

of the work. Before the work was taken in hand the existence of these prisoners was, to most people, entirely unknown. Much less was the fact known that of the prisoners in Russia, for example, some twelve hundred a month were dying from want and disease. They were lost to general knowledge as though in a forest. The attention of the League was called to their existence. The work was taken in hand quietly and unostentatiously. The result has been, however, the restoration to their homes of over four hundred thousand men with hardly any expenditure to the League. It is difficult to express too high an appreciation of the work of Dr. Nansen and his extraordinarily able helpers. It is again just such work as this, in addition to whatever may be done on subjects of more theatrical interest, which convinces many persons of the useful work which the League can really perform. The Fifth Committee's comments on Dr. Nansen's report is Document A. 96, which was considered by the Assembly at its meeting on the 22nd September.

*Relief of Fugitives in Asia Minor.*—Of the other matters that came before the Fifth Committee that of the most immediate interest was a proposal introduced by Dr. Nansen to organize relief for the persons rendered homeless by the burning of Smyrna and the other incidents of the Turkish advance in Asia Minor. Dr. Nansen brought forward his motion in the Assembly on the strength of a telegram received from his Assistant Commissioner. The question was referred to the Fifth Commission, which considered it the same afternoon. The question of finance was important. Dr. Nansen was hopeful that he could raise from outside sources, whether Greek or other, the sum necessary for the actual support of the fugitives, but the question of staff and the expense incurred in connection with it was important, as also the fact that the whole question was urgent and could not wait. By the time the committee met the same afternoon the Secretary-General and the Financial Controller had examined the situation and were prepared with a suggestion. The Secretary-General could not, of course, speak for the Council, but suggested that the Council would probably be willing to accept a recommendation for an expenditure of a sum not exceeding 100,000 gold francs to be taken from the Emergency Fund of the League. This suggestion was adopted, and the Committee also recommended that Dr. Nansen should be empowered to employ for his purpose the staff which was already at his disposal for Russian refugees, provided that this latter work was not interrupted, and also that the sums expended on the two kinds of relief were kept strictly separate. The whole proposal was to be limited to a period of one month, during which other arrangements of a more permanent character might be made if necessary. Dr. Nansen, however, did not anticipate that the expense would necessarily be very heavy. The fugitives could be relieved near to their own country, and it was hoped that early repatriation might be possible. A number of applauding speeches were made in committee, which were perhaps of use in creating enthusiasm but which occupied time. It is perhaps to the credit of the British Delegation that, in order to facilitate business, they all kept quiet, although, as one member remarked, they would probably have to foot any bill. The recommendations were reported to the Assembly next morning and passed. The text of the resolutions is attached.

It is noteworthy that actual measures for relief have thus been devised and sanctioned within twenty-four hours of the receipt of the telegram asking for help, and the concurrence obtained of all the nations present. The fact is illustrative. Much of the speech-making at the League gives an air of unreality to what goes on there. But in this case action was actually taken within twenty-four hours, and that with the general concurrence—all of which would have been impossible but for the existence of the League.

The report of the committee (Document No. A. 80) was considered by the Assembly at its meeting on the 25th September, when Lord Balfour announced that the British Government was prepared to give £50,000 for the purpose of relief, provided other Governments collectively subscribed a like sum. Sir James Allen, in moving the following resolution, stated that his Government would contribute the sum of £1,000 towards the work of relief:—

“The Assembly, having heard the statement of Lord Balfour, and recognizing the extreme urgency of bringing effective aid to the refugees in the Near East, for which purpose financial assistance from the various Governments would be of the greatest value, decides that its members will at once place the situation before their respective Governments, recommending an immediate and adequate financial contribution to Dr. Nansen's organization.”

This resolution was passed unanimously.

*White Slave Traffic.*—This question was dealt with at considerable length in the report of last year. At this Assembly the question was not the subject of the same controversy.

The recommendations of the Advisory Committee in their report (Document No. A. 9 (1)) are worthy of careful reading, but, except in so far as they relate to emigration, they do not closely affect New Zealand. Indeed, under the conditions obtaining in New Zealand, even those sections which deal with emigration are not of great moment. From the general point of view, however, it will be of importance to note how far, as time goes on, it will have been found possible to ensure legislation in the different signatory States carrying out the measures suggested. Moreover, although, as has been stated, New Zealand is not intimately affected, the Government will no doubt consider how far action on their part is desirable in view of the recommendations in the report of the Advisory Committee which have been endorsed by the Fifth Committee in its report (Document No. A. 118), which was passed by the Assembly at its meeting on the 25th September.

*Russian Refugees.*—Following on the statement of the action taken with regard to fugitives in Asia Minor, it is fitting to mention the question of Russian refugees. Dr. Nansen, the High Commissioner, had continued his work on the subject during the year now elapsed. The difficulty was obvious. Russia under a Bolshevik Government was closed to many of them. On the other