

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

**SOCIAL AND HUMANITARIAN
WORK**

**Section,
Publications Secretariat,**

Revised Edition

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WORK**

**Information Section,
League of Nations Secretariat,
GENEVA.**

NOTE

This pamphlet is one of a series issued by the Information Section of the Secretariat of the League of Nations on various aspects of the League's work. Amongst the others is a general survey of the work of the League during the first five and a-half years of its existence; the rest deal with the constitution and organisation of the League, the Permanent Court of International Justice, the financial reconstruction of Austria, political activities, financial and economic work, the financial administration and the allocation of the expenses of the League, disarmament, health, mandates, transit, minorities, the administration of the Saar and Danzig and intellectual co-operation.

These pamphlets, which are issued for information purposes, should not be regarded as taking in any way the place of official documents.

May, 1926.

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THE SOCIAL AND HUMANITARIAN WORK OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The League of Nations was founded primarily as an instrument for the maintenance of peace, but it was plainly intended also as a means of promoting such international co-operation as is essential to general progress. There are many problems in which fruitful action can be undertaken only on concerted plans. One State may adopt all reasonable measures towards certain ends, but may find that success is dependent not only upon its own efforts but also upon what policy is followed in other countries. This is true in many things, including what may be conveniently termed social and humanitarian problems, which form one broad division of League activities.

The work of the League in this respect has been varied and considerable; efforts have been directed, on the one hand, to the suppression of old abuses such as the traffic in women and children and the traffic in opium; and, on the other hand, to mitigating the sufferings which war has left in its train, such as those caused by typhus epidemics, and to improving the unhappy lot of prisoners of war, of Russian refugees, Armenians, Greeks and Turks, whom conflicts or political upheavals have scattered far from their homes. Among these tasks some, such as the traffic in women and children and the traffic in opium, have been expressly committed to the League by the Covenant. Others, like the repatriation of prisoners of war or the refugee question, have been taken up by the League either in general

accordance with the spirit of the Covenant, or in response to the indication of public opinion. For the purpose of these tasks, the League has created permanent organisations, such as the Opium Committee and the Committee on the Traffic in Women and Children ⁽¹⁾, or provisional organisations such as the High Commissariats for Prisoners of War and for Refugees. As in all League work, no rigid lines have been followed, but the particular organisations have been adjusted to particular needs. The following pages explain the machinery that has been applied to each subject, the methods employed, and the results achieved.

There is a Section for Humanitarian and Social Questions in the General Secretariat of the League, which prepares the work of the Commissions and follows up the execution of decisions arrived at. A special Section was temporarily established for secretarial work connected with Refugees.

⁽¹⁾ Since transformed into the Advisory Commission for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People.

PART I

1. TRAFFIC IN OPIUM AND OTHER DANGEROUS DRUGS

The problem of the suppression of the opium abuses assumed international proportions about the year 1906, when it was realised by certain States that, if China was to be able to root out the evil which had so long affected her people, she must be granted every possible assistance by other countries. She herself had set a term of ten years as a maximum within which to accomplish this task, and certain missionary societies of China and other organisations urged the Government of the United States of America to take the initiative of calling together representatives of Governments concerned in the opium traffic. As a result of their solicitations, correspondence under the direction of President Roosevelt was opened with the interested Powers on the possibility of making an investigation into the problem, and eventually in 1909 an International Opium Commission met at Shanghai on the invitation of the Government of the United States of America. The following Powers were represented :

Austria-Hungary	Italy	Russia
China	Japan	Siam
France	Netherlands	United States of
Germany	Persia	America
Great Britain	Portugal	

An invitation was also extended to Turkey, but she did not nominate a representative.

1. *The International Opium Commission, Shanghai.*

This Commission may be said to have indicated the general lines on which the campaign was to be conducted,

and, although the views of the Commission were not in any way binding on the Governments, their recommendations subsequently formed the basis of the Opium Convention drawn up at The Hague. International public opinion was aroused, the way was paved for further conferences and the abuse of opium was denounced as an evil and a degradation to those countries countenancing it. Measures were agreed upon to support and assist the efforts of China.

In order that the recommendations of the Commission might be made binding on States and that the public interest created should not be allowed to die out, the Government of the United States of America proposed an International Conference with a view to drawing up a Convention. This Conference was summoned at The Hague on January 22nd, 1912, its recommendations being incorporated in the International Opium Convention of 1912.

2. *The Convention of 1912.*

The Convention begins by defining the type of opium or dangerous drug to be controlled.

Raw opium is defined as the "spontaneously coagulated juice obtained from the capsules of the *papaver somniferum*, which has only been submitted to the necessary manipulations for packing and transport".

Prepared opium is described as the product of raw opium obtained by a series of special operations, especially by dissolving, boiling, roasting and fermentation, designed to transform it into an extract suitable for consumption.

Medicinal opium is described as raw opium heated to 60° Centigrade and containing not less than 10 per cent of morphine.

Morphine and cocaine are defined (their chemical formula being given) as the principal alkaloid of opium and

the principal alkaloid of *erythroxylon coca*, heroin being distinguished as *diacetyl-morphine*.

The Convention insists that the control of the distribution of raw opium shall be ensured by the Contracting Parties and that the use of prepared opium shall be subject to gradual suppression with due regard to the circumstances of each country concerned.

On the side of international control of the traffic, the Contracting Parties undertake to adopt measures prohibiting entry and to control export to countries restricting import. They undertake also to prohibit altogether the export and import of prepared opium, except to those countries not yet ready for total suppression. With regard to the control of the alkaloids, the Contracting Powers undertake to confine their use to medical and legitimate purposes and to require all those engaged in their manufacture, sale, distribution, import and export to do so under Governmental licence only.

The Convention contains a series of clauses specially designed to assist China, who, on her part, undertakes certain obligations.

All the countries represented at the first International Conference signed the International Opium Convention, although some of them did so with reservations. Invitations were sent out by the Netherlands Government to those Powers which had not been represented at the Conference to sign the Convention; in this way twenty-seven more signatures were received.

The question of the ratification of the Convention was not so simple a matter, and a second International Conference was called in 1913 to discuss this point. Twenty-five Powers participated, but for various reasons a number of them refused to ratify. In spite of this fact, the Conference passed a resolution urging them to do so, and decided

that, in the event of the necessary signatures not having been obtained by December 31st, 1913, the signatory Powers should be requested to appoint delegates to examine the possibility of bringing the Convention into force. The position being still unsatisfactory at the end of the year, the third International Conference was convoked by the Government of the Netherlands in June 1914, and on this occasion more progress was made, for eleven countries ratified the Convention and seven others stated their readiness to do so. It was therefore decided to bring the Convention into force in spite of the fact that it had not been ratified by all its original signatories, and a Protocol was opened at The Hague by the signing of which any Power could put the Convention into force.

It seems probable that, had it not been for the Great War, more signatory Powers would have ratified, but during the war all action of this kind was suspended, and few, if any, of those countries which had ratified appear to have reached the point of passing the necessary national legislation. It may indeed be asserted that, despite the long period during which efforts had been made to secure applied action, nothing effective in this way had been accomplished before or during the war, though the existence of the Opium Convention had furnished a most valuable instrument, the full application of which would do much to suppress the illicit traffic.

II. THE LEAGUE'S PART IN THE PROBLEM

At the conclusion of the war a number of Governments took vigorous steps to secure more effective progress towards the suppression of the traffic. The most important step was the insertion of a provision in the Treaty of Versailles automatically bringing into force for each of its signatories the International Opium Convention of 1912.

Another step was the insertion in Article 23 of the Covenant of the League of Nations of a provision entrusting the League with the duty of supervising the execution of agreements with regard to the traffic.

