

LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

C.255.1930.IV.

Geneva, May 6th, 1930.

CHILD WELFARE COMMITTEE.

SIXTH SESSION

Report by the Representative of Yugoslavia.

The Child Welfare Committee held its sixth session at Geneva from April 9th to 16th, 1930.

1. Provisional Draft Agreement regarding the Return of Children and Young People to their Homes.

The Child Welfare Committee examined the observations formulated by Governments on the two provisional draft agreements regarding the return of children and young people to their homes and assistance for foreign minors, submitted to them after the Committee's fifth session.

As only twenty-two Governments communicated their views on the first of these two drafts, the Committee instructed the Secretariat to endeavour to obtain the observations of the Governments which had not replied to the Secretary-General's letter, No.C.L.143.1929 and decided to place the question on the agenda of its next session. I have no doubt the Council will approve the Committee's recommendation.

2. Preliminary Draft Convention on Assistance for Foreign Minors.

After examining the observations on the Preliminary Draft Convention on Assistance for Foreign Minors, the Committee decided to refer the Governments' replies to the Legal Sub-Committee, requesting the Sub-Committee, in the light of the replies received, to submit to it for its next session proposals or suggestions for ensuring in the widest possible sense a solution of the problem of the assimilation of foreign minors to national minors from the point of view of assistance and protection.

3. Recognition and Enforcement Abroad of Maintenance Orders.

The Committee examined the report from its Legal Sub-Committee concerning the recognition and enforcement abroad of maintenance orders.

After an exchange of views, the Committee stated that, while <sup>fully</sup> aware of the legal and administrative difficulties connected with the problem, it was of opinion that an effort should be made to draw up international agreements, either in the form of general conventions or of agreements between countries whose legislation was based on similar principles, so as to ensure the mutual recognition and enforcement of maintenance orders.

From the relevant passage of the Committee's report, it will be seen that this question, in the form in which it is proposed to study it, undoubtedly stretches the competence of the Child Welfare Committee.

I personally see no objection to the mandate of the Committee being extended so far as to give the Committee authority to pursue its study of this question on the lines proposed, with the understanding that this extension is not to be regarded as a precedent. I would propose, however, that before such an authorisation is given by the Council, the relevant part of the Committee's report, together with these observations, should be communicated to the Members of the League in order that they may have an opportunity of making any observations on the extension of the Committee's mandate which they may desire. Should no objections be received by November 1st, of this year, the Council's authorisation might be considered as granted.

4. Illegitimate Children.

The Committee continued its enquiry into the question of illegitimate children and noted the proposals submitted by the Legal Sub-Committee regarding the order in which the various problems should be dealt with. The Committee decided that it would be useful to study in a number of selected countries the social measures which most closely affect illegitimate children, and instructed the Secretariat, with the assistance of the members of the Committee and voluntary organisations, and in conjunction with the International Labour Office to prepare a report on these problems. The Child Welfare Committee is also of opinion that in those same countries the comparative mortality as between legitimate and illegitimate children should likewise, with the assistance of the Health Organisation be examined.

5. Auxiliary Services of the Juvenile Courts.

The question of the auxiliary services of the juvenile courts likewise appeared on the agenda of the Child Welfare Committee's sixth session, but as the Agenda Sub-Committee decided that the examination of a certain number of questions should be postponed and dealt with at the 1931 session, the information collected was examined from a purely formal point of view, without any discussion of its substance. The Committee proposed, and I presume the Council will approve that the questionnaire concerning juvenile courts drawn up by the Commission Internationale Pénale et Pénitentiaire should be forwarded to Governments not represented on that Commission, and that a reminder should be sent to Governments which have not replied to the League's questionnaire relating to auxiliary services. The information thus obtained is to be submitted to the Committee at its 1931 session.

