Réveillard, Jean  
Sérot, Robert

DELEGATION . . . . . P: 14-15

**France-German Commercial Treaty**

See under Commerce: Treaties

**Franco d'Andrade, General Alfredo**

Delegate of Portugal . . . . . P: 18  
FORCED labour . . . . . CVI: 9, 10  
LIQUOR traffic in Togoland and Cameroons . . . . . CVI: 24  
SLAVERY Convention, Int., 1926 . . . . . CVI: 10, 22

**Fromageot, M.**

Assistant delegate of France . . . . . P: 14  
ARBITRATION, Compulsory: Draft optional convention . . . . . CI: 25-6, 32  
INTERNATIONAL LAW: Codification  
Conference: Preparatory work for . . . . . CI: 21  
Report of Sub-Com. of Com. No. 1: Modification . . . . . CI: 37  
Work of Com. of Experts . . . . . CI: 10-12 (statements)  
TREATIES, etc.: Accession given subject to ratification . . . . . CI: 9, 28

**Frontiers**

between ANGOLA and S. W. Africa . . . . . P: 269, 330  
FRONTIER questions in relation to production, etc. . . . . P: 153  
REFUGEES to be settled in frontier districts of Bulgaria . . . . . P: 281, 346-9  
between TRANSJORDAN and Syria . . . . . P: 269  
between TURKEY and Iraq  
Expenses of Com. of Enquiry . . . . . CIV: 110

**G**

**Gaitán-Hurtado, Dr. Efraín**

Substitute-representative of Colombia . . . . . P: 13  
HEALTH Organisation, Work of . . . . . C II: 23

**Gallavresi, Giuseppe**

Substitute-representative of Italy . . . . . P: 16  
CINEMATOGRAPH, Educational: Int. Institute . . . . . C II: 17, 18, 19, 25  
INTELLECTUAL co-operation . . . . . C II: 14  
OPIUM: Reduction in Persia and India . . . . . CV: 24  
RELATIONS between League and bodies established under its auspices. . . . . C II: 64  
SECRETARIAT Branch offices . . . . . C IV: 15

**Geneva**

COMMUNICATIONS with, see Transit, etc.: Communications

**Germany**

See also Bernstorff, Count  
Breitscheid, Dr.  
Hoetzsch, Dr.  
Imhoff, M.  
Kaas, Dr.  
Lang-Brumann, Mme  
Rheinbaben, Baron von  
Ruppert, M.  
Stresemann, Dr.

**DELEGATION**

List . . . . . P: 15  
Substitute delegates, appointment . . . . . P: 41

**Ghadimy, Dr. Hussein Khan**

Secretary-General, delegation of Persia . . . . . P: 18  
BUDGET, 1928, Tenth financial period  
Int. law, Com. of Experts for the codification of (item) . . . . . C IV: 66

**Gliwie, Hipolit**

Delegate of Poland . . . . . P: 18  
ECONOMIC CONFERENCE, Int., Work of . . . . . C II: 43; P: 151-2

**Gilwit, Hippolit (continued)**

ECONOMIC CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE: Constitution. . . . . C II: 50-1; P: 152  
 TRAFFIC in women and children . . . . . C V: 32  
 TRANSIT and communications . . . . . C II: 26-7, 27, 65

**Gravina, Count Manfredi**

Substitute-representative of Italy. . . . . P: 16  
 CHILD Welfare . . . . . C V: 12-13

**Great Britain**

• See British Empire

**Greece**

See also Caclamanos, Demètre  
 Michalakopoulos, André  
 Politis, Nicolas

DELEGATION . . . . . P: 15

DISPUTE between Greece and Bulgaria, see that title

FINANCIAL restoration  
 See Refugees: Greek, etc.

REFUGEES  
 See Refugees: Greek, etc.

**Guani, Dr. Alberto**

Delegate of Uruguay . . . . . P: 20

INTERNATIONAL LAW: Codification  
 Proposal of Paraguay. . . . . P: 100, 105, 114

LIBRARY of League: Rockefeller gift . . . . . P: 109

PRESIDENT OF ASSEMBLY

Election. . . . . P: 28

Presidential address . . . . . P: 28-9

Speech at close of session . . . . . P: 212-14

TRIBUTE to M. de Madariaga . . . . . P: 178

DELEGATION . . . . . P: 15

**Guerrero, Dr. J. Gustavo**

Delegate of Salvador . . . . . P: 19

ARMS and ammunition, etc.: Private manufacture and publicity of manufacture of  
 C III: 13-14, 19

Proposal *vs* . . . . . C III: 44, 45, 50, 64, 65

BUDGET, 1928, Tenth financial period

Secretariat and Special Organisations

Int. law, Com. of Experts for the progressive codification of C IV: 49, 50, 63, 65

• • Liaison with Latin-America . . . . . C IV: 47

• COST OF LIVING and adjustment of salaries of League staff. . . . . P: 194

INTERNATIONAL LAW: Codification

Conference: Addition of news items to agenda . . . . . C I: 36

Work of Com.: of Experts  
 C I: 12-13 (statement)

• • TREATIES, etc.: Accession given subject to ratification . . . . . C I: 9

WAR or threat of war

Financial assistance for States victims of aggression. . . . . C III: 63

Prohibition of wars of aggression, Polish declaration *vs* . . . . . C III: 46, 47

**H**

**Haas, Robert**

BUDGET, 1928, Tenth financial period  
 Transit and communications . . . . . C IV: 22

**Hainari, Tilma**

Substitute-representative of Finland . . . . . P: 14

REFUGEES: Russian . . . . . C V: 17

TRAFFIC in women and children . . . . . C V: 32

**Halti**

DELEGATION . . . . . P: 15

**Hambro, Carl Joachim**

Delegate of Norway. . . . . P: 18

ALCOHOLISM . . . . . C V: 9, 10

ARMAMENTS reduction . . . . . P: 56-7

**COUNCIL**

Election of non-perm. Members

Open procedure advocated. . . . . P: 58

System of single transferable vote and proportional representation C VI: 10-11, 11, 12

Secret procedure . . . . . P: 57-8

ECONOMIC CONFERENCE, Work of . . . . . P: 57

INTERNATIONAL LAW, Work of Com. of Experts. . . . . P: 57

NEWS agencies and monopoly of news  
 C VI: 14-15, 16, 18

**OPIUM**

Central Board, Permanent

C V: 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46

Traffic in . . . . . C V: 19, 27

PRESS Experts Conference, Work of. . . . . C VI: 14-15

REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 56-8

SAAR BASIN: Work of Council. . . . . P: 58

**SECRETARIAT**

Under Secretaries-General

Posts limited to nationals of Great

Power States . . . . . P: 58

**Hammar skjöld, M.**

SALARIES of temp. staff of Court of Int. Justice  
 C IV: 35

**Health, Epidemics and Prevention of Disease**

in Com. No. 2

Discussion and documents

C II: 20-2, 23-5, 88-90, 90-3

Report . . . . . C II: 88-90; P: 421-4, 424-7

in Plenary Meeting

Discussion and documents

P: 24, 30, 31, 32, 124, 126, 127, 291-8, 355-6, 421, 424

Resolution, Sept. 20, 1927. . . . . P: 126, 127

ACCOUNTS of organisation, 1926 . . . . . C IV: 153, 154

ADMINISTRATIONS, Study by Health Com.

East

Far. . . . . C II: 21

Near . . . . . C II: 21

Joint Committee *vs* comparative study

Scope of work . . . . . C II: 21

BUDGET ESTIMATES of organisation for

1928 . . . . . C IV: 22-3, 33, 77, 172, 195-7, 204

CAUSES of death, Revision of int. list of . . . . . P: 295

CHOLERA . . . . . P: 294

**COMMITTEE**

Assessors . . . . . P: 124, 292, 421-2

Co-operation with Child Welfare Com.

*vs* cinema . . . . . C V: 14

New (elected) . . . . . P: 292

Proposed reduction of number of questions for yearly consideration . . . . . C II: 23

Relations with Office int. d'hygiène publique

See Office int., etc.

Tribute to. . . . . C II: 24, 25; P: 226

Health, Epidemics and Prevention of Disease (continued)

- CONDITIONS, Study of
  - in Albania . . . . . C II : 21
  - in Persia . . . . . C II : 21
- CONFERENCES and congresses
  - Montevideo Conference, June, 1927
    - C II : 90 ; P : 424-5
  - Pacific Conference, Int. : Melbourne, Dec. 1926 (Health conditions of indigenous populations) C II : 22-3, 24 ; P : 126, 298, 423
  - Pan-American Congress, Havana, Nov. 1924 . . . . . C II : 21
  - Rabies Conference, Paris, 1927
    - C II : 24, 90 ; P : 125, 126, 297, 423
  - Tropical diseases in Central Africa . . . C II : 21
- CONTROL applied to agricultural products . C II : 44
- CONVENTION, 1926
  - See below under Epidemiological intelligence, etc. : Singapore, etc. : Discharge
- COURSES, Int. . . . . C II : 89 ; P : 125, 298, 422-3
- ENQUIRY *re* infant mortality
  - See under Infant welfare, etc.
- EPIDEMICS : Quarantine measures in Australia . . . . . C II : 22, 23
- EPIDEMIOLOGICAL Intelligence Service
  - Broadcasting . . . . . C II : 89 ; P : 294, 422
  - Intelligence centre in Australia, Proposed . . . . . C II : 23
  - Publications . . . . . P : 294
  - Singapore Bureau
    - Discharge of obligation under Sanitary Conventions of 1926
      - Method of work . . . . . P : 293-4
      - Views of Govts. *re* . . . . . P : 355
      - See also below under Work
    - Financing of
      - C II : 88-9 ; C IV : 22, 34, 204, 295 ; P : 422
    - Work of C II : 21, 22, 23, 24, 88, 89 ; P : 36, 125, 126, 294
- EUGENICS, Study of . . . . . P : 298
- EXPERTS : Lectures to be given at Health Centre at Buenos Aires . . . . . C II : 91
- INFANT mortality *see* Infant welfare, etc.
- INSURANCE
  - in Australia . . . . . C II : 22
  - in Czechoslovakia . . . . . C II : 21
  - Instruction of insured in principles of hygiene . . . . . C II : 21
  - Sickness Association : League contribution . . . . . C IV : 187, 188
  - Work of expert Commission *re*
    - C II : 24, 90, 92 ; P : 295, 423, 426-7
- INTERCHANGES of health officers and scientists
  - in Baltic and North Sea . . . . . P : 297
  - in Germany . . . . . C II : 23, 89 ; P : 297, 356, 422
  - in Great Britain . . . . . P : 297
  - in India . . . . . P : 36, 297-8, 422
  - in Japan . . . . . C II : 21-2, 89
- LEPROSY in Latin-America . . . . . C II : 92 ; P : 426
- LIAMON between Latin-America and League
  - Budget estimates, 1928 . . . . . C IV : 15, 182
  - Suppl. credits
    - C IV : 46-8, 55, 262, 265, 267, 268
  - Reference to Supervisory Commission of letter from Com. No. 2 to Com. No. 4
    - C IV : 33-4
- MALARIA, *see that title*
- MEDICAL Director of Health Section : Missions . . . . . C II : 21, 22, 25
- MISSIONS to Latin-America
  - Lectures by health experts at Int. Health centre at Buenos Aires (proposal) . . . C II : 91

Health, Epidemics and Prevention of Disease (continued)

- MISSIONS to Latin-America (continued)
  - Rapporteur . . . . . C II : 10
  - Reports of Com. No. 2
    - Draft on results of first mission presented by M. Calvo Mackenna C II : 90-3
    - Discussed . . . . . C II : 21-24
    - Final text . . . . . P : 126, 424-7
    - Resolutions and draft resolutions of Assembly . . . . . P : 127
    - Com. No. 2 . . . . . C II : 23, 24
    - Special missions *re* study of health problems proposed . . . . . C II : 23 ; C IV : 47
- OF NATIVES in Southern Pacific Islands C II : 22-3, 24
  - P : 126, 298, 423
- OFFICE int. d'hygiène publique
  - Relations with Health organisation
    - C II : 21, 23, 24 ; P : 125, 126, 293-4, 422
- PHYSICAL education, Study of . . . . . P : 298
- PUBLIC Health
  - Budget in Persia . . . . . C II : 22
  - Educational centre at Rio de Janeiro
    - Proposed placing under League auspices . . . . . C II : 91-2 ; P : 426
  - Inauguration of college at Budapest . . C II : 22
  - Preventive medicine in relation to C II : 21, 90
  - Relations of various national organisations with League Health organisation . . . . . C II : 21
- PUBLICATIONS . . . . . P : 294, 295
- RABIES Conference, Paris, 1927 . . . . . C II : 24, 90
  - P : 125, 126, 297, 423
- RAFFORTEUR of Com. No. 2 . . . . . C II : 10, 24
- REPORTS of
  - Com. No. 2
    - Draft submitted by Sir Ramaswami Ayyar on work of Com. . . . . C II : 88-90
    - Discussed . . . . . C II : 24-5
    - Final text . . . . . P : 421-4
    - Draft on results of first mission presented by M. Calvo Mackenna . . . C II : 90-3
    - Discussed . . . . . C II : 21-24
    - Final text . . . . . P : 424-7
    - Council and Secretariat . . . . . P : 291-8, 355-6
- RESOLUTIONS and draft resolutions
  - Draft resolution of Com. No. 2 and amendments . . . . . C II : 23, 24-25
  - Resolutions of Assembly, Sept. 20, 1927
    - P : 126, 127
  - Resolutions presented by Cuban, Czechoslovak and Uruguyan delegates during 7th Assembly : Measures taken by Health Committee . . . . . P : 298
  - See also Nutrition
- ROCKEFELLER Foundation
  - Sums repayable from budget surplus, 1926 . . . . . C IV : 24, 84
- SINGAPORE Bureau
  - See above under Epidemiological Intelligence Service
- SLEEPING sickness, Work of Com.
  - C II : 24, 89 ; P : 36, 125, 126, 296, 356, 422
- STANDARDISATION of sera and biological products . . . . . P : 296-7
- STATISTICS . . . . . P : 294
- STILL-BIRTH . . . . . C V : 13, 55
- STUDY tours
  - See above Interchanges of health officers
- TROPICAL diseases in Central Africa : Conference . . . . . C II : 21
- TUBERCULOSIS . . . . . C II : 21
- VACCINES, Prophylactic . . . . . P : 294
- VENEREAL diseases . . . . . C II : 21 ; P : 426

**Health, Epidemics and Prevention of Disease (continued)**

- WORK of Organisation
  - Method . . . . . C II: 20
  - Resolution of Com. No. 2 . . . . . C II: 24-5
  - Statement by M. Velghe . . . . . C II: 20-1

**O'Hegarty, Diarmuid**

- Delegate of Irish Free State . . . . . P: 16
- OPIUM: Permanent Central Board . . . . . C V: 43

**Hénings, E.**

- Assistant delegate and expert, delegation of Sweden . . . . . P: 20
- ARBITRATION, security and disarmament
  - C III: 42, 55, 66
- AVIATION: Belgian proposal *vs* . . . . . C III: 50, 51
- WAR or threat of war
  - Council action in times of emergency C III: 43
  - Financial assistance for States victims of aggression. . . . . C III: 63

**Hernández Portela, Ramiro**

*See* Portela, Ramiro Hernández

**Hilton Young, Sir Edward**

*See* Young, Sir Edward Hilton

**History, Teaching of**

- CORRECTION of text-books . . . . . C II: 11, 14, 15

**Hoetzsch, Dr.**

- Substitute-representative of Germany . . . . . P: 15
- COUNCIL, election of non-perm. Members
  - System of single transferable vote and proportional representation . . . . . C VI: 12-13
- SLAVERY Convention, 1926 . . . . . C VI: 10

**Holiday Courses in Austria . . . . . C II: 14**

**Holsti, Rudolf**

- Delegate of Finland . . . . . P: 14
- WAR or threat of war
  - Financial assistance for States victims of aggression. . . . . C III: 34, 63, 64

**Hôtel National**

- SALE . . . . . C IV: 38

**Hubert, Lucien**

- Substitute-representative of France. . . . . P: 14
- COUNCIL, election of non-perm. Members
  - System of single transferable vote and proportional representation . . . . . C VI: 11, 12
- PRESS, power of capital and power of public opinion . . . . . C VI: 17-18
- SLAVERY Convention, 1926. . . . . C VI: 10

**Hungarian Optants in Transylvania P: 251, 324-5, 329**

**Hungary**

*See also* Apponyi, Count Albert  
Rosenberg Augusta  
Tánczos, General Gabriel  
Vest, Baron de

- DELEGATION . . . . . P: 15
- FINANCIAL reconstruction
  - Balance of loan. . . . . P: 349
  - Final report of Com.-Gen. . . . . P: 282-3

**Hurst, Sir Cecil James Barrington**

- Delegate of British Empire . . . . . • P: 12
- ARBITRATION, Compulsory: Draft optional convention . . . . . C I: 27, 32
- INTERNATIONAL LAW: Codification C I: 19; P: 209
- Credits allotted by Com. No. 4 . . . . . C I: 35
- TREATIES, etc.: Accession given subject to ratification . . . . . C I: 8, 20, 28

**Hydraulic Power Convention, 1923**

- LIST of signatures, ratifications and adhesions P: 383-4

**Hydrographic Bureau, International . . . . . P: 311**

**I**

**Identity Documents for Persons without Nationality**

- QUESTION raised by 3rd general Conference on transit . . . . . C II: 27, 95, 99; CV: 71, 72, 81
- Resolution of Assembly C II: 99; P: 201, 483

**Imhoff, M.**

- Expert, delegation of Germany . . . . . P: 15
- RELIEF Union, Int. . . . . C II: 56

**Immigration and Emigration**

*See* Emigration, etc.

**Import and Export Prohibitions and Restrictions**

- CONFERENCE, Diplomatic C II: 40, 41, 48, 99-100, 102; P: 142, 143, 144, 149, 151, 274
- CONVENTION, Protocol and Declaration, 1927
  - Examination . . . . . C II: 40
  - Signatures . . . . . P: 403
- RECOMMENDATIONS of Economic Conf. and Govt. action *vs* C II: 35, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46; P: 40, 64, 142, 144, 149, 151, 274, 339

**Imports and Exports**

- in GREAT BRITAIN . . . . . P: 64-5
- OPIUM
  - See under* Opium, etc.

**India**

*See also* Ayyar, Sir C. P. Ramaswami  
Fazl-I-Hussain, Khan Bahadur  
Mian Sir  
Kapurthala, Maharaja of  
Lytton, Earl of  
Mullick, Sir Basanta Kumar

- DELEGATION . . . . . P: 15-16
- LEAGUE questions of importance to. . . . . P: 36-7
- RELATIONS with League and development of int. attitude in. . . . . P: 35-6
- SLAVERY in, progress of measures to abolish C VI: 8

**Industry**

- AGREEMENTS C II: 36-7, 41, 43, 47; P: 143, 146, 148, 340, 340-1, 449
- ARBITRATION, Compulsory *vs* industrial questions in Canada . . . . . P: 94
- INDUSTRIAL INFORMATION . . . . . P: 340, 449
- INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY: Clauses of Franco-German commercial treaty *vs* C II: 48; P: 344

**Industry (continued)**

- PRODUCTION and industrial organisation  
C II: 36, 41, 43, 44, 109; P: 64, 142-3, 143, 146, 148, 151, 340, 449
- in RELATION to agriculture . . . C II: 38, 43; P: 341
- REPRESENTATION of industrial experts on Economic Consultative Committee *see under* Economic and Financial Organisation: Consultative Committee

**Infant Welfare and Mortality**

- ENQUIRY by Health Com.  
C II: 29, 90; P: 73, 295-6, 302, 355, 423
- HEALTH Centre, Int (Buenos Aires): Establishment . . . . . C II: 91; P: 425
- AUSTRALIA . . . . . C II: 22
- HUNGARY . . . . . C II: 22
- MONTEVIDEO Conference, June 1927  
Plans for investigation resulting from  
C II: 90-91; P: 296, 356, 425-6
- PROTECTION of infancy from birth up to schoolage . . . . . C II: 21
- STILL BIRTH and mortality  
Statistics: Standardisation . . . . . C V: 13, 55

**Iñiguez, Pedro F.**

- Delegate of Chile . . . . . P: 12
- ARBITRATION, security and disarmament . . . . . P: 169-170

**Inland Navigation**

- CLAUSES *re*, contained in commercial treaties . . . . . C II: 48; P: 144
- COMPETITION between railways and waterways . . . . . P: 291, 354
- CONVENTION on navigable waterways, 1921  
List of signatures, ratifications and adhesions . . . . . P: 376-8
- ENQUIRY into . . . . . C II: 26, 95; P: 479
- PRIVATE LAW in . . . . . C II: 95; P: 289, 354, 479
- STATISTICS, Standardisation of  
C II: 95; P: 289, 354, 479
- TIMBER-FLOATING on Niemen . . . . . P: 290
- TONNAGE measurement of vessels employed in: Convention, 1925  
List of ratifications, etc. . . . . P: 384-5
- WATER transport. . . . . P: 289-90

**Institute of the Educational Cinema, International**

*See under* Cinematograph

**Institute, Int. for Intellectual Co-operation**

*See under* Intellectual co-operation

**Institute of Scientific Organisation of Labour**

- CO-OPERATION with Economic Consultative Committee . . . . . C II: 50, 53, 110; P: 450

**Instruction of Youth in Aims and Ideals of League**

- LEAGUE of Nations educational information centre, Proposed creation  
C II: 14, 14-15, 17, 68; P: 87, 359, 433
- MEASURES taken by various Govts.  
C II: 14, 15, 16, 17; P: 310
- NATIONALISM and internationalism . . . . . P: 87, 130
- RECOMMENDATIONS of Sub-Com. of experts  
Periodical examination by Sub-Com. of results obtained . . . . . C II: 68
- Re-grouping, etc., proposed  
C II: 68; P: 359, 433

**Instruction of Youth in Aims and Ideals of League (continued)**

- REPORT of experts *re* study of question  
Approval of Com. on Intellectual Co-operation . . . . . C II: 11-12, 17; P: 359
- RESOLUTION of Assembly, Sept. 22, 1927 . . . . . P: 134
- SOUTH AMERICA, progress in . . . . . P: 24
- SUB-COM. of experts  
Small committee *re* investigation of certain urgent questions, Proposed creation . . . . . C II: 68-69
- TEACHING of staff: Lecturers to be sent to countries . . . . . C II: 13, 68; P: 359

**Insulin . . . . . C II: 22; P: 297**

**Insurance, Health**

*See under* Health, etc.

