

I draw your attention to the section of page 2 of the report dealing with prompt payment of current contributions and to the recommendation on page 4.

On the afternoon of the 10th October the Fourth Committee presented a short report to the Assembly (Document A. 81) and a draft resolution under which the Special Committee's report, with a slight modification, is approved by the Assembly. Under the draft resolution a Special Committee on Contributions, consisting of five members, is appointed to deal with matters that may arise in connection with the collection of contributions and to report to the Assembly at its Eighteenth Session.

The resolution was adopted by the Assembly.

COMMITTEE No. 5: HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL QUESTIONS.

Delegate: Mr. W. J. JORDAN. Substitute: Sir CECIL DAY.

TRAFFIC IN OPIUM AND OTHER DANGEROUS DRUGS.

In its campaign against narcotics the League derives its authority from Article 23 (c) of the Covenant, which states that subject to and in accordance with the provisions of international conventions, existing or hereafter to be agreed upon, the members of the League:—

“Will entrust the League with the general supervision over the execution of agreements with regard to the traffic in women and children and the traffic in opium and dangerous drugs.”

The question has three main aspects:—

- (1) Opium for smoking (or prepared opium), essentially an Eastern problem;
- (2) Drugs manufactured by chemical processes from opium and coca leaves; and
- (3) The raw material supplied by countries producing the opium poppy or coca leaves.

For the assistance of Governments in the campaign against this traffic the League has three administrative organs:—

- (1) The Advisory Committee (consisting of twenty-five members and two assessors) which represents both the producing or manufacturing countries and the consuming countries. Its chief function is to help the Council of the League to exercise general supervision over the Agreements or Conventions (five in number) regarding Opium and other Dangerous Drugs and to suggest steps to be taken.
- (2) The Permanent Central Opium Board, a body of eight experts who keep a constant watch on the movements of the international drug market, with a view to recommending the Council to take action against any country violating the Conventions.
- (3) A Supervisory Body of four members (one representative of each of the two bodies mentioned above, and representatives of the Health Committee of the League and of the Office International d'Hygiene Publique in Paris) whose object it is to examine estimates of narcotic requirements supplied by Governments and to draw up statistics and publish statements regarding the traffic.

During its discussion of the subject the Committee had before it a review of the work of the Permanent Central Opium Board and the *aide-memoire* of the Rapporteur (M. Gorgé, of Switzerland). These reports show that by the addition of seven accessions to the Convention for the Limitation of the Manufacture and the Regulation of the Distribution of Narcotic Drugs sixty States are now parties to this instrument.

In its attempts to control the drug traffic throughout the world the League has been able to register notable achievement. It has undertaken the task of stamping out this plague, which is described as worse than leprosy, since it is more contagious and possibly more difficult to cure; and while care should be taken to avoid too great optimism, there is much encouragement to be drawn from the success which has attended its efforts so far. Manufacture has been limited at the sacrifice of much loss of revenue to manufacturing States. For example, India, which thirty-five years ago derived from the export of opium no less than £7,250,000, now exports but a very small quantity to the United Kingdom and a few other places for purely medical and scientific purposes. Her revenue from this source has consequently almost entirely disappeared.

But while control has been satisfactorily established over manufactured narcotic drugs, the Fifth Committee was unanimous in the view that a resolute attack must now be made upon the excess of production of raw materials—the real source of the evil. Clandestine manufacture to which drug traffickers now resort in regions of the world, such as China, where the raw materials are grown extensively and are thus easily accessible, has assumed alarming proportions, and it is clear that if there is a surplus of production of the raw material that surplus will find an outlet in the illicit market. To satisfy its legitimate requirements the world requires approximately 540 tons of raw opium. Statistics (which do not, however, include the great opium-producing country of China) show that in 1934 the ascertained production of raw opium was about 1,080 tons. China, one of the most serious victims of the illicit traffic, has undertaken the total suppression of poppy-growing and the use of opium within a fixed period of five years, but its difficulties in carrying out the plan are recognized as considerable. However, the Chinese Government has expressed its determination to achieve this desirable object. The countries chiefly concerned in producing raw opium are Afghanistan, Bulgaria, China, Greece, India, Indo-China, Iran, Japan and Korea, Turkey, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and Yugoslavia. In these countries hundreds of thousands of peasant families are annually cultivating the opium poppy over an extensive area, and the elimination of this means of livelihood will involve considerable sacrifice.