

A governing body of the International Educational Cinematographic Institute has been set up, and there can be little question that the operations of this governing body will be in the direction of urging upon the world by moral suasion the absolute necessity of guarding the young from the evil effects of indiscriminate and sometimes evil cinemas. I strongly urged that women should be represented on this governing body.

Other relative matters dealt with were the drawing up of a draft convention for the repatriation of minors who have escaped from the authority of their parents or guardians, and the contemplation of a draft convention for the relief of minors of foreign nationality. This latter draft would be in the nature of a model. Another matter of some interest to New Zealand was the resolve to draw up a convention on the execution of judgments relating to maintenance payable on behalf of children by persons responsible for their support who have deserted them and gone abroad.

TRAFFIC IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

A rather fierce discussion took place on resolutions submitted to the committee dealing with the traffic in women. The ladies on the committee (and they number about twelve altogether) supported by a Committee of Experts who had investigated the question, made a dead set against the licensed houses which still obtain in France and other countries, and from which they claimed that the white slaves sent principally to South America and the Central American republics were recruited. This section of the committee insistently demanded that the committee should advise the League to request that those countries which still retain the licensed-house system should at least investigate the question immediately, with the view to their abolition. Not unnaturally perhaps, the French representative opposed this movement against the licensed houses with some vehemence. He denied the contentions of the other side that the licensed houses led to more prostitution and disease than was the case in countries which had abolished these institutions. This contention, however, of my French colleague was flatly denied by the representatives of other countries, who claimed that the best results possible had been shown from the abolition of the licensed-house system. I was not especially interested in the matter, for in New Zealand, as you are aware, licensed houses were abolished thirty or forty years ago, and there has never been the slightest hint since then of going back to the old system. Personally, I had some sympathy with the French delegate and the representatives of the other countries, who, I believe, with perfect sincerity contended that the systems which they had in their countries were best suited to the special circumstances and temperament of their respective peoples.

Eventually a resolution was carried by the committee and subsequently adopted by the General Assembly requesting that Governments of those countries still retaining the licensed-house system should inquire at once as to the possibility of their immediate abolition. In the committee this resolution was carried by a large majority.

TRAFFIC IN OPIUM AND OTHER DANGEROUS DRUGS.

There was this year the usual discussion with regard to opium and other dangerous drugs. In the discussion I was much struck with the evidence of the world-wide extent and awful dangers of this great evil. A good deal of the discussion was directed to the question of illicit traffic in drugs.

It appears from the documents submitted to the committee that the position with regard to the illicit traffic is still highly unsatisfactory; that the manufacture of harmful drugs goes on unrestricted, and, in fact, is increasing; that new methods of manufacture are rendering the supervision of manufacture more and more illusory. The situation is, therefore, extremely serious, if not alarming. The committee thought that the attention of Governments should be drawn to the necessity of inflicting on traffickers heavy penalties, and that the Courts everywhere should energetically associate themselves with the action of the administrative authorities. A resolution was adopted emphasizing the urgent necessity for—

- (a) The immediate ratification and enforcement by all States, members of the League, of the Geneva Convention of 1925;
- (b) The adoption and strict application of the other measures which have been recommended by the committee from time to time, and in particular the following:—
 - (i) Withdrawal of the license to manufacture or trade in the drugs from any firm, if there is sufficient evidence to show that the firm is engaged in or is knowingly supplying drugs for the illicit traffic;
 - (ii) Strict control over exports to countries not exercising adequate supervision over the trade in the drugs, and the rigid limitation of such exports to the quantities that may reasonably be required for medical purposes in the country itself;
 - (iii) Immediate communication of the fullest particulars relating to any important seizures of smuggled drugs to the Governments of any countries in which the persons connected with the transaction may be or may have been residing at the time, or in which any part of the transaction may have taken place;
 - (iv) Immediate and full investigation by the Government, on the receipt of particulars of such a transaction, whether directly or from the League;
 - (v) Exercise of an adequate control by every Government to ensure as far as possible that its territories shall not be used for the transit or transshipment of consignments of drugs (whether declared as such or not) for the illicit traffic;
 - (vi) Provision in each country's national law of severe penalties for persons convicted of organizing the smuggling of drugs, whether into that or into other countries.

In order to facilitate the efforts of each individual Government to stamp out the illicit traffic, the committee once more insisted upon the necessity of full co-operation; Governments were recommended to supply each other with all particulars necessary for inquiries with regard to persons implicated in smuggling offences, and to communicate to each other, whenever this was recognized as essential, copies of telegrams relating to the transactions of smugglers.