

Before, however, dealing with the general question before the committee, may I briefly remark upon a proposal strongly put forward by Great Britain, and which had my full support. To Great Britain the evil has reached such proportions in Hong Kong and other Eastern possessions as to bring the administration to an impasse. For instance, in Hong Kong the Governor of that colony reports that since the war there has been a great increscence in the growth of the poppy in China, with the result that smuggling on a hitherto unheard-of scale has become quite a common thing. Indeed, before this state of things, the Government itself undertook the direct importation and control of opium in Hong Kong, selling it at a high price, so as to make it difficult to get. In view, however, of the wholesale smuggling from China that has come about since the war, the Government has found that there is no demand whatever for its article, and it is calculated that the smuggling agencies are able to sell opium in Hong Kong territory at a ridiculously low price, owing to its proximity to China and the freedom from payment of duty. The Governor frankly reports that the whole administration of Hong Kong is being seriously prejudiced by this menace. Similar reports come from other British quarters in the East, and the British Government consequently drafted a strong memorandum to the League setting out the facts, and suggesting that a Special Commission should be appointed by the League of Nations to go to the Eastern countries with a view to gathering authoritative evidence upon the whole situation in these countries, so that, armed with the report of such a Commission, the League itself could take some useful and perhaps drastic action to curtail the horrible evils of the opium trade. I should mention that it is the smuggling of opium, and not the use of drugs, that is accentuated in these countries as the great evil against which it was desired to take the action as indicated in the above sentences.

When the British proposal came before the committee strong objection was taken to it by most of the nations present. They suggested, indirectly, that it was really a British matter, not one for the League; and, in any event, the expense, they said, was (particularly in this year, when drastic economy was being insisted on) a matter that the League ought not to undertake. However, thanks to the pertinacity of Dame Lyttelton and other members of the British delegation (whom I loyally supported, believing, as I do, that you would always wish me on every reasonable occasion to support the British delegation), a resolution of sorts was finally adopted which may result in the British delegation getting its way.

Returning again to the general question, I think there is evidence that the moral influence of the League is having some effect already. Persia, one of the principal offenders, has reduced the growing of the poppy very considerably, and other countries, too, have followed the same course. In passing, I should mention that I stated to the committee that New Zealand would include the derivatives of opium—namely, eucodal and dicodide—in the convention. While some countries, however, seemed to be anxious, I must confess that the general impression upon my mind is that few, if any, of the countries are showing a great deal of vigour about the present situation. No doubt there is the economic question, which obtrudes itself against any great immediate reform. The countries which grow the poppy do so as one of their staple industries. The representative of Czecho-Slovakia (in Europe) admitted, as did the representatives of other poppy-growing countries, that it would be a very real economic hardship to materially reduce the area now under cultivation in their respective countries.

Eventually a resolution was carried approving of the work of the committee. I imagine that new energy may be galvanized into the movement against opium and dangerous drugs by the meeting of the Special Conference in 1929, in terms of the convention of 1925.

ARMENIAN AND TURKISH REFUGEES.

It seemed, I observed, rather a general opinion this year that the League had, perhaps, gone as far as it could reasonably be expected to go in the work of repatriation of refugees. It was significant rather that Dr. Nansen was unable to get any greater assistance than the mere payment of the administration expenses for his scheme for repatriating Armenians. It is sufficient to say that the League seems determined to recognize the whole of the refugee services on more rational lines. Nor do I conceal my impression that the time has grown ripe for a very careful investigation of the whole system of refugee repatriation.

Generally speaking, I consider this committee, keeping its eye ranged all over the world upon the vices and shortcomings of mankind, is doing satisfactory work, and has, indeed, in front of it a splendid future. For indeed, as I remarked at the beginning of this report, concerted international action from Geneva is likely to achieve much more in the way of world reform than any isolated national effort.

SIXTH COMMITTEE.

This committee, which I personally attended, had this year to deal with some interesting questions. On all the subjects it took in hand I found it expedient to express what I considered to be the viewpoint of the Dominions, and particularly of New Zealand. On each occasion your representative's observations were received with courtesy and attention by the representatives of the other forty-seven nations.

In the first part of our session the work of the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation came into review. Included in this subject were frequent observations on the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, established at Paris, which is nowadays, in a sense, the nursery and almost the seat of the operations of this movement.

At the beginning great regret was expressed on the death of Professor Lorentz, who for many years has presided over the deliberations of the committee, and by the sway of his remarkable personality has exercised a very considerable influence on the whole movement. In the election of Professor Gilbert Murray, an Englishman, to the chair in place of M. Lorentz a compliment was paid to Great Britain and the Dominions, though, in any event, Professor Gilbert Murray, by the force of a remarkable intellect and by a very tactful attitude, has already made a name for himself in Europe in this aspect of the League's work.