

Many delegates enumerated and explained the legislative measures taken in their countries to control the legitimate trade in narcotics and to suppress the illicit traffic. Some of these were: application of the system of import and export certificates, withdrawal of the licences of manufacturers found to be implicated in illicit transactions, co-operation between Governments in tracing the sources of the traffic and bringing the traffickers to justice and heavier penalties for infractions of the drug laws. The Committee made an appeal to Governments that have not yet fully applied the various measures recommended by the Advisory Committee and approved by the Council and the Assembly. It expressed the hope that they would do so as soon as possible and emphasized the necessity for co-operation between the League and the various Governments.

The Canadian Delegate (the Honourable Irene Parlby) gave an account of some of the methods employed in Canada to deal with the problem of narcotics, such as close supervision of the transactions of wholesale and retail druggists, heavy penalties for traffickers (often long terms of imprisonment), and increased co-operation with the United States authorities under the extradition treaty of 1925. In fact, most of the measures suggested by the Advisory Committee had been in force for years in Canada. The Canadian Delegate expressed the hope that States which had not yet ratified the Opium Convention would before long see their way to co-operating with the other countries in their efforts to suppress the drug traffic. Canada was not a manufacturing country and there was complete control of all drugs entering the country legally; nevertheless Canada suffered severely from the illicit traffic. In a country of such great size, it was impossible to prevent smuggling altogether, as long as the supply of narcotics was so much greater than the world's legitimate needs, and the convocation of a Conference on the limitation of manufacture was therefore most welcome to Canada. It appeared possible, however, that limitation of manufacture alone would prove insufficient to wipe out the illicit traffic and that the ultimate solution would be found in a system of State monopolies of production as well as manufacture.

The Fifth Committee learnt with satisfaction that the Conference on the Limitation of the Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs would meet on 27th May, 1931, and that the Advisory Committee had prepared a plan of limitation to serve as a basis for the discussions of the Conference.

SIXTH COMMITTEE

(Political Questions)

Protection of Minorities

The question of minorities was discussed at greater length than usual during the Eleventh Assembly. While no definite decisions were taken, the exchange of views should prove most valuable to the League in dealing with this complex and delicate problem.

Marked differences of opinion were found to exist regarding the competence of the Assembly to deal with this question and the procedure of the Council in dealing with minority petitions as laid down by the Council at Madrid in June, 1929, on the initiative of the Canadian Representative. Some delegates maintained that the Assembly was competent to pronounce upon the application of the so-called minority treaties because it was the supreme organ of the League under the guardianship of which the minorities were placed, while others held that the minority treaties had entrusted the question exclusively to the Council. All were agreed, however, that the question could be discussed by the Assembly under Article 3, paragraph 3, of the Covenant, which lays down that "the Assembly may deal at its meetings with any matter within the sphere of action of the League or affecting the peace of the world."