

SIXTH COMMITTEE: POLITICAL QUESTIONS.

Delegate: Mr. W. J. JORDAN. Substitute: Mr. C. A. BERENDSEN.

REFUGEES.

The Sixth Committee had referred to it for consideration under this head:—

- (1) The report of the Nansen International Office for Refugees.
- (2) Results of the work of the Committee on International Assistance to Refugees—
 - (i) Report of the Committee on International Assistance to Refugees;
 - (ii) Report by the Acting-President of the Governing Body of the Nansen International Office for Refugees; and
 - (iii) Report of the High Commissioner of the League of Nations for Jewish and other Refugees coming from Germany.

This subject, in view of its importance and its difficulty, was referred by the Sixth Committee to a Sub-Committee on Refugees, of which Lord Cranborne, of the United Kingdom, was made Rapporteur. The Report of this Sub-Committee, a lengthy document (A. VI/6, 1936) itself gave rise to considerable debate in the Sixth Committee, but was, in general, approved.

The Nansen International Office for Refugees, which in accordance with a resolution of a previous Assembly is to be liquidated by 1938, should in the opinion of the Committee continue its activities at least until that date and without prejudice to any future decision that might be taken by the Assembly for its further extension.

Much sympathy was expressed for the unfortunate of the refugee class in many countries, and two specific proposals were made in this connection:—

- (1) That a credit of 15,000 francs be asked for to enable the Nansen Office to send a mission to the Far East with the task of studying the situation of refugees in that part of the world, a proposal which was declined by the Fourth Committee (Finance); and
- (2) That a credit of 400,000 francs should be established with a view to settling refugees from the Saar in Paraguay.

This latter proposal led to an animated debate in view of the principle that previously had been accepted, that the actual work of caring for individual refugees was not properly a League activity, and a further objection was raised by the representative of Bolivia, who made a general reservation on behalf of his Government in respect of any League activity that might prejudice the existing position in the Chaco. On the other hand, it was stressed that the League had a particular responsibility for the refugees from the Saar in view of the League's administration of that Territory, and that the situation was comparable to that of the Assyrian refugees from Iraq, in connection with which the League had voted a considerable sum.

The Sixth Committee finally resolved to recommend a credit of 400,000 francs. The Fourth (Finance) Committee, however, declined to agree, but compromised on adding 200,000 francs to the Budget of the Nansen International Office.

So far as Jewish and other refugees from Germany are concerned, the Committee considered that the existing arrangements to care for this unfortunate class of people should be continued, and that in 1938 the question of refugees as a whole should be considered by the Assembly.

The report of the Committee on this subject is Document A. 73, 1936, XII, and the Committee's concluding resolutions are of sufficient importance to warrant their quotation in full, as follow:—

I. "The Assembly—

"Having examined, in the light of verbal explanations, the reports of the Acting President of the Governing Body of the Nansen International Office and of the High Commissioner for Refugees coming from Germany;

"Having taken into account the recommendations of the Committee for International Assistance to Refugees:

"Thanks the Committee for their valuable report, and Judge Hansson and Sir Neill Malcolm for the work which they have done during their term of office."

II. "The Assembly—

"Having weighed the many elements in the refugee problem;

"Having noted that, in pursuance of previous decisions of the Assembly and in conformity with the recommendations of the High Commissioner for Refugees coming from Germany, the organizations created by the League of Nations on behalf of refugees will terminate at the end of 1938;

"Having taken account at the same time of the continuing difficulties of this problem and of the importance of ensuring as soon as possible a uniform regime of legal protection for the refugees:

"Recommends the Governments concerned to adopt the Convention of 28th October, 1933, relating to the international status of refugees, and the Provisional Arrangement of 4th July, 1936, concerning the status of refugees coming from Germany;

"Recommends also that Governments concerned should participate in the negotiation of a Convention for the protection of the refugees from Germany;

"Considers, further, that the Assembly should, at the latest at its ordinary session in 1938, determine the general principles which, after that year, should govern the attitude of the League towards the refugee problem as a whole."