**Intellectual Co-operation**

*For questions dealt with by Committee and Institute see the subjects concerned*

- in Com. No. 2  
Discussion and documents . . . . . C II: 10-13, 14-17  
Report . . . . . C II: 14-17, 68-70; P: 129, 433-6
- in Plenary Meeting  
Discussion and documents  
P: 87-8, 129-34, 309-10, 359-62, 433-6  
Resolution, Sept. 22, 1927 . . . . . P: 133
- BUDGET ESTIMATES for 1928 . . . . . C IV: 23, 78, 173, 201-2

**COMMITTEE**

- Activity . . . . . P: 361-2
- Budget estimates, 1928 . . . . . C IV: 78
- Correspondents . . . . . P: 362
- International character of Com. and Sub-Coms. . . . . C II: 11, 14, 15; P: 310
- Representatives on Committee on Intellectual workers of I. L. O. . . . . C II: 15
- Statement by Prof. Lorentz *re* work of Sub-Committees, Method of work . . . . . C II: 10-13
- Work during 1927 . . . . . P: 24

**INSTITUTE in Paris**

- Approval of activities by Administrative Council . . . . . C II: 68
- Financial position and grants made  
C II: 15, 16, 68, 69, 70; P: 87, 130, 132, 133, 361
- International character . . . . . C II: 11; P: 131, 132-3
- Int. co-ordination service *re* library information offices . . . . . C II: 16; P: 87, 130, 133
- Reports of Institute noted by Committee on Intellectual Co-operation . . . . . C II: 70
- Work during 1927 . . . . . P: 24

**NATIONAL Committees**

- Activities and creation of new Coms. . . . . C II: 15, 16, 70; P: 130, 133
- Meeting of representatives suggested . . . . . C II: 12; P: 362

**RAPPORTEUR of Com. No. 2 . . . . . C II: 9, 17**

**REPORTS of**

- Com. No. 2  
Draft submitted by Dr. Breitscheid . . . . . C II: 68-70
- Discussed . . . . . C II: 14-17
- Final text . . . . . P: 433-6
- Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 309-10, 359-62

**RESOLUTIONS and draft resolutions**

- Draft resolution of Com. No. 2 . . . . . C II: 16-17
- Resolutions of Assembly, Sept. 22, 1927 . . . . . P: 133-4

**Intellectual Rights**

- COPYRIGHT . . . . . C II: 12, 15, 69; P: 361

**Intellectual Workers**

COMMITTEE *re*, established by I. L. O. C II: 15, 70

**Interchanges**

*See* Exchange

**International Bureaux**

*See* Bureaux, International

**International Federation for Mutual Assistance  
in the Relief of Peoples overtaken by Disaster**

*See* Relief Union, Int.

**International Institute of Agriculture, Rome**

Co-operation with Economic organisation of  
League *re* agricultural questions

C II: 59, 60, 109; P: 144, 451

**International Law, Codification of**

in Com. No. I

Discussion and documents

C I: 8, 10-21, 33-7, 40, 41-50, 53-8

Reports . . . . . C I: 53-8; P: 484-90

in Plenary Meetings

Discussion and documents P: 30, 49-52, 52-3,  
57, 60, 62-3, 69, 77-8, 82, 99, 100, 105, 114,  
199, 202-11, 213, 227-8, 319, 484-90

Resolutions, Sept. 27, 1927. . . . . P: 210, 211

in AMERICA C I: 17-18, 19, 21, 44, 53; P: 50-1, 99,  
199, 207, 108, 211

ARBITRATION, security, etc.: Relation to  
P: 60, 62-3, 69, 77-8, 82, 99, 213

ATTITUDE of various Govts.

British Empire . . . . . C I: 19  
Colombia . . . . . P: 49-52  
Denmark . . . . . P: 52-3  
Norway . . . . . C I: 17; P: 57  
Persia . . . . . P: 38

**COMMITTEES**

*See below* Experts' Committee and Con-  
ference: Preparatory Com-  
mittee

**CONFERENCE**

Agenda for: Addition of new items  
C I: 18, 19, 34, 35, 36, 54

Date . . . . . C I: 34, 55, 56; P: 203

Invitations to Govts., Form of C I: 35, 56, 58

Method of convening  
C I: 13, 17, 19, 20, 46, 49, 55; P: 204

Place of meeting  
C I: 16, 18, 19, 20, 55, 57; P: 203-4, 205-6

Preparatory Committee  
Credits (1928)

*See below* Credits allotted for work  
of Experts' Com., etc.

Method of appointment  
C I: 20, 34-5, 55-6, 57-8;  
P: 207, 209, 209-10

Preparatory work  
C I: 16, 17, 20, 21, 46-7, 55, 55-6, 58;  
P: 204, 205, 209, 209-10

Procedure in, Rules *re*. . . C I: 16, 17, 56-7, 58

Question of holding one, or more  
C I: 13, 45, 49, 55

Rules *re* procedure in  
*See above* Procedure, etc.

Unanimity rule  
*See above* Procedure, etc.

CONFERENCES and Congresses *re*. . . . . P: 50

CREDITS allotted for work of Com. of Experts  
and Preparatory Com.<sup>9</sup>

in Com. No. 4 . . . . . C IV: 23, 48-51, 60, 62-6

**International Law, Codification of (continued)**

CREDITS allotted for work of Com. of Experts and  
Preparatory Com. (continued)

Report of Com. No. 4 (Chapter III,  
Item 29)

Amendment by Swedish delegation

Discussion. . . . . P: 195-201

Decision of Com. No. 4 *re*. . . . . P: 211-12

Reference to Com. No. 4 . . . . . P: 201

Text . . . . . P: 178

Discussion. . . . . C I: 35-6

Text . . . . . P: 475, 477

DIFFICULTIES in field of. . . . . C I: 19, 19-20

EARLY work in field of . . . . . P: 49-52, 202-3

**EXPERTS' COMMITTEE**

Credits for continuation of work

*See above* Credits allotted for work of  
Experts' Com., etc.

Mandate of . . . . . C I: 43-4

Minutes to be at disposal of Cl. . . . . C I: 44, 49

Programme 1927-8. . . . . C I: 48

Reports presented to Cl. . . . . C I: 43

Terms of reference . . . . . C I: 14, 42-3

Tribute of thanks to  
C I: 44, 49, 54, 57; P: 49, 319

**Work**

Discussion in Com. No. I . . . . . C I: 10-21, 34-7

Extract from minutes of Cl. (45th  
session) . . . . . C I: 49-50

Report presented to Cl. by M. Zaleski,  
June 13, 1927 . . . . . C I: 42-8

Report of Sub-Com. of Com. No. I  
*See below* Reports of: Sub-Com. of

Com. No. I  
Resolution of Cl., June 13, 1927 C I: 41, 48-9, 50

Statements *re*  
*See below* Statements, etc.

FUTURE of codification . . . . . C I: 57; P: 208

INCLUSION of question in agenda of 8th  
Assembly . . . . . P: 30

INITIATIVE taken by Assembly, Nature of  
C I: 10-11, 43-4; P: 103

INSTITUTE founded in 1873 . . . . . P: 51

PARAGUAYAN proposal<sup>9</sup>

*See below* Preparation of a general and  
comprehensive plan, etc.

PREPARATION of a general and comprehensive

plan: Proposal of Paraguay

Discussion. . . . . C I: 8, 12, 21, 33-4  
P: 99, 100, 105, 114, 206-7, 210-11

Procedure *re*. . . . . P: 105, 114

Rapporteur of Com. No. I. . . . . C I: 34

Reference to Sub-Com. of Com. No. I C I: 21

Reports of

Com. No. I . . . . . P: 489

Sub-Com. of Com. No. I

Adopted with modification in Com.

No. I. . . . . C I: 33-4

Draft text. . . . . C I: 53

Final text. . . . . P: 489-90

Resolutions and draft resolutions:

Assembly resolution, Sept. 27, 1927. . . . . P: 211

Paraguayan draft resolution C I: 40; P: 105

Statements by M. Caballero C I: 21; P: 210-11

Submitted to Assembly . . . . . P: 99

Text of proposal . . . . . C I: 40; P: 105

PRESCRIPTION in, Application of notion of C I: 48

QUESTIONS EXCLUDED as being on agenda  
of Hague Conference on Private Law  
C I: 47-8, 49<sup>9</sup>

QUESTIONS RECOMMENDED as ripe for int.  
agreement  
C I: 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 44-5, 47, 54, 57;  
P: 199, 203

RAPPORTEUR of Com. No. I . . . . . C I: 7, 37

**International Law. Codification of (continued)**

**REPORTS of**  
 Com. No. I . . . . . P: 484  
 Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 227-8, 319  
 Sub-Com. of Com. No. I  
 • Amendment in Com. No. I . . . . . C I: 34-7  
 • Draft text . . . . . C I: 53-8  
 Final text. . . . . P: 484-90

**RESOLUTIONS of Assembly, Sept. 27, 1927** P: 210, 211

**STATEMENTS on work of Com. of Experts by**  
 M. Fromageot . . . . . C I: 10-12  
 M. Guerrero. . . . . C I: 12-13  
 M. Politis. . . . . P: 202-5  
 M. Rundstein (member of Com. of Experts) . . . . . C I: 14

**SUB-COM. of Com. No. I**  
 Appointment and composition  
 C I: 21; P: 484, 489  
 Reports. . . . . C I: 53-8; P: 484-8, 489-90

**WORK OF COM. OF EXPERTS**  
 See above Experts' Committee: Work

**WORK OF COM. OF JURISTS at Rio** . . . . . P: 50-1

**International Status of League Officials**  
 LEGAL position caused by . . . . . C IV: 251

**International Studies**  
 NATIONAL centres . . . . . C II: 15

**Inter-Parliamentary Union**  
 APPROBATION of recommendations of Int. Economic Conference. . . . . C II: 39

**Iraq**  
 See under Mandates

**Ireland**  
 See Irish Free State

**Irish Free State**  
 See also O'Hegarty, Diarmuid  
 MacWhite, Michael  
 DELEGATION . . . . . P: 16

**Italy**  
 See also Alfieri, Dino  
 Bonin-Longare, Count Lelio  
 Cavazzoni, Stefano  
 Cippico, Count Antonio  
 Gallavresi, Giuseppe  
 Gravina, Count Manfredi  
 Marinis Stendardo di Ricigliano,  
 General de  
 Pilotti, Massimo  
 Scialoja, Vittorio  
 Suvich, Fulvio  
 Tamedei, Cesare  
 DELEGATION . . . . . P: 16

**J**

**Jaeklin, W.**  
 APPRECIATION of services as League treasurer  
 • • • • • C IV: 24  
 SECRETARIAT  
 Information section, work of. . . . . C IV: 34

**Janson, P.-E.**  
 • Delegate of Belgium . . . . . P: 11

**Janson, P.-E. (continued)**  
 CHILD Welfare Committee, Work of  
 C V: 11, 12; P: 123  
 ECONOMIC CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE: Con-  
 stitution. . . . . C II: 60

**Japan**  
 See also Adatci, Miñeiciró  
 Mushakoji, Viscount Kintomo  
 Nagai, Matsuzo  
 Nagaoka, Harukazu  
 Sato, Naotake  
 DELEGATION . . . . . P: 16-17

**Jeppe, Karen**  
 TRIBUTE to work of. . . . . C V: 11, 50; P 124

**Jouhaux, Léon**  
 Assistant delegate of France. . . . . P: 14  
 ARMS and ammunition, Private manufacture  
 of . . . . . C III: 49  
 ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . P: 145-6  
 ECONOMIC CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE: Con-  
 stitution C II: 52-3, 59-60; P: 145-6, 146-7

**Journalists, Professional Facilities for**  
 C VI: 14, 29; P: 135, 441, 442

**Judicial and Extra-Judicial Acts in Penal Matters,  
 Communication of**  
 See Penal Matters: Communication, etc.

**Justice**  
 IMMANENT and organised . . . . . P: 59-60, 69, 90

**K**

**Kaas, Dr.**  
 Substitute-representative of Germany . . . . . P: 15  
 BUDGET, 1928, Tenth financial period  
 Secretariat and Special Organisations  
 Administrative Commissions and  
 minorities questions. . . . . C IV: 19  
 Int. law, Com. of Experts for the  
 codification of . . . . . C IV: 65-6  
 Transit and communications, collection  
 of information re . . . . . C IV: 92  
 Suppl. credits . . . . . C IV: 46

**Kapurthala, Maharaja of**  
 Delegate of India. . . . . P: 15  
 SLAVERY in India, progress of measures to  
 abolish . . . . . C VI: 8.

**Keto, J. W.**  
 Delegate of Finland . . . . . P: 14  
 ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . C II: 42, 53  
 ECONOMIC CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE: Consti-  
 tution . . . . . C II: 53

**Kluyver, Mrs. C. A.**  
 Secretary, delegation of Netherlands . . . . . P: 17  
 TRAFFIC in women and children . . . . . C V: 29-30

**Knowles, G.**  
 • Substitute-representative of New Zealand P: 17  
 BUDGET of Int. Labour Organisation (1928)  
 Refugee Service . . . . . C IV: 59



**Knowles, C. (continued)**

MANDATES : Administration of Western Samoa . . . . . C VI : 20

**Koumanoudi, Kosta**

Delegate of Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes . . . . . P : 19

ARBITRATION, security and disarmament . P : 175-6

**Külz, M.**

RELIEF Union, Int. . . . . C II : 55

**L**

**Labour**

AUDITED ACCOUNTS of organisation for 1926  
See under Audit of League accounts :  
Statement, etc.

BUDGET of organisation and financial questions  
See Labour Organisation under Budget  
of League

and CAPITAL, Interdependence of . . . . . P : 79-80

COMMISSIONS : Credits 1928 . C IV : 25, 28, 225, 239

CONDITIONS  
in Relation to rationalisation . . . . . P : 143, 146  
in Relation to trust system in industry C II : 37

CONVENTIONS : Ratifications (including list)  
C IV : 25 ; P : 368-74

FORCED labour  
See Slavery and analogous conditions

**LABOUR OFFICE, INT.**

Building  
Cost of equipping Annex . . . . . C IV : 84  
Upkeep and repairs . . . . . C IV : 25  
Committee on Intellectual Workers . . C II : 15  
Co-operation with Economic Consultative  
Committee C II : 49, 51, 52, 53, 54, 59, 60, 109 ;  
P : 143-4, 155

Correspondence Offices  
Budget estimates for 1928  
C IV : 26, 29, 225, 239  
Suppl. credits . . . . . C IV : 263  
Indian office at Delhi . . . . . C IV : 26  
Proposed amalgamation with branch  
offices of Secretariat  
C IV : 15, 29, 58, 262, 271 ; P : 473

Salaries of officials, increase . . . . . C IV : 25  
Diplomatic Division : re-organisation C IV : 227  
Members of Expert commission *re* study  
of social insurance . . . . . C II : 90  
Parliamentary reports : re-classification  
of category . . . . . C IV : 227

Publications  
Expenditure, sales and new German  
editions . . . . . C IV : 25, 26-7, 58, 222, 271

Refugee Service  
See under Refugees : Russian and,  
Armenian, etc.

Staff  
Appeal to Governing Body in event  
of dismissal rescinded C IV : 255 ; P : 201  
Disputes *re* legal rights, settlement  
See Administrative Tribunal  
Holidays taken in country of origin,  
Travelling expenses . . . . . C IV : 26  
Increments, budgetary increase due to  
C IV : 25, 222

Minor staff, Increase . . . . . C IV : 25, 222, 227  
Overtime . . . . . C IV : 227  
Promotions . . . . . C IV : 227  
Temp. staff . . . . . C IV : 227

**Labour (continued)**

**LABOUR OFFICE, INT. (continued)**

Staff (continued)  
Resolution adopted by, *re* adjust-  
ment of salaries . . . . . C IV : 89  
Salaries, wages and allowances  
C IV : 27, 224, 227, 228-236  
Transfers . . . . . C IV : 227

NATIVE labour  
Commission : Establishment . . . . . C IV : 25-6

RATIONALISATION and scientific organisation of  
Telegram from third Int. Congress of  
Scientific Organisation of Labour C II : 33

REPRESENTATIVES on Economic Consultative  
Committee see under Economic and  
Financial Organisation : Consultative  
Committee

TREATY OF VERSAILLES : Amendment to  
labour part (Art. 393)  
List of ratifications, etc. . . . . P : 412

**Labrousse, François**

Substitute-representative of France . . . . . P : 14  
CHILD welfare : Effect of cinema on children C V : 12  
TRAFFIC in women and children C V : 33-4, 37, 38, 39

**Laidoner, General Johan**

Delegate of Estonia . . . . . P : 14  
FINANCIAL Committee, Work of . . . . . C II : 56

**Lang-Brumann, Mme**

Expert, delegation of Germany . . . . . P : 15  
TRAFFIC in women and children . . . . . C V : 29

**Lange, Christian L.**

Substitute-representative of Norway . . . . . P : 18  
ARBITRATION, security and disarmament . . P : 76-8  
Draft optional convention for com-  
pulsory arbitration C I : 22, 23, 24, 29, 32

BUDGET of Secretariat and Special Organ-  
isations, 1928  
Int. law, Com. of Experts for the codi-  
fication of . . . . . C IV : 62-3, 65

INTERNATIONAL LAW : Codification  
Arbitration and codification . . . . . P : 77-8  
Conference  
Addition of new items to agenda . . . C I : 36  
Preparatory work and procedure C I : 17-18, 21  
Credits . . . . . C IV : 62-3, 65

REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat P : 76-8

**Larsen-Jahn, Martha**

Substitute-representative of Norway . . . . . P : 18  
CHILD Welfare Committee, Work of . . . . . C V : 13  
OPIUM traffic . . . . . C V : 28, 117-18

**Latin-America**

DOCTORS, Scholarships for . . . . . C II : 91 ; P : 425-6  
HEALTH Missions to  
See Health, etc. : Missions, etc.

INFANT welfare in see under Infant  
welfare, etc. : Montevideo Confer-  
ence, etc.

LEPROSY in . . . . . C II : 92 ; P : 426

**LIAISON with League**

Correspondents, credits for . . . . . C IV : 43  
Item of budget, 1928 . . . . . C IV : 15, 76, 171, 181  
Suppl. credits C IV : 46-8, 55, 262, 265, 267, 268  
Reference to Supervisory Commission  
of letter from Com. No. 2 to Com.  
No. 4 . . . . . C IV : 33-4

**Latin-America (continued)**

- MALARIA in . . . . . C II: 21
- REGIONAL economic agreements proposed . . . . . C II: 45
- TRANSIT and communications
  - Situation *re* . . . . . C II: 97; P: 481
  - *See also* Transit, etc.: Information, general, etc.

**Latvia**

- *See also* Cielens, Felix  
Duzmans, Charles.