It was in virtue of this provision of Article 23 that the First Assembly of the League of Nations (November 1920) decided to establish an Advisory Committee on Traffic in Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs. This it did with the full consent and co-operation of the Netherlands Government, which had convened the Conference at The Hague in 1912 and has since acted as the channel of communication between the signatories on matters affecting the application of the Convention.

Before the duties connected with the execution of the Opium Convention were transferred from the Netherlands Government to the League of Nations, all States Parties to the Convention were asked if they objected. Although only one country raised any objection, it was decided that, while the League should become the recognised centre for the carrying out of the Convention, all communication with countries not Members of the League should go through the Netherlands Government.

The Advisory Committee, set up in accordance with the resolution of the First Assembly of the League, consisted of representatives of the countries chiefly concerned. The states invited to nominate members were :

China	India	Portugal
France	Japan	Siam
Great Britain	Netherlands	

In addition, three assessors, Sir John Jordan, Mrs. Hamilton Wright, and M. Brenier were appointed for their special knowledge of the question, and subsequently representatives of the United States of America, Germany, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Switzerland and Bolivia were added.

The Committee is an advisory body to the Council, its secretarial work being in charge of the Opium Section of the Secretariat of the League of Nations, which, by the Assembly resolution, is entrusted with the duty of collecting information on the arrangements made in the various countries for carrying out the Opium Convention, on the production, distribution and consumption of the drugs, and on other necessary data for the purpose of enabling the League to exercise general supervision over the execution of the arrangements concluded.

The Advisory Committee has held seven sessions and has obtained important results. These may be usefully divided into :

(a) Steps taken to secure the effective execution of the provisions of the International Opium Convention of 1912, and

(b) Steps taken to prepare a more comprehensive policy designed to supplement the provisions of that Convention in such a way as to lead to a more rapid suppression of the traffic.

A. MEASURES FOR THE MORE EFFECTIVE EXECUTION OF THE CONVENTION

I. Ratifications of and Adhesions to the Convention.

The Advisory Committee has repeatedly called the attention of the Council and the Assembly, and, through them, of the Governments of the Members of the League, to the importance of securing the ratification of the 1912 Convention by all States of the world. At the date of the First Assembly, some forty States had signed, many of them having done so as signatories to the Treaty of Versailles. To-day there are forty-eight signatories, including forty-two out of the fifty-five Members of the League. The Convention

has been ratified by fifty States, among whom are forty-five Members of the League. In addition to the formal ratification, many of the Members of the League have already passed the necessary legislation.

2. *Questionnaire.*

The Advisory Committee at its first meeting prepared and sent to all States a questionnaire on the cultivation, production and manufacture of opium and other dangerous drugs. A summary of the answers, received from the Governments formed a basis for discussion at the second meeting of the Committee. It was realised by the Committee that such information, coupled with the information received in the Annual Reports which the Governments undertook to send to the Secretariat, was a necessary preliminary to any satisfactory international policy for the limitation of the production of raw materials from which the drugs are manufactured, or for the limitation and the control of the drugs themselves.

3. *Importation Certificate System.*

An essential element in the system contemplated by the Convention of 1912 is the establishment of extremely strict control over the international traffic in dangerous drugs, and such control can best be secured by the establishment of a system of licences by all the signatory Powers. To this end, the Committee prepared a model for an import certificate. It recommended that no Government should allow the export of any dangerous drugs except on the production by the exporter of a licence from the importing State certifying that the drugs in question were required for legitimate purposes.

This system, which was first recommended by the Committee in 1922, has already been accepted by thirty-eight Governments, thirty-one of which have actually put it into force.

4. *Penalties.*

The Committee suggested to the Council that it would be useful if Governments were to institute more severe penalties for the internal traffic in and consumption of dangerous drugs. The Assembly and the Council, having declared themselves in agreement, a letter was sent out to the Governments asking them to put the recommendations into effect. More than one country, without waiting for this step, acted upon the Committee's suggestion.

5. *Exchange of Information regarding Seizures of Drugs.*

The Governments of the Members of the League have used the Secretariat as a centre for the exchange of information concerning any seizures of drugs within their territories, and important results have already been achieved by this system. This greatly facilitates the task of the Governments in arresting illicit traffic. The Secretariat has been able, on more than one occasion, when receiving news of some seizure of illicit drugs in one country, to report the matter immediately to the Government of the country from which the drugs have emanated.

6. *Free Ports.*

The question of the traffic in drugs through free ports was discussed at the second session of the Advisory Committee. It was felt that these ports provide a means whereby illicit traffic can easily be carried on, as they do not come under Governmental control. It was suggested that measures might be taken by the Governments enabling them to assume full control over consignments of drugs entering or leaving a free port, but as these measures involved a technical enquiry into the regime of free ports, the Advisory Committee for Communications and Transit was approached with a view to ascertaining what practical measures could be taken in these ports or in free zones to prevent illicit traffic, and what technical proposals could be made to

Governments to that effect. A Sub-Committee was formed by the Advisory Committee for Communications and Transit to which members of the Advisory Committee on Traffic in Opium were invited, and the following measures for the control of dangerous drugs in free ports were proposed :

“Opium should not be despatched from the country of origin to a free port except in the two following cases :

“(a) If the consignment is sent with a through bill of lading made out to a final destination via the free port, the country of origin must not, in such a case, despatch the opium unless the country of destination shown in the through bill of lading has given the necessary guarantees mentioned in the Opium Convention.

“(b) If, according to the bill of lading, the free port is the final destination of the consignment, the consignment should not be despatched by the country of origin unless the sovereign State of the port has given the same guarantees. In such a case, the free port is considered, in respect of these guarantees alone, as being on exactly the same footing as any other part of the territory of that State.”

These proposals were incorporated in the report of the Advisory Committee to the Council in January 1923, and were adopted by the Council at its meeting on February 1st, 1923. The possibility of enacting them was expressly safeguarded in the Convention of the International Regime of Maritime Ports concluded at the Second General Transit Conference held at Geneva, November-December 1923. Article 17 of this Convention stipulates that none of its provisions shall affect the measures which one of the Contracting States may feel called upon to take in pursuance of general

international conventions, particularly conventions concluded under the auspices of the League, relating to the export or import of "particular kinds of articles, such as opium or other dangerous drugs".

7. Control of Transit.

At a League Conference in the autumn of 1923, an International Convention for the Simplification of Customs Formalities was drawn up and signed on November 3rd. In order to prevent the inclusion in this Convention of any provisions which might prejudice the application of obligations by which the Contracting Parties to this Convention might be bound by the International Opium Convention of 1912, a clause was inserted in the Protocol to the following effect :

"It is understood that the obligations of the Contracting States under the Convention referred to above do not in any way affect those which they have contracted or may in future contract under international treaties or agreements relating to the preservation of the health of human beings, animals or plants (particularly the International Opium Convention), the protection of public morals or international security."

As a further safeguard for the provisions of the International Opium Convention, an article was inserted in the Convention and Statute on the International Regime of Railways concluded at Geneva in December 1923, which reads as follows :

"Nothing in this Statute shall affect the measures which one of the Contracting States is or may feel called upon to take in pursuance of general international conventions to which it is a party, or which may be concluded hereafter, particularly conventions concluded under the auspices of the League of Nations, relating to the transit, export or import of

particular kinds of articles such as opium or other dangerous drugs, arms, or the produce of fisheries, or in pursuance of general conventions intended to prevent any infringement of industrial, literary, or artistic property, or relating to false marks, false indications of origin or other methods of unfair competition."

B. MEASURES PROPOSED FOR SUPPLEMENTING THE CONVENTION OF 1912.

At an early stage in its labours, it became clear to the Advisory Committee that the measures above discussed for securing the application of the Convention of 1912 would not in themselves be sufficient to obtain the complete suppression of the illicit traffic in drugs, however sincerely the Governments might endeavour to carry out their undertakings. In other words, the Committee reached the conclusion that, if there were a vast production of the raw materials from which drugs are manufactured, these drugs would inevitably find their way into the world market. They are so small in volume and of such immense value in comparison with their weight and size that illicit traffic is a very simple matter yielding great profit, and no measure of control can succeed entirely in suppressing it.

