

“(6) Considering, furthermore, that this comprehensive study should also not extend to questions of the nationality of women, in regard to which the Assembly maintains the decisions which it has already taken ;

“(7) Considering it desirable that the study of the other elements of the question should be entrusted to the competent scientific institutions, which should be given instructions enabling them to co-ordinate their work ;

“(8) Considering that, for private law, the League of Nations possesses in the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law an organ well qualified to carry out such a study of comparative law ; and that for other aspects of the question it would be desirable to have recourse to other competent scientific institutes ;

“(9) Considering that a small committee of experts, comprising members of both sexes, should be set up for the purpose of determining the exact scope of the contemplated comprehensive study and of distributing the work among the various scientific institutes, and that this committee should, so far as necessary, maintain contact with the institutes during the progress of the study and examine and settle the final form and content of the resulting documents, with a view to the preparation of a synthetic survey, which should accompany the documents when they are published by the League ;

“(10) Considering that this committee should have power to consult women's international organizations and invite their co-operation in any form which it thinks advisable ;

“(11) Asks the Council to appoint a committee of experts of both sexes for the purposes above mentioned, and expresses the hope that the committee will receive the co-operation necessary for the successful execution of the present resolution.”

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## SECOND COMMITTEE : ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND OTHER TECHNICAL QUESTIONS.

New Zealand Delegate : Mr. W. J. JORDAN. Substitute : Mr. R. M. CAMPBELL.

Keeping in mind the issues of peace and war, of life and death, that challenged attention during the 1937 League Assembly, it will be appreciated that the League's efforts, its ample documents, and delegates' speeches on the problems that fall within the province of the Second Committee seemed somewhat removed from the rank of first urgency. These problems relate to what is called “the work of the technical organizations of the League” : they cover economic and financial matters, including access to raw materials, migration, communications and transit, housing, health and nutrition.

That such subjects should be discussed at Geneva, and the greatest possible measure of international co-operation secured, is clearly all to the good. Just as clearly, the contention that “the League can regain in the economic sphere the prestige it has lost in the political sphere”—the “political sphere” here meaning the task of ensuring peace and collective security—is nonsense. Better by far recognize that all our strivings after human betterment will be vain unless we do collectively secure peace. This is the proviso that one feels bound to add to any commendation of the worthwhileness of the League's technical work.

As a fair sample of the value and the limitations of the League's technical work, reference may be made to the comparatively new subject of nutrition. This has been on the agenda of the last three Assemblies ; it has been before the International Labour Conference, the permanent organization of which has collaborated in preparing reports ; and the considerable output of published material has been both a cause and a result of widespread interest in the subject. In 1937 the League had before it the final report of its Mixed Committee (so-called because it included agricultural, economic, and health experts), entitled “The Relation of Nutrition to Health, Agriculture, and Economic Policy.” This report is a mine of useful information ; and even if it invites the retort that the obvious is somewhat laboriously proved—as that food consumption varies with income, or that farmers suffer through consumers' poverty—this is answered by remarking that the obvious is commonly neglected.

The report brings to an end the special activities of the League in the sphere of nutrition : but the Second Committee recommended, and the Assembly resolved, that the permanent organizations of the League should maintain interest in the subject and publish summaries of progress.

A specific recommendation that may suitably call for action in New Zealand is that a National Nutrition Committee be set up by the Government in each country. The reports and discussion agreed that such bodies can do useful work.

The Assembly also requested “Governments to furnish to the League of Nations annual reports on the action taken by them to study the state of national nutrition and to improve nutritional standards.” These recommendations, together with the liquidation of the League's *ad hoc* committees on nutrition, seem properly to place the emphasis where it belongs—that is to say, they admit the essentially national and governmental responsibility for effective action, enabling people to enjoy the improved nutrition which their health requires and which production makes so abundantly possible.

The review of the League's health work in general, including the studies and discussion on housing, served again to illustrate the active and widespread interest in ways and means, and the inescapable responsibilities of modern government, for improving conditions of life. A New Zealand representative may perhaps be pardoned if he feels some satisfaction at the references to the relatively favourable mortality rates that the Dominion has achieved, rates that commonly serve as an ideal to which others aspire. But, at the same time, when current governmental efforts and plans in so many other countries are under review, nobody from even so favoured a country as ours can be insensible to the fact that we cannot be content to rest on our laurels. Were we inclined to complacency, a study of other Governments' activities in the sphere of health should be a useful corrective. In this connection it will be of interest to New Zealand to follow the proceedings of the Conference on Rural Hygiene to be