- DELEGATION . . . . . P: 17

**Law**

- *See* International law  
Legislation  
Private law

- Laws on Domicile, Conflicts of . . . . . C I: 48

**League of Nations**

- CRITICAL period of League history . . . . . P: 58
- EDUCATIONAL information centre proposed  
C II: 14, 14-15, 17, 68; P: 87, 359, 433
- INDIA, relations with League and development  
of contact with . . . . . P: 35-6
- INSTITUTES and bodies set up under its au-  
thority  
• *See below* Relations with Institutes, etc.
- NEW WORK involving new expenditure  
• *See that title under* Budget
- POWERS and functions . . . . . P: 59
- RELATIONS with Institutes, etc., set up under  
its authority: Draft resolution of Dame  
Edith Lyttelton  
Discussion . . . . . C II: 19, 64  
Procedure *re* . . . . . P: 129, 138  
Reference to 9th Assembly . . . . . P: 179  
Report of Com. No. 2 and amendment C II: 63, 64  
Text . . . . . C II: 19; P: 129
- SPHERE OF ACTIVITIES and competence to  
extend . . . . . C IV: 44-5; P: 224
- STATES non-Members, Relations with  
C II: 26, 27, 96, 96-7, 99; P: 24, 36, 201
- UNIVERSALITY . . . . . P: 24, 35
- WORK of, Special work of reference and period-  
ical summaries to be published on . . . . . C II: 14

**Legal Assistance for the Poor**

- *See* Poor, Legal assistance for

- Legal Personality of Foreign Commercial Cor-  
porations, Recognition of . . . . . C I: 47-8, 49

- Legal Position and Functions of Consuls . . . . . C I: 48

- Legal Position of Private Non-profit-making  
Int. Associations and of Private Int. Founda-  
tions . . . . . C I: 48

**Legislation**

- *re* CHILDREN and young people, Protection  
and welfare . . . . . C V: 13
- *re* INDUSTRY *See* Industry: Arbitration, etc.
- MONETARY and banking laws . . . . . P: 287
- OPIUM: in Persia . . . . . C V: 21, 23, 94-5; P: 415-16
- *re* SLAVERY *see under* Slavery
- SOCIAL  
• *See* Labour: and Capital
- *re* TAXATION . . . . . C II: 57, 105
- *See also* International law and Private law

**Leitmaier, Dr. Markus**

- Substitute-representative of Austria . . . . . P: 11
- FOREIGN ARBITRAL AWARDS, Convention *re*  
execution . . . . . C II: 18, 62-3; P: 179-80

- Leprosy in Latin-America . . . . . C II: 92; P: 426

**Ley, The Hon. Thomas John**

- Delegate of Australia . . . . . P: 11
- ALCOHOLISM . . . . . C II: 30-1, 31
- CINEMATOGRAPH, Educational: Int. Institute  
of . . . . . C II: 17, 18
- ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . C II: 54
- ECONOMIC CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE: Con-  
stitution. . . . . C II: 54

**Liberia**

- DELEGATION . . . . . P: 17
- WELCOME to president of . . . . . P: 115

**Libraries**

- of COURT of Int. Justice  
Budget estimates, 1928 . . . . . C IV: 31, 247
- GIFT by Mr. Rockefeller for establishment of  
special League library . . . . . C IV: 17, 39, 260  
P: 107-9, 475
- INFORMATION OFFICES attached to  
Creation of int. co-ordination service  
by Int. Institute of Intellectual Co-  
operation. . . . . C II: 16; P: 87, 130, 133
- National offices, proposed creation . . . . . C II: 16  
P: 130, 133, 360
- of INT. LABOUR OFFICE  
Budget estimates, 1928 . . . . . C IV: 31, 225
- of SECRETARIAT  
Budget estimates, 1928 . . . . . C IV: 17, 173
- Salary of librarian . . . . . C IV: 84

**Licensed Houses**

- *See under* Traffic in women, etc.

**Lighting of Coasts**

- *See* Maritime navigation: Buoyage and light-  
ing of coasts

**Limburg, Joseph**

- Substitute-representative of Netherlands . . . . . P: 17
- ARBITRATION, Compulsory: Draft optional  
convention . . . . . C I: 26, 29, 36
- INTERNATIONAL LAW: Codification  
Conference: Convening and work of . . . . . C I: 15, 20
- TREATIES, etc.: Accession given subject to  
ratification . . . . . C I: 9

**Liquor Traffic**

- CENTRAL INT. OFFICE for control of traffic in  
Africa: Documentation . . . . . P: 311
- in MANDATED TERRITORIES  
• *See under* Mandates

**Lithuania**

- *See also* Voldemaras, A.
- DELEGATION . . . . . P: 17

- Loans issued under League Auspices . . . . . C II: 57, 103  
P: 137, 438, 443

**Löfgren, Jonas Ellef**

- Delegate of Sweden . . . . . P: 20
- ARBITRATION, security and disarmament . . . . . P: 46-7
- Draft optional convention for compulsory  
arbitration . . . . . C I: 22-3

- Löfgren, Jonas Ellef (continued)**  
 DISPUTES, settlement of . . . . . P: 46-7  
 ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of C II: 39, 42; P: 47-8  
 INTERNATIONAL LAW: Codification  
 Conference: Place of meeting and procedure . . . . . C I: 18  
 REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat P: 46-8
- Lorentz, Prof.**  
 INTELLECTUAL co-operation . . . . . C II: 10-13
- **Loucheur, Louis**  
 Substitute-representative of France . . . . . P: 14  
 ALCOHOLISM . . . . . C II: 9, 29, 29-30, 32  
 CINEMATOGRAPH, Educational: Int. Institute  
 C II: 17, 18, 19, 25  
 ECONOMIC CONFERENCE, Int.: Work of  
 C II: 9, 46-49, 54; P: 142-3  
 ECONOMIC CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE: Constitution  
 C II: 49-50, 51, 51-2, 54-5, 58, 59, 61  
 P: 143-4  
 RELATIONS between League and bodies established under its auspices . . . . . C II: 19
- Loudon, Jonkheer J.**  
 Delegate of Netherlands . . . . . P: 17  
 ARBITRATION, security and disarmament  
 C III: 21-2, 54-5, 66, 67, 69  
 P: 161-3  
 Draft optional convention for compulsory arbitration . . . . . P: 162  
 Study of principles of Covenant, etc.  
 C III: 21-2, 55  
 CONFERENCE HALL and new buildings for use of Secretariat . . . . . P: 183-4, 193  
 DISARMAMENT Conference  
 Preparatory Commission  
 Date of . . . . . C III: 12-13, 14-15  
 Work of . . . . . C III: 11-13, 14  
 ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . P: 150  
 INTERNATIONAL LAW: Codification of . . . . . P: 205-6  
 TRIBUTE to M. de Madariaga . . . . . C III: 71  
 WAR or threat of war  
 Financial assistance for States victims of aggression . . . . . C III: 59, 62-3  
 Prohibition of war of aggression, Polish declaration *vs* . . . . . C III: 46, 47
- **Louwers, O.**  
 Assistant delegate of Belgium . . . . . P: 11  
 SLAVERY Convention, 1926 . . . . . C VI: 9, 22
- Lupu, Dr. Nicolae**  
 Delegate of Roumania . . . . . P: 19  
 ALCOHOLISM . . . . . C II: 31  
 REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat P: 111-12
- Luxemburg**  
*See also* Bech, Joseph  
 Vermaire, Charles  
 DELEGATION . . . . . P: 17
- Lynden van Sandenburg, Count F. A. C. van**  
 Delegate of Netherlands . . . . . P: 17  
 ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . C II: 44  
 FOREIGN ARBITRAL AWARDS, Convention *vs* execution . . . . . C II: 18, 63  
 REFUGEES: Greek: Settlement and financial reconstruction scheme . . . . . C II: 62
- Lynden van Sandenburg, Count F. A. C. van (continued)**  
 RELIEF Union, Int. . . . . C II: 56  
 SLAVERY Convention, Int., 1926  
 Ratifications . . . . . C VI: 10, 22
- Lytelton, The Hon. Mrs. Alfred**  
 Substitute-representative of British Empire . . . . . P: 12  
 CHILD Welfare Committee, Work of . . . . . C V: 14  
 INTELLECTUAL co-operation . . . . . C II: 14-15, 16
- OPIUM**  
 Central Board, Permanent: Expenses of  
 Convention . . . . . C V: 39, 43, 44, 45  
 Exports from Persian Gulf . . . . . C V: 28  
 Work of Commission of Enquiry in Persia . . . . . C V: 24-5
- RELATIONS between League and bodies established under its auspices . . . . . C II: 19, 63, 64**  
**TRAFFIC in women and children C V: 33, 37; P: 121-3**  
**TRIBUTE to Miss Jeppe . . . . . C V: 11**  
**WOMEN and children in the Near East, Protection of . . . . . C V: 11**
- Lytton, Earl of**  
 Delegate of India . . . . . P: 15  
 ARBITRATION, security and disarmament C III: 36-7  
 ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . C II: 39  
 OPIUM traffic . . . . . P: 118-19  
 WAR or threat of war  
 Financial assistance for States victims of aggression . . . . . C III: 63
- M**
- MacCormack, Colonel D. W.**  
 Substitute-representative of Persia . . . . . P: 18
- OPIUM**  
 Central Board, Permanent . . . . . C V: 42-3  
 Work of Commission of Enquiry in Persia . . . . . C V: 20-3, 25-6
- Maekenna, Dr. Luis Calvo**  
 Substitute-representative and expert, delegation of Chile . . . . . P: 12  
 HEALTH Organisation, Work of C II: 21, 23; P: 127
- Mae White, Michael**  
 Delegate of Irish Free State . . . . . P: 16  
 BUDGET of Secretariat, 1928  
 Administrative Commissions and minorities questions . . . . . C IV: 19  
 Transit and communications, collection of information *vs* . . . . . C IV: 52  
 ECONOMIC CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE: Constitution . . . . . C II: 60  
 SECRETARIAT: Information section, work of C IV: 34
- Madariaga, M. de**  
 FAREWELL SPEECH in Com. No. 3 . . . . . C III: 71-2  
 TRIBUTE to work as Chief of Disarmament Section . . . . . C III: 71; P: 1, 8
- Malaria**  
 COURSES organised by Health Organisation  
 C II: 22, 89-90; P: 36, 296, 355, 423  
 in BULGARIA . . . . . C II: 89, 94; P: 349, 423, 429

**Malaria (continued)**

in GREAT BRITAIN . . . . . C II : 22  
 in INDIA . . . . . C II : 21 ; P : 36, 125, 423  
 in LATIN AMERICA . . . . . C II : 21  
 in SYRIA . . . . . C II : 21, 89 ; P : 423  
 WORK of Malaria Commission of League  
     C II : 21, 22, 24, 89-90 ;  
     P : 125-6, 126, 296, 355, 423

**Mandates**

in Com. No. 6  
     Discussion and documents  
         C VI : 18-21, 23-5, 29-30  
     Report . . . . . C VI : 29-30 ; P : 446-7  
 in Plenary Meeting  
     Discussion and documents  
         P : 78, 86, 140, 266-73, 330-5, 446-7  
     Resolution, Sept. 23, 1927 . . . . . P : 140  
 ANNUAL REPORTS of Mandatory Powers  
     P : 140, 273, 330-1  
 BUDGET ESTIMATES for 1928 C IV : 21, 83, 172-193-4  
 COMMISSION, PERMANENT  
     10th Session, Work of . . . . . P : 268-72, 330  
     11th Session, Work of . . . . . P : 330-5  
     German member . . . . . C VI : 20 ; P : 330  
     Minutes of sessions C VI : 19-20, 21, 25, 30 ;  
         P : 140, 446, 447  
     Publicity of meetings . . . . . C VI : 20, 21  
     Special allowances to members . . C IV : 83, 193

**DOCUMENTS**

Distributed since 7th session of Assembly,  
 Reference to Com. No. 6 . . . . . P : 78, 86  
 Indexing of records of Commission . . P : 273

**IRAQ**

Administration . . C VI : 19, 30 ; P : 269-70, 496  
*See also under Frontiers*

**LEGAL relationship between Mandatory Powers and mandated territories**

C VI : 18-19, 29 ; P : 140, 446

**LIQUOR traffic**

Definition of terms . . . . . C VI : 19, 24, 30 ;  
     P : 140, 268-9, 446  
 Increase . . . . . C VI : 19, 24, 30 ; P : 140, 446  
 Petition *vs* license for sale in South  
     West Africa . . . . . P : 272

**OFFICIALS in mandated territories, choice of**

C VI : 19, 30 ; P : 446

**PETITIONS to Mandates Commission**

Codification of rules . . . C VI : 19, 30 ; P : 446

**REPORTS of**

**Committee No. 6**

Draft submitted by Dr Nansen . . C VI : 29-30  
     Discussion and amendments . . C VI : 23-5  
     Final text . . . . . P : 446-7  
     Council and Secretariat . . . P : 266-73, 330-5

RESOLUTION of Assembly, Sept. 23, 1927 . . P : 140

**SOUTH WEST AFRICA**

Administration . . . . . C VI : 20 ; P : 333, 334-5  
     Frontier between Angola and  
         P : 269, 330, 332-3, 335  
     Petition *vs* license for sale of spirituous  
         liqueurs . . . . . P : 272  
     Relations with Union of South Africa P : 332

**SYRIA**

Administration C VI : 19, 30, 273 ; P : 270, 331, 446  
     Deposit of Organic law, postponement  
         P : 273, 331, 334  
     Frontier between Transjordan and . . P : 269  
     Petitions . . . . . P : 271-2, 334

**WESTERN SAMOA**

Administration C VI : 19, 20, 30 ; P : 271, 446

**Manufactured Goods in India . . . . . P : 37**

**Marinis Stando di Risigliano, General de**

Substitute-representative of Italy . . . . . P : 16  
 ARBITRATION, security and disarmament. . P : 172-3  
 ARMS and ammunition, Private manufacture  
     of . . . . . C III : 19, 64, 65  
 AVIATION : Belgian proposal *vs* . . . . . C III : 51  
 WAR or threat of war  
     Financial assistance for States victims  
         of aggression . . . . . C III : 63  
     Prohibition of wars of aggression,  
         Polish declaration *vs* . . . . . C III : 26

**Maritime Navigation**

BUOYAGE and lighting of coasts  
     C II : 95 ; P : 289, 311, 354, 479  
 CLAUSES *vs*, contained in commercial treaties  
     C II : 48 ; P : 144  
 COMMITTEE : General duties . . . . . P : 288  
 TONNAGE measurement, Unification  
     C II : 95 ; P : 289, 354, 479

**Maritime Ports**

CLAUSES *vs* rules contained in commercial  
     treaties . . . . . C II : 48 ; P : 144  
 CONVENTION on int. régime, 1923  
     List of signatures, ratifications and  
         adhesions . . . . . P : 380-2  
 TREATMENT of captains and crews of ships in P : 289

**Marriage, Age of**

*See Children and young people, etc. : Age of consent, etc.*

**Mathematical Quantities and Constants, Annual Tables**

Office and Publication *vs*, Credits for  
     C II : 12-13, 16, 69 ; P : 130, 133, 360

**McKinnon, Wood, Mr.**

TREATIES, etc. : Accession given subject to  
     ratification . . . . . C I : 9

**Memel Convention, Alleged Infractions of P : 251-2, 325**

**Mensdorff-Pouilly-Dietrichstein, Albert**

Delegate of Austria . . . . . P : 11  
 ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . P : 149  
 INTELLECTUAL co-operation . . . . . P : 87-8  
 MORAL disarmament . . . . . P : 87  
 OPIUM convention . . . . . C V : 28  
 REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat P : 87-8

**Merchandise**

INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY *vs*, published by  
     Germany . . . . . C II : 15

**Mexico**

ATTENDANCE of Mexican observers at Econ-  
     omic Conference . . . . . P : 24

**Michalakopoulos, André**

Delegate of Greece . . . . . P : 15  
 REFUGEES : Armenian, Settlement of . . . P : 189

**Minorities**

MOSLEMS of Albanian origin in Greece  
     Credits . . . . . C IV : 74, 109, 111  
     Report of Council and Secretariat . . . P : 265

PROCEDURE : Report of Council and Secre-  
     tariat . . . . . P : 260-1

**in ROUMANIA**

*See Hungarian optants, etc.*

- Minority Schools in Upper Silesia**  
 ADMISSION of children to schools in Voivodie of Silesia: Petition from Deutscher Volksbund . . . . . P: 261-5  
 SCHOOLS at Wilcza-Gorna, Laziska-Gorna and Bytkow . . . . . P: 265
- Modzelewski, Jean de**  
 Substitute-representative of Poland . . . . . P: 18  
 AUDIT of League accounts, 1926 . . . . . P: 194  
 • BUDGET OF LEAGUE, 1928  
 • Supplementary credits . . . . . P: 195  
 BUDGET OF SECRETARIAT, 1928  
 Administrative Commissions and minorities questions . . . . . C IV: 20  
 Liaison with Latin-America . . . . . C IV: 47  
 Transit and communications, collection of information *vs* . . . . . C IV: 51, 53  
 Travelling expenses of officials . . . . . C IV: 15  
 CONTRIBUTIONS of States to League . . . . . P: 194  
 SALARIES of League staff at Geneva, adjustment . . . . . C IV: 57  
 TRIBUTE to Chairman of Committee No. 4 . . . . . C IV: 58
- Molloff, Wladimir**  
 Delegate of Bulgaria . . . . . P: 12  
 ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of. . . . . C II: 46  
 REFUGEES: Bulgarian, Settlement, etc. . . . . C II: 25-6
- Moltesen, Laust**  
 Delegate of Denmark . . . . . P: 13  
 ARMAMENTS reduction. . . . . P: 52-3  
 ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of. . . . . P: 52  
 INT. LAW, codification of  
 Work of Com. of Experts . . . . . P: 52  
 REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 52-3
- Monetary and Banking Laws**  
 PUBLICATION. . . . . P 287
- "Monthly Summary"**  
 of CONVENTIONS concluded under League auspices. . . . . C IV: 55, 262  
 prepared by INFORMATION section  
 C IV: 185-6, 209, 218-19
- Moore, Sir William Harrison**  
 Substitute-representative of Australia. . . . . P: 11  
 • ARBITRATION, Compulsory: Draft optional convention . . . . . C I: 25  
 INTERNATIONAL LAW: Codification Conference  
 Method of convening . . . . . C I: 19  
 Rules *vs* procedure . . . . . C I: 36-7
- Moral Disarmament.** . . . . C III: 13, 29, 36, 46;  
 C VI: 15, 16, 17; P: 39, 40, 41, 68, 87, 112, 114, 156
- Morales, Dr. Eusebio A.**  
 Delegate of Panama . . . . . P: 18  
 REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 100-103
- Moss, Mrs. I. H.**  
 Substitute-representative of Australia. . . . . P: 11  
 HEALTH Organisation, work of . . . . . C II: 22-3  
 TRAFFIC in women and children . . . . . C V: 34
- Most-Favoured-Nation Clause**  
 APPLICATION . . . . . C II: 39, 40, 43, 45, 46, 48, 100, 102;  
 P: 144, 149, 154, 339-40, 345-6  
 See also under Customs: Tariffs: Collective, etc.
- Motherhood, Protection** . . . . . C II: 21
- Motta, Giuseppe**  
 Delegate of Switzerland . . . . . P: 20  
 APPOINTMENT as hon. member of General Com. . . . . P: 31  
 ARBITRATION, security and disarmament  
 C III: 56; P: 110  
 Draft optional convention for compulsory arbitration . . . . . C I: 25, 26, 28, 29-30, 30, 31, 32-3  
 AVIATION: Belgian proposal *vs* . . . . . C III: 51  
 CONFERENCE HALL and new buildings for use of Secretariat. . . . . P: 185  
 INTERNATIONAL LAW: Codification Conference  
 Convening, place and work of . . . . . C I: 19  
 Preparatory Com. for . . . . . C I: 35  
 LIBRARY of League: Rockefeller gift . . . . . P: 108  
 PROCEDURE in Com. No. 3. . . . . C III: 15  
 REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 109-11  
 TREATIES, etc.: Accession given subject to ratification . . . . . C I: 8, 10, 28; P: 141  
 WAR or threat of war  
 Financial assistance for States victims of aggression. . . . . C III: 62
- Mullick, Sir Basanta Kumar**  
 Substitute-representative of India . . . . . P: 16  
 COUNCIL, election of non-perm. Members  
 System of simple transferable vote and proportional representation . . . . . C VI: 12
- Munch, Peter**  
 Substitute-representative of Denmark. . . . . P: 13  
 COUNCIL, election of non-perm. Members  
 System of single transferable vote and proportional representation . . . . . C VI: 11, 12
- Museums, Int. Office of**  
 WORK of . . . . . C II: 12, 16, 69;  
 P: 88, 130, 131, 133, 309, 361
- Muskakoji, Viscount Kintomo**  
 Substitute-representative of Japan . . . . . P: 16
- OPIUM**  
 Central Board, Permanent. . . . . C V: 42, 46  
 Convention . . . . . C V: 27  
 TRAFFIC in women and children . . . . . C V: 36
- N**
- Nagai, Matsuzo**  
 Delegate of Japan . . . . . P: 16  
 ALCOHOLISM: Procedure *vs* study . . . . . C II: 9  
 ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . C II: 40-1, 54  
 HEALTH Organisation, Work of. . . . . C II: 21-2, 23  
 INTELLECTUAL co-operation . . . . . C II: 16  
 TRANSIT and communications . . . . . C II: 27
- Nagaoka, Harukazu**  
 Delegate of Japan . . . . . P: 16  
 ARBITRATION, security and disarmament. . . . . P: 173  
 ARMS and ammunition, etc., Private manufacture of . . . . . C III: 63

**Nagaoka, Harukazu (continued)**

WAR or threat of war  
 Financial assistance for States victims  
 of aggression . . . . . C III: 63  
 Prohibition of wars of aggression, Polish  
 declaration re . . . . . C III: 46, 47

**Nansen, Dr. Fridtjof**

Delegate of Norway . . . . . P: 18

ARBITRATION, security and disarmament  
 C III: 27, 55, 174-5  
 Draft optional convention for compulsory  
 arbitration . . . . . C III: 27, 41, 42; P: 174-5

ARMS and ammunition, Private manufacture  
 of . . . . . C III: 26

**MANDATES**

Commission, Work of  
 C VI: 18-20, 21, 22, 24; P: 140  
 Liquor traffic in Togoland and Cameroons  
 C VI: 24, 25

**REFUGEES**

Armenian, Settlement of  
 P: 172 (letter), 181-2 (statement), 191  
 Russian and Armenian . . . . . C V: 15; P: 190-1

**SLAVERY**

in Abyssinia and Sierra Leone . . . . . C VI: 9  
 Convention, 1926 . . . . . C VI: 9

**Nationality**

PROBLEMS of . . . . . C I: 14, 17

QUESTION RECOMMENDED as ripe for int.  
 agreement . . . . . C I: 11, 12, 14, 15, 19, 44, 54, 57;  
 C IV: 49; P: 51, 199, 203

SUGGESTED POSTPONEMENT of study of ques-  
 tion . . . . . C I: 49

Nationality of Commercial Corporations and  
 Question of Diplomatic Protection . . . . . C I: 47-8, 49

**Natives**

HEALTH conditions, *see* Health: of natives  
 LABOUR, Native: Establishment of  
 Commission . . . . . C IV: 25-6

Nanon Broadcasting Station . . . . . C II: 89; P: 422

Naval Three-Power Conference  
 C III: 13, 22-3, 37; P: 25, 26, 85, 91, 96, 161-2, 166

**Navigation**

PROTECTION of national . . . . . P: 340  
*See also* Aerial navigation and Inland naviga-  
 tion and Maritime navigation

**Near East**

HEALTH in . . . . . C II: 21  
 WOMEN and children in  
*See* Women and children in Near East

**Neculesca, Eugène**

Expert, delegation of Roumania . . . . . P: 19  
 ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . C II: 46; P: 147-8  
 ECONOMIC CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE: Con-  
 stitution . . . . . C II: 53  
 TRANSMIT and communications . . . . . C II: 27

**Netherlands**

*See also* Beelaerts van Blokland, Jonkheer F.  
 Eysinga, Jonkheer W. J. M. van  
 Klayver, Mrs. C. A.  
 Länburg, Joseph  
 London, Jonkheer J.  
 Lynden van Sandenburg, Count F. A. C. van  
 Wettum, W. G. van

**Netherlands (continued)**

DELEGATION . . . . . P: 17  
 LOAN for enlargement of premises of Court  
 of Int. Justice . . . . . C IV: 38, 259, 273; P: 195, 475-6

**Neutral House at Constantinople**

FURNITURE . . . . . C IV: 38-9, 260; P: 357-8

**New Work of League Involving New Expenditure**

*See that title under* Budget

**New Zealand**

*See also* Knowles, C.  
 Parr, Sir James

DELEGATION . . . . . P: 17

**News and Newspapers**

AGENCIES and monopolies . . . . . C VI: 14-15, 16, 17, 18  
 FALSE and tendencious . . . . . P: 136  
 PEACE-TIME censorship C VI: 14, 16, 29; P: 441, 442  
 PROTECTION of . . . . . C VI: 14, 16, 29; P: 441, 442  
 TRANSPORT of newspapers and postal sub-  
 scriptions . . . . . C VI: 14, 29; P: 135, 441  
*See also* Press

**Nicaragua**

DELEGATION . . . . . P: 17

**Nitobe, Dr.**

LECTURES in Japan . . . . . C II: 16

**Norway**

*See also* Hambro, Carl Joachim  
 Lange, Christian L.  
 Larsen-Jahn, Martha  
 Nansen, Dr. Fridtjof  
 Worm-Müller, Dr. J. S.