The Committee therefore decided, as has been previously mentioned, that it was necessary to evolve a policy for the limitation of the production of raw materials from which drugs are manufactured. Such a restriction of the production of the raw materials involved a self-denying ordinance on the part of Governments within whose territories the poppy and coca leaves are cultivated (that is to say, in China, India, Turkey, Persia, Serbia, Greece, Turkestan, Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Siberia, Java, Peru, Bolivia). It would

necessarily have to take the form of a new international agreement and the first step was to determine the world's annual legitimate, scientific and medical requirements of dangerous drugs. The Council therefore, on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, invited the Governments of the Members of the League to prepare an estimate of their total annual requirements for the inhabitants of their territories for medicinal, scientific and other uses, and an Opium Sub-Committee, formed with the assistance of the Health Committee of the League, was set up to examine the question.

This Sub-Committee reported its opinion that 600 milligrammes (about 10 grains English) per head per year might be considered a provisional maximum amount of raw opium (containing on an average 10 per cent of morphine) required for medical and scientific purposes. The Health Committee, at its meeting in February 1924, considered this report and took the view that 450 milligrammes might be taken as a provisional maximum for countries possessing a well-developed medical service.

The report of the Sub-Committee came before the Opium Committee, whose ultimate object was to work out an approximate total of the world's legitimate requirements of dangerous drugs, and then to propose to the States a new distribution of production which would limit the total output to the amount required for the purposes already defined. Agreement once secured as to the legitimate requirements of each State, the practical execution of this plan would raise few difficulties for the reason that poppy plants and coca-leaves cannot be concealed and are easily destroyed in the fields of cultivation.

The Advisory Committee had decided upon this plan of procedure, and had received a number of replies from Governments giving estimates of their annual internal requirements for legitimate purposes, when, at its session in May

1923, it received further proposals on the subject from the American delegation to the Committee. These proposals were summarised as follows :

“As a concrete expression of principles so far as concerns opium and its derivatives, the following propositions are submitted to the Opium Advisory Committee in the earnest hope that they will be agreed to and their adoption recommended to the Council and Assembly of the League of Nations, in order that the doubts, if any, which now exist as to the true intent and meaning of the Hague Opium Convention shall be permanently removed :

“1. If the purpose of the Hague Opium Convention is to be achieved according to its spirit and true intent, it must be recognised that the use of opium products for other than medicinal and scientific purposes is an abuse and not legitimate.

“2. In order to prevent the abuse of these products it is necessary to exercise the control of the production of raw opium in such a manner that there will be no surplus available for non-medicinal and non-scientific purposes.”

The American delegation urged the adoption of the proposals as a political necessity for the true fulfilment of the purposes of the Convention. The Advisory Committee expressed agreement with this view and decided to continue its investigations into international requirements and to take all the other necessary preparatory measures to facilitate the convening of an international conference of the producing and manufacturing States in order to agree on a basis of distribution.

While the Advisory Committee was engaged on the question of the limitation of production as suggested in the American proposals, it was at the same time confronted with the acute problem of the continuance of opium-smoking

in a number of countries in the Far East. As the purpose of Chapter II of the International Opium Convention of 1912 was to secure gradually the complete suppression of such smoking, and as the provisions of that chapter were not at present being carried out owing partly to a number of international difficulties, the Advisory Committee recommended that a special conference on the suppression of opium-smoking should be summoned.

The report of the Advisory Committee recommending the two Conferences and accepting the American proposals was adopted by the Fifth Assembly, which suggested that the second Conference, for the limitation of the production of raw opium and the coca-leaf, should be enlarged so as to include all countries which were members of the League or Parties to the Convention of 1912. This would enable the Conference to secure their adhesion to the principles embodied in any agreement reached.

C. THE OPIUM CONFERENCES.

The two Conferences met at the end of 1924 and continued into the first two months of 1925.

The first Conference, for the gradual suppression of the use of prepared opium, included representatives of the British Empire, China, France, India, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal and Siam. An agreement was reached by which the Signatory Powers undertook to strengthen the measures already provided for by the Hague-Convention and to take any further measures necessary to suppress entirely within a period of fifteen years the consumption of prepared opium in the territories under their authority. This period is to begin as soon as the poppy-growing countries have ensured the effective execution of the necessary measures to prevent the clandestine exportation of raw opium from their territories from constituting a serious obstacle to the reduction

of consumption in the countries where the use of prepared opium is temporarily authorised. Provision is made for a commission to be appointed by the League Council to decide when these measures have been effectively executed. All the Powers represented signed these undertakings with the exception of China. A Protocol and a Final Act were also drawn up.

The second Conference, for the limitation of the export production of raw opium and coca-leaves and of the manufacture of morphine, heroin and cocaine to the quantities required for medical and scientific purposes, included representatives of forty-one States : Albania, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Danzig, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, India, Irish Free State, Italy, Japan, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Persia, Poland, Portugal, Roumania, Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Siam, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela. ●

A Convention was drawn up providing for the more effective restriction of the production or manufacture of narcotics and establishing closer control and supervision of the international trade. The substances which it is proposed to control are raw opium, medicinal opium, morphine, heroin, coca-leaves, crude cocaine, cocaine, ecgonine and Indian hemp, and provision is made for the internal control of raw opium and coca-leaves, of manufactured drugs and Indian hemp. Each country will state in advance its annual needs for medicinal, scientific and other purposes, and the international trade is to be controlled by a system of export authorisations and import certificates.

A permanent Central Board is to be appointed within three months from the coming into force of the Convention and is to receive periodically from the Contracting Parties the

estimates of the quantities of narcotics they need, etc., and, if it considers that excessive quantities are accumulating in any country so that there is a danger of the country becoming a centre of illicit traffic, it will have the right to ask for explanations from that country.

There is also a Protocol by which the signatory States, recognising their obligations to establish such control over the production, distribution and export of raw opium as would prevent illicit traffic, agree to take such measures as may be required completely to prevent, within five years from the date of the Protocol, the smuggling of opium from constituting a serious obstacle to the effective suppression of the use of prepared opium in those territories where such use is temporarily authorised.

A Final Act contains certain recommendations considered worthy of further study by Governments, among which may be specially mentioned a request to the Council to examine the suggestion made that a Commission should be appointed to visit certain opium-producing countries for the purpose of making a careful study (in collaboration with the Governments of those countries) of the difficulties connected with the limitation of the production of opium in those countries and advising as to the measures which could be taken to make it possible to limit the production of opium in those countries to the quantities required for medical and scientific purposes.

The American delegation, feeling that it would be impossible for them to realise their programme, withdrew from the Conference, as did China. The President of the Conference stated that the difference between the American delegation and the Conference was the question as to the moment when the American aims should be realised; the American delegation contended for immediate action, the other delegations felt that time was required. The President affirmed his conviction that the problem of drug control had entered

a new phase and that the Conference was the opening step in a movement which would accelerate from day to day.

The recommendation of the second Conference in regard to the appointment of Commissions to visit certain opium-producing countries was studied by the Assembly and the Council in connection with the question of opium production in Persia. Towards the end of 1925 a Commission was constituted to investigate in Persia the possibility of replacing the poppy by other crops. Its members are an American, an Italian and a Frenchman. This Commission sailed from Trieste on March 12th, 1926.

The American Social Hygiene Bureau has contributed 20,000 dollars towards the expenses of the Commission, a similar sum being furnished by the League.

