

This petition was submitted to a Minorities Committee composed of the representatives of the United Kingdom, Ecuador, and France. It is alleged that of twenty-two persons only ten have been granted pensions, and those since 1935. None of them has received the arrears of pensions due since April, 1923.

To this the Roumanian Government replied that a decision had not been reached in three cases out of twenty-two cases; certain documents establishing pension rights had not been produced. However, steps had been taken to pay the heirs of those three former officials the pensions due. In regard to the other nineteen the Roumanian Government states categorically that their rights were admitted before May, 1935.

The petitioner states that the Finance Minister had instructed the General Pensions Fund to pay arrears in State bonds which were quoted at 20 per cent. of their nominal value. The pensioners refused to accept, as they considered the payment should be in cash. The Roumanian Government quoted legal authority for their action, but in spite of this it had now made the necessary provision for payment to be made in cash.

The petitioners allege that the amount of the pensions had been cut down to less than half what they should have received.

The Government pointed out that owing to changes in the value of money and in the cost of living the pensions were equitable.

Owing to the lack of full information from either side it was difficult to summarize the position, but the Council agreed with the opinion of the Rapporteur that the position as outlined in the report of the Japanese representative still obtained, and that as this report had been adopted five years ago the Council had no doubt that the Roumanian Government would recognize the importance of applying these principles in full at the earliest possible moment.

The Report (Document C. 260, 1937, I) was adopted.

ALEXANDRETTA AND ANTIOCH.

On this question the report of the committee under the chairmanship of M. Maurice Bourquin (Belgium) was presented to the Council in private session. Some of its main points are—

The committee has framed a draft Statute and Fundamental Law for the Sanjak. The Statute is to be the international charter of the Sanjak, its provisions being binding on all authorities who will have to deal, in whatever capacity, with the affairs of the Sanjak.

The Fundamental Law concerns the internal life of the Sanjak only. It must be interpreted and applied in the light of the Statute, and should its provisions conflict with those of the Statute, must prevail.

The Statute sets out in Article I the general principles governing the Sanjak of Alexandretta :—

- (1) The Sanjak shall constitute a separate entity enjoying full independence in its internal affairs;
- (2) The State of Syria shall be responsible for the conduct of the foreign affairs of the Sanjak;
- (3) The Sanjak and Syria shall have the same Customs and monetary administration.

The area occupied by the Sanjak is set out in paragraphs 8 to 11 of the committee's report to the Council.

Article 5 states that in order to supervise the observance of the present Statute and the Fundamental Law of the Sanjak, the Council of the League shall appoint a delegate of French nationality, who shall reside in the Sanjak. The Council's delegate shall be entitled to suspend for a maximum period of four months any legislative or administrative act that is contrary to the provisions of the present Statute or of the Fundamental Law. In such case the delegate shall immediately refer the matter to the Council, with which the final decision shall rest.

To enable the delegate to exercise his suspensive power, the Committee stated it was desirable that the Government of the Sanjak should communicate to him all legislative and governmental acts before their promulgation, and that the delegate should normally exercise his suspensive power within a period of one month as from the promulgation of the act or of its prior communication to him.

On any question taken by the Council of the League its decisions and recommendations shall be taken by a two-thirds majority, without reckoning the votes of the representatives of the parties.

Article 8: Citizenship: Sanjak citizenship shall imply Syrian nationality, but loss of citizenship shall not involve loss of Syrian nationality. There are further articles dealing in detail with aspects of Sanjak citizenship.

The question of languages was one of some difficulty. The Council in its resolution of 27th January, 1937, had decided that Turkish should be an official language in the Sanjak, and the Council had to determine "the character and conditions of the use of another language." It was agreed by the committee that the second language should be Arabic, and the Turkish expert had agreed that Arabic should have an official character, and that conditions for its use should be so determined as to give "full satisfaction to the Arab element in the Sanjak in all those districts where the Arabs are in the majority." The committee as a whole recommended that the following principles should apply :—

- (a) Turkish shall be an official language.
- (b) Arabic shall be an official language.
- (c) In the public schools, elementary teaching shall be given in the official language preponderant in the village or quarter in which the particular school is situated; the teaching of the other official language shall be either optional or compulsory, provided that in this respect the two languages receive completely identical treatment.