

On the 1st October the Sixth Committee met for the purpose of considering a draft report prepared for submission to the Assembly by M. Motta, the first delegate of Switzerland, who had presided over the deliberations of the sub-committee referred to above. The first section of the report treats of finance, a matter which has already been dealt with here. The second concerns the current work of the Nansen Office and that of the High Commissioner who cares for refugees coming from Germany. On these two subjects M. Motta contented himself with proposing two comprehensive draft resolutions for submission to the Assembly. As these draft resolutions did not involve anything of a controversial nature, they were readily disposed of towards the end of the debate. On the third part of the report, however—that dealing with the winding-up of the Nansen Office and the future of refugee work—there was a debate, protracted doubtless because of the attitude of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In the course of the debate many moving appeals were made, especially by the representatives of the United Kingdom and Norway, but the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics's delegate stated categorically that it would be impossible for him to assent to the two resolutions in four parts, since the instructions received by him from his Government were to the effect that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics would accept no proposition which involved action by the League in the matter of Russian refugees beyond the 31st December, 1938. No other member of the Committee, however, was prepared to discriminate in the matter of nationality, and, indeed, the greater number of the refugees under the care of the Nansen Office is of Russian origin. Attempts were made to get over the difficulty, particularly by the representative of France, who suggested postponement of decision, his plan involving a request to the Nansen Office to formulate a scheme of future work, such scheme to be forwarded in January next to Governments for their observations. But the overwhelming majority of members who subsequently spoke preferred a definite decision, since it was only fair to the Nansen Office, and also to the refugees themselves, to be made aware of their future position. A draft resolution by the Latvian delegate couched in similar terms to the Committee's draft resolution was also discussed, but the two resolutions did not differ materially—the substance was the same, but the form somewhat different.

The Latvian draft resolution needs no further reference, except to say that when put to the vote it was lost. M. Motta's draft resolution was subsequently voted, and it was accepted almost unanimously, one delegation only voting against it, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the Latvian delegation abstaining. After the vote had been taken, M. Grumbach, the representative of France, brought forward a motion, the object of which was to instruct the Nansen Office to prepare a scheme of future work for submission to Governments. It was pointed out to him, however, that the Committee had already taken a decision on the whole of M. Motta's report. If the third section of the report was lost in the Assembly—and the vote of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics would certainly cause this if that delegation had not in the meantime changed its mind—it was available to M. Grumbach to move his own motion.

Between the rising of the Sixth Committee and the meeting of the Assembly on the 5th October, at which the report was to be taken, M. Grumbach had been in communication with members of other delegations, and as a consequence the report was accompanied by a draft resolution in the names of the delegations of Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, and The Netherlands to replace Articles 2, 3, and 4 of the Committee's third resolution. The effective part of the amendment was to be found in the following words:—

“Request the Council to draw up or cause to be drawn up before the next Assembly a plan for international assistance to refugees.”

As I have before observed, it was known that the delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics would vote against the third resolution. It was believed, however, that he would abstain when the amendment was put to the vote, and many delegates thought that the cause of the refugees would be served by gaining time. The amendment was supported by several speakers, but Lord Cranborne (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the United Kingdom, preferred an immediate decision, since it would not be fair to the refugees themselves to keep them in suspense. He added that he would not hamper the movers of the motion, who believed that their action would serve a good cause. Bearing in mind your instructions, and knowing that the Committee's draft resolution would be defeated if put to the vote (unanimity being required), I decided to vote for the amendment. Forty-seven States voted, twenty-two abstained, including the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and twenty-five voted for the amendment, which was thus carried. Parts 2, 3, and 4 of the Committee's third resolution were not put to the vote, as these were replaced by the amendment (Document A. 77, 1937). The resolutions, numbered 1 and 2 in the Committee's report (Document A. 75 (1), 1937, XII), were passed by the Assembly.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS COVENANT.

In accord with your telegram of the 9th September, 1937, received on the eve of my leaving for the League Assembly, and with the sixteenth of your twenty-one points (letter to Secretary-General of the 16th July, 1936) giving your Government's views on the Covenant, I took advantage of every opportunity to press for the formal separation of the Covenant from the treaties of peace.

The Committee of Twenty-eight, which was set up by Assembly resolution of the 10th October, 1936, and of which New Zealand is a member, resumed its sittings on the 10th September, three days before the opening of the Eighteenth Assembly, and it held four further meetings during the period of this Assembly. The Committee's mandate is “to study all the proposals which have been, or may be, made by Governments regarding the application of the principles of the Covenant and the problems connected therewith.” The field is wide. Not all Governments submitted proposals with the fullness or, one can fairly say, with the helpful conscientiousness that marked the New Zealand reply to the request for an expression of views; but twenty-seven statements were received from Governments, with, of course, a great variety of comment and suggestions, in time to be embodied in special supplement No. 154 (1936) to the League's official *Journal*.