DELEGATION . . . . . P: 18

RATIFICATION of Slavery Convention, 1926 . . . . . P: 135

**Nutrition**

STUDY of problem . . . . . C II: 92; P: 298, 427

**Obscene Publications, Traffic in**

CONVENTION, 1923: List of ratifications, etc. P: 387-9  
 RELATION to traffic in women and children  
 C V: 36, 38, 99; P: 301, 418

**Office for Annual Table of Constants and Math-  
 ematical Quantities**

*See under* Mathematical quantities, etc.

**Office Int. d'hygiène publique**

RELATIONS with health organisation of League  
 C II: 21, 23, 24; P: 125, 126, 293-4, 422

**"Official Journal" of League**

BUDGET ESTIMATES, 1928 . . . . . C IV: 185

**Official Languages of League**

EFFECT on duration of League meetings C IV: 210

**Oldenburg, Andreas**

- Substitute-representative of Denmark . . . . . P: 13
- BUDGET of Secretariat, etc., 1928
  - Branch offices . . . . . C IV: 15
- SECRETARIAT
  - Information section, work and budget . . . . . C IV: 34, 55

**Onslow, Earl of**

- Delegate of British Empire . . . . . P: 12
- ARBITRATION, security and disarmament
  - C III: 32-3, 55, 65, 67, 68, 70; P: 164-5
- AVIATION: Belgian proposal *re* . . . . . C III: 50
- BUDGET of Secretariat, etc., 1928
  - Int. law, Com. of Experts for the progressive codification of . . . . . C IV: 64, 65
- TRIBUTE to M. de Madariaga . . . . . C III: 71

**Opium and other Dangerous Drugs, Traffic in**

- in Coms. Nos. 4 and 5
  - Discussion and documents C IV: 9-10, 39-42, 54-5, 59, 60, 61, 70-1, 72, 198, 260-1, 266-7, 268, 272-3; C V: 18-28, 32, 39-43, 44-7, 93-7, 100-2
  - Reports C V: 93-7, 100-2; P: 413-14, 414-17
- in Plenary Meetings
  - Discussion and documents
    - P: 36, 38, 75-6, 117-21, 304-8, 413-17, 474-5
  - Resolution, Sept. 20, 1927 . . . . . P: 119

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

- Assessors . . . . . P: 307
- Constitution and functions of . . . . . C V: 42
- Extraordinary session to discuss question of illicit traffic
  - See below under Illicit traffic*
- Relations with Perm. Central Board
  - C IV: 39, 41; C V: 40-1, 41, 42, 43, 45
- Representation of Italy . . . . . P: 304
- Work of 9th session
  - Report of Council and Secretariat P: 304-6
  - See also below Reports*

**ANNUAL REPORTS . . . . . P: 304-5**

**BUDGET ESTIMATES for 1928 . . . . . C IV: 198**

**CENTRAL BOARD, Permanent (to be set up after coming into force of Convention of Feb., 1925)**

- Arts. of Convention providing for establishment (text) . . . . . C IV: 70-1
- Constitution and position of Board
  - C V: 39, 40-1, 41, 42, 43, 45, 100, 102; P: 75
- Draft reply of Com. No. 5 to Com. No. 4 C V: 46
- Expenses of
  - Budget estimates proposed for 1928 . . . . . C IV: 72, 266-7, 268
  - Discussion in Com. No. 5 . . . . . C V: 39-43, 44-7
  - Procedure *re* . . . . . C V: 10-11
  - Provision for staff . . . . . C V: 46, 101, 102
  - Question of inclusion in budget
    - Discussion . . . . . C IV: 9-10, 39-42, 54-5, 59, 60, 61; C V: 102
  - Extract from Council minutes (June 1927) . . . . . C IV: 70
  - Note by Sec. Gen. . . . . C IV: 70-1
  - Reports of
    - Com. No. 4 . . . . . C IV: 272-3; P: 474-5
    - Supervisory Commission . . . . . C IV: 260-1, 266-7, 268
  - Rapporteur of Com. No. 5 . . . . . C V: 11
  - Remuneration of members C IV: 269; C V: 39, 39-40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 101, 101-2
  - Report by Dame Edith Lyttelton to Com. No. 5 C V: 39-43, 44-7, 100-2 (*text*)
  - Sub-Committees of Com. No. 5
    - to Consult with Com. No. 4 . . . . . C V: 47
    - to Prepare draft letter . . . . . C V: 44, 46

**Opium and other Dangerous Drugs, Traffic in (continued)**

**CENTRAL BOARD, Permanent, etc. (continued)**

- Expenses of (continued)
  - Travelling expenses, etc., of members . . . . . C V: 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 101, 102
- Relations with Advisory Com.
  - C IV: 39, 41; C V: 40-1, 41, 42, 43, 45
- Scheme proposed in Geneva Convention, Review of . . . . . C V: 101
- in CENTRAL and South America . . . . . C V: 97; P: 304-5, 414

**CHINA, Exports by post to . . . . . C V: 97; P: 306, 413**

**COMMERCE in drugs: Necessity of furnishing reports on . . . . . C V: 97; P: 414**

**COMMISSION of Enquiry to Persia**

*See below under Persia*

**CONVENTIONS**

- Agreement of Feb. 11, 1925
  - List of ratifications, etc. . . . . P: 391
  - Operative in India . . . . . P: 36
- Convention, 1912 (Hague)
  - C V: 26, 40, 96, 97, 100; P: 304, 305, 307, 414
  - List of ratifications, etc. . . . . P: 390-1
- Convention, etc., of Feb. 19, 1925 (Geneva)
  - Central Board, Permanent (to be set up after coming into force of Convention), *see that title above*
  - List of ratifications, etc. C IV: 71-2; P: 391-3
  - Ratification C V: 24, 25, 26, 27, 27-8, 41, 45, 97, 102; P: 119, 304, 305, 306-7, 413, 417

**COUNCIL action *re* . . . . . P: 306-7**

**ESTONIA AND LITHUANIA, Transit trade through . . . . . P: 306**

**FREE PORTS and zones. . . . . C V: 97; P: 306, 414**

**ILLICIT traffic**

- British proposal
  - See below Source of supplies, etc.*
- Extent of, and necessity for Govt. action *re* . . . . . C V: 22, 26, 40, 42, 96 P: 75, 118, 118-19, 305, 413
- Extraordinary session of Advisory Com. to discuss: Italian proposal
  - C V: 96-7; P: 75-6, 306, 307, 413
- Italian proposal *re*
  - See above Extraordinary session, etc.*
- in Persian Gulf: so-called illicit traffic not contrary to laws of locality C V: 25, 26
- Source of supplies, Govt. investigation *re*: British proposal C V: 96; P: 305-6, 413
- Work of Perm. Central Board *re* C V: 39, 100, 101

**IMPORTS and exports**

- in China
  - See above, China, etc.*
- Import certificate system
  - C V: 21, 23-4, 25, 94-5; P: 306, 416
- in India
  - See below in India: Export reduction*
- in Persia
  - See below in Persia: Exports*

**in INDIA**

- Export reduction . . . . . C V: 21, 24, 25

**in LITHUANIA**

- See above Estonia and Lithuania*

**PERMANENT CENTRAL BOARD**

*See above Central Board, Permanent*

**in PERSIA**

- Commission of Enquiry
  - Appointment and composition (1925) . . . . . C V: 94; P: 415
  - Credits . . . . . C V: 93; P: 415
  - Discussion . . . . . C V: 18-27, 32; P: 38, 120
  - Observations of Persian Govt. on report of Commission . . . . . C V: 18, 19, 20, 22, 94-5; P: 307, 415-16

**Opium and other Dangerous Drugs, Traffic in (continued)**

**in PERSIA (continued)**

Commission of Enquiry (continued)  
 Plan recommended by Commission  
 C V : 20-1, 94 ; P : 307, 415

- Programme proposed to Medjless by  
 Persian Govt. C V : 23, 94-5 ; P : 307, 415-16
- Rapporteur of Com. No. 5 . . . C V : 10, 27
- Reports of  
 Com. No. 5  
 Draft submitted by M. Veverka C V : 93-6  
 Discussed and amended C V : 18-27, 32  
 Final text . . . . . P : 414-17  
 Council and Secretariat . . . . . P : 307-8

Resolutions and draft resolutions  
 Assembly (6th Session) . . C V : 93 ; P : 414  
 Assembly (8th Session), Sept. 20,  
 1927 . . . . . P : 120  
 Com. No. 5 . . . . . C V : 27  
 Statement by Chairman of Commission  
 C V : 18-19  
 Statement by Persian delegate . C V : 20-3  
 Effect of curtailment of Indian opium  
 exports . . . . . C V : 21, 24, 25  
 Exports. . . . . C V : 26  
 from Persian Gulf . . . . . C V : 25, 26  
 Legislation . . . . . C V : 21, 23, 94-5 ; P : 415-16  
 Results of stoppage of opium export C V : 21, 25  
 Substitutes for opium poppy  
 C V : 19, 20, 21, 23, 25, 94 ; P : 415  
 Tariff questions  
 C V : 20, 25, 26, 27, 95 ; P : 120, 416, 417  
 Uses of Persian opium C. V : 19, 22, 94, 95 ; P : 415

**RAPPORTEUR of Com. No. 5 . . . . . C V : 10, 28**

**REPORTS of**  
 Com. No. 5  
 Draft submitted by Mme. Larsen-  
 Jahn . . . . . C V : 96-7  
 Discussed and amended . . . C V : 27-8  
 Final text . . . . . P : 413-14  
 Council and Secretariat . . . . . P : 304-8

**REPORTS ON WORK of Commission of Enquiry  
 in Persia**  
*See above in Persia: Commission of  
 Enquiry: Reports*

**RESOLUTION of Assembly, Sept. 20, 1927 . . . P : 119**

**in SOUTH AMERICA**  
*See above in Central and South America*

**TRIBUTE to Commission of Enquiry in Persia  
 and to Persian Govt.**  
 C V : 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 95 ; P : 38, 416, 417

**TURKEY: Enquiry re ratification of Hague  
 Convention by . . . C V : 97 ; P : 304, 307, 414**

**Oprešen, G.**  
**INTELLECTUAL co-operation . . . . . C II : 14, 15**

**Osuský, Dr. Stephan**  
 Delegate of Czechoslovakia . . . . . P : 13

**ADMINISTRATIVE Tribunal: Establishment**  
 C IV : 12, 36

**AUDIT of League accounts, 1926 . . . . . C IV : 12**

**BUDGET, 1928, Tenth financial period**  
 Labour Organisation, Int.  
 Correspondence Offices, proposed amal-  
 gamation with branch offices of  
 League . . . . . C IV : 29  
 Entertainment allowances . . . . C IV : 28  
 New work involving new expenditure C IV : 12, 14  
 Secretariat and Special Organisations  
 Administrative Commissions and min-  
 orities questions . . . . . C IV : 19  
 Armaments, reduction of . . . . . C IV : 46  
 Economic and financial organisation C IV : 21  
 Int. law, Com. of Experts for the pro-  
 gressive codification of  
 C IV : 23, 48, 49, 50, 51, 60, 63, 64, 65

**Osuský, Dr. Stephan (continued)**

**BUDGET, 1928, Tenth financial period (continued)**

Secretariat and Special Organisations (continued)  
 Liaison with Latin America . . . . C IV : 48  
 Publications, sale of . . . . . C IV : 21  
 Relief Union, Int. . . . . C IV : 23  
 Transit and communications, collection  
 of information *vs.* . . . . . C IV : 52, 53  
 Unforeseen expenditure subject to  
 special Cl. vote . . . . . C IV : 14  
 Suppl. credits . . . . . C IV : 14, 43, 44  
 Unforeseen expenditure . . . . . C IV : 29  
 Working Capital Fund: Recoverable  
 advances . . . . . C IV : 12

**CONFERENCE HALL and new buildings for use  
 of Secretariat . . . . . P : 184-5**

**CONFERENCES of League**  
 Contribution to expenses by non-Members  
 of League represented at . . . . . C IV : 14

**CONTRIBUTIONS of States in arrears . . . . . C IV : 12**

**COURT of Int. Justice, Perm.**  
 Deputy judges: Remuneration. C IV : 12, 37  
 Salaries of temp. staff C IV : 31-2, 32, 32-3, 33, 35

**LIBRARY of League: Rockefeller gift . . . . . P : 108**

**NEUTRAL HOUSE in Constantinople, Furniture**  
 C IV : 39

**OPIUM: Permanent Central Board Expenses**  
 C IV : 10, 39, 40, 42

**SALARIES of staff at Geneva, adjustment**  
 C IV : 11, 12, 57

**SECRETARIAT**  
 Increase in work of . . . . . C IV : 12  
 Information section, work of . . . . C IV : 34  
 Publications . . . . . C IV : 38  
 Sale of Hôtel National and Villa Arm-  
 leder: Procedure . . . . . C IV : 38  
 SUPERVISORY Commission, Work of . . . C IV : 12

**P**

**Pacific Health Conference**  
 C II : 22-3, 24 ; P : 126, 298, 423

**Pacific Islands, Southern**  
**NATIVES, Health conditions of**  
 C II : 22-3, 24 ; P : 126, 298, 423

**Pams, Jules**  
 Delegate of France . . . . . P : 14  
**ALCOHOLISM . . . . . C II : 32 ; C V : 9, 10**  
**TRIBUTE to Miss Jeppe . . . . . C V : 11**

**Panama**  
*See also Morales, Dr. Eusebio A.*  
**DELEGATION . . . . . P : 18**

**Pan-American Congress, Havana . . . . . C II : 21**

**Paraguay**  
*See also Caballero, Dr. Ramon V.*  
**DELEGATION . . . . . P : 18**  
**PROPOSAL re codification of int. law**  
*See Int. law, etc.: Preparation, etc.*

**Parr, Sir James**  
 Delegate of New Zealand . . . . . P : 17  
**ARBITRATION, security and disarmament**  
 C III : 55-6, 67, 68, 69



**Parra-Pérez, C.**

- Delegate of Venezuela . . . . . P: 20
- HEALTH organisation, Work of . . . . . C II: 24
- OPIUM Convention . . . . . C V: 27
- WOMEN and children in the Near East, Protection of . . . . . C V: 11

**Passports**

- See Emigration, etc.: Transit cards, etc.
- Identity documents, etc.
- Refugees: Russian and Armenian, etc.:
- Identity certificate system

**Paul-Boncour, M.**

- Delegate of France . . . . . P: 14
- ARBITRATION, security and disarmament  
C III: 37-9, 66, 68, 69; P: 165-8
- DISARMAMENT Conference  
Work of Preparatory Commission  
C III: 15, 22-5, 37, 38
- PROCEDURE *re* work in Com. No. 3 . . . . . C III: 33
- WAR or threat of war  
Financial assistance for States victims  
of aggression . . . . . C III: 61

**Paull, Dr. Leo di**

- Delegate of Austria . . . . . P: 11
- ALCOHOLISM . . . . . C II: 29
- BUDGET 1928, Tenth financial period  
Labour Organisation, Int.  
Travelling expenses of officials . . . C IV: 26
- Secretariat and Special Organisations  
Administrative Commissions and minorities questions . . . . . C IV: 18-19, 58
- Mandates . . . . . C IV: 21
- Transit and communications, collection of information *re* . . . . . C IV: 52
- CINEMATOGRAPH, Educational: Int. Institute  
C II: 19, 25
- DOCUMENTS, distribution to delegates . . C IV: 55-6
- ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . C II: 39
- ECONOMIC CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE: Constitution . . . . . C II: 59, 61
- FINANCIAL Committee, Work of . . . . . C II: 56-7
- INTELLECTUAL co-operation . . . . . C II: 14
- TRANSIT and communications . . . . . C II: 27, 65

**Paulucci di Calboli Barone, Marquis**

- See Calboli Barone, Marquis Paulucci di

**Pearce, Sir George Foster**

- Delegate of Australia . . . . . P: 11
- ARBITRATION, security and disarmament  
C III: 67; P: 93-4, 169
- Draft optional convention for compulsory arbitration . . . . . C III: 43; P: 94
- DISARMAMENT Conference, Preparatory Commission . . . . . C III: 15
- ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . P: 94-5
- REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat . P: 93-5
- TREATIES, etc.: Accession given subject to ratification . . . . . C I: 9

**Pella, V. V.**

- Substitute-representative of Roumania . . . P: 19
- INTERNATIONAL LAW: Codification  
Methods of codification . . . C I: 18; P: 206-7
- Preparatory work for Conference  
C I: 33-4; P: 207
- Report of Com. No. 1 . . . . . P: 207-9

**Penal Matters**

- COMMUNICATION of judicial and extra-judicial acts in  
Questionnaire *re*, sent to Govts. C I: 48; P: 208
- UNIFICATION suggested . . . . . C I: 18; P: 208

**Permanent Central Board to be set up under Opium Convention, 1925**

- See Opium, etc.: Central Board, etc.

**Permanent Court of International Justice**

- See Court of Int. Justice, etc.

**Persia**

- See also Alâ, Hussein Khan  
Foroughi, Mohammad Ali Khan  
Ghadimy, Dr. Hussein Khan  
MacCormack, Colonel D. W.