PART 2

I. TRAFFIC IN WOMEN AND THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

The League of Nations has occupied itself with the question of the traffic in women and children in virtue of Article 23 (c) of the Covenant, which states that the Members of the League "will entrust the League with the general supervision over the execution of agreements with regard to the traffic in women and children, and the traffic in opium and other dangerous drugs".

It will be readily admitted that the traffic in women and children is a problem to the solution of which the new machinery provided by the establishment of the League of Nations is properly applied. It is in the first place an international problem. Very rarely are the various acts which together constitute a case of trafficking perpetrated within the boundaries of a single State. Normally a trafficker buys his wares in one country and sells them in another, often transporting them through a third country or more. Against so widely ramified an evil the isolated efforts, however strenuous, of individual States cannot be fully effective.

Secondly, the problem directly concerns Governments. That the traffic may be suppressed, it is necessary that the trafficker be subject to punishment, the exercise of which is a function of the State.

These characteristics make the problem eminently fitted for treatment by the League.

Impelled by the recognition of these two essential features of the traffic, the voluntary organisations which, towards the end of the last century, had been formed in various

countries to combat the traffic, proceeded, in the first place, to unite their scattered efforts in an international plan of action, and, secondly, to invoke the aid of Governments.

As a result of the first International Congress of the voluntary organisations, held in 1899, the International Bureau for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children was formed with the object of co-ordinating the work of the voluntary organisations.

The Congress was followed by governmental action. On the invitation of the International Bureau, the French Government convened, in 1904, the first diplomatic Conference to deal with the traffic. The second diplomatic Conference was convened by the same Government in 1910. These two Conferences were followed respectively by the Agreement of 1904 and the Convention of 1910.

Under the terms of the Agreement, the parties thereto undertook each to appoint a central authority with the duty of collecting information about the traffic, of watching ports where the traffic might be carried on and of assisting its victims.

The parties to the Convention bound themselves to punish those guilty of the traffic, as defined in the Convention, even though the acts constituting the offence had been committed in other countries.

By the time of the institution of the League of Nations (January 10th, 1920), sixteen States were parties to the Agreement, which was also applied in a number of British, Dutch, French and German colonies, and nine States were parties to the Convention.

ADVENT OF THE LEAGUE

Such, briefly stated, was the result of the application to the question of the preliminary machinery for the solution of international problems. In the following pages an attempt

will be made to show to what effect the machinery made available by the institution of the League of Nations has been applied to this particular problem.

The first step taken in execution of the provision of the Covenant was administrative, and consisted in the appointment in May 1920 of an official on the Secretariat of the League "to keep in touch with all matters relative to the White Slave Traffic".

I. The Conference of 1921.

The First Assembly of the League, which was held in November 1920, showed a determination to make effective use of the new organisation. Having taken stock of the results achieved by previous international efforts, it decided that a questionnaire should be sent by the Secretariat to all Governments to ascertain the measures taken or proposed in the various countries to combat the traffic. It also invited the Council to convene an International Conference which, having co-ordinated the replies of the Governments to the questionnaire, should "endeavour to secure a common understanding between the Governments with a view to united action".

This International Conference on the Traffic in Women and Children was held at Geneva from June 30th to July 5th, 1921. Thirty-four States were represented.

Before examining the results of the Conference, reference should be made briefly to the manner in which it was conducted. League methods are of interest to those who wish to appreciate justly not only what has been done through the League in any one sphere of activity, but also its special characteristics as a means of international co-operation.

The Conference of 1921 differed from the earlier diplomatic Conferences and broadly resembled the other Conferences held by the League, in the following respects.

The ground was prepared in the first instance by the issue of a questionnaire designed to elicit all available information on what various Governments had done, and generally what they were prepared to do, for the suppression of the traffic. The replies to the questionnaire provided delegates with a firm ground of fact from which they could proceed without delay to discussion, compromise, and agreement on clearly defined issues.

To the Conference were invited not only States which were parties to the previous international engagements, but all States willing to take part.

The Conference was held in public. It heard not only delegates of Governments, but the representative of a voluntary organisation—the International Bureau for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children—who furnished a detailed and instructive report on the work of the voluntary organisations.

Having examined the replies to the questionnaire, the Conference engaged in a comprehensive discussion of the situation as it presented itself in the light of these replies, and of the other information at its disposal. The result was the adoption of a Final Act ⁽¹⁾, containing a number of recommendations for action by Governments. The Final Act having been approved by the Council, the Second Assembly (September 1921) invited Governments to authorise their delegates to sign forthwith a Convention, submitted by the British Government, in which many provisions of the Final Act were given conventual form, and the *International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children* ⁽²⁾ was opened for signature at Geneva on September 30th, 1921.

⁽¹⁾ League of Nations document C. 223. M. 162. 1921.

⁽²⁾ League of Nations document A. 125 (2). 1921.

The Convention was signed by thirty-three States. Of these, twenty-three ⁽¹⁾ have, at the time of writing, ratified the Convention, and of non-signatory States six ⁽²⁾ have adhered to it.

2. *Features of the Convention of 1921* ⁽³⁾.

The new Convention was intended to supplement rather than to replace the earlier international acts relating to the traffic. More than one delegate bore witness to the remarkable effect of both the international Agreement of 1904 and the Convention of 1910, which, in those countries where they had been applied, had rendered the traffic difficult, dangerous and unremunerative. The First Article of the new Convention therefore prescribes that the High Contracting Parties, if not already parties to the Agreement of 1904 and the Convention of 1910, shall ratify or adhere to them without delay. Of the new provisions in the Convention of 1921, the first is that the punishments prescribed by the Convention of 1910 for traffickers in women and girls are also made applicable to those who engage in the traffic of children of both sexes.

The Convention of 1921 requires the punishment of those guilty not only of the offences committed, but of attempts to commit, and, within legal limits, of acts preparatory to the commission of such offences.

The new Convention raised to 21 the age-limit which in the earlier Convention had been fixed at 20.

The provisions of the Convention of 1921 relating to extradition go further than those of the Convention of 1910;

⁽¹⁾ South Africa, Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, British Empire, Canada, Cuba, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Norway, Netherlands, Roumania, New Zealand, Siam, Portugal, Latvia, Poland and Danzig, Sweden.

⁽²⁾ Denmark, Bulgaria, Panama, Peru, Spain, Uruguay.

⁽³⁾ The Conference of 1921 decided to employ throughout the expression "Traffic in Women and Children" instead of the familiar "White Slave Traffic".

for, whereas the Convention of 1910 simply provided that the offences contemplated in the Convention should be included in the list of offences for which extradition might be granted in accordance with extradition conventions already existing between the Contracting Parties, by the Convention of 1921 the High Contracting Parties agreed that in cases where there were no extradition conventions in force between them, they would take all measures within their power to extradite or provide for the extradition of persons accused or convicted of the offences specified in Articles 1 and 2 of the Convention of May 4th, 1910.

Another important addition in the 1921 Convention was that the High Contracting Parties agreed that if they had not already taken legislative or administrative measures relating to the licensing and supervision of employment agencies and offices, they would prescribe such regulations as were required for the protection of women and children seeking employment in another country.

At the Conference of 1921 it was pointed out that the hitherto unprecedented scale of emigration, due to the recent political changes especially in Central and Eastern Europe, had created a situation of which the traffickers had quickly taken advantage. An article dealing with the protection of emigrants was therefore embodied in the new Convention.

3. The League Organisation.

Another important result of the Conference of 1921 was the recommendation that the Council of the League, in dealing with the traffic, should be assisted by a standing Committee. Acting on this recommendation, the Council appointed, in September 1921, the Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children, which in 1925 was reorganised under the name of the "Advisory Commission for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People".

The Advisory Committee, as originally constituted, was composed of the delegates of nine Governments (1) and of Assessors appointed by five voluntary organisations (2), enjoying all the rights of Government delegates except the right to vote.

