

and member of several learned societies in different countries, be appointed for the remainder of the term of office held by the late Mme. Cecile de Tormay—*i.e.*, three years. The appointment was approved by the Council and a tribute paid to Mme. Cecile de Tormay's memory and an acknowledgment of the services which she had rendered to the League of Nations.

CONSTITUTION, PROCEDURE, AND PRACTICE OF COMMITTEES OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

The representative of France submitted a report to the Council (Documents C. 257, 1937, and C. 257, 1937, Corrigendum), covering the progress made since last January in the matter of the reform of Committees of the League of Nations.

Health Committee.—The Council approved the draft Rules of Procedure, details of which will be found in Document C. 148, M. 96, 1937, III.

Financial Committee.—Proposals regarding the constitution and composition of this committee were put before the Council at its session in January last by the Rapporteur for this subject, the representative of France, but at the request of one of the members discussion was adjourned.

The Financial Committee has never had a definite statute, its composition, procedure, practice, and powers being the result of an evolutionary process determined by circumstances since its formation. The Council decided in 1934 that it was not necessary at that date to contemplate a definite statute and decided to examine in three years' time the most appropriate procedure to be adopted for reform. At the meeting in January last the Rapporteur gave a summary of the history of the committee (see Document C. 80, 1937), and made certain proposals bearing on the constitution and procedure. Their purpose was to give to the Financial Committee a statute conforming to the general rules laid down by the Council and to formulate the principles which should be followed in the selection of its members.

The representative of the United Kingdom offered no objection to the proposals, but expressed the view that the problems with which the committee was concerned were very largely problems of long duration—reconstruction schemes, &c. This aspect in his opinion would seem to call for a greater degree of continuity in the membership than might be necessary in the case of some other technical committees of the League, but no doubt the Council would always bear this consideration in mind when renewing the membership of this particular committee.

The representative of Sweden, Rapporteur for financial questions, endorsed the conclusions of the Rapporteur on the subject of the Financial Committee, and stated he had already given careful consideration to the composition of the committee, and would not fail to make proposals to the Council for appointments in due course.

The conclusions of the report were adopted.

COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSIT ORGANIZATION.

The Rapporteur submitted a supplementary report (Document C. 263, 1937) covering proposals relating to the work of the special committee which had been set up to consider the reform of this organization. This committee had prepared a draft statute to replace the one at present in force (Document C. 253, 1937, VIII).

The present features of the Communications and Transit Organization are as follow:—

- (1) There is a general conference every four years.
- (2) A Communications and Transit Committee, consisting of approximately one-third of the members, meets once a year.
- (3) The members of the committee are appointed by certain States, some of them *ex officio* and others according to certain rules. These members, however, are not representatives responsible to their respective Governments; on the contrary, it had been expressly laid down that members should not be bound by instructions from the Government by which they are nominated.

It will be seen that the idea was to create an organization "half-way between a committee of experts and a committee of Government representatives."

The committee which met to draw up the statute decided that there would be no disadvantage in abolishing the ordinary general conferences, with the proviso that their functions be handed over to the Assembly Committees, supplemented, if necessary, by the States members of the organization who are not members of the League.

A new recommendation is that each member of the committee will be appointed by the Council of the League in agreement with the State of which he is a national.

The changes made in the statute for the Transit and Communications Committee, apart from the above noted, are the express mention of public works and electric power as a function of the committee. Other changes are of a formal or technical nature. The function of the Organizations for Communications and Transit now is "to facilitate international co-operation in the field of communications and transit and also in those of public works and of electric power in so far as they relate to communications and transit."

The committee revising the statute disagreed on the question of selecting as members of the committee those countries, nationals of which are to be nominated by the Council, in agreement with the Governments concerned.

The majority of the committee thought that all these countries should be chosen by election, with the proviso that the Transit Committee should in any case include nationals of States having a preponderating interest in the field of communications and transit.

The minority preferred to maintain the present state of affairs, providing for the continuous participation in the Committee of States permanent members of the Council.