

"(5) Though it is recognized that the life of prisoners in penitentiary institutions must be essentially different from a life of freedom, in order to preserve the punitive character of the penalty, the penitentiary system must be organized in such a manner that defects in the instruction and moral education of the delinquent should be remedied. The selection of prisoners capable of being rehabilitated should be made according to scientific and practical standards, depending upon the personality of the individual delinquent. Competent persons, and particularly doctors, should co-operate in this work. An organization of prisoners' work, having as its principal aim vocational training, is an essential factor of social readaptation.

"(6) Continuous supervision of the conditions of rehabilitation of prisoners is necessary, in order to ensure a progressive lightening in the application of the penalty, and thus to enable the transition to be made from prison life to a free life.

"(7) Discontinuity in the application of a sentence cannot be recommended, as it hinders the work of rehabilitation, in so far as it is in contradiction to the punitive character common to all penalties depriving individuals of their liberty.

"(8) It is desirable that the application of penalties and precautionary measures by which individuals are deprived of their liberty should be supervised by a competent authority, preferably by a representative of the judicial authority.

"(9) With a view to the more effective prevention of recidivism, it is necessary, notwithstanding the excellent results of private initiative in the matter of assistance to discharged prisoners, that the unity and continuity of such assistance should be ensured by the State.

"It is to be hoped that measures will be adopted to deal with the position of convicted aliens expelled on their release. Such measures should be included in a special convention or as a clause in a convention on international judicial co-operation or the general situation of aliens."

Referring to the last paragraph thereof, the Fifth Committee, recognizing that the League has no organ which could at present examine this question, recommended the Assembly to instruct the Secretary-General to invite the Seventh International Conference for the Unification of Penal Law, which is to open in Cairo in January, 1938, to include in its agenda the position of aliens and stateless persons released from prison, and, further, to report to the next Assembly on the results of such a study.

The Assembly duly adopted the report of the Fifth Committee on Penal and Penitentiary Questions (Document A. 62, 1937, IV).

INTERNATIONAL RELIEF UNION.

On the proposal of the Venezuelan delegate, the Report of the International Relief Union (Document A. 15, 1937, XII), covering the year 1936, was referred by the Assembly to the Fifth Committee for examination.

During the year under review the Union had not been called upon to take any direct action in rendering assistance, but, following an appeal made on 11th December, 1936, in the Council of the League by the representative of the United Kingdom, the Executive Committee held an extraordinary session to determine whether and how far the Union could, with the co-operation of the International Red Cross Committee and the National Red Cross Societies, take steps in favour of civilian victims of the Spanish conflict. A resolution, later transmitted to the United Kingdom Government, was passed by the Executive Committee, recommending that such steps as were deemed necessary be taken in order to obtain information, to arrange for possible action, and to convene the Committee as soon as further decisions could be reached. The United Kingdom Government, however, decided, in view of subsequent information received from various quarters, not to take the action contemplated in the resolution; this decision was taken mainly on the ground that the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs stated during the meeting of the Council in December, 1936, that his Government were for the present addressing themselves solely to the League for such technical assistance as they required for dealing with problems of health and relief.

The Rapporteur on the subject of the International Relief Union (the delegate of Venezuela) stressed the fact that the Union was fully alive to its responsibilities, and that in the scientific field it had done much to stimulate the activities of Committees set up in various countries to study means of preventing public disasters. It was, of course, recognized that most calamities could not be foreseen, but the effects of others could at least be limited by appropriate measures. With this end in view the Union had, under the auspices of the French Government, organized the first International Conference for Protection against Natural Disasters. The Conference was held in Paris in September, 1937. Useful results from a scientific angle had been achieved, and co-operation between various public and private national relief organizations and the Executive Committee of the Union will in future be better assured.

The Executive Committee is still engaged in the study of the application of insurance principles to protection against disasters.

The Convention of 1932 has been acceded to by some thirty States, and efforts are being made to secure further accessions.

The Assembly duly accepted the report of the Fifth Committee (Document A. 60, 1937, XII).

ASSISTANCE TO INDIGENT FOREIGNERS.

As the replies (see Document C. 341, M. 231, 1937, IV) from Governments on the Second Draft Multilateral Convention on Assistance to Indigent Foreigners (drawn up in 1936 by the Committee of Experts) differed so much in content and character, the Council at its Ninety-eighth Session, 1937,