

of the necessary ratifications. There is hope, but some doubt, that these will be forthcoming shortly ; consequently the question of the remuneration of the members of the Board and of its secretariat has arisen. An estimate was prepared amounting to 147,200 francs, and referred by the Council to the Assembly, which in turn referred it to the Fifth Committee (Document A. 22).

The main point to be considered was, was the estimate sufficiently large ? A suggestion that it be accepted for 1928 because, in any case, some months must elapse before the Board could be set up, was vetoed, because the members of the Board must be appointed for five years, and consequently no provisional scheme which could be modified in the light of experience was possible.

Some doubt was expressed as to whether the Central Board, which was to take over part of the work of the Advisory Committee in traffic in opium, would do that work more effectively than the Advisory Committee. It was, however, impossible to pursue this argument to its conclusion, because the Board and its machinery is part of the convention, and the Board must be established after the convention comes into operation. It would function within the limits prescribed by the convention, and the Advisory Committee would continue to assist the League in the discharge of the latter's duties under Article 23 of the Covenant. The essential difference between the two bodies is that, whilst the new one will consist of persons independent of Governments, the Advisory Committee is composed of persons representative of Governments, apart from assessors, who have no votes.

On the question of remuneration of the members of the Board when set up there were two schools of thought—that which advocated adequate remuneration, and that which believed that it should be possible to secure the gratuitous services of eminent and able persons qualified to do the work, travelling and sustenance allowance, of course, being given on a generous scale. It may be mentioned here that, although the Central Board will be an organ of the League (for it is to be appointed by the Council in conjunction with a representative of the Government of the United States, if America thinks fit to participate), the parties to the convention who are not members of the League will bear their share of the expenses.

Ultimately a letter, of which the following is a summary, was addressed to the Fourth Committee :—

“ The Fifth Committee is of opinion that it would be well if the Council could secure the gratuitous services of persons of the qualifications contemplated in the report to the Geneva Conference, thus carrying on the traditions of the League. Should this prove impossible, as is feared by several members, the Fifth Committee is not prepared to say that the provisional estimate would be sufficient, because it appears that the remuneration suggested in the provisional estimate will not be likely to attract the class of person contemplated by the Geneva Conference. As regards subsistence allowances, the committee feels that the members of the Board should be placed on the same footing as members of other League Committees. With regard to travelling-expenses, while it makes no comment on the figures given, the Fifth Committee points out that these expenses must depend on whether the Council, in order to secure continuity in the work, finds it possible to appoint members living within easy reach of the seat of the League. As to the salaries of the staff, the Fifth Committee trusts that, in considering the remuneration of the secretary, the Fourth Committee will not overlook the view expressed by the Opium Conference that the secretary should occupy a confidential position of importance and responsibility.”

SIXTH COMMITTEE.

SLAVERY.

It is regrettable that few States (eleven in all) have ratified or adhered to the Slavery Convention, but it is believed that further ratifications will shortly be received by the Secretariat.

In accordance with a resolution of the Seventh Assembly providing for the transmission to it every year of information communicated to the Secretary-General, under Article 7 of the convention, a document called “ Annual Report by the Council ” (A. 37, A. 37 (a), A. 37 (b)) was issued, and this the Sixth Committee had before it.

As was made clear by several delegates, the Assembly must not expect to have every year a progress report, because few countries now require to make legislative or even administrative enactments regarding slavery. The public eye, however, is turned to some countries, and developments there are awaited with interest.

The Sixth Committee's report to the Assembly is Document A. 74, and the Assembly passed the following resolution on the 22nd September :—

“ The Assembly notes the report from the Council and the supplementary reports regarding slavery, which contain communications on this subject from the Government of Abyssinia, the British Government, the Government of India, the Government of Portugal, and the Government of the Sudan, and, in view of the limited number of ratifications of the Convention of the 25th September, 1926, which have been deposited up to the present, expresses the hope that the States which have signed will ratify the convention as soon as possible.”