6. Cinematograph.

The Committee heard the communications of the Director of the International Educational Cinematographic Institute and of the Marquis Guad-el-Jelu, member of the Governing Body of that Institute and Spanish Delegate to the Child Welfare Committee. Two resolutions were adopted, one expressing the hope that the Draft International Convention for the abolition of tariff barriers against educational films will shortly become effective, and the other drawing the attention of Governments to the necessity of taking measures to ensure that the effects of film censorship shall not be frustrated by the inclusion of uncensored variety turns when children and young people are admitted to the performance. I hope the Council will approve the transmission of these two resolutions to all Governments.

7. Preliminary Enquiry into Children in Moral Danger.

Mlle. Chaptal, Commissioner of the League, submitted to the Committee a preliminary report on the progress of the enquiry into children in moral danger which she has been requested to carry out in eight countries. So far the enquiry has only been conducted in the United States and Canada. As soon as it has been completed in all the countries selected, a final report will be issued.

8. Blind Children.

The Danish Delegate, Rapporteur on the question of blind children, drew the Child Welfare Committee's attention to the important information of a social nature contained in the Health Committee's report on the welfare of the blind in different countries. The Committee set up a Sub-Committee to examine the various questions which it is proposed to study, and this Sub-Committee will submit a report to the Committee next year.

9. Co-operation with the International Criminal Police Commission.

At a joint meeting with the Traffic in Women and Children Committee, the Child Welfare Committee examined the correspondence exchanged between the Secretariat and the International Criminal Police Commission regarding the possibility of co-operation, and unanimously adopted a resolution in which the two Committees state that this co-operation could best be given by the International Commission furnishing opinions on the problems before the Traffic in Women and Children or Child Welfare Committees on the request of those Committees. It will be for the Chairman of those Committees, in agreement with the Secretariat, to judge the cases in which this co-operation might be asked for and the form which it should take.

10. Codification of Conventions.

At this same joint meeting, the two Committees took note of the resolution adopted by the Tenth Assembly of the League of September 24th, 1929 regarding the codification of conventions which was forwarded to them in accordance with the Council resolution of January 13th, 1930.

11. Rules of Procedure.

The new Rules of Procedure adopted by the two Committees in joint session seem to me to call for only one observation by the Council. I would add, however, that the article I have in mind is not among those which have just been amended. In my opinion it is undesirable that, in a Committee composed of representatives of Governments, the Chairman should have a casting vote in deciding questions of substance as apart from questions of procedure. The substance of resolutions on which the members of the Committee are equally divided should, I think, be considered as rejected. I propose therefore that the last sentence

of paragraph 8 of the Rules be amended as follows:

"In the case of the votes being equal, the motion will be regarded as lost, except in questions of procedure where the Chairman shall have a casting vote."

12. Regrets expressed by the Committee at the departure of Dame Rachel Crowdy.

The Council will note that the Committee passed a resolution expressing appreciation of the work performed by Dame Rachel Crowdy as Chief of the Social Questions and Opium Traffic Section and as Secretary of the Committee. My colleagues will, I am sure, share the appreciation felt by the Committee for Dame Rachel Crowdy's work. I feel that the Council could best give effect to the Committee's desire that the services of Dame Rachel Crowdy should continue to be at its disposal by appointing her as an assessor to the Committee. The Rules of Procedure lay down that, except in special cases, assessors represent international organisations whose work is recognised as coming more particularly within the scope of this Committee. I think the Council will agree that this is a special case of the kind for which the Rules provide. Moreover, as regards the Child Welfare Committee, the Rules of Procedure of which are identical with those of the Traffic in Women and Children Committee, a precedent for the appointment of an individual, as apart from the selection of an organisation, exists in the appointment by the Council in December 1924 of Mr. Bascom Johnson as an assessor. It is understood that the appointment of Dame Rachel Crowdy, which will I hope be approved by the Council, will not take effect until after she has left the Secretariat.

I propose that the Council should take note of the Child Welfare Committee's Report on its Sixth Session and should adopt the report of the representative of Yugoslavia.