

XV. GENERAL COMMITTEE : MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS

THROUGH its General Committee the Assembly was apprised of a number of questions which were either not referred to the main Committees or were so referred only after preliminary consideration by the General Committee. Incidentally, the General Committee, of which the first delegate of New Zealand was a member in his personal capacity as Chairman of the Third Committee, had a particularly full programme owing to the length of the discussion on certain subjects—particularly the relationship of the W.F.T.U. and other non-governmental bodies to the United Nations—dealt with elsewhere in this report.

Resolution on Wheat and Rice

Thus, as the news regarding the world food situation became increasingly grave, an important debate took place in the Assembly on a resolution on wheat and rice submitted by the delegates of China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The facts of the increasing menace of famine which have since become so tragically familiar were exposed by the authors of the draft resolutions and by various other speakers, especially representatives of producing countries, and earnest appeals made for international co-operation. Particularly striking, and particularly terrible in its message, was the speech of the delegate of India, Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar. As the delegate of New Zealand had occasion to speak before the Assembly earlier on the threat of world famine (see the report on the Second Committee), he did not participate in this particular debate.

This was the text of the resolution which the Assembly unanimously adopted :—

“ The damage caused by war and the dislocation of agricultural production resulting from the shortage and dislocation of labour, the removal of draught animals, the shortage of fertilizers, and other circumstances connected with the war have caused a serious fall in world production of wheat. In addition, a large number of countries, including some of those which are normally the largest producers of grain, have suffered serious droughts and have therefore reaped abnormally small crops. The supply of rice is also so short as to threaten a famine in certain areas. There is, moreover, a serious risk of grain production in the coming season being insufficient to prevent continuing hunger. For these reasons the world is faced with conditions which may cause widespread suffering and death and consequently set back all plans for reconstruction.

“ THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THEREFORE,

“ 1. Urges all Governments and peoples to take immediate and drastic action, both directly and through the international organizations concerned, to conserve supplies, by securing adequate collection of crops from the producers, by saving food and avoiding waste, and to ensure the maximum production of grain in the coming season :

“ 2. Notes that several of the United Nations have recently announced measures to reserve grain supplies for direct human consumption and to secure increased production :