At its first session, the Committee recommended, and the Council subsequently agreed, that the Governments of Germany and the United States of America should be invited to send delegates to the Committee. Since the second session of the Committee a delegate from the United States has attended its meetings in an advisory capacity.

Formally invested with the function of advising the Council on all matters relative to the traffic, and counting among its members representatives of those voluntary organisations which are closely acquainted with the problem, the Advisory Committee is the organisation which, in the first instance, examines relevant proposals brought before the Assembly, and generally defines the policy which should guide the League in this sphere of its activity. Effect has already been given by the Council or Assembly to most of the proposals of the Committee, whose existence is a guarantee that the policy of the League in this, as in other domains, will, in so far as Governments give effect to it, be continuous, properly co-ordinated and based on expert knowledge.

4. Supervision of Ratification.

The League makes a constant endeavour to ensure the ratification of the Convention of 1921, as well as adhesion to the Agreement of 1904 and the Convention of 1910. Not

(1) Denmark, France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Poland, Roumania, Spain, Uruguay.

(2) International Bureau for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children; Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women; Association internationale catholique pour les œuvres de protection de la jeune fille; Fédération des unions nationales des amies de la jeune fille; Women's International Organisations.

only has the Council specifically urged States which have failed to ratify or adhere to the Convention to do so without delay, but the question has been exhaustively discussed at the sessions of the Assembly. It will probably be found that this open discussion goes far to encourage acquiescence, which, in most cases, is delayed merely by administrative difficulties.

5. *Reports.*

Annual reports on the traffic are, each year, received from Members of the League and from non-Member States which are parties to any of the International Agreements on the subject. These reports are of great help in enabling the Committee to appreciate the situation at any given time.

6. *Licensed Houses.*

Whilst it is sometimes claimed that the question of licensed houses is an internal question and therefore outside the competence of the League, the majority of the members of the Advisory Committee have supported the opinion that the licensed house is much the most hospitable market for the traffic and that, consequently, the traffic cannot be suppressed if the phenomenon which, on this hypothesis, is its principal cause is to be overlooked.

The Committee, at its second session, adopted a resolution to the effect that, "pending the abolition of the system of licensed houses, no foreign woman should be employed or carry on her profession as a prostitute in a licensed house". As this resolution was adopted by the Committee only after considerable opposition, the Council decided simply to communicate it to Governments, along with the relevant portions of the minutes of the sessions of the Council and the Committee.

The Council, however, "recognising the connection which may exist between a system of licensed houses and the traffic in women and children", has invited States which have recently abandoned the system to explain the motives of

their decision to abandon it, in so far as they concern the traffic, and States which still maintain the system to indicate whether their experience leads them to the conclusion that the system encourages the traffic or otherwise. On the nature of the replies of Governments to these questions will doubtless largely depend the future action of the League on this subject.

7. Enquiry into the Traffic.

At the second session of the Advisory Committee, the delegate of the United States proposed that, in order to furnish the Committee with full and accurate information on the traffic, experts should be appointed to investigate on the spot in such countries as they might select the extent of the traffic in women and children and the effectiveness of the measures hitherto taken to suppress it. The Council, approving the principle, which subsequently received the warm support of the Fourth Assembly, that such an enquiry should, with the consent and collaboration of the Governments concerned, be held, asked its Member Governments each to appoint an expert. Seven nominations have been received. The Council itself has appointed as President Dr. William Snow, Chairman of the American Social Hygiene Bureau. The choice of these recognised experts (1) gives reason to expect that the enquiry will be conducted on thoroughly scientific lines and will give goods results.

The American Social Hygiene Bureau has shown its interest in the enquiry by offering to bear its expenses up to the sum of 75,000 dollars. This offer has been accepted by the League. This body has further undertaken to prepare a collection of the laws and regulations of all countries in respect of the traffic in women.

(1) Dr. William Snow (United States of America); M. Isidore Maus (Belgium); Mr. S. W. Harris (British Empire); M. Hennequin (France); Princess Cristina Giustiniani Bandini (Italy); M. Alfred de Meuron (Switzerland); Dr. Paulina Luisi (Uruguay).

8. *Protection of Children.*

The question of the protection of children was brought within the sphere of the League's activity by a decision of the Fifth Assembly that the work hitherto carried out by the International Association for the Promotion of Child Welfare should henceforth be entrusted to the League Secretariat.

The Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children, which the Council reconstituted in 1924 so that it might perform the new duties entrusted to it by the Assembly, drew up a report suggesting a study of comparative legislation for the protection of life and health in early infancy, the compilation of laws regarding age of marriage and age of consent in penal law, and the preparation of an international convention for the assistance or repatriation of abandoned, neglected or delinquent children of foreign nationality. The report also dealt with questions regarding child labour, family allowances, the effects of the cinematograph on the minds and morals of children, their biological education, mental and physical recreation, the neglected and delinquent child, the evil effects of alcoholism, and the education of young people in the principles of international co-operation.

The Committee is henceforth to be known as the "Advisory Commission for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People". It consists of a certain number of Government delegates and two panels of assessors, one for questions concerning the traffic in women and children, the other for child welfare. It is divided into two Committees; the first Committee, or "Traffic in Women and Children Committee", deals with subjects hitherto referred to the Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children; the second, or "Child Welfare Committee" with its legal and liaison sub-committees set up in 1926, deals with all matters relating to the protection of children, and, for certain questions, works in co-operation with the League Technical Organisations and

the International Labour Office. The Government delegates sit on both committees, the assessors only on that dealing with the subject with which they are especially concerned. The two committees may meet together in plenary session for the discussion of any question of interest to both.

At the meeting in which this plan was drawn up for submission to the Council, the Commission noted with gratitude a letter from Colonel Snow, the President of the American Social Hygiene Bureau, stating that the Association had placed at the disposal of the League the sum of 5,000 dollars for its work on the protection of childhood.

II. SUPPRESSION OF THE TRAFFIC IN OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS

The traffic in obscene publications, like the traffic in women and children, is an evil which has its roots in many countries and no country may hope to escape its effects unless all combine to dislodge the cause. In attempting to achieve this result through the League, the nations of the world have but applied the latest method to the solution of a problem which has baffled earlier attempts.

1. Pre-League Efforts.

The history of pre-League efforts follows a course parallel to that already indicated in connection with the traffic in women and children. A Congress of voluntary organisations formed in various countries to combat the spread of pornographic objects and writings, which was held in 1908, recommended that action should be taken by Governments to frame a common policy. On the invitation of the French Government, a diplomatic Conference for the suppression of the traffic in obscene publications, consisting of the delegates of Governments invited to be represented at the Conference on Traffic in Women and Children of 1910, was held in Paris from April 18th to May 4th of that year.

This Conference drew up two Acts : (1) An International Administrative Agreement by which the Contracting Parties undertook each to appoint a central authority whose duty should be to supervise the suppression of the traffic in the country in question, and to communicate information to the corresponding authorities of other countries, and (2) a draft International Convention.

When this question was brought before the League of Nations in 1922, the Agreement had been ratified or adhered to by seventeen States, but the Convention had never passed the drafting stage.

2. The Intervention of the League.

Unchecked by the existence of international engagements for the punishment of offenders, there were signs that the traffic had of recent years grown in extent and audacity. Consequently, the proposal for an International Conference, brought before the Third Assembly of the League (September 1922) by the British Government, was welcomed by the Assembly, and the French Government, in recognition of the initiative which it had taken in 1910, was invited to convene a Conference under the auspices of the League.

The French Government having accepted this offer, the International Conference for the Suppression of the Circulation of and Traffic in Obscene Publications, consisting of the representatives of thirty-five States, was held at Geneva from August 31st to September 12th, 1923.

