

NANSEN INTERNATIONAL OFFICE FOR REFUGEES.

The report of the governing body of the Nansen International Office for Refugees is No. A. 12. It is estimated that there are 800,000 Russians, 170,000 Armenians, and 14,000 other refugees of Near Eastern nationalities. In some of the countries in which they have taken refuge about 50 per cent. are unemployed, and 25 per cent. of the whole consists of children and sick persons. Further, there are a number of Russian women refugees in China who have become victims of the white slave traffic. It was on behalf of these last mentioned that the Spanish delegate on the Sixth Committee made an earnest appeal. She suggested that a credit be voted solely for the purpose of relieving the situation of the Russian women in the Far East; that such work should not affect the Nansen Office or the time laid down for its existence; and that the Nansen Office should act in conjunction with the Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women. The matter was also discussed at considerable length in the Fifth Committee. Ultimately a sub-committee consisting of members of the Fifth and Sixth Committees was appointed. This sub-committee, after considering the matter, advised that a conference which is to be convened in the East for another purpose should also be charged to deal with the question of Russian refugee women in China.

The efforts of the Nansen Office to arrange for the settlement of refugees in oversea countries has not met with success. The plan for settling Iraq Assyrians in Brazil has been abandoned, although there is a proposal afoot for settling them in British Guiana. Nevertheless, the Office can claim to have ameliorated the hard lot of many thousands of refugees. The Sixth Committee's report and the resolution attached thereto (Document A. 37) were adopted by the Assembly on the 26th September.

INTELLECTUAL CO-OPERATION.

I invite your attention to pages 58-69 of the Secretary-General's report (Part II) of Document A. 6 (a), and also to the report of the governing body of the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation (Document C. 338, M. 155).

The subjects dealt with by the Institute are striking and varied, but much of the work appeals only to specialists. I have always felt that intellectual co-operation between the nations is not only good in itself, but invaluable as a means of bringing about that better understanding which is a necessary preliminary to much that the League stands for. But the intellectual co-operation must be of a kind which reaches the masses and which the masses can understand and appreciate. It was with this idea in mind that I made a short speech in the Sixth Committee, taking New Zealand, the member State farthest from the seat of the League, as an example of the danger towards insularity in far distant communities which the Intellectual Co-operation Organization, given the will and the means, can correct. I am convinced it is mainly on the younger generations that the fate of the League depends, and I quoted the important part which the system of exchange of teachers within the British Commonwealth of Nations had played in the co-operation of mind and intellect. I suggested that the scheme be extended by the introduction of a system of exchange of professors as between the nations.

It is easy to point to difficulties of race, of religion, and particularly of language. Many of these difficulties exist at a League of Nations Assembly, but they do not prevent a considerable measure of co-operation in matters affecting the world in general. It is also easy to sneer at moral disarmament, which the representatives of at least one nation at the Disarmament Conference were convinced must be seriously pursued if we are to attain that state of mind which will make impossible a repetition of the horrors of 1914-18. But when all is said, moral disarmament is a factor, and an important one, and cannot be neglected.

The Sixth Committee's report and the draft resolution attached thereto were accepted by the Assembly on the 26th September (Document A. 41).

PROTECTION OF MINORITIES.

Earlier in this report I have referred to the speech which the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs made in the Assembly on the subject of minorities. In April last the Polish Government, through its representative in Geneva, requested that a motion should be placed on the agenda for the next Assembly. The object of this motion, the text of which is given in Document A. 7, was to obtain the summoning of an international conference to draw up a general Convention on the International Protection of Minorities. In addition to this motion there was one submitted by the Hungarian Delegation providing for reference to the Sixth Committee of that part of the report on the work of the League dealing with the question of protection of minorities (Document A. 26). There was therefore material for a good debate, and expectations were realized to the full.

The supervision of the execution of clauses dealing with the protection of minorities in certain treaties is one of the tasks of the League. These clauses apply not to all countries which took part in the Great War, but only to some which received augmentation of territory or were created or recreated by the treaties. Other countries which received additions of territory partly inhabited by peoples of different race and tongue are not bound by the minority clauses; and, as a consequence, there is a feeling of injustice which has become prominent of late. Whether it is this feeling which prompted the Polish motion, or whether there are other causes not apparent on the surface, it is not for me to say. I merely have to deal briefly with the motion, its discussion in Committee, and the result of the discussion as shown in the report presented to the Assembly. I may, however, be permitted to remark that there appears to be some inconsistency in a proposal to generalize a system the difficulties of which have on more than one occasion been loudly voiced by the country making the proposal.