

COMMUNICATIONS CONCERNING THE WORK OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS IN TIME OF CRISIS.

I refer you to pages 23 and 24 of Document A. 11 and to Document A. 39. Acting on the suggestion made by the Committee on Arbitration and Security, a draft resolution was prepared by the Third Committee for submission to the Assembly, the object of such resolution being to enable the Secretary-General to take the necessary action with a view of ensuring communication with Geneva by aircraft and motor transport in times of emergency.

The resolution is given in Document A. 73, and was passed by the Assembly on the 30th September.

COMMITTEE No. 4.

The Audited Accounts for the year 1929 (Document A. 3) were formally passed, and the committee, before examining the draft Budget of 1931, gave consideration to the Swiss Government's proposal to amend paragraph 3 of Article 1 of the Financial Regulations (see Document A. 19). This article deals with the Supervisory Commission and the method of appointment of the members. The amendment was designed to prevent re-eligibility on expiration of appointment, except after a period of three years, and therefore follows, to an extent, the principle which governs the election of non-permanent members of the Council. Such amendment, whilst having the advantage of allowing nationals of every member of the League to take part in turn in the important work of financial supervision, has the disadvantage of depriving the League for three years of the services of a man whose assistance it can ill afford to lose.

There was general acceptance of the principle of the amendment, although many delegates contended that it might on occasion be desirable to retain the services of a member of the Supervisory Commission for a second period of three years without interruption. The amended paragraph as it emerged from the Committee, and as it was passed by the Assembly, reads as follows:—

“On retiring from the Commission on the expiration of their term of office, members shall only be eligible for re-election for a single period of three years. This rule shall not prevent subsequent election of the same persons after the expiration of at least three years from the end of their last term of office.”

This amendment will not take effect until 1931.

The Assembly approved the suggestion of the Fourth Committee that the latter should submit to the former, for the election of the Supervisory Commission, a list of names equal to the number of seats to be filled. (See Documents A. 62 and A. 53.)

The Fourth Committee recommended the appointment of M. Osusky and M. Reveillaud as members, and M. Modzelewski and M. Ottlik as substitute members, of the Supervisory Commission, and the recommendation was accepted.

FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE LEAGUE.

For the financial position on 31st August last see Document A. 32.

BUDGET.

The Budget of the Secretariat and special organizations of the League as presented to the Fourth Committee is Document A. 4 (three papers), whilst there was a supplementary Budget Document (A. 4 (c)).

The figures show an increase over last year's estimates of about one million gold francs. In conjunction with these documents should be read the report of the Supervisory Commission (Documents A. 5 and A. 5 (a)).

The British delegate, early in the proceedings, dealt with the report by the Medical Adviser on hygienic conditions of work in the Secretariat of the League (Appendix 1 of Document A. 5), from which he gave quotations, with the result that any impulse which some members of the committee might have had to endeavour to obtain reductions in a few of the items was considerably weakened—for instance, item No. 10, showing an increase of some 70,000 francs on last year's figure for headquarters, an increase largely due to the acquisition of an additional annexe. It was known, however, that little saving, if any, could be effected, since orders by the Assembly, involving augmentation of staff, have to be executed. There are considerable increases in the vote of the Economic and Financial Organizations, caused by additional work, ordered by the Assembly; and in that of the Health Organization, due to expansion of work in the Eastern Bureau at Singapore and to certain undertakings in the Far East. There is a new provision of 200,000 gold francs, contribution to a fund for the upkeep and running-expenses of the League wireless station. It may here be observed that the station will be used not only by the League, but for commercial and news purposes. The authorities look for an ultimate profit, and it is to be hoped that the station will eventually pay for its keep. I understand that the original estimate of 1,600,000 gold francs for the cost of construction of the station will be exceeded by about 700,000 gold francs, the increase being due to the insistence of the experts on the latest equipment being provided.

Could one with reason have charged the Secretariat with extravagance in the preparation of the Budget, one would have been justified in protesting against the increases, in the face of international depression, reduction of salaries of Civil servants, and dismissal of officers in various national services; but delegates in the Fourth Committee are helpless if their fellow-delegates introduce in other committees resolutions involving new work, and consequently further expenditure.