Nine months before the Conference opened, a questionnaire was addressed by the Secretariat to Governments asking their opinion on the various important points on which debate was expected, such as the advisability of attempting to include in the Convention a definition of the word "obscene", increase of penalty for offences committed in respect of minors, and extradition of those guilty of serious offences. The replies received from thirty-one

Governments provided the delegates with remarkably full information on the attitude of the Governments to the various questions, and this information enabled them to concentrate at once on the vital issues.

The Conference, basing its discussions on the draft Convention of 1910, drew up an International Convention for the Suppression of the Circulation of and Traffic in Obscene Publications, followed by a Final Act. The Convention was opened for signature on September 12th, 1923, and has already been signed by the representatives of forty-three States.

3. Special Features of the Convention of 1923.

The punitive provisions of the new Convention are drawn up with a fullness and precision calculated to expose the traffic at each of its vulnerable points. A comparison of the punitive articles of the Draft Convention of 1910 and of the Convention of 1923 is instructive.

Article I of the draft Convention of 1910 reads :

“It shall be a punishable offence :

“(1) To manufacture or be in possession of obscene writings, drawings, pictures or articles for the purpose of trading in or distributing the same;

“(2) To import or cause to be imported, convey or cause to be conveyed, for the above purpose, any such obscene writings, drawings, pictures or articles, or to put them in circulation in any other manner;

“(3) To trade, even privately, therein or to make a trade of lending thereof;

“(4) To advertise such trade by any means whatsoever.”

Article I of the Convention of 1923 reads :

“It shall be a punishable offence :

“(1) For purpose of or by way of trade or for distribution or public exhibition to make or produce

or have in possession obscene writings, drawings, prints, paintings, printed matter, pictures, posters, emblems, photographs, cinematograph films, or any other obscene objects;

“(2) For the purposes above mentioned to import, convey or export or cause to be imported, conveyed or exported any of the said obscene matters or things, or in any manner whatsoever to put them into circulation;

“(3) To carry on or take part in a business, whether public or private, concerned with any of the said obscene matters or things, or to deal in the said matters or things in any manner whatsoever, or to distribute them or to exhibit them publicly or to make a business of lending them;

“(4) To advertise or make known by any means whatsoever, in view of assisting in the said punishable circulation or traffic, that a person is engaged in any of the above punishable acts, or to advertise or to make known how or from whom the said obscene matters or things can be procured either directly or indirectly.”

Besides the numerous punitive provisions which, as will be seen from the above texts, have been added to the new Convention, the latter contains new articles providing for the right of search, the convocation of further conferences to revise the Convention, should need arise, and submission of disputes arising out of the interpretation of the Convention to the Permanent Court of International Justice.

The governmental replies to the questionnaire showed virtual unanimity of opinion in favour of leaving each State free to give to the word “obscene” the meaning which seemed to it appropriate, and a statement upon this and other important points is given in the Final Act, which also contains certain recommendations on subjects not considered suitable for incorporation in the Convention itself, such

as the recommendation that offences connected with the traffic should be held to be aggravated when committed in respect of minors.

Moreover, the Final Act refers to a very important question on which opinions were sharply divided at the Conference, namely, that of incitement to abortion and anti-conception propaganda. Some delegates maintained that an article should be inserted in the Convention making the spread of such propaganda punishable; some others opposed on the ground that, in so far as the propaganda was obscene, its suppression was already provided for by the Convention, but that it could not be considered as *ipso facto* obscene.

The Conference contented itself with expressing in the Final Act a desire, with which some delegates disagreed, that steps be taken to arrive at an international agreement on the subject.

The Convention of 1921 on the Traffic in Women and Children, as the figures already quoted show, has been ratified or adhered to by twice as many States as was the Convention of 1910 over the much longer period which ensued between the adoption of the Convention and the institution of the League and it may be hoped that the Convention on Obscene Publications of 1923 will fare at least as well. Whatever may be the ultimate success of the League in obtaining the ratification of these Conventions, it is noteworthy that within a year of the application of the machinery of the League there were drawn up and signed international acts of so comprehensive a character that the final eradication of both the traffic in women and children and the traffic in obscene publications may be said to wait only on the effective application of the Conventions of 1921 and 1923.

III. INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE RELIEF OF PEOPLES OVERTAKEN BY DISASTER

The question of an international union for the relief of peoples overtaken by disaster was brought before the League of Nations in the form of a scheme drawn up by Senator Ciraolo, President of the Italian Red Cross, proposing that the Members of the League should constitute themselves a federation for the purpose of rendering aid to countries which had been the victims of great catastrophes. It was hoped that if all nations were formally to engage to help one another in such emergencies, the provision of relief would take place with greater certainty and rapidity than when left to private benevolence. The Fourth Assembly decided, as a first step, that the scheme should be sent to all Governments for their observations.

Twenty-one Governments approved the scheme as a whole and the Fifth Assembly instructed the Council to appoint a preparatory Committee to determine the exact sphere of action of the proposed federation and to study its financial aspects. Under the chairmanship of Senator Ciraolo, the Committee, including representatives of the international Red Cross organisations, held three meetings in 1925, in the course of which it drew up a draft statute of an "International Relief Union"—which it submitted to the Council and the Sixth Assembly—and revised the same for submission to the Council in December.

The Secretary-General, in accordance with a resolution passed at the December meeting of the Council, has now submitted to all Governments for formal examination the revised statutes of the Union, together with a statement of its objects, asking them to communicate their views on the subject before July 1st, 1926. Should the Council consider that the replies then received make it possible to contemplate

the definite establishment of the Union by international agreement, it will take steps to convene a meeting of Government representatives for that purpose.

The object of the Union, according to the Statute, is not solely to provide relief in money and kind. In certain cases it will do so, but its main purpose is to co-ordinate relief work, thus economising both time and money.

The disasters in respect of which first aid will be given are "public misfortunes due to *force majeure* (act of God) the exceptional gravity of which exceeds the limits of the powers or resources of the stricken people". First aid, it may be noted, does not include repairs or reconstruction.

The Union will be strictly neutral in character and, in the exercise of its functions, will not recognise any national, political, religious, social or racial distinctions. States Members may, if they so desire, be represented by their national Red Cross, it being understood that the national Red Cross organisations are the executive agents of the Union.

The funds will be administered by the League of Nations, whose representatives are entitled to be heard at all meetings of the General Council and Executive Committee of the Union. For its principal resources, the Union reckons with donations, bequests and public contributions. States Members will only be called upon to contribute to an initial fund of 625,000 francs (Swiss) a sum based on the number of units payable by them towards the expenses of the League of Nations. This payment, which is made once only, not every year, is the sole pecuniary burden on Members.

The signatories undertake to grant to the International Relief Union, the International Red Cross and the national Red Cross organisations far-reaching immunities, facilities and exemptions of all kinds for their establishment, for the movements of their staff and supplies, for their relief operations and for the publicity of their appeals.

The general expenses of the Union will be borne in the first place by the International Red Cross, so far as its resources permit. Should they prove inadequate the income from the initial fund and the reserve will be drawn upon. The Statute further provides for a levy of not more than 1 per cent on all funds placed at the disposal of the Union.

A *General Council* upon which all Members are represented will serve as the deliberative and constitutional body. It will divide the world into geographical areas, corresponding to the risk of specific forms of disaster and to specific conditions governing relief in the event of disaster; these areas to coincide as far as possible with the territories of States.

Each area will be represented by experts. The latter will constitute an Advisory Committee whose duty it will be to co-ordinate and prepare the work of the Union. In the event of a catastrophe, the experts of each area are the special advisers of the *Executive Committee* for the organisation of relief in their area.

The *Executive Committee* consists of seven members appointed for two years by the General Council, two representatives of the International Red Cross (League of Red Cross Societies and the International Red Cross Committee) being co-opted in an advisory capacity. It acts in the same way as the board of directors of a private company. It is the agent of the Union and the trustee for any funds contributed under specific charges, conditions or assignments. It has full and independent powers to take, in the name of the Union, any action consistent with its aims as defined in the Statute, to organise relief work and appeals to the public and the members of the Union.

