

## FIFTH COMMITTEE

(Social and Humanitarian Questions)

*Penal and Penitentiary Questions*

The Twelfth Assembly decided to consult a number of international organizations dealing with these questions, and in particular to ask them how the League of Nations could be of assistance in achieving a gradual unification of criminal law and the co-operation of States in the prevention and suppression of crime. The views of these organizations were submitted to the Fifth Committee of the Thirteenth Assembly, which took no decision thereon as they are to be transmitted to the Governments in accordance with the decision of the Twelfth Assembly (see Report of the Canadian Delegates, 1931, page 24).

As regards penal administration—the original question brought before the Eleventh Assembly—no progress was made, as the International Penal and Penitentiary Commission has not completed the revision of the standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners which the Twelfth Assembly asked it to undertake. The whole question of the League's activity in this connection will therefore come up for review at the next Assembly.

*Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People*

The Fifth Committee discussed at length certain questions of interest to both the Traffic in Women and Children Committee and the Child Welfare Committee, which together constitute the Advisory Commission for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People. These were: the reorganization of the Advisory Committee, the budgetary provision made for the social work of the League, and the methods of obtaining more publicity for this work.

On the first question no decision was taken, as the matter is under consideration by a sub-committee. As regards the budget, the Fifth Committee addressed an appeal to the Fourth Committee and another to the Assembly, drawing attention to the importance of this aspect of the League's work and expressing the hope that sufficient funds would be allotted for it. On the question of publicity, a resolution was adopted requesting the International Federation of League of Nations Societies and the international organizations represented by assessors on the Advisory Commission to give special attention to this matter.

The Fifth Committee did not discuss the work of the *Child Welfare* Committee in any detail, but simply took note of its report. It considered that the Child Welfare Committee should study the question of desertion of the family, which presents certain international aspects. It also adopted a resolution urging the States Members of the League to redouble their efforts to assist, through public authorities and private organizations, the children who are suffering most from the effects of the economic crisis.

The Fifth Committee associated itself with the hope expressed by the *Traffic in Women and Children* Committee that the Convention of 1921 for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children would soon be more widely ratified. The principal questions considered recently by the Traffic in Women and Children Committee are the proposed abolition of the age-limit in the 1921 Convention, which has been found to put difficulties in the way of punishing traffickers, and the measures to be taken to repress the activities of souteneurs. The Fifth Committee considered it desirable that the 1921 Convention should be revised simultaneously on both of these points, and asked the Traffic in Women and Children Committee to study the best means of achieving this end. As some time will elapse before the revision can be accomplished; the Fifth Committee asked Governments in the meantime to make the necessary changes in their national legislation to ensure the punishment of the traffickers, even if their victims are over age and consent.