- DELEGATION . . . . . P: 18
- EDUCATION in . . . . . C II: 14
- ELECTION of non-perm. Members of Cl.  
Reservation of right of candidature. P: 116-17
- OPIUM traffic in  
See Opium, etc.: in Persia

**Pflügl, Emerich**

- Delegate of Austria . . . . . P: 11
- ARBITRATION, security and disarmament C III: 56-7
- DISARMAMENT Conference, Minutes of Preparatory Commission. . . . . C III: 13
- WAR or threat of war  
Financial assistance for States victims  
of aggression . . . . . C III: 59-60

**Physical Education, Study of . . . . . P: 298**

**Pilotti, Massimo**

- Substitute-representative of Italy. . . . . P: 16
- ARBITRATION, Compulsory: Draft optional convention . . . . . C I: 31

**Piracy**

- QUESTION recommended as ripe for int. agreement. . . . . C I: 11, 12, 45, 54; P: 203
- URGENCY of question doubted  
C I: 11, 45, 46, 54; P: 203, 207-8

**Pitamic, Leonidas**

- Substitute-representative of Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. . . . . P: 19
- ADMINISTRATIVE Tribunal: Establishment C IV: 36
- BUDGET of Secretariat, etc., 1928  
Administrative Commissions and minorities questions . . . . . C IV: 19
- Int. law, Codification of: Com. of Experts  
C IV: 49
- OPIUM: Perm. Central Board: Expenses  
C IV: 40, 42, 54

**Plaisant, Marcel**

- Assistant delegate of France. . . . . P: 14
- FOREIGN ARBITRAL AWARDS, Convention *re* execution . . . . . C II: 63
- HEALTH Organisation, Work of . . . . . C II: 24, 25
- INTELLECTUAL co-operation. . . . . P: 132-3
- REFUGEES: Bulgarian, Settlement, etc. . . C II: 26
- RELATIONS between League and bodies established under its auspices. . . . . C II: 64

**Poland**

*See also* Gliwic, Hipolit  
 Modzelewski, Jean de  
 Rostworowski, Michel  
 Rundstein, Szymon  
 Sokal, François

DELEGATION . . . . . P: 18

INLAND navigation, *see* Inland navigation:  
 Enquiry

Political Crises, Credits to meet . . . . C IV: 14, 15

**Political Questions**

INACTIVITY of Council *re* certain questions P: 58, 59

**Politis, Nicolas**

Delegate of Greece . . . . . P: 15

ARBITRATION, security and disarmament  
 Draft optional convention for compulsory  
 arbitration. . . . . C I: 29, 32

DISPUTE between States Members  
 Procedure. . . . . P: 59

INTERNATIONAL LAW: Codification  
 Arbitration and codification . . . . P: 60, 62-3  
 Conference: Place of meeting, procedure  
 and work of . . . . . C I: 15-16, 36, 37  
 Credits allotted by Com. No. 4. . . . C I: 35  
 Preparatory Com. for Conference  
 C I: 34, 35; P: 209-10  
 Proposal of Paraguay. . . . . C I: 12  
 Work of Com. of Experts P: 202-5 (*statement*)

LEAGUE of Nations  
 Critical period of League history and  
 difficulties to be solved . . . . . P: 58, 59

REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat P: 58-63

TREATIES, etc.: Accession given subject to  
 ratification . . . . . C I: 8, 9

WAR or threat of war  
 Financial assistance for States victims  
 of aggression . . . . . C III: 60; P: 61-2  
 Prohibition of wars of aggression, Polish  
 proposal *re* . . . . . C III: 46

**Poor, Legal Assistance for the**

BUDGET estimates 1928 . . . . C IV: 23, 173, 202

**Popular Arts**

*See under* Arts and letters

**Portela, Ramiro Hernández**

Substitute-representative of Cuba . . . . P: 13  
 TRAFFIC in women and children  
 C V: 28, 36, 38; P: 121

**Ports**

*See* Maritime Ports

**Portugal**

*See also* Freire d'Andrade, General Alfredo  
 Vasconcellos, Dr. Augusto de

DELEGATION . . . . . P: 18-19

RATIFICATION of Slavery Convention, 1926  
 C VI: 28; P: 135, 440

Prescription in International Law . . . . C I: 48

**President of Assembly**

*See* Cuani, Dr. Alberto

**Press**

COMMITTEE of Press Experts  
 Credits . . . . . C IV: 173

**Press (continued)**

COMMUNICATIONS, improvement of  
 C VI: 14, 29; P: 135, 441, 442

CONFERENCE of Press Experts, work of  
 Discussion C VI: 13-16, 17-18, 23; P: 135-6  
 Credits for advisory work arising out of  
 C IV: 46, 264

Inclusion of question in agenda of 8th  
 Assembly . . . . . P: 48-9, 70

Rapporteur to Assembly . . . . . C VI: 23

Reports of  
 Com. No. 6

Draft presented by M. de Brouckère  
 C VI: 28-9

Final text . . . . . P: 441-2

Council and Secretariat . . . . P: 311-12, 366

Resolution of Assembly, Sept. 22, 1927 . P: 135

Work reviewed by delegations

Japan (Adatci). . . . . P: 54

Netherlands (van Blokland) . . . . P: 40-1

LIAISON between Dutch Press and Court of  
 Int. Justice . . . . . C IV: 32, 35

LIBERTY in Spain . . . . . C VI: 15

POWERS of, and creators of public opinion  
 C VI: 15, 16, 17-18; P: 136

REGIONAL Press understandings . . . . C VI: 15

RELATIONS with Information Section of  
 Secretariat. . . . . C IV: 209, 215-221

SECRETARIAT assistance to Press during  
 League meetings. . . . . C IV: 210

*See also* News and newspapers

"Press Review" . . . . . C IV: 221

**Prints**

*See under* Exhibitions: Chalcographie

**Private Law**

in INLAND Navigation C II: 95; P: 289, 354, 479

INT. INSTITUTE for unification of  
 Foundation . . . . . P: 228-9, 320

Persian religious law, representation at P: 38

**Privileges and Immunities, Diplomatic**

*See* Diplomatic privileges and immunities

**Procedure of Int. Conferences and for Conclusion  
 and Drafting of Treaties**

QUESTION recommended as ripe for int. agree-  
 ment  
 Special Procedure *re*  
 C I: 11, 12, 13, 19, 47, 54, 57; P: 203

**Production**

ORGANISATION of C II: 36, 38, 41, 43, 44, 45-6, 109  
 P: 64, 142-3, 143, 148, 150, 151, 340, 341, 449

RELATIONS between production and consump-  
 tion. . . . . C II: 43, 47; P: 153

**Products of Sea, Exploitation of**

*See* Exploitation of Products of Sea

**Property**

INDUSTRIAL, *see* Industry, etc.

SCIENTIFIC  
*See* Sciences: Scientific property

**Prostitutes**

*See under* Traffic in women and children

Protection of the Beauties of Nature C II: 15; P: 361

**Protection of Consumers against Worthless Goods**

C II : 101

**Publications**

of COURT of Int. Justice . . . . . C IV : 31, 79, 246

of INT. ORGANISATIONS . . . . . P : 311

of LABOUR OFFICE, INT.

Expenditure, sales and new German editions . . . . .

C IV : 25, 26-7, 28, 58, 78, 80, 222, 225, 237, 263, 271 ; P : 473

of SECRETARIAT and Special Organisations

Agents, establishment in various countries . . . . . C IV : 14, 16

Budget estimates, 1928

See under Budget : Secretariat, 1928 :

Items

Disarmament Section . . . . . C IV : 200, 208

Economic section and publications for committees

C IV : 20, 191, 192, 208 ; P : 287, 351-3

Examination of certain questions before preparation of 1929 estimates . . . . . C IV : 258-9

Health . . . . . P : 294, 295

Information Section

C IV : 76, 185-6, 209, 218-19

Mandates section . . . . . C IV : 21, 193, 194

Minutes of Coms. and Sub-Coms. : Question of printing . . . . . C IV : 38

Printing, questions *re* . . . . . C IV : 75

Sales and publishing expenses

C IV : 16, 21, 45, 172, 185-6, 262, 271 ;

P : 473

Speedy printing and distribution . . . . . C IV : 55-6

Staff of Publications Dept. . . . . C IV : 262-3

YEAR-BOOKS, *see that title*

**Publicity Work of Information Section of League**

C IV : 17, 34, 209, 215-221

**Q**

**Quotas, Import and Export . . . . . C II : 41**

**Quezada, Armando**

Delegate of Chile . . . . . P : 12

**ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . C II : 45**

**R**

**Rables Conference, Paris, 1927**

C II : 24, 90 ; P : 125, 126, 297, 423

**Railways**

CLAUSES *re*, contained in commercial treaties C II : 48

COMMUNICATIONS with Geneva in times of emergency . . . . . P : 235, 242, 244-5, 288

COMPETITION between railways and waterways

P : 291, 354

CONVENTION on int. regime, 1923

List of signatures, ratifications and adhesions . . . . . P : 379-80

TRANSPORT system in former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy : Examination of question by Transit Committee . . . . . P : 288

**Rajehman, Dr.**

BUDGET of Health organisation, 1928 . . . . . C IV : 22-3

HEALTH organisation

Budget, 1928 . . . . . C IV : 22-3

Work of . . . . . C II : 24

**Ratification of Conventions concluded under League Auspices**

See Treaties, etc. : Ratification of agreements, etc.

**Rationalisation**

See under Industry : Production and industrial organisation

**Raw Material**

in INDIA . . . . . P : 37

**Red Cross Societies**

CO-OPERATION with Relief Union . . . . . P : 363, 442

**Reduction of Armaments**

See Armaments, Reduction, etc.

**Rees, M. van (Vice-chairman of Perm. Mandates Commission)**

WORK OF MANDATES COMMISSION . . . . . C VI : 20-1

**Refugees**

**ARMENIAN**

in Greece . . . . . P : 189

National home for

See below Settlement : in Erivan Republic

Russian and Armenian, Settlement of

See below Russian and Armenian, etc.

Settlement

in Erivan Republic

C V : 16, 58, 62 ; P : 187, 189, 190, 191, 470

Letter from High Commissioner *re* . . . . . P : 172

Scheme, Progress of . . . . . C V : 80, 358-9

Statement by High Commissioner . . . . . P : 181-2

in Syria C V : 16, 18, 50, 57-8, 64-5, 69, 76, 80 ;

P : 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 469

Joint Armenian Sub-Com.

Composition and work

C V : 57-8, 63, 80 ; P : 469

Statutes . . . . . C V : 63-4

See also Women and children in

Near East, Protection of

**BULGARIAN : Settlement in Bulgaria**

in Com. No. 2

Discussion and documents . . . . . C II : 25-6, 93-4

Report . . . . . C II : 93-4 ; P : 127, 428-9

in Plenary Meeting

Discussion and documents

P : 127, 128, 397, 428-9

Resolution, Sept. 20, 1927 . . . . . P : 128

Frontier question . . . . . P : 281, 349

Health questions . . . . . C II : 94 ; P : 349, 429

History of the scheme, legislation *re* and

progress . . . . . P : 277-8, 280-1, 349

Housing problem . . . . . C II : 26, 94 ; P : 429

Land for settlement . . . . . C II : 94 ; P : 349, 429

Loan, floating and control

C II : 25, 93-4 ; P : 128, 279-80, 348, 422

Protocol, Sept. 8, 1926 : Ratification . . . . . P : 397

Rapporteur of Com. No. 2 . . . . . C II : 10, 25

Reports of

Com. No. 2

Draft submitted by Major Elliot . . . . . C II : 93-4

Discussed . . . . . C II : 25-6

Final text . . . . . P : 428-9

Council and Secretariat . . . . . P : 276-81, 348-9

**Refugees (continued)**

- BULGARIAN: Settlement in Bulgaria (continued)**  
Resolutions and draft resolutions of Assembly, Sept. 20, 1927 . . . . . P: 128  
Modified French text of Draft of Com. No. 2 . . . . . C II: 26
- CONFERENCE of Govts. on Russian and Armenian refugee questions**  
See below Russian and Armenian, etc.: Conference, etc.
- EXTENSION to other refugees of measures taken to assist Russians and Armenians**  
Categories of refugees entitled to proposed aid . . . . . C V: 71-2, 82  
Identity certificates . . . . . C V: 71, 72, 81  
Memo. and appendix by High Commissioner . . . . . C V: 59, 71-2; P: 471  
Report of Refugee Service of I. L. O. C V: 81  
Resolutions of Council (June, 1921, Dec. 1926) . . . . . C V: 65, 71
- GREEK: Settlement in Greece and financial reconstruction scheme in Com. No. 2**  
Discussion and documents. C II: 61-2, 105-8  
Report . . . . . C II: 105-8; P: 437-9  
in Plenary Meeting  
Discussion and documents  
P: 134, 281-2, 346-8, 437  
Resolution, Sept. 22, 1927 . . . . . P: 134  
Letter of M. Caphandaris to Sec.-Gen. of League . . . . . P: 348  
Loan see below under Protocol, etc.  
Progress of work . . . . . P: 439  
Protocol (draft) and Agreement between Greek Govt. and National Bank: Outline . . . . . C II: 106-7; P: 437-8  
Protocol, Sept. 29, 1923: Addl. Act and Declaration vs modification  
List of signatures, etc. . . . . P: 397  
Protocol, Sept. 15, 1927, and Declaration vs: Signatures . . . . . P: 397  
Rapporteur of Com. No. 2 . . . . . C II: 10, 62  
Reports of Com. No. 2  
Draft submitted by M. Suvich C II: 105-8  
Discussed . . . . . C II: 62-3  
Final text . . . . . P: 437-9  
Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 281-2, 346-8  
Resolutions  
Assembly resolution, Sept. 22, 1927 . . . . . P: 134  
Cl. resolution, June 17, 1927 . . . . . P: 347
- IDENTITY CERTIFICATES for Russians and Armenians**  
See below Russian and Armenian, etc.: Identity certificate system
- REFUGEE SERVICE of I. L. O.**  
See below under Russian and Armenian, etc.
- RUSSIAN**  
in China . . . . . C V: 14, 76, 78-9; P: 186, 191, 468  
in Finland . . . . . C V: 17  
in Roumania . . . . . C V: 17  
in Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom . . . . . C V: 17  
in Turkey . . . . . C V: 15, 77-8; P: 186-7, 191, 468
- RUSSIAN AND ARMENIAN: Work of I. L. O. and High Commissioner in Com. No. 5**  
Discussion and documents C V: 14-18, 56-93  
Report . . . . . C V: 56-9; P: 467-71  
in Plenary Meeting  
Discussion and documents P: 186-92, 467-71  
Resolution, Sept. 26, 1927 . . . . . P: 191-2  
Arrangements, 1922 and 1924 . . . . . C V: 56, 60, 65  
Arrangement and Supplementary Arrangement, 1926 C V: 56-7, 58, 62, 71, 75-6; P: 470  
Adhesions  
C V: 15, 56, 57, 60, 66-7; P: 188, 468

**Refugees (continued)**

- RUSSIAN AND ARMENIAN: Work of I. L. O. (contd.)**  
Budget of Refugee Service for 1928  
C IV: 25, 29-31; C V: 15, 16, 18, 81-2; P: 188  
Conference, Inter-governmental (1927)  
Composition and work of  
C V: 58, 61, 79, 82; P: 470  
Resolutions . . . . . C V: 61-2  
Funds, Need of C V: 16; P: 187, 188, 189, 191  
Identity certificate system C V: 14, 15, 56, 57, 60, 65-6, 66-7, 71, 72, 81; P: 187, 468  
Letter (Feb. 10, 1927) from Central Com. for Russian Refugees . . . . . C V: 68  
Letter (Feb. 25, 1927) from Central Com. for Armenian Refugees . . . . . C V: 68-9  
See also above Arrangement, etc., 1926
- Legal status**  
Conference to examine  
C V: 15, 17, 18, 57, 66; P: 187, 188, 190-1, 469  
Recommendations of Technical Commission . . . . . C V: 62-3  
Measures Govts. prepared to take, Information requested vs  
C V: 18, 58, 59, 62, 79; P: 187, 470
- Nansen passport**  
See above Identity certificate system
- Nansen stamp funds**  
Report and recommendations of Advisory Sub-Com. . . . . C V: 69-70  
Sub-Com. for administration of C V: 61, 74, 76  
Nansen stamp system C V: 17, 56, 58, 60, 62, 66-7, 79; P: 187, 188, 191, 468, 470
- Passports**  
See above Identity certificate system
- Rapporteur of Com. No. 5 . . . . . C V: 10, 18**  
"Refugee": Definition of term . . . . . C V: 71
- Refugee Service in Buenos Aires, Reports (extracts) . . . . . C V: 86-93**
- Refugee Service of I. L. O.**  
Budget for 1928  
C IV: 25, 29-31; C V: 15, 16, 18, 81-2; P: 188  
Funds, Means of obtaining and purpose of . . . . . C V: 75-6  
Organisation . . . . . C V: 74-5  
Memo. on work of . . . . . C V: 73-82
- Reports of Com. No. 5**  
Draft submitted by Major Elliot C V: 56-9  
Discussed and amended . . . . . C V: 14-18  
Final text . . . . . P: 467-71  
Director of Labour Office: Covering letter and text . . . . . C V: 73-83  
High Commissioner: Covering letter and text . . . . . C V: 59-66
- Resolutions of Advisory Com. (1926) . . . . . C V: 57, 62**  
Assembly (7th Session) . . . . . C V: 60, 73-4  
Assembly (8th Session) Sept. 26, 1927 . . . . . P: 191  
Inter-governmental Conference . . . . . C V: 62
- Revolving fund**  
Contributions C V: 5, 16, 56, 57, 58, 60, 62, 64, 66-7, 79, 82-3; P: 469, 470  
Creation and administration  
C V: 18, 56, 75, 82; P: 468
- Settlement**  
in Canada . . . . . C V: 80  
in Oversea countries C V: 15, 16, 17, 18, 56, 57, 58-9, 61, 61-2, 66, 75, 79-80, 82-3; P: 187, 188, 470  
List of applications . . . . . C V: 15, 85-6  
Reports (extracts) from Service in Buenos Aires . . . . . C V: 86-93  
Transference to other countries . . . . . C V: 76-7  
Unemployment C V: 14, 15, 16, 56, 57, 62, 71, 76, 77, 81, 82; P: 468, 469  
Census . . . . . C V: 16, 76, 84
- Registration of Treaties**  
See under Treaties, etc.

- Relief Bureau, International** . . . . . P : 311
- Relief Union, International, Conference re Creation**  
in, Com. No. 2  
Discussion and documents . . . . . C II : 55-6, 102-3  
Report . . . . . C II : 102-3 ; P : 442-3  
in Plenary Meeting  
Discussion and documents  
P : 25, 48-9, 70, 76, 105, 136, 308, 362-5, 442-3  
Resolution, Sept. 22, 1927 . . . . . P : 136
- **CONVENTION and Statutes 1927,**  
Analysis and text . . . . . P : 363-5  
Signatures . . . . . C II : 56, P : 404
- CREDITS** voted for 1928 . . . . . C IV : 23-4, 173, 203
- PREPARATORY Committee**  
Action by, *vs* application of Convention  
C II : 56, 136, 443  
Preparatory work *vs* Conference . C II : 308, 363
- RAPORTEUR** of Com. No. 2 . . . . . C II : 10, 56
- REFERENCE** of question to Com. . . . . P : 70, 105
- REPORTS** of  
Com. No. 2  
Draft submitted by Baron de Vest C II : 102-3  
Discussed . . . . . C II : 55-6  
Final text . . . . . P : 442-3  
Council and Secretariat . . . . . P : 308, 362-5
- RESOLUTION** of Assembly, Sept. 22, 1927 . . . . . P : 136
- TRIBUTE** to Senator Ciralo  
C II : 56 ; P : 76, 136, 442, 443
- Report on Work of Council and Secretariat**  
DISCUSSION P : 35-41, 42-8, 49-54, 55-69, 71-8, 79-86,  
86-103, 109-114  
TEXT of report, suppl. report and annex  
P : 225-317, 318-366, 367-412
- Responsibility of States for Damage done in their Territory to Person or Property of Foreigners**  
PROBLEM of . . . . . C I : 14-15  
QUESTION recommended as ripe for int. agreement  
C I : 11, 12, 14, 15, 19, 45, 54, 57 ; P : 199, 203
- Restrepo, Dr. Antonio José**  
Delegate of Colombia . . . . . P : 13  
Press Experts Conference, work of . . . . . C VI : 15
- Réveillaud, Jean**  
Expert, delegation of France . . . . . P : 14  
ADMINISTRATIVE Tribunal : Establishment C IV : 36  
ALLOCATION of League expenses  
Expenses of Committee . . . . . C IV : 17-18
- **BUDGET, 1928, Tenth financial period**  
Court of Int. Justice  
• Salaries of temp. staff. . . . . C IV : 59
- **Secretariat and Special Organisations**  
Int. law, Com. of Experts for the codification of . . . . . C IV : 23, 50, 51, 66
- DOCUMENTS, distribution to delegates . . . . . C IV : 58
- OPIMUM : Perm. Central Board : Expenses C IV : 41
- Reynold, M. de**  
Expert attached to Swiss delegation for question of intellectual co-operation . . . . . C II : 10
- Rheinbaben, Baron von**  
Substitute-representative of Germany . . . . . P : 15
- REFUGEES**  
Armenian, Settlement of . . . . . P : 191  
Russian and Armenian . . . . . C V : 15
- Riddell, Walter A.**  
Substitute-representative of Canada . . . . . P : 12
- BUDGET, 1928, Tenth financial period**  
Labour Organisation, Int.  
Refugee Service . . . . . C IV : 59  
Secretariat and Special Organisations  
Int. law, Com. of Experts for codification of . . . . . C IV : 64  
Liaison with Latin-America . . . . . C IV : 48
- CHILD Welfare Committee, Work of.** . . . . . C V : 13-14
- COUNCIL, election of non-perm. Members**  
System of single transferable vote and proportional representation . . . . . C VI : 12
- OPIMUM**  
Central Board, Permanent. . . . . C V : 45  
Convention . . . . . C V : 28  
Work of Commission of Enquiry in Persia. . . . . C V : 26
- TRAFFIC** in women and children . . . . . C V : 36, 38
- Road Traffic**  
REGULATIONS . . . . . P : 290
- Rockefeller, John D.**  
GIFT for construction and endowment of League library C IV : 17, 39, 260 ; P : 107-9, 475
- Rollin, Henri**  
Assistant delegate of Belgium . . . . . P : 11
- ARBITRATION, Compulsory : Draft optional convention** . . . . . C I : 24, 26, 27, 30, 31, 31-2, 32
- ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of** . . . . . C II : 44
- INTERNATIONAL LAW : Codification**  
Convening of Conference and questions to be dealt with . . . . . C I : 14, 20
- TREATIES, etc. : Accession given subject to ratification** . . . . . C I : 28
- Rosenberg, Augusta**  
Expert, delegation of Hungary. . . . . P : 15
- ALCOHOLISM** . . . . . C II : 30
- TRAFFIC** in women and children . . . . . C V : 34-6, 37, 38
- Rostworowski, Michel**  
Substitute-representative of Poland. . . . . P : 18
- TREATIES, etc. : Accession given subject to ratification** . . . . . C I : 28
- Roumania**  
*See also* Comnène, Nicolas Petresco  
Diano, Nicolas  
Lupu, Dr. Nicolas  
Neculcea, Eugène  
Pella, V. V.  
Titulesco, Nicolas  
Vacaresco, Hélène
- DELEGATION**  
List . . . . . P : 19  
Substitute delegate, appointment . . . . . P : 185
- Routes, Utilisation in Times of Emergency**  
*See under* Transit and communications :  
Communications, etc.
- Rowe Dutton, E.**  
Expert, delegation of British Empire . . . . . P : 13
- BUDGET** of Secretariat, etc., 1928  
Disarmament . . . . . C IV : 23  
Relief Union, Int. . . . . C IV : 23
- COURT** of Int. Justice, Perm.  
Salaries of temp. staff. . . . . C IV : 33

