

Unfortunately, the convention of the 19th February, 1925, is not yet in operation, for the reason that it cannot come into force until it has been ratified by ten Powers, including some of the States by which the Central Board to be set up under the convention is to be appointed, of which States at least two must be permanent members of the Council of the League. The convention has been signed by many countries, but at the time of making this report only six ratifications have been received. It should be noted that these ratifications have come from English-speaking countries, and that they include Great Britain, which has a permanent seat on the Council, and India, which is a producing and exporting country, and which, from the statement made by the Indian delegate, is taking severe measures to control the illicit traffic and to limit production. Until the convention becomes operative there is little doubt that the illicit traffic will, if not grow, at any rate not decrease. The questions involved are serious, and solution of them is imperative. Whether they can be completely solved under a convention which has not been tried is uncertain, and, in the circumstances, it is useless for certain countries, which are merely consuming and not also producing, to complain that the convention does not go far enough.

Unfortunately, this opium question, like several others which have a moral bearing, is complicated by having an economic aspect, for the production of the poppy is very largely due to the labours of the peasant class, and to reduce that production to a quantity which is sufficient to meet legitimate requirements only will involve a substitution of crops—a policy the fulfilment of which must of necessity take some years. However, it was generally agreed that it was essential that the convention should come into force at the earliest possible moment, and a resolution urging Governments who had not already done so to ratify, or adhere, so that, if possible, the ratifications necessary to bring it into force may be deposited with the Secretariat before the end of 1926, was put forward by the Second Committee and passed by the Assembly at its meeting on the 21st September, when it also passed a resolution approving of the report of the Advisory Committee and of the resolutions which that Committee had passed.

The Advisory Committee's report is worthy of careful study, because it shows the great difficulties which have to be coped with in the suppression of the illicit traffic. Many delegates who had taken part in the discussion of last year's Assembly were hopeful that the report of the Special Commission of Inquiry which had been sent to Persia would be available; but it was not before the Second Committee. This is unfortunate, because it seems to be proved that much of the illicit traffic has its origin in shipments from the Persian Gulf. An attempt has been made to show that some of the opium shipped from Persia has been smuggled into that country from other countries; but there appears to be no doubt that until proposals are made, and given effect to, for a substitution of crops in Persia the illicit traffic in that part of the world will remain stationary, or will even increase.

In closing, it is as well to place on record that some objections were raised to the method which is to be employed in appointing the Central Board under Article 19 of the new convention. There was an insinuation that the producing countries might have a larger representation on the Board than their interest justified, but from the information given it would seem that there is no reason to doubt that the Council, which is to appoint the Board, will act strictly in the terms of Article 19 of the convention. Indeed, one of the countries which insists that the convention does not go far enough and has refused to sign it has a permanent seat on the Council, and consequently a voice in the appointment of the Central Board.

The Fifth Committee's report to the Assembly is Document A. 74, and the resolutions are given in Document A. 91.

ADVISORY COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.— TRAFFIC IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

The report of the Traffic in Women and Children Committee of the Advisory Commission for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People is numbered A. 18, and it came before the Fifth Commission of the Assembly at its meeting on the 13th September. The discussion ranged largely round the resolutions of the Traffic in Women and Children Committee, but there was a desire on the part of more than one speaker that that committee should not confine itself to the duties conferred on it in the covenant—*i.e.*, a general supervision of the execution of agreements, with regard to the traffic in women and children—but should take steps to prevent prostitution, in pursuance of the principle that "prevention is better than cure." More than one speaker referred to a large percentage of prostitution being due to unhygienic conditions and mental deficiency, and, naturally, the question of alcohol, with which resolution 7 of the Traffic in Women and Children Committee deals, was dwelt upon. Considerable weight was attached to the influence on the young mind of obscene literature. To pave the way for an extended inquiry into causes, as distinct from a supervision of international engagements, the delegate for Cuba introduced a resolution which, whilst it met with sympathy, was not put to the vote, because the report of an inquiry proposed by the Council in 1923 is awaited. The resolution approving of the report of the Traffic in Women and Children Committee was passed by the Assembly at its meeting on the 21st September. (See Document A. 75.)

CHILD WELFARE COMMITTEE.

The report on the work of the second session of the Child Welfare Committee is Document A. 19, which, together with Document A. 37, containing the resolution of the Council on that report, was before the Fifth Commission of the Assembly. This year there was again a discussion as to what were purely national as opposed to international questions; but the discussion led nowhere, and, indeed, it must be difficult for a committee of enthusiasts such as, apparently, the Child Welfare Committee is, to confine its work within limitations which are ill defined and on which no helpful guidance has been received from the Council or the Assembly. A number of interesting points was