

Traffic in Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs

The Fifth Committee noted with pleasure the progress of the ratification of the 1925 Opium Convention, and emphasized the importance it attached to the bringing into force of the 1931 Convention for limiting the manufacture and regulating the distribution of narcotic drugs. In this connection it welcomed the announcements made by some eighteen delegates of their Governments' intention to ratify. The Canadian delegate explained that the formal ratification by Canada would be completed in a few days.* On the proposal of Mme. Frémont, the Canadian delegate, the Committee adopted a resolution urging that the States that had not signified their intention as regards ratification should become parties to the Convention with the least possible delay.

The Fifth Committee drew the attention of the Fourth Committee and the Assembly to the necessity of providing sufficient funds to meet the expenses entailed by the putting into force of the 1931 Convention, and also to enable the Advisory Committee to meet twice yearly and to provide for the printing of its minutes.

Satisfaction was expressed with the progress made by the Advisory Committee and the Secretariat in the preparatory work for a conference on the limitation of the production of opium and the cultivation and harvesting of the coca-leaf. The Secretariat was authorized to ask each Government for any information that it might consider essential to ensure that the technical preparations for this conference should be as thorough as possible.

The results of the Bangkok Conference on Opium-Smoking were discussed by the Chinese delegate, who expressed his Government's regret that the Governments represented at this Conference had not taken stronger measures for the suppression of the opium-smoking habit and the manufacture of and trade in prepared opium. The Chinese Government considered that the monopoly system encouraged opium-smuggling, since the sale price of opium, in countries where there is a monopoly, is generally much higher than the price of contraband opium.

The delegates of States represented at the Bangkok Conference repeated the view expressed in the Final Act of the Conference that no radical measures for the suppression of opium-smoking were practicable while the production of opium continued on an enormous scale, and while large quantities of opium were smuggled into their territories. They considered that prohibition would merely result in the substitution of the use of smuggled opium, or even more dangerous drugs, for that of monopoly opium. They outlined the measures taken by their Governments looking toward the gradual suppression of opium-smoking in their Far-Eastern territories.

The Fifth Committee, realizing the difficulties encountered both by the Chinese Government and by the States signatories of the Bangkok Agreement, thought that the solution of the problem should be sought, not in systematically opposing the two views, but in closer and more continuous co-operation between all the Governments concerned.

SIXTH COMMITTEE

(Political Questions)

Protection of Minorities

In pursuance of the resolution adopted by the Assembly on the motion of the German delegation, the Sixth Committee devoted two meetings to the examination of that part of the Secretary-General's report on the work of the League since the last session of the Assembly which concerns the protection of minorities.

*The instrument of ratification was deposited at the Secretariat on October 17, 1932.