

REFUGEES : NANSEN INTERNATIONAL OFFICE.

The report of the governing body of the Nansen International Office for Refugees for the year ended 30th June last is Document A. 22, and this was referred to the Sixth Committee. Brief information is to be found also in Documents A. 6 and A. 6 (a). Although it is some sixteen years since the conclusion of peace, various problems connected with refugees still remain, and attempts are being made to widen the scope of the League's activities. This great work for refugees, in the inauguration of which the Norwegian explorer, Nansen, took a prominent part, has been one of the bright features of the League's humanitarian activities; but I doubt whether those members of the early Assemblies who generously voted money imagined that the item "refugees" would find a place on an agenda so far in the future as 1935. An excellent summary of what has been done in the preceding year is given in the report of the Sixth Committee to the Assembly (Document A. 45). This report concludes with the resolution which the Assembly passed on the 24th September.

The Assembly was notified at its meeting on the 27th September that the General Committee proposed the adjournment of the appointment of a successor to M. G. Werner, President of the Governing Body of the Nansen International Office for Refugees, until an inquiry (which is dealt with in the next paragraph) had been held.

INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES.

The two preceding paragraphs touch those aspects of the refugee problem which the Nansen International Office was created to deal with. This Office is in the process of being wound up under a scheme approved by the Assembly a few years ago. During the last two or three years the refugee problem has been intensified by certain political events, and aspects have been created which are not within the competence of the Nansen Office.

The question of international assistance to refugees was raised this year by the Norwegian delegation and referred to the Sixth Committee. The Committee came to the conclusion that the refugee problem required further examination, and it decided to recommend the Assembly to request the Council to appoint a small committee of competent persons to report. The inquiry, however, for political and financial reasons, is to be limited to the categories of refugees already under the Nansen Office and the High Commissariat in London. The Assembly agreed to the proposal on the 28th September under a resolution which will enable the Council to take action, even before the next Assembly, should the report be available (see Document A. 64).

SETTLEMENT OF ASSYRIANS OF IRAQ.

This item appeared for the first time on the agenda of the Assembly. It had, however, occupied the attention of the Council for some years, and for this reason it was argued that the League had a moral responsibility for the settlement of a Christian community which has been described as "an alien element in Iraq."

Investigations into a possible place of settlement had extended over a lengthy period, and finally a part of Syria, over which country France exercises a mandate, was selected. Negotiations with the various authorities had not been without considerable difficulty. Moreover, the country chosen will have to be reclaimed and partly irrigated.

The British Government proposed to meet five-twelfths of the cost of settlement provided—

- (1) Its contribution did not exceed £250,000; and
- (2) That the Government of Iraq contributed a like amount.

Apart from any contributions from private sources, it was for the League to make provision for the balance of the money required.

A statement on the matter made to the Sixth Committee has been issued in documentary form. It is numbered A. VI/5/1935. The report of the Committee of the Council set up to consider the actual questions arising out of the proposed settlement is Document C. 352, M. 179.

After a short debate the Sixth Committee referred the matter to the Fourth Committee under a resolution which expressed the opinion that the financial participation of the League was worthy of the most sympathetic consideration of the Assembly.

In due course the question of the provision of funds came before the Fourth Committee, and was by that Committee referred to the Supervisory Committee. To the recommendation of the Supervisory Committee I have alluded in my remarks on the work of the Fourth Committee. It suffices to mention here that the recommendation was to the effect that 400,000 francs should be contributed by the League in 1936, and that the total contribution of the League should be limited to 1,300,000 francs spread over four years.

The report of the Sixth Committee is Document A. 72, and on the 28th September the Assembly agreed to accept the responsibilities—financial and otherwise—proposed by its Committee.

INTELLECTUAL CO-OPERATION.

The Sixth Committee devoted a considerable part of its time to the discussion of certain aspects of the work conducted by the Intellectual Co-operation Organization. The distinguished French statesman M. Edouard Herriot acted as Rapporteur, to whose report I invite your attention, especially the introduction (Document A. 59). Those who attach great importance to the moral influence which they think the League is able to exercise were, I am sure, glad to read M. Herriot's remarks.