**Roy, The Hon. Philippe**  
 Substitute-representative of Canada . . . . . P: 12  
 ALCOHOLISM . . . . . C II: 30  
 TRANSIT and communications . . . . . C II: 27

**Ruegger, M.**  
 COURT of Int. Justice, Perm.  
 Printing expenses . . . . . C IV: 31  
 Salaries of temp. staff. . . . . C IV: 32

**Rundstein, Szymon**  
 Legal adviser, delegation of Poland. . . . . P: 18  
 INTERNATIONAL LAW: Codification  
 Work of Com. of Experts C I: 14 (statement)

**Ruppert, M.**  
 Expert, delegation of Germany. . . . . P: 15  
 TRAFFIC in women and children. . . . . C V: 36, 38

**Russia**  
 RUSSIAN REFUGEES  
 See Refugees: Russian and Armenian  
 See also Soviet Russia

**Ryrie, Sir Granville de Laune**  
 Delegate of Australia . . . . . P: 11  
 CONFERENCE HALL and new buildings for  
 use of Secretariat. . . . . P: 193  
 COUNCIL, election of non-perm. Members  
 System of single transferable vote and  
 proportional representation . . . . . C VI: 11  
 PRESS agencies and monopolies. . . . . C VI: 17

**S**

**Saar Basin** . . . . . P: 58, 254-8, 326-7

**Salaries of Staff at Geneva**  
 See Cost of living and adjustment of salaries,  
 etc.

**Salle de la Réformation**  
 ARRANGEMENTS for improvement . . . . . C IV: 56, 263

**Salvador**  
 See also Guerrero, Dr. J. Gustavo  
 DELEGATION . . . . . P: 19

**Sandler, R. J.**  
 Delegate of Sweden. . . . . P: 20  
 ALCOHOLISM . . . . . C II: 29, 30  
 ARBITRATION, security and disarmament C III: 34-6  
 DISARMAMENT Conference, Minutes of Pre-  
 paratory Commission . . . . . C III: 15

**Sato, Naotake**  
 Substitute-representative of Japan . . . . . P: 16  
 BUDGET of Secretariat, 1928  
 Liaison with Latin-America . . . . . C IV: 48  
 Transit and communications, collection  
 of information re . . . . . C IV: 51-2  
 ORGUM: Perm. Central Board: Expenses  
 C IV: 40-1, 55

**Scholarships**  
 for LATIN-AMERICAN doctors C II: 91; P: 425-6  
 POST-GRADUATE . . . . . P: 87

**Scholastic Works, Correction of Errors in**  
 C II: 11, 14, 15

**Schools, Primary**  
 See under Education: in Persia

**Scialoja, Vittorio**  
 Delegate of Italy . . . . . P: 16  
 ARBITRATION, security and disarmament. . . . . P: 84-6  
 Draft optional convention for com-  
 pulsory arbitration . . . . . C I: 24-5  
 INTERNATIONAL LAW: Codification  
 Proposal of Paraguay . . . . . C I: 34  
 Work of Com. of Experts . . . . . C I: 49  
 REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat P: 84-6

**Sciences**  
 BIBLIOGRAPHY ON  
 See Bibliography  
 SCIENTIFIC PROPERTY: Proposed establish-  
 ment of draft convention . . . . . C II: 12, 69

**Sea, Exploitation of Products of**  
 C I: 11, 12, 13, 19, 37, 47, 54, 57; P: 49, 203

**Secretariat of League**  
 ADMINISTRATIVE Commissions and minorities  
 questions  
 Work of section of Secretariat . . . . . C IV: 18-19  
 AUDITED ACCOUNTS for 1926  
 See under Audit of League accounts:  
 Statement, etc.  
 BRANCH Offices  
 Activities . . . . . C IV: 15  
 of Information Section . . . . . C IV: 15, 55, 262  
 Proposed amalgamation with Corresp-  
 ondance offices of Labour Office  
 C IV: 15, 29, 58, 262, 271; P: 473

**BUDGET**  
 See Budget: Secretariat, etc.

**BUILDINGS**  
 New temp. annex adjoining original  
 annex  
 Budget estimates . . . . . C IV: 55, 262  
 Cost charged to Building Fund. . . . . C IV: 73  
 Procedure re sale of Hôtel National and  
 Villa Armleder . . . . . C IV: 38, 259-260  
 See also Budget, etc., Buildings at Geneva

**CONDITIONS of work**  
 Extract from minutes of Council, June  
 1927 . . . . . C IV: 205  
 Report by Sec.-Gen.  
 C IV: 12, 13, 205-14 (text), 270; P: 472

**DISARMAMENT Section, work of** . . . . . C IV: 208

**DISTRIBUTION Branch, work of** . . . . . C IV: 206-7

**DUPPLICATING service, work of** . . . . . C IV: 208, 212-13

**ECONOMIC Section, work of** . . . . . C IV: 208

**EXPENDITURE from 1920 to 1926** . . . . . C IV: 214

**INCREASE of work since 1920**  
 See above Conditions of work

**INDEMNITIES for staff** . . . . . C IV: 187

**INFORMATION Section**  
 Branch office, activities . . . . . C IV: 15  
 Report on work by Sec.-Gen.  
 C IV: 17, 34, 209, 215-221 (text), 271; P: 473  
 Staff questions . . . . . C IV: 75-6

**INTELLECTUAL co-operation**  
 Creation of new post . . . . . C IV: 78

**Secretariat of League (continued)**

- INTERNAL ADMINISTRATIVE Services
  - Creation of addl. posts . . . . . C IV : 75, 76
  - Salaries . . . . . C IV : 178-181
  - Work : Report and statistics  
C IV : 80, 206-8, 209-10, 212-14
- LEGAL adviser's branch
  - Creation of new post . . . . . C IV : 76
- LIAISON with Latin-American States
  - Budget estimates  
C IV : 15, 46-8, 55, 171, 182, 262, 265, 267, 268
- LIBRARY
  - Gift of League Library by Mr. Rockefeller . . . . . C IV : 17, 39, 260; P : 475
  - Salary of librarian . . . . . C IV : 84
- POSTAL SERVICE, statistics showing work during 1925 and 1926 . . . . . C IV : 212
- PUBLICATIONS, *see that title*
- REGISTRATION of Treaties Office : Work . . . . . C IV : 209
- REGISTRY, statistics showing work between 1919 and 1927 . . . . . C IV : 212
- RELATIONS with Press during League meetings . . . . . C IV : 210
- REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat, *see that title*
- REQUEST to prepare survey of arbitration treaties already concluded . . . . . C I : 26, 30, 31, 32
- RESERVE FUND for the Death and Invalidity Fund . . . . . C IV : 187
- SALARIES of Staff, adjustment  
*See Cost of living, etc.*
- SHORTHAND and Typing Dept., work of . . . . . C IV : 207
- STAFF
  - Annual leave at expense of League, length of service needed to acquire . . . . . C IV : 80
  - Compensation awards granted by Administrative Tribunal . . . . . C IV : 188, 254
  - Disputes *re* legal rights, settlement  
*See Administrative Tribunal*
  - Gratuities on New Year's Day . . . . . C IV : 188
  - Hours of work . . . . . C IV : 207, 209
  - Increase since 1920, figures showing . . . . . C IV : 214
  - Increments, budgetary increase due to . . . . . C IV : 13, 14, 75
  - Local staff
    - Intermediate category for . . . . . C IV : 80
    - Status and travelling expenses . . . . . C IV : 15-16
    - Medical examination . . . . . C IV : 187, 188
  - Members of section
    - Promotion from B to A category . . . . . C IV : 86
  - Overtime . . . . . C IV : 210, 214
  - Recruitment, procedure . . . . . C IV : 188
  - Resolution adopted by, *re* adjustment of salaries . . . . . C IV : 89
  - Right of appeal to Council in event of dismissal : abrogation . . . . . C IV : 255
  - Salaries, wages and allowances  
C IV : 15, 171-2, 175, 176-181
  - See also Cost of living, etc.*
  - Sick leave taken 1924-1926 . . . . . C IV : 210, 214
  - Staff Provident Fund, *see that title*
  - Subordinate officials, new posts for . . . . . C IV : 75
  - Subsistence allowance, rates of  
C IV : 81-2, 258, 268-9 (*text of scale*)
  - Transfers from one section to another . . . . . C IV : 45, 45-6
  - Travelling expenses . . . . . C IV : 15-16, 80, 171, 184
  - Tribute to work . . . . . P : 72
  - Welfare fund . . . . . C IV : 187, 188
- TRANSLATING and Interpreting Section
  - Heads of, Members of Section A . . . . . C IV : 80
  - Work . . . . . C IV : 207-8, 213
- UNDER-SECRETARIES-GENERAL
  - Posts limited to nationals of Great Power States . . . . . P : 58

**Secretariat of League (continued)**

- VERBATIM reporters . . . . . C IV : 207
- Secretary-General of League
  - AUTHORITY, how effected by Administrative Tribunal . . . . . C IV : 250
  - BUDGET ESTIMATES for salaries, etc., of Sec.<sup>y</sup> Gen. and office . . . . . C IV : 175
- Security
  - See Arbitration, security, etc.*
- Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Kingdom of
  - See also* Djouritch, Djordje  
Fotitch, Konstantin  
Koumanoudi, Kosta  
Pitamic, Leonidas
  - DELEGATION . . . . . P : 19
- Sérot, Robert
  - Assistant delegate of France . . . . . P : 14
- COUNCIL, election of non-perm. Members
  - System of single transferable vote and proportional representation  
Mixed Sub-Com. proposed . . . . . C VI : 7
- MANDATES : Liquor traffic in Togoland and Cameroons . . . . . C VI : 24
- NEWS, false or tendencious . . . . . P : 136
- PRESS Experts Conference, work of . . . . . C VI : 136
- SLAVERY Convention, 1926 . . . . . C VI : 22
- TELEPHONIC and telegraphic communications . . . . . P : 136
- Siam
  - See also* Varnvaidya, Prince
  - DELEGATION . . . . . P : 19
- Sickness Insurance Association
  - LEAGUE contribution . . . . . C IV : 187, 188
- Sierra Leone
  - SLAVERY, legislative measures taken *re* . . . . . C VI : 9, 28  
P : 134-5, 440
- Singapore Epidemiological Bureau
  - See under* Health, etc. : Epidemiological Intelligence Service
- Slavery and Analogous Conditions
  - in Committee No. 6
    - Discussion and documents . . . . . C VI : 8-10, 17, 21-2, 28
    - Report . . . . . C VI : 28; P : 439-40
  - in Plenary Meetings
    - Discussion and documents  
P : 134-5, 274, 335, 439-440
    - Resolution, Sept. 22, 1927 . . . . . P : 135
  - in ABYSSINIA
    - Information *re* progress of abolition . . . . . C VI : 9, 28  
P : 135, 440
    - Letter from Abyssinian delegation *re* conditions of certain classes of natives . . . . . C VI : 17, 21
  - ANNUAL REPORTS of signatories . . . . . C VI : 9, 10, 22, 28  
P : 134, 135, 439
  - in BURMA . . . . . C VI : 8
  - CONVENTION, Int., 1926
    - Accession of Sudan . . . . . C VI : 21
    - Budget estimates, 1928 . . . . . C IV : 23, 173, 202
    - Communication to Governing Body of I. L. O. . . . . P : 374
    - India, work in connection with . . . . . P : 36, 37
    - Ratifications, etc.
      - List . . . . . C VI : 21; P : 43, 335, 398
      - Question of . . . . . C VI : 9, 10, 21, 22, 28; P : 135, 440
      - Reservation excluding Indian states . . . . . C VI : 8

- Slavery and Analogous Conditions (continued)**  
 FORCED labour : Procedure to be taken *re* C VI : 9, 10  
 in INDIA (Nepal, Kelat State) . . . . . C VI : 8  
 INFORMATION *re* legislation to be commun-  
 icated to League . . . . . C VI : 9 ; P : 335  
 RAPPOORTEUR to Assembly . . . . . C VI : 10  
 REPORTS of \*  
 • Committee No. 6  
 • Draft presented by Sir E. Hilton Young C VI : 28  
 Amendment and discussion . . . C VI : 21-2  
 Final text . . . . . C VI : 28 ; P : 439-40  
 Council and Secretariat . . . . . P : 274, 335  
 RESOLUTION of Assembly, Sept. 22, 1927 . . . P : 135  
 in SIERRA LEONE, legislative measures taken  
*re* . . . . . C VI : 9, 28 ; P : 134-5, 440
- Sleeping Sickness**  
*See that title under* Health, etc.
- Smit, Jacobus Stephanus**  
 Delegate of South Africa . . . . . P : 19  
 COUNCIL, election of non-perm. Members  
 System of single transferable vote and  
 proportional representation . . . . . C VI : 12  
 MANDATES  
 Liquor traffic in Togoland and Cam-  
 eroons . . . . . C VI : 24, 25  
 South-West Africa . . . . . C VI : 20
- Social Insurance**  
*See under* Health, etc. : Insurance
- Social Welfare**  
 PROPOSED establishment of school in Chile  
 C II : 91 ; P : 426
- Sokal, François**  
 Delegate of Poland . . . . . P : 18  
 ARBITRATION, security and disarmament  
 C III : 19-20, 66, 69 ; P : 82  
 ECONOMIC CONFERENCE, work of . . . . . P : 82  
 PROCEDURE in Com. No. 3 . . . . . C III : 15  
 REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat P : 82-4  
 WAR or threat of war  
 Financial assistance for States victims  
 of aggression . . . . . C III : 62  
 Prohibition of wars of aggression, Polish  
 declaration *re*  
 C III : 20-1, 26, 46, 66 ; P : 82-4, 155
- South Africa**  
*See also* Brookes, Edgar Harry  
 Smit, Jacobus Stephanus  
 DELEGATION . . . . . P : 19-20
- South America**  
 EXCHANGE of scientists with Japan . . . . . C II : 22
- South-West Africa**  
*See under* Mandates
- Soviet Russia**  
 REPRESENTED at Economic Conference . . . P : 24, 36
- Spain**  
 PARTICIPATION in certain work of League . . . P : 24  
 RATIFICATION of Slavery Convention, 1926 C VI : 21
- Staff of League**  
 ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL, *see that title*
- Staff of League (continued)**  
 INDEMNITIES provided in Staff Regulations  
 Budget estimates, 1928 C IV : 16, 76, 172, 187  
*See also* Labour Office : Staff and Secretariat :  
 Staff
- Staff Provident Fund**  
 ACCOUNTS : Report of auditor . . . . . C IV : 159  
 ADMISSION of officials originally holders of  
 temp. contracts . . . . . C IV : 38, 258  
 BALANCE SHEET as at Dec. 31, 1926 . . . C IV : 155-8  
 GUARANTEE against embezzlement provided  
 by officials' accounts with . . . . . C IV : 82  
 LEAGUE CONTRIBUTION . . . . . C IV : 15, 171, 182  
 REPORT of Auditor . . . . . C IV : 159
- Standard of Living**  
 in RELATION to liberty of trade and immigra-  
 tion . . . . . P : 95  
*See also under* Labour
- Standardisation of Sera and Biological Products** P : 296-7
- State and Private Enterprises**  
 FISCAL equality . . . . . C II : 46, 47
- States non-Members of League**  
 CONTRIBUTIONS towards expenses of Con-  
 ferences in which they participate  
 C IV : 13, 14, 271 ; P : 473  
 CO-OPERATION in work of League Conferences  
 and technical organisations  
 C II : 26, 27, 96, 96-7, 99 ; P : 24, 36, 201
- Statistics**  
 COMMITTEES of League between 1920 and  
 1927 : Statistical table . . . . . C IV : 211  
 CONFERENCES of League between 1920 and  
 1926 : Statistical table . . . . . C IV : 211  
 COST of living in Geneva : Statistical tables C IV : 261  
 COUNCIL sessions between 1920 and 1926 :  
 Statistical table . . . . . C IV : 211  
 Economic  
*See* Economic statistics  
 HEALTH . . . . . P : 294  
 in INLAND NAVIGATION, Standardisation  
 C II : 95 ; P : 289, 354, 479  
 POSTAL SERVICE of Secretariat : Statistics  
 showing work, 1925 and 1926 . . . . . C IV : 212  
 REGISTRY of Secretariat : Statistics showing  
 work, 1919-1927 . . . . . C IV : 212  
 STILL-BIRTH and infant mortality . . . . . C V : 13, 55  
 TRANSIT . . . . . C IV : 53  
 YEAR-BOOKS, *see that title*
- Still-Birth** . . . . . C V : 13, 55
- Straits Commission, Report of**  
 REPORT of Council and Secretariat . . . . . P : 325-6
- Stresemann, Dr.**  
 Delegate of Germany . . . . . P : 15  
 ARBITRATION, security and disarmament  
 P : 80-2, 163-4  
 COURT of Int. Justice  
 Optional clause, attitude of Germany . . . P : 81  
 ECONOMIC CONFERENCE, work of . . . . . P : 79-80  
 REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat P : 79-82



**Stucki, Walter**

Expert, delegation of Switzerland . . . . . P: 20  
 ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . C II: 45

**Students**

*See under* Scholarships and University relations

**Sudan**

ACCESSION to Slavery Convention 1926 . . . . . C VI: 21

**Supervisory Commission**

CHAIRMAN and vice-chairman for 1927, election . . . . . C IV: 81  
 COMPOSITION . . . . . C IV: 73, 258  
 CREDITS for expenditure, reduction . . . . . C IV: 78  
 DEATH of former member and tribute of Com. No. 4 . . . . . C IV: 44  
 MODIFICATIONS effected in budget estimates of Labour Organisation (1928) . . . . . C IV: 223  
 REPORT on establishment of Administrative Tribunal . . . . . C IV: 250-7  
 TRIBUTE to Commission by Com. No. 4 . . . . . C IV: 61  
 WORK OF 22nd, 23rd AND 24th SESSIONS  
   Examination . . . . . C IV: 12, 36-7, 272-3  
   Reports (text)  
     22nd session . . . . . C IV: 81-4  
     23rd session . . . . . C IV: 73-80  
     24th session . . . . . C IV: 84-9  
 WORK OF 25th SESSION  
   Examination C IV: 38-43, 44-56, 60, 61-6, 272-3  
   Report . . . . . C IV: 258-269  
 WORK OF EXTRAORDINARY SESSION . . . . . P: 321  
 WORK APPROVED by Assembly . . . . . P: 195

**Suvich, Fulvio**

Substitute-representative of Italy . . . . . P: 16  
 ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of C II: 41, P: 144-5  
 ECONOMIC CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE: Constitution . . . . . C II: 52  
 REFUGEES: Greek: Settlement and financial reconstruction scheme . . . . . C II: 61  
 TRANSIT and communications . . . . . C II: 27

**Sweden**

*See also* Hennings, E.  
           Löfgren, Jonas Eliel  
           Sandler, R. J.  
           Vennersten, A. F.  
           Wicksell, Anna  
 DELEGATION . . . . . P: 20

**Switzerland**

*See also* Bolli, Colonel Beat Henri  
           Burckhardt, Walther  
           Motta Giuseppe  
           Stucki, Walter  
 DELEGATION . . . . . P: 20

**Syria**

*See under* Mandates

**T**

**Tánczos, General Gabriel**

Delegate of Hungary . . . . . P: 15  
 ARBITRATION, security and disarmament . . . . . C III: 25-6, 67, 70

**Tánczos, General Gabriel (continued)**

BUDGET, 1928  
   Suppl. credits . . . . . C IV: 44  
   DOCUMENTS, distribution to delegates . . . . . C IV: 56

**Taxation and Fiscal Evasion**

DOUBLE TAXATION and fiscal evasion? C II: 57, 105  
   P: 150, 285-6, 350  
 EXPORT taxes . . . . . P: 339  
 FISCAL EQUALITY of state and private enterprises . . . . . C II: 46, 47  
 IMPORT TAXES in Great Britain . . . . . P: 65

**Telegraphic and Telephonic Communications**

AGREEMENTS *re*, need of modification . . . . . C VI: 14  
 CIPHER telegrams . . . . . C VI: 29; P: 135, 441  
 COMMUNICATIONS with League in times of emergency . . . . . C IV: 22, 168  
   P: 233, 235, 236, 237, 238, 241, 242-3, 244-5, 291  
 RATES . . . . . C VI: 16, 29; P: 135, 136, 441, 442