The central permanent services of the Union are provided by the International Red Cross under the supervision of the *Executive Committee*.

PART 3

I. THE REPATRIATION OF PRISONERS OF WAR

Since its foundation, the League of Nations has been actively engaged in mitigating the human wretchedness caused by the war. On one point—that of returning prisoners of war to their homes—it has attained complete and final success.

In April 1920 nearly half a million war prisoners or interned soldiers were still vainly waiting, sometimes in conditions of appalling misery, for means to be sent home. A number of charitable organisations had been formed to deal with the situation and their activities had done much to lessen the suffering. But their resources were insufficient and the position became so serious that one report predicted the probable death in the ensuing winter of most of the prisoners left in Siberia, variously estimated at between 120,000 and 200,000.

In these circumstances the Council of the League, by a resolution dated April 11th, 1920, appointed Dr. Nansen to co-ordinate all the efforts made hitherto on behalf of the prisoners of war and to organise their repatriation. The undertaking was tremendous and funds were almost non-existent. Nevertheless, by July 1st, 1922, Dr. Nansen had carried out the task at a cost of not more than £400,000. Altogether 427,386 prisoners belonging to 26 different nationalities were repatriated, thanks to the efforts of the League High Commissioner, assisted by the International Red Cross and other charitable institutions.

II. RUSSIAN REFUGEES

In 1920 there were more than a million and a-half refugees scattered about Europe, old and young, men, women and children, belonging to every class and every walk in life, unable to claim any State as their own, most of them penniless and not in a position to earn their living. As the result of an appeal addressed to it by the great charitable associations, the Council of the League, convinced of the necessity of co-ordinating all relief work on behalf of refugees, entrusted Dr. Nansen with the task of "attaining a definite settlement of the question of Russian refugees".

(a) *Inter-Governmental Conference (August 1921).*

A Conference of Government representatives, which met under the auspices of the League at Geneva in August, 1921, declared that aid to refugees was a moral duty in the fulfilment of which all States must co-operate. The Conference laid down the lines of action for Dr. Nansen, the High Commissioner, and asked each Government to appoint a special official to keep in touch with Dr. Nansen. The most urgent task was to help the refugees to find food and lodging, for most of them were completely destitute. Through Dr. Nansen's efforts this difficulty was overcome, with the help given by the Governments and charitable associations. But this was only a palliative, since the High Commissioner could not continue indefinitely to ask for considerable sums of money from the Governments and charitable associations. It was objectionable also from the point of view of the refugees themselves. The real solution of the problem, pending repatriation, was to enable the refugees to live by their own work. This required preliminary work of two kinds, namely, to take a census of refugees according to their professions, and to find

what countries would be willing to receive them and give them work.

The census was taken at the instigation of the High Commissioner's office and with the help of the International Labour Office. The High Commissioner set up offices in most of the capitals of Central and Eastern Europe, and employment agencies were formed in several of these cities.

(b) Russian Refugees in Constantinople.

The work of helping refugees was well under weigh when the position of refugees at Constantinople grew suddenly worse owing to the cessation of the very important assistance hitherto rendered by the French Government and the American Red Cross. Twenty-five thousand refugees were threatened with death by starvation. The High Commissioner urgently despatched a cargo a flour to Constantinople. On his intercession, the French Government agreed to continue the maintenance of part of the refugees. On the other hand, the American Relief Administration and the American Red Cross undertook to provision the refugees for four months and to contribute 25,000 dollars towards evacuating them to countries were they could find work, on condition that the League found a sum of £30,000. Great Britain offered to give £10,000 if the other members of the League would contribute between them £20,000. The sum was raised and a Committee undertook to organise the work of evacuation. With their help 25,000 refugees were sent from Constantinople to America, Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. One thousand others found work locally. The business of evacuating and placing refugees is still continuing, through the close co-operation of the High Commissioner, the International Red Cross, the great relief organisations and the Governments.

(c) *Legal Status of Russian Refugees.*

The business of evacuation raised a very delicate point, namely, that of the legal status of refugees. Some refugees possessed identity cards issued to them by the Government of the country in which they resided, but these cards were not recognised by other Governments and so could not take the place of passports. The result was that refugees could not go to a country where they had either relatives or friends or in which they could find work, merely because they possessed no papers recognised by passport authorities. A Conference of Government representatives summoned at Geneva by the High Commissioner in July 1922 agreed upon a simplified "standard" identity card. The High Commissioner asked all the Governments to adopt this card for refugees in their territory and to recognise similar cards issued by other Governments. Thirty-four Governments, including Germany and Turkey, have up to date accepted this proposal.

As certain categories of Russian refugees showed a strong desire to return home, negotiations were undertaken with the Soviet Government for the purpose of assuring their return to Russia under satisfactory conditions. About eight thousand refugees from Bulgaria and Greece were repatriated in this manner. The High Commissioner repatriated only those refugees who wished to return to their country. No measure has been taken that could be interpreted as an attempt to induce refugees to return to Russia.

In view of the fact that the present position of Russian refugees, although substantially improved, was still precarious, and that the cessation of the High Commissioner's work would undo at one stroke everything so far achieved in favour of the refugees, the Fourth Assembly of the League asked the Council to request the Governments of States Members of the League to be good enough to continue the

assistance they had given the High Commissioner hitherto, particularly in developing facilities for the general and professional education of refugees, and in finding work for those who are unemployed.

In 1923-24 the work of finding employment for refugees made further progress, and the Fifth Assembly, considering that the question had become almost exclusively one of employment and migration, decided to transfer to the International Labour Office the task of completing the work begun by the High Commissioner.

✓ III. PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE NEAR EAST

A task akin to that of the suppression of the traffic in women and children on which the League has engaged is the rescue of the deported women and children in the Near East. As is generally known, in the course of the protracted military operations in that region, many women were taken from their homes and removed by their captors to the interior of Asia Minor. The Council of the League, in April, 1921, appointed a Commission (1) which acted with strict impartiality and without making any distinction between the various races and religions. Working with great devotion under most trying conditions, it assisted in restoring to their own people large numbers of women and children; it secured the help of the Inter-Allied Police and other authorities in Constantinople and founded League of Nations "houses of refuge" at Constantinople and Aleppo, where persons of every nationality were received. The religious authorities of the Greek, Armenian, and Mussulman communities were invited

(1) Dr. Kennedy, Miss Emma Cushman, Madame Gaullis (since replaced by Miss Joppe, for work at Aleppo).

to furnish contributions and to give their advice on the administration of these houses.

The home at Constantinople acts as a clearing-house where the women and children remain while enquiries are made into their nationality. Once this is established, if it is not known where their relatives are, they are entrusted to the care of one of the various charitable voluntary organisations which operate in the city. At Aleppo there are no private organisations of this nature on whose assistance the League Commission may rely. Consequently, at the Aleppo home, the women and children remain, in some cases, for periods of several months while the necessary enquiries are being made. It is an interesting feature of the home at Aleppo that the women and children sheltered there are taught useful trades during their period of residence.

The work of the League Commission, both at Constantinople and Aleppo, has been warmly praised by Turkish and Christian women alike.

IV. SETTLEMENT OF GREEK REFUGEES

A more sudden emergency arose during the 1922 Assembly in connection with the tens of thousands of refugees who poured into Greece as a result of Greco-Turkish hostilities. The League authorised Dr. Nansen to make use of the Russian refugee organisation, and a sum of 100,000 gold francs was voted for administrative measures immediately necessary. Great Britain contributed £19,000 and other States made important contributions to meet pressing needs. The number of refugees was found to be no less than 750,000, of which 80 per cent were women and children, most of whom were without sufficient clothes, food or lodging. A general plan of co-operation was drawn up in concert with the refugee organisation; measures were taken to meet

transport difficulties and two members of the Epidemic Commission of the League helped in the sanitary organisation of the refugee camps. Tons of clothes and medical stores, etc., were contributed by Governments and refugee and charitable organisations, but all this assistance reached only a comparatively small number.

