

The important part played by small communities in the placing of children in families was emphasized. The documentation obtained in this aspect showed that the methods and practice of administering the laws and regulations in small communities presented special problems, and to these problems the Advisory Committee on Social Problems was constantly applying its energies. This Committee has also decided to undertake in 1937 the important task of a general study of the principles underlying the treatment of the neglected and delinquent child. This study will also include Child Welfare Councils and the boarding-out of children in families, so far as they are connected with the treatment of the neglected and delinquent child.

The same body (the Advisory Committee) also takes an interest in the problem of nutrition, a problem having a great bearing on public health and the economic, agricultural, and social developments of all nations. While the subject of nutrition is the main concern of the Second Committee (which deals, *inter alia*, with technical and economic problems), the Council of the League had agreed to a suggestion that the Advisory Committee on Social Questions, which would be particularly interested in the problem of the distribution of foodstuffs, according to both quantity and quality, amongst the whole population as far as mothers and children are affected, should have a representative on the Mixed Committee on Nutrition.

As regards the tendency observed in measures taken by certain Governments and authorities to give preference to the organization of canteens, it seemed to the Fifth Committee a matter for consideration whether these measures, which tend to diminish the family's responsibility without giving it the benefit of education, are as good as measures taken to carry the new principles of nutrition into the home. Useful work might be done in studying the relative value of canteens, milk kitchens, &c., in promoting improved family standards of nutrition, as compared with the results obtained by individualized education of families in their own homes. In the methods of educating the general public in order to bring the newer knowledge of nutrition within their reach, the Fifth Committee emphasized the importance of maternal efficiency in the health and well-being of the family, and advocated the education of all girls in the principles of nutrition and care of children, since this knowledge on the part of the general public and mothers is of such eminent importance for the development and welfare of children and young people.

Realizing the progress which New Zealand had already achieved in its efforts to promote child-welfare, I took the opportunity, on the 2nd October, of addressing my fellow-delegates on the Fifth Committee.

In giving a brief survey of the aims and activities of the Child Welfare Branch of the New Zealand Education Department, I referred to the policies of past and present Governments directed towards the attainment of further progress in the treatment of the problem, and emphasized the importance which New Zealand attached to dealing with it from the pre-natal period. Other aspects touched upon in my remarks were the system and the activities of the Plunket Nurses under which the needs of both European and Maori mothers and children were given the most efficient attention, State medical examination and dental care, the distribution of cocoa and milk in the schools at Government expense, the care of children in rural as well as urban districts (a point which was stressed by several delegates), and housing. As having an important bearing upon the problem at its root, I mentioned the recent introduction of the basic wage at a sum considered sufficient for the needs of a father, mother, and three children; referred to the compulsory payment of family allowances, State allowances to widows and deserted women, and the children whom they had to support; to the boarding-out system for children under proper State supervision, and to the prohibition of child labour, even on farms. In conclusion, I stated that the Government were prepared to give sympathetic consideration to any practical suggestions which the Advisory Committee might in future put forward.

A resolution from the Fifth Committee was drafted for presentation to the Fourth (or Budget) Committee asking that the credit vote for the work of the new Advisory Committee be increased by 15,000 francs. This grant was reduced to 12,000 francs by the Fourth Committee.

In conclusion, the Fifth Committee submitted to the Assembly the following three resolutions:—

“The Assembly—

I. “Thanks the Advisory Commission on the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People for the efforts it has made to improve the lot of children and young people;

“Suggests that, in view to better co-operation between the Advisory Committee on Social Questions and other organizations dealing with different aspects of social questions, liaison should be established with other Commissions and Committees when questions likely to concern the Advisory Committee are being discussed.”

II. “Attaches particular importance to the decision of the Advisory Committee on Social Questions to draw up at its next session a ‘scheme of study’—that is to say, a programme of work;

“And is of opinion that one of the first points in its work should be a study of the more important solutions that have been found for the problem of the general organization of child-welfare in various countries.”

III. “Approves the interest displayed and the efforts made by the Advisory Committee on Social Questions in regard to the social aspect of the problem of nutrition and,

“Considering that the study of the welfare of children living in urban communities and in rural districts is in many respects connected with the problem of nutrition:

“Is of opinion that the Advisory Committee should deal in greater detail with the social aspects of this question in co-operation with the Mixed Committee on the Problem of Nutrition, particularly from the point of view of child-welfare;

“Recommends the Advisory Committee to consider the utility of pursuing the study of these two questions, which supplement one another.”