**Territorial Waters**

QUESTION recommended as ripe for int. agreement . . . . . C I: 11, 14, 15, 19, 44, 54, 57; C IV: 49  
   P: 199, 203

**Theunis, M.**

ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . C II: 33-8, 54

**Thomas, Albert**

BUDGET, 1928, Tenth financial period  
   Labour Organisation, Int.  
     Correspondence offices and correspondents . . . . . C IV: 25, 26, 29  
     Economies effected . . . . . C IV: 26, 222  
     Entertainment allowances . . . . . C IV: 27, 28  
     Increase, causes of . . . . . C IV: 25, 26, 222  
     Staff of office: New posts . . . . . C IV: 222  
     Travelling expenses of officials . . . . . C IV: 26  
     Unforeseen expenditure . . . . . C IV: 29  
 LABOUR  
   Commissions on Art. 408 and on native labour . . . . . C IV: 25-6  
   Conventions, Ratifications. . . . . C IV: 25  
 LABOUR OFFICE  
   Publications, expenditure, sales, etc. . . . . C IV: 25, 26-7, 222  
 REFUGEES  
   Armenian, Settlement of . . . . . C IV: 30-1  
   Russian and Armenian C IV: 29-30; C V: 15-16

**Titulesco, Nicolas**

Delegate of Roumania . . . . . P: 19  
 OPIUM: Perm. Central Board Expenses . . . . . C IV: 70

**Trade**

*See* Commerce

**Traffic in Alcohol**

*See* Liquor traffic

**Traffic in Women and Children**

in Com. No. 5  
   Discussion and documents . . . . . C V: 28-31, 33-4, 97-100  
   Report . . . . . C V: 98-100; P: 417-19  
 in Plenary Meetings  
   Discussion and documents . . . . . P: 74-5, 121-3, 290-302, 417-19  
   Resolution, Sept. 20, 1927 . . . . . P: 123  
 AGE of consent and of marriage in relation to traffic . . . . . C V: 30, 34, 35, 60;  
   P: 121, 122, 302, 301, 413

**Traffic in Women and Children (continued)**

- ALCOHOLISM in relation to traffic C V: 32, 33; P: 302  
 BUDGET ESTIMATES for 1928 . . . . . C IV: 198-9  
 CENTRAL authorities of different States, need  
 for co-operation between . . . . . P: 299  
 COMMITTEE: Work of 6th session . . . . . P: 299-302  
 COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS  
 Question of extension of enquiry . . . . . P: 300  
 Report of  
*See below* Report of Special Body of  
 Experts  
 Tribute to  
*See below* Tribute to Special Body of  
 Experts  
 CONVENTION, INT., 1921: List of ratifications,  
 etc. . . . . P: 386-7  
 CONVENTIONS AND AGREEMENT  
 Age-limit as laid down by . . . . . P: 300  
 Need for adhesion . . . . . C V: 99; P: 299, 418  
 DIGEST of laws and regulations *re* traffic . . . . . P: 301  
 EDUCATION in sex-matters. . . . . P: 300  
 EMIGRATION and immigration  
 C V: 28, 30, 33, 35, 36, 38; P: 99, 121, 300, 417  
 EMPLOYMENT of women abroad  
 C V: 30, 34, 36, 99; P: 300, 417-18  
 FOREIGN PROSTITUTES . . . . . C V: 35, 99; P: 301, 418  
 LICENSED HOUSES  
 C V: 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38,  
 38-9, 99, 100; P: 121, 122, 300, 301, 418, 419  
 OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS: Relation to problem  
 C V: 36, 38, 99; P: 301, 418  
 PROPAGANDA . . . . . P: 302  
 PROSTITUTES and prostitution  
 C V: 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 39, 99, 100;  
 P: 74, 121, 122, 418  
 Foreign prostitutes, *see that title above*  
 RAPPORTEUR of Com. No. 5 . . . . . C V: 10  
 REPORTS (ANNUAL) from Govts., Examination  
 of . . . . . P: 301  
 REPORT OF SPECIAL BODY OF EXPERTS  
 C V: 29, 31, 32, 33, 37, 98;  
 P: 75, 121, 122, 299, 417  
 REPORTS FROM VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS . . . . . P: 301  
 REPORTS of  
 Com. No. 5  
 Draft submitted by M. Portela. . . . . C V: 97-8  
 Discussed . . . . . C V: 28-32, 33-7  
 Revised draft . . . . . C V: 99-100  
 Discussed and amended . . . . . C V: 37-9  
 Final text . . . . . P: 417-19  
 Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 299-302  
 RESOLUTION of Assembly, Sept. 20, 1927 . . . . . P: 123  
 SOUTENEURS and procurers  
*See below* Traffickers  
 TRAFFICKERS. . . . . C V: 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 98, 99, 100  
 P: 74-5, 121, 122, 300, 417, 418, 419  
 TRIBUTE to Special Body of Experts  
 C V: 31, 36, 37, 100; P: 121, 419  
 WAGES of women in certain branches of  
 employment. . . . . C V: 31, 99; P: 75, 300, 418  
 WOMEN POLICE, Employment of  
 C V: 29, 32, 33, 34, 38, 99; P: 121, 301, 418

**Transit and Communications**

- For questions dealt with by Advisory Com.  
 see the subjects concerned  
 in Com. No. 2*  
 Discussion and documents C II: 26-7, 64-5, 95-9  
 Report . . . . . C II: 95-9; P: 479-83

**Transit and Communications (continued)**

- in Plenary Meeting  
 Discussion and documents  
 P: 25, 201, 287-91, 354, 479-81  
 Resolution, Sept. 26, 1927 . . . . . P: 201  
 BUDGET ESTIMATES of organisation, 1928  
 C IV: 21-2, 172, 194-5  
 Suppl. credits  
 C IV: 33, 51-3, 53-4, 55, 62, 77, 265-6, 268  
 COMBINED TRANSPORT and single contract  
 C II: 95; P: 290, 479  
 COMMITTEE  
 Composition . . . . . C II: 96-7; P: 480-1  
 Study of questions raised during 3rd  
 General Conf., recommended  
 C II: 96, 99; P: 483  
 Work accomplished between 7th and  
 8th Sessions of Assembly . . . . . P: 287-91, 354  
 COMMUNICATIONS of importance to League  
 in times of emergency  
 C II: 96; C III: 10, 11, 42-3, 80;  
 C IV: 22, 168; P: 26, 158, 233, 235,  
 236, 237-8, 241-5, 291, 354, 480  
 CONFERENCES  
 1920 to 1923: Results. . . . . C II: 95; P: 479  
 1927 (3rd general)  
 Agenda . . . . . P: 287-8, 480  
 Results . . . . . C II: 95-6; P: 479-81  
 CONVENTIONS  
 Barcelona Conventions, 1921  
 List of ratifications, etc. . . . . P: 375-9  
 Geneva Conventions, 1923  
 List of signatures, ratifications and  
 adhesions . . . . . P: 379-84  
 List of ratifications, etc. . . . . P: 375-85  
 Need for ratification . . . . . C II: 96  
 FREEDOM of transit: Convention and Statute  
 List of ratifications, etc. . . . . P: 375  
 INFORMATION, general, collection and exchange  
 Credits C II: 64-5; C IV: 33, 51-3, 53-4, 55, 62,  
 77, 265-6, 268; P: 201-2, 475, 483  
 Organisation *re* . . . . . C II: 26, 26-7, 27, 97-8, 98-9  
 Resolutions of  
 7th Assembly . . . . . C II: 97; P: 481  
 8th Assembly . . . . . C II: 27, 99; P: 201  
 3rd General Conf. on Transit  
 C II: 98; P: 482-3  
 RAPPORTEUR of Com. No. 2 . . . . . C II: 10, 27  
 RELATIONS of organisation with States non-  
 Members of League  
 C II: 26, 27, 96, 96-7, 99; P: 201  
 REPORTS of  
 Com. No. 2  
 Draft submitted by M. de Brouckère C II: 95-9  
 Discussed . . . . . C II: 26-7  
 Final text . . . . . P: 479-83  
 Council and Secretariat . . . . . P: 287-91, 354  
 RESOLUTION of Assembly, Sept. 26, 1927. . . . . P: 201  
 RULES of organisation: Revision by Third  
 General Conf. on transit, etc.  
 C II: 96, 99; P: 201, 480, 483  
 STATISTICS on transit questions. . . . . C IV: 53  
 TECHNICAL LIAISON with non-European  
 countries  
*See above under* Information, etc. and  
 Relations, etc.  
 TRANSIT CARDS for emigrants *see* Emigrants

**Transjordan**

*See under* Frontiers

**Translators**

FORMATION of national groups . . . . . C II: 15; P: 361

**Transport**

- COMBINED  
See Transit, etc. : Combined, etc.
- REPRESENTATION of experts on Economic consultative Committee *see under* Economic and financial organisation : Consultative Committee
- WATER  
See Inland navigation : Water transport

**Travelling Expenses of League Officials**

- See under Budget : Court of Int. Justice, Labour Organisation, Secretariat and Secretariat

**Treasurer of League**

- APPRECIATION of Mr. Jacklin by Committee No. 4 . . . . . C IV : 24
- BUDGET ESTIMATES for Office, 1928 . . . . . C IV : 175, 177

**Treaties and other Int. Engagements**

- ACCESSION given subject to ratification  
See below under Ratification
- ADMISSIBILITY of reservations to general conventions . . . . . P : 228, 319-20
- ARBITRATION treaties  
See Arbitration, security, etc. : Treaties, etc.
- ARMS and ammunition, Traffic in : Convention P : 394-7
- ARTS : Int. Agreement *vs* casts proposed . . . . . C II : 16  
P : 130, 133
- CHEMICAL warfare : Protocol . . . . . P : 396-7
- of COMMERCE  
See Commerce : Treaties, etc.
- COMMERCIAL ARBITRATION  
Convention *vs* execution of foreign arbitral awards  
See under Commercial arbitration : Foreign, etc.  
Protocol, 1923 . . . . . C II : 100-1, 102 ; P : 401
- CONVENTIONS concluded under League auspices  
Expenses arising from : question of placing on League budget by provisions of Convention concerned . . . . . C IV : 9-10  
Monthly Summary : Credits required . . . . . C IV : 55, 262
- Ratification  
See below Ratification, etc.
- COPYRIGHT : Berne Convention, 1886, Revision  
See under Intellectual Rights : Copyright
- COURT of Int. Justice, Perm.  
Final Act of Conference of States Signatories of Protocol of Signature  
See Court of Int. Justice, Permanent : Conference of States, etc.  
Protocol of Signature and Optional Clause  
See Court of Int. Justice, Permanent : Protocol, etc. and Optional Clause, etc.
- COVENANT : Protocols *vs* amendments to Arts.  
See under Covenant of League
- CURRENCY and banking reform in Estonia Protocol . . . . . P : 404
- vs* CUSTOMS  
See Customs : Formalities, etc. and Tariffs : Collective conventions
- ELECTRIC Power Convention, 1923 . . . . . P : 382-3
- EMIGRATION : Greco-Bulgarian Convention . . . . . P : 398

**Treaties and other Int. Engagements (continued)**

- HEALTH Convention, 1926  
See under Health : Epidemiological, etc. : Singapore Bureau, etc. ; Discharge, etc.
- HYDRAULIC POWER Convention, 1923 . . . . . P : 383-4
- IMPORT and export restrictions : Convention  
See under Import and export prohibitions, etc.
- INLAND NAVIGATION  
Convention on navigable waterways, 1921 . . . . . P : 376-8
- INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENTS registered with League  
List of signatures, ratifications and adhesions . . . . . P : 367-412  
See also below Registration, etc.
- LABOUR Conventions . . . . . C IV : 25 ; P : 368-74
- LEAGUE ACTION *vs*, under Arts. 18 and 20 of Covenant . . . . . C III : 18
- LOCARNO Agreements  
See under Arbitration, etc.
- MARITIME PORTS : Convention on int. régime, 1923 . . . . . P : 380-2
- MEMEL Convention . . . . . P : 251-2, 325
- "MONTHLY SUMMARY" of Conventions concluded under League auspices . . . . . C IV : 55, 262
- NAVIGABLE WATERWAYS : Convention . . . . . P : 376-8
- OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS : Convention, 1923 P : 387-9
- OPIMUM Conventions, etc.  
See under Opium, etc.
- PACIFIC SETTLEMENT of int. disputes : Protocol, 1924  
See Arbitration, security, etc. : Protocol, etc.
- PEACE TREATIES  
Amendments to labour part  
List of ratifications, etc. . . . . P : 412
- RAILWAYS : Convention of int. régime, 1923 P : 379-80
- RATIFICATION of agreements, etc., concluded under League auspices  
Accession given subject to ratification in Com. No. 1 :  
Discussion and documents . . . . . C I : 8-10, 27-8, 40-1, 52  
Report . . . . . C I : 52 ; P : 447-8  
in Plenary Meetings  
Discussion and documents . . . . . P : 141, 447-8  
Resolution, Sept. 23, 1927 . . . . . P : 141  
Advantages . . . . . C I : 8, 9, 10, 52  
Communication from Swiss Govt., Feb. 18, 1927 . . . . . C I : 8, 41 (*text*)  
Form of future League documents *vs* ratification . . . . . C I : 10, 52  
Legal value . . . . . C I : 8, 9, 10, 52  
Rapporteur of Com. No. 1 . . . . . C I : 52  
Reports of  
Com. No. 1 . . . . . P : 447  
Sub-Com. of Com. No. 1  
Discussed and amended . . . . . C I : 278  
Draft text . . . . . C I : 52  
Final text . . . . . P : 447-8  
Report by M. Zaleski submitted to Council, March 1927  
Note by Sec.-Gen. . . . . C I : 40  
Text . . . . . C I : 40-1  
Resolution of Assembly, Sept. 23, 1927 P : 141  
States which have adopted . . . . . C I : 8  
Sub-Com. of Com. No. 1  
Appointment and composition . . . . . C I : 8, 10  
P : 447  
Report . . . . . C I : 52 ; P : 447-8  
Report of Council and Secretariat . . . . . P : 447

**Treaties and other Int. Engagements (continued)**

**REFUGEES**

- Arrangements, 1922, 1924, 1926  
*See under* Refugees: Russian and Armenian
- Bulgarian: Protocol, 1926 . . . . . P: 397
- Greek: Protocols  
*See under* Refugees: Greek, etc.

**REGISTRATION of Treaties**

- Present situation *vs* Int. Engagements registered with League . . . . . P: 312-17, 319
- Secretariat Office, work of . . . . . C IV: 209
- Treaty Series* for 1928
- Budget estimates and publication . . . . . C IV: 76, 185; P: 317
- See also above* Int. Engagements, etc.

- RELIEF UNION: Convention and Statutes, 1927**  
*See* Relief Union: Convention, etc.

- SLAVERY Convention, 1926**  
*See* Slavery, etc.: Convention, etc.

- TARIFF treaties *see under* Customs: Tariffs: Collective, etc.**

- TONNAGE measurement of vessels employed in inland navigation: Convention, 1925** P: 384-5

- TRAFFIC in women and children: Conventions**  
*See under* Traffic in women, etc.

- TRANSIT Conventions**  
*See* Transit, etc.: Conventions

- VERSAILLES TREATY, June 28, 1919**  
 Art. 393 and other corresponding arts.: Amendments  
 List of ratifications, etc. . . . . P: 412
- Committee on Art. 408  
 Budget estimates, 1928 . . . . . C IV: 78

- Treaties, Procedure for Conclusion and Drafting of**  
*See* Procedure of Int. Conferences, etc.

- "Treaty Series" . . . . . C IV: 76, 185; P: 317

- Tropical Diseases in Central Africa: Conference** C II: 21

**Trusts**

- See under* Industry: Agreements

- Tuberculosis, Study re Preventive Measures against** . . . . . C II: 21

**Tumedei, Cesare**

- Substitute-representative of Italy . . . . . P: 16

- BUDGET, 1928, Tenth financial period**  
 Labour Organisation, Int.  
 Correspondence Offices . . . . . C IV: 29
- Entertainment allowances . . . . . C IV: 27, 27-8, 28
- Secretariat and Special Organisations  
 Administrative Commissions and minorities questions . . . . . C IV: 18, 19
- Economic and financial organisation . . . . . C IV: 20, 21
- Health organisation . . . . . C IV: 22
- Int. law, Com. of Experts for the progressive codification of . . . . . C IV: 23
- Transit and communications . . . . . C IV: 22
- Unforeseen expenditure  
 Division into sections . . . . . C IV: 29

- LABOUR OFFICE, Int.**  
 Publications, receipts from sales . . . . . C IV: 26, 27

- TREATIES, etc.: Accession given subject to ratification** . . . . . C I: 9

**Turkey**

- FRONTIER between Iraq and Expenses of Com. of Enquiry** . . . . . C IV: 110

**Turkey (continued)**

- PARTICIPATION in Transit and Economic Conferences** . . . . . C II: 26; P: 24, 36
- RATIFICATION of Opium Convention, Enquiry *re*** . . . . . C V: 97; P: 304, 307, 414

**U**

**Under-Secretaries-General**

- BUDGET ESTIMATES for salaries, etc. (including office)** . . . . . C IV: 175

**Union of South Africa**

- See* South Africa

**United States of America**

- CONTRIBUTIONS towards Conferences in which it participates** . . . . . C IV: 14
- PARTICIPATION in work of League** . . . . . C II: 26, 27; P: 24, 36
- RELATIONS with League *vs* establishment of new League library (Rockefeller gift)** . . . . . C IV: 260

**University Relations**

- in AUSTRIA** . . . . . C II: 14
- "BULLETIN" issued by Institute, Publication . . . . . C II: 69; P: 359
- EXCHANGE of professors and students** . . . . . C II: 15
- STUDENTS: Meetings of representatives of Int. Associations, Results** . . . . . C II: 69; P: 87
- SUB-COM., Work of** . . . . . P: 359-60

**Urrutia, Dr. Francisco José**

- Delegate of Colombia . . . . . P: 13

**INTERNATIONAL LAW: Codification**

- History of work in field of . . . . . P: 49-52
- Report of Sub-Com. of Com. No 1 . . . . . C I: 34, 35
- Work of Com. of Experts . . . . . C I: 19

- REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat** P: 49-52

**Uruguay**

- See also* Bastos, Dr. Julio  
 Cosio, Pedro  
 Guani, Dr. Alberto

- DELEGATION** . . . . . P: 20

**V**

**Vacaresco, Hélène**

- Substitute-representative of Roumania . . . . . P: 19
- CHILD Welfare Committee, Work of** . . . . . C V: 14
- CINEMATOGRAPH, Educational: Int. Institute** . . . . . P: 132
- INTELLECTUAL co-operation** . . . . . C II: 15, 16; P: 131-2
- REFUGEES, Russian and Armenian** . . . . . C V: 17
- TRAFFIC in women and children** . . . . . C V: 32, 37-8
- TRIBUTE to work of Miss Jeppe** . . . . . C V: 11

- Vaccines, Prophylactic** . . . . . P: 294

**Valvanne, Hugo**

- Substitute-representative and Secretary-General, delegation of Finland . . . . . P: 14

**Valvanne, Hugo (continued)**

COUNCIL, election of non-perm. Members.  
System of single transferable vote and  
proportional representation . . . . C VI : 12

**Vandervelde, Emile**

Delegate of Belgium . . . . . P : 11  
ARBITRATION, security and disarmament. . . P : 71-2  
REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat P : 71-2

**Varnvaldya, Prince**

• Delegate of Siam. . . . . P : 19  
COUNCIL, election of non-perm. Members  
System of single transferable vote and  
proportional representation . . . . C VI : 13

**Vasconcellos, Dr. Augusto de**

Delegate of Portugal . . . . . P : 18  
ALCOHOLISM . . . . . C II : 9, 9-10, 10, 30  
BUDGET of Secretariat, etc., 1928  
Liaison with Latin-America . . . . . C IV : 48  
Transit and communications, collection  
of information *vs.* . . . . . C IV : 52-3  
CONFERENCE HALL and new buildings for  
use of Secretariat. . . . . P : 192  
ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . C II : 45  
HEALTH Organisation, Work of . . . C II : 21, 23, 24  
OPIUM : Perm. Central Board : Expenses C IV : 42, 55  
REFUGEES, Russian and Armenian . . . . C IV : 30

**Velghe, M.**

HEALTH Organisation, Work of. . . . . C II : 20-1

**Veneral Disease, Study re Preventive Measures**

against . . . . . C II : 21 ; P : 426

**Venezuela**

*See also* Escalante, Diogenes  
Parra-Pérez, C.  
Zumeta, César

DELEGATION . . . . . P : 20

**Vennersten, A. F.**

Delegate of Sweden. . . . . P : 20  
ALCOHOLISM . . . . . C II : 9  
BUDGET, 1928, Tenth financial period  
• Court of Int. Justice, Perm.  
Salaries of temp. staff. . . . . C IV : 59  
Secretariat and Special Organisations  
Int. law, Codification of  
• Com. of Experts . . . . . C IV : 50, 63-4, 66  
ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of C II : 46 ; P : 153-4  
ECONOMIC CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE : Con-  
• stitution. . . . . C II : 53-4  
SECRETARIAT : Branch offices . . . . . C IV : 15

**Vermaire, Charles**

Substitute-representative of Luxemburg. . . P : 17  
TRAFFIC in women and children . . . . . C V : 32

**Vessels**

TONNAGE measurement  
*See under* Inland navigation and Maritime  
navigation

**Vest, Baron de**

Expert, delegation of Hungary. . . . . P : 15  
HEALTH Organisation, Work of . . . . . C II : 22  
RELIEF Union, Int. . . . . C II : 55

**Veverka, Dr. Ferdinand**

Delegate of Czechoslovakia . . . . . P : 13  
ALCOHOLISM . . . . . C II : 9  
ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . P : 145  
HEALTH Organisation, Work of . . . . . C II : 21  
INTELLECTUAL co-operation . . . . . C II : 15  
OPIUM : Work of Commission of Enquiry in  
Persia. . . . . P : 120  
REFUGEES, Russian and Armenian . . . . C V : 15

**Villa Armleder**

SALE . . . . . C IV : 38

**Villegas, Enrique**

Delegate of Chile. . . . . P : 12  
ARBITRATION, security and disarmament  
P : 25, 26, 113-14  
CHILD welfare . . . . . P : 24  
DANZIG, financial problems . . . . . P : 25  
ECONOMIC CONFERENCE, 1926 . . . . . P : 25  
ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL organisation, work  
of . . . . . P : 25  
INFANT mortality Conference at Montevideo . P : 24  
INTELLECTUAL co-operation  
Work of Com. and Institute . . . . . P : 24  
LATIN-AMERICA, health problems in. . . . . P : 24  
OPENING SPEECH of Assembly . . . . . P : 23-7  
OPIUM and other dangerous drugs . . . . . P : 24-5  
PRESS Conference, Work of . . . . . P : 26  
REFUGEES, Bulgarian and Greek . . . . . P : 25  
REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat P : 113-14  
STATES not members of League : participation  
in League work . . . . . P : 24  
TRAFFIC in women and children . . . . . P : 24  
TRANSIT organisation, work of . . . . . P : 25  
UNIVERSALITY of League . . . . . P : 24  
WAR or threat of war. . . . . P : 26

**Vistula, Regulation of**

*See under* Inland navigation : Enquiry

**Voionmaa, Väinö**

Delegate of Finland. . . . . P : 14  
ALCOHOLISM . . . . . C II : 29, 30, 32

**Voldemaras, A.**

Delegate of Lithuania. . . . . P : 17  
ARBITRATION, security and disarmament. . . P : 55-6  
REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat . P : 55-6

**W**

**Waddington, Luis**

DEATH and tribute of Com. No. 4. . . . . C IV : 44

**War or Threat of War**

AGGRESSION or threat of aggression  
Obligations of League Members under  
Art. 10 of Covenant. . . . . C III : 10  
*See also below* Covenant, etc., and Finan-  
cial assistance, etc., and Prohibition,  
etc.