To meet the problem in a permanent form was quite beyond the resources of the Greek Government, unaided. The League therefore considered the possibilities of a scheme for productive and self-supporting refugee settlements. An enquiry was made by the League as to the means by which this could be done and as to the possibilities of raising the necessary money. Eventually a detailed plan was drawn up, under which a resident Refugee Settlement Commission was appointed (presided over first by Mr. Henry Morgenthau and then by Mr. Howland, both Americans) to which the Greek Government undertook to transfer full rights over a large extent of territory. The Financial Committee of the League collaborated in drawing up arrangements and conditions calculated to attract foreign money, and a loan of ten million pounds sterling was successfully raised in 1924 for this purpose.

This scheme has for some time been in active operation and in one of its recent reports the Commission states that it has done its work under varying and difficult conditions, but has nevertheless, by sure stages, achieved considerable progress. Anyone visiting those parts of the country where colonisation has been carried on will have no difficulty in obtaining an idea of the results achieved. Most of the centres created have brought increasing activity to their respective districts and have stimulated the urban and rural life of the country to a remarkable degree.

This is especially striking in Macedonia, which absorbs the great majority of the colonists. A traveller in Macedonia to-day can measure the extent of the work accomplished by

comparison with the former state of the country. Amid the vast once-deserted plains and in the wide uncultivated fields, where nothing was to be seen but occasional herds led by nomad shepherds, villages have sprung up bustling with life, with large and well-designed streets and simple but sanitary cottages and busy shops, where the rural artisans, the locksmith, the blacksmith and the farrier, have courageously resumed their work. Around these small centres are fields covered with wheat and barley, others sown with cotton or tobacco, and beyond them the vineyards and all the other newly established forms of cultivation.

Even the coast of Macedonia, which was formerly deserted, is beginning to be populated with sea-folk and fishermen, refugees from the Propontis, the Black Sea area and the shores of Asia Minor. In many bays where no living soul had been seen within the memory of man, there are now little fleets of fishing-smacks, sailing-vessels with cargo and even small shipyards—in fact, the beginnings of a small maritime centre.

According to the last report of the Commission, 550,635 persons were settled up to December 31st, 1925. In addition to 5,000 houses built by the State and the 50,000 houses belonging to exchangeable Turks in Macedonia, the Commission has built 35,825 houses, distributed considerable quantities of live stock and correspondingly large supplies of wagons, agricultural implements, forage, grain, etc., as well as subsistence grants in money. A considerable amount of work is also being done and is steadily developing in urban settlement.

The Commission speaks highly of the activity and vitality of the majority of the settlers, who faithfully observe their liabilities, who have introduced new methods of cultivation and who have increased the productive capacity of the districts where they are settled. There still remain a large number of refugees requiring relief and, amongst those who are not yet settled, many are in precarious circumstances.

V. BULGARIAN INHABITANTS OF WESTERN THRACE

In the month of April 1923, the Bulgarian Government asked the Council to recommend measures for improving the position of Bulgarians who had been deported from Western Thrace by the Greek authorities,

The Council requested Dr. Nansen to do everything in his power to relieve the lot of these people and to recommend the Greek Government to assist in this work with all the means at its disposal. The representative of the High Commissioner in Greece left immediately for Thessaly, to which the Bulgarians from Western Thrace had been deported.

The High Commissioner was able to secure food and lodging for the deportees from the Greek Government and, at the suggestion of the High Commissioner, the Government organised the return of the deportees to their homes.

VI. SCHEME FOR ESTABLISHING ARMENIAN REFUGEES IN THE CAUCASUS

The question of the settlement of Armenian refugees came in definite form before the Council in 1923 and before the Assembly in 1924.

As a result of the retreat of the Greek armies from Asia Minor, 120,000 Armenian refugees had arrived in Greece. The Greek Government, having experienced considerable difficulty in coping with the financial aspects of the whole problem of Asia Minor refugees, asked the Council to take measures to provide the Armenians with a national home in the Caucasus.

As the question of the Armenian refugees was in many ways similar to that of Russian refugees, which had already been transferred to the International Labour Office, the Assembly asked that Office to proceed in collaboration with Dr. Nansen to an investigation of the possibilities of a settlement.

At the last Assembly Dr. Nansen submitted the results of this enquiry in the form of a scheme for irrigation works in Armenia, which, he said, would allow of the settlement in good conditions of 15,000 to 25,000 refugees. A Commission of five was appointed to study the technical and financial prospects of the undertaking. This body, which met for the first time on October 30th in Paris, despatched to the Caucasus an engineer to make an expert study of the proposed irrigation scheme, the cost of which is estimated at one million sterling.

VII. SLAVERY

Under a programme approved by the Fourth Assembly, a Temporary Commission was appointed to consider questions relating to slavery. This Commission, after submitting its programme of work to the Fifth Assembly, prepared a detailed report on slavery as a whole, showing the different aspects of the alienation, or restriction, of individual freedom and suggesting practical measures for coping with this abuse, such as the abolition of the legal status of slavery, the infliction of penalties for slave-raiding and similar acts, the consideration of slave transport by sea as an act of piracy, measures for the repatriation of freed slaves, powers for the courts enabling them to repress abuses, legislation for the suppression of the abuses of peonage, the non-recognition of the legal status of serfdom, the prohibition of forced labour, except for public works and under conditions of inadequate remuneration, and economic and social measures to render

wage labour attractive. The Commission further suggested that certain of these measures might form the subject of international agreements.

The Sixth Assembly, therefore, had under consideration measures proposed by the Commission, to which was added a draft convention prepared by Viscount Cecil. On the basis of this material, the Assembly prepared the text of a draft Convention which is being submitted to Governments, including non-members of the League, such as Afghanistan, Ecuador, Egypt, Germany, Mexico, Russia, the Sudan, Turkey and the United States of America, for their observations.

By the terms of the draft Convention the signatories would undertake to prevent and suppress the slave trade and to bring about progressively and as soon as possible the disappearance of slavery in all its forms. They would also agree to take measures to prevent conditions analogous to slavery from resulting from forced labour, it being recognised that, in principle, forced labour may only be exacted for public purposes, and that in territories in which it still survives for other purposes it shall be adequately remunerated, of an exceptional character and shall not involve the removal of labourers from their place of residence. Special clauses of the draft Convention deal with penalties and trade at sea.

The Sixth Assembly, while contemplating that on a later date a conference of plenipotentiaries might re-examine and sign the final text of any Convention agreed upon, recommended that every effort should be made at once to adopt measures in conformity with the draft Convention.

CONCLUSION

This is a considerable record of League achievement in humanitarian and social tasks, and it is a field in which the League has become almost universal, for countries such as

Germany, the United States of America, Turkey and Soviet Russia, which are not Members of the League, co-operate with its agents or organisations.

In dealing with these questions the machinery and methods of the League have proved adaptable, effective and swift in action. Ample and precise information is gathered and concentrated through questionnaires, enquiries, expert investigations, annual reports, etc.; Governments and private organisations are then brought together in conferences, and their decisions entrusted for action to the standing machinery that exists for the purpose, such as the League Committees or other agents. If the moment proves unripe for decision, further study is devoted to the subject, advance is made at such points where advance is possible, and the opportune moment for a general step forward is awaited. Efforts that were formerly dispersed and intermittent are co-ordinated, systematised, and made continuous under a permanent organisation. This continuity extends the atmosphere of understanding which is essential to progress.

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