**CHEMICAL warfare**

*See under* Armaments, reduction, etc.

**War or Threat of War (continued)**

- COUNCIL action in times of emergency and facilitation of Council meetings  
Discussion and documents  
C II: 95; C III: 10, 11, 42-3, 80;  
C IV: 168; P: 26, 39, 158, 165, 233, 235, 237-9, 239-41, 241-7, 453
- Application of Art. 11 of Covenant  
C III: 11, 18, 21; P: 158, 235
- Czechoslovak proposals . . . . . C III: 41, 42-3  
Financial aspect of question . . . . . C IV: 168  
Reports of  
Com. No. 3 . . . . . C III: 80  
Com. of Council . . . . . P: 237-41, 245-6  
Resolutions (II and III) of Assembly and Com. No. 3 . . . . . C III: 82; P: 177, 453
- COVENANT, means furnished by, to defend victims of aggression . . . . . P: 38
- ECONOMIC and financial relations of States  
Application of Art. 16 P: 235, 239, 276, 321, 322
- FINANCIAL assistance for States victims of aggression: Finnish proposal  
Discussion and documents  
C II: 105; C III: 32-3, 34, 51, 59-64, 66, 74-6, 80, 83; P: 26, 38, 42, 71, 97, 137, 158, 162, 170, 177, 234, 235, 236, 239, 287, 322, 453, 455-6
- Accession of States not Members of League . . . . . C III: 74  
Arbitration, etc., Relation to. . . . . C III: 61  
Determination of aggressor . . . . . C III: 59, 61  
*See also below under* Prohibition of wars of aggression, etc.
- Draft resolution of M. Holsti  
Discussion. . . . . C III: 59-64  
Draft text. . . . . C III: 59  
Final text. . . . . C III: 63-4  
Guarantees . . . . . C III: 59, 60, 61, 75  
Procedure *re* study of. . . . . C III: 51  
Report of Com. No. 3. . . . . C III: 80; P: 453  
Report of Financial Com.  
Adhesions. . . . . C III: 64  
Observations of Polish Govt. *re* C III: 74-6  
Report of Council and Secretariat P: 287, 322  
Resolution (IV) of Assembly and Com. No. 3. . . . . C III: 83; P: 170, 177, 455-6  
Statement by M. Holsti. . . . . C III: 34
- MEASURES Member States prepared to take to support Council recommendations  
C III: 53, 54, 55, 67-8, 81, 84;  
P: 160, 162, 165, 169, 178, 455, 456
- NEUTRAL States: Position in League war against aggressor. . . . . C III: 30
- OUTLAWRY of war C III: 21, 22, 30, 46, 54-5, 67, 81;  
P: 56, 57, 162, 454  
*See also below* Prohibition of wars of aggression, etc.
- PROHIBITIONS of wars of aggression, Declaration *re*: Polish proposal  
Discussion C I: 29; C III: 10, 20-1, 22, 26, 28, 30, 32, 33, 33-4, 37, 45-7, 66; P: 61-2, 81, 82-4, 85-6, 92, 104-5, 110, 114, 155-6, 157, 162, 164, 175-6.
- Acceptance of proposal  
by Bulgaria . . . . . P: 172  
by Venezuela . . . . . P: 186  
Covenant of League and its relation to proposal. . . . . P: 85-6  
Determination of aggressor  
C III: 22; P: 85-6, 92, 175  
*See also above under* Financial assistance, etc.
- Extension of condemnation proposed  
C III: 22, 30, 46, 47
- Procedure *re* study  
C III: 11, 33-4, 46, 47; P: 105  
Rapporteur of Com. No. 3. . . . . C III: 57

**War or Threat of War (continued)**

- PROHIBITIONS of wars of aggression, etc. (continued)  
Statements by M. Sokal  
C III: 20-1; P: 82-4, 155
- Text of proposal  
C III: 11, 45-6; P: 84, 104-5, 155
- Adopted unanimously in Assembly,  
Sept. 24, 1927. . . . . P: 155-6  
*See also above* Outlawry of war
- REGIONAL assistance . . . . . P: 234, 239
- RESOLUTION (draft) of Polish delegation  
*See above* Prohibition, etc.
- Waterways, Navigable  
*See* Inland navigation
- Welcome to President of Liberia . . . . . P: 115
- Western Samoa  
*See under* Mandates
- Wettum, W. G. van  
Expert, delegation of Netherlands . . . . . P: 17
- OPIUM  
Central Board, Permanent. . . . . C V: 41, 44, 45  
Work of Commission of Enquiry in Persia  
C V: 23-4, 27
- Who's Who, Int. . . . . P: 362
- Wicksell, Anna  
Assistant delegate and expert, delegation of Sweden . . . . . P: 20
- OPIUM convention . . . . . C V: 27
- TRAFFIC in women and children . . . . . C V: 38-9
- Wine  
*See under* Alcoholism: Discussion in Com. No. 2
- Wireless Telegraphy  
P: 235, 236, 238, 241, 242-3, 244-5, 291
- Women and Children in Near East, Protection of  
in Com. No. 5  
Discussion and documents. . . . . C V: 11, 50, 51-5  
Report . . . . . C V: 50; P: 420-1
- in Plenary Meeting  
Discussion and documents  
P: 123-4, 356-8, 420-1  
Resolution, September 20, 1927 . . . . . P: 124
- in ALEPPO  
Age and sex of rescued . . . . . C V: 53-4; P: 357  
Areas explored. . . . . C V: 51; P: 356  
Contributions, July 1, 1926-May 31, 1927  
and cost of work . . . . . C V: 51, 52; P: 357  
Education and settlement of rescued  
C V: 54; P: 357  
Methods of rescue . . . . . C V: 52-3; P: 357  
Rescue work. . . . . C V: 51; P: 356
- COMMISSION for Protection  
Report on work, 1926-1927  
*See below under* Reports  
Work to end in 1927: Miss Jeppe to continue unofficially . . . . . C V: 11, 50, 51  
P: 123, 356, 420
- in CONSTANTINOPLE  
Furniture of Neutral House . . . . . C IV: 38-9, 260  
P: 357-8
- FINANCIAL support of voluntary organizations, need for continuation of  
C V: 11, 50, 54  
P: 124, 42

**Women and Children in Near East, Protection of (contd.)**

- FURNITURE and equipment to be retained by Miss Jeppe until rescue work at end  
CV : 11, 50, 54 ; P : 124, 421
- PROGRESS REPORT of work of Commission
  - 1922-26 . . . . . CV : 50 ; P : 356, 421
  - 1926-27 . . . . . CV : 50, 51-5 ; P : 356-8, 421
- RAPPORTEUR of Com. No. 5 . . . . . CV : 9, 11
- REPORTS of
  - Commission for Protection . . . . . CV : 51-5
  - Com. No. 5
    - Draft submitted by Mlle Forchhammer CV : 50
    - Discussed and amended . . . . . CV : 11
    - Final text . . . . . P : 420-1
    - Council and Secretariat . . . . . P : 356-8
- RESOLUTION of Assembly, Sept. 20, 1927 . . . . . P : 124
- SUPPORT of French Govt. . . . . CV : 11, 50, 51, 55  
P : 123, 356, 421
- TRIBUTE to
  - Miss Jeppe . . . . . CV : 11, 50 ; P : 124, 421
  - League of Nations and Mandatory Power (France) . . . . . CV : 11, 50, 51, 55 ; P : 123, 124

**Women and Children, Traffic in**  
See Traffic in women and children

**Working Capital Fund**  
See under Budget of League

**World Population Conference**  
WORK vs statistics of still-birth and infant mortality . . . . . CV : 13

**Worm-Müller, Dr. J. S.**  
Substitute-representative of Norway . . . . . P : 18  
ECONOMIC CONF., Int., Work of . . . . . C II : 42  
FINANCIAL Committee, Work of . . . . . C II : 57  
WAR of threat of war  
Financial assistance for States victims of aggression . . . . . C III : 61

**Y**

**Year-books**  
ARMS and ammunition, Traffic in . . . . . P : 250  
ECONOMIC . . . . . C II : 101, 102  
MILITARY, see under Armaments, etc.

**Young, Sir Edward Hilton**

- Substitute-representative of British Empire . . . . . P : 12
- BUDGET, 1928, Tenth financial period
  - Increase of budget, causes . . . . . C IV : 13
  - New work involving new expenditure C IV : 13, 60
  - Secretariat and Special Organisations
    - Armaments, reduction of . . . . . C IV : 46
    - Economic and financial organisation C IV : 19-20
    - Development . . . . . C IV : 21
    - Health organisation . . . . . C IV : 22
    - Int. law, Com. of Experts for the progressive codification of . . . . . C IV : 49, 50
    - Liaison with Latin-America . . . . . C IV : 48
    - Transit and communications, collection of information vs . . . . . C IV : 52
    - Transit and communications in times of crisis . . . . . C IV : 22
    - Unforeseen expenditure subject to special Council vote . . . . . C IV : 14, 15
    - Suppl. credits . . . . . C IV : 43, 59

**Young, Sir Edward Hilton (continued)**

- CONFERENCE HALL and new buildings for use of Secretariat . . . . . P : 182-3, 184
- CONTRIBUTIONS of States to League
  - Maximum limit of individual contributions . . . . . C IV : 13
- COUNCIL, election of non-perm. Members
  - System of single transferable vote and proportional representation . . . . . C VI : 12
- COURT of Int. Justice
  - Remuneration of deputy judges . . . . . C IV : 37
- DOCUMENTS, distribution to delegates . . . . . C IV : 58
- ECONOMIC CONFERENCE, work of . . . . . P : 63-6
- ECONOMIC CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE: Constitution . . . . . P : 65
- EXPENDITURE incurred in settlement of disputes: Payment by parties concerned C IV : 21
- FINANCIAL Committee, Work of . . . . . C II : 57
- MORAL disarmament . . . . . C VI : 17
- OPIUM: Perm. Central Board: Expenses C IV : 10, 40
- PRESS agencies and news monopolies . . . . . C VI : 17
- REPORT on work of Council and Secretariat P : 63-6
- SALARIES of League staff, Adjustment of C IV : 11, 37, 57
- SECRETARIAT
  - Salaries of staff
    - Increments cause of increased budget (1928) . . . . . C IV : 13
- SLAVERY
  - in Abyssinia and Sierra Leone . . . . . C VI : 9, 21, 22  
P : 134, 135
  - Progress of abolition and ratifications of Convention . . . . . P : 134-5

**Youth**

- INSTRUCTION in aims and ideals of League  
See Instruction of youth, etc.

**Z**

**Zahle, Herluf**

- Delegate of Denmark . . . . . P : 13
- INTERNATIONAL LAW: Progressive Codification
  - Proposal of Paraguay . . . . . C I : 34

**Zumeta, César**

- Delegate of Venezuela . . . . . P : 20
- ADMINISTRATIVE Tribunal for staff of League P : 201
- ALCOHOLISM . . . . . C II : 10
- BUDGET OF LEAGUE, 1928
  - Suppl. credits . . . . . C IV : 43
- BUDGET OF SECRETARIAT, 1928
  - Liaison with Latin-America . . . . . C IV : 46, 47-8, 55
  - Transit and communications, collection of information vs . . . . . C IV : 53
  - Unforeseen expenditure subject to special Council vote . . . . . C IV : 15
- COURT of Int. Justice, Perm.
  - Printing expenses . . . . . C IV : 31
- REFUGEES: League work on behalf of . . . . . C IV : 29
- SECRETARIAT
  - Buildings: Sale of Hôtel National and Villa Armleder . . . . . C IV : 38
- TRANSIT and communications C II : 65 ; C IV : 53

# NUMERICAL LIST OF DOCUMENTS

PUBLISHED in the RECORDS of the EIGHTH ASSEMBLY (ordinary)

Document number	Volume and page	Document number	Volume and page
<b>Administrative Tribunal for Staff of League</b>		<b>Council</b>	
A. 6. 1927. X . . . . .	C IV : 250	(Reports)	
A. 72. 1927. V . . . . .	P : 478	A. 13. 1927 . . . . .	P : 225
A. IV/5. 1927. X . . . . .	C IV : 250	A. 13 (a). 1927 . . . . .	P : 318
<b>Agenda of Assembly</b>		A. 13 (a). 1927. Annex . . . . .	P : 367
A. 2 (1). 1927 . . . . .	P : 219	(Single transferable vote, etc.)	
<b>Arbitration, Compulsory : Draft Optional Convention</b>		A. 75. 1927. VII . . . . .	P : 440
A. I/3/1927 . . . . .	C I : 50	<b>Covenant of League : Interpretation of Provisions re Sphere of League Activities</b>	
A. I/4/1927 . . . . .	C I : 51	A. 20. 1927. V . . . . .	P : 224
<b>Arbitration, Security and Disarmament</b>		<b>Economic Committee, Work of</b>	
A. 108. 1927. IX . . . . .	P : 453	A. 70. 1927. II . . . . .	P : 430
<b>Arms and Ammunition, etc. : Private Manufacture of</b>		A. II/11/1927 . . . . .	C II : 99
A. 104. 1927. IX . . . . .	P : 451	<b>Economic Conference, International</b>	
<b>Budget and Financial Questions</b>		A. 92. 1927. II . . . . .	P : 448
A. 3. 1927. X . . . . .	C IV : 90	A. II/22/1927 . . . . .	C II : 108
A. 4 (1). 1927. X . . . . .	C IV : 169	<b>Financial Committee, Work of</b>	
A. 4 (a). (1). 1927. X . . . . .	C IV : 222	A. 85. 1927. II . . . . .	P : 443
A. 4 (b). 1927. X . . . . .	C IV : 245	A. II/15/1927 . . . . .	C II : 103
A. 5. 1927. X . . . . .	C IV : 73	<b>Greece : Financial Reconstruction</b>	
A. 5 (a). 1927. X . . . . .	C IV : 84	A. 91. 1927. II . . . . .	P : 437
A. 46. 1927. X . . . . .	C IV : 167	A. II/17. 1927 . . . . .	C II : 105
A. 47. 1927. X . . . . .	C IV : 160	<b>Health</b>	
A. 113. 1927. X . . . . .	P : 472	A. 68. 1927. III . . . . .	P : 424
A. IV/12. 1927 . . . . .	C IV : 270	A. 69. 1927. III . . . . .	P : 421
C. 518. M. 177. 1927. X . . . . .	C IV : 258	A. II/4/1927 . . . . .	C II : 90
<b>Buildings of League</b>		A. II/5/1927 . . . . .	C II : 88
A. 93. 1927 . . . . .	P : 466	<b>Infant Welfare</b>	
A. 110. 1927 . . . . .	P : 467	A. 68. 1927. III . . . . .	P : 424
<b>Children and Young People, Protection and Welfare of</b>		A. II/4/1927 . . . . .	C VI : 7
A. 62. 1927. IV . . . . .	P : 419	<b>Intellectual Co-operation</b>	
A. V/2. 1927 . . . . .	C V : 55	A. 63. 1927. XII . . . . .	P : 433
<b>Cinematographic Institute at Rome, International Educational</b>		A. II/2/1927 . . . . .	C II : 68
A. 65. 1927. XII . . . . .	P : 428	<b>International Law : Codification of</b>	
A. II/7 (1)/1927 . . . . .	C II : 93	A. 18. 1927. V . . . . .	C I : 41
<b>Commercial Arbitration : Execution of Foreign Arbitral Awards</b>		A. 59. 1927. V . . . . .	C I : 40
A. 106. 1927. II . . . . .	P : 457	A. 105. 1927. V . . . . .	P : 484
A. II/3/1927 . . . . .	C II : 70	A. 111. 1927. V . . . . .	P : 489
A. II/14/1927 . . . . .	C II : 88	A. I/5/1927 . . . . .	C II : 53
A. II/23/1927 . . . . .	C II : 81	A. I/6/1927 . . . . .	C I : 53
<b>Contributions in Arrears</b>		<b>League of Nations : Relations with Institutes and Bodies set up under its Authority</b>	
A. 71. 1927. X . . . . .	P : 445	A. 107. 1927 . . . . .	P : 457
<b>Cost of Living</b>		<b>Mandates</b>	
A. 116. 1927. X . . . . .	P : 471	A. 76. 1927. VI . . . . .	P : 446
A. IV/8. 1927 . . . . .	C IV : 270	A. VI/3. 1927 . . . . .	C VI : 29



<i>Document number</i>	<i>Volume and page</i>	<i>Document number</i>	<i>Volume and page</i>
<b>Opium</b>		<b>Secretariat, Present Conditions of Work in</b>	
A. 22. 1927. XI . . . . .	C IV : 70	A. 21. 1927 (including C. 245. 1927) . . .	C IV : 205
A. 64. 1927. XI . . . . .	P : 413	<b>Slavery</b>	
A. 66. 1927. XI . . . . .	P : 414	A. 74. 1927. VI . . . . .	P : 439
A. V/4. 1927 . . . . .	C V : 93	A. VI/1. 1927 . . . . .	C VI : 28
A. V/6. 1927 . . . . .	C V : 96	<b>Traffic in Women and Children</b>	
A. V/12. 1927 . . . . .	C V : 100	A. 73. 1927. IV . . . . .	P : 417
<b>Press Experts Conference</b>		A. V/3. 1927 . . . . .	C V : 97
A. 77. 1927 . . . . .	P : 441	A. V/3 (1). 1927 . . . . .	C V : 98
A. VI/4. 1927 . . . . .	C VI : 28	<b>Transit and Communications</b>	
<b>Refugees</b>		A. 78. 1927. VIII . . . . .	P : 479
<b>(Bulgarian)</b>		A. II/12/1927 . . . . .	C II : 95
A. 67. 1927. II . . . . .	P : 428	<b>Treaties and other International Engage-</b>	
A. II/9/1927 . . . . .	C II : 93	<b>ments : Accession given subject to Rati-</b>	
<b>(Greek)</b>		<b>fication</b>	
A. 91. 1927. II . . . . .	P : 437	A. 12. 1927. V . . . . .	C I : 40
A. II/17/1927 . . . . .	C II : 105	A. 95. 1927. V . . . . .	P : 447
<b>(Russian and Armenian)</b>		A. I/2/1927 . . . . .	C I : 52
A. 48. 1927. VIII . . . . .	C V : 59	<b>Women and Children in the Near East,</b>	
A. 90. 1927. IV . . . . .	P : 467	<b>Protection of</b>	
A. V/5. 1927 . . . . .	C V : 56	A. 29. 1927. IV . . . . .	C V : 51
<b>Relief Union, International</b>		A. 61. 1927. IV . . . . .	P : 420
A. 89. 1927. VIII . . . . .	P : 442	A. V/1 (1). 1927 . . . . .	C V : 50
A. II/16/1927 . . . . .	C II : 102		

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