The second part of the work entrusted to the Organisation relates to the methods used in preparing national statistics. A Sub-Committee of the Committee of Statistical Experts has made a report¹ which will be considered by the main Committee in July, in order that recommendations may be available for the next population census in 1940.

The third part is a study of the relationship between the activity of the building industry and general economic activity. A note on this question has been prepared² which was submitted to the delegation for the study of means of preventing economic depressions which met in June. This question will form the subject of one of the chapters of the volume dealing with the theories of the trade cycle to be published later this year.

Agricultural Credits.

The last Assembly called for an enquiry to be made into the question of agricultural credits. While it did not confine this enquiry to any particular part of the world, it was understood that a beginning would be made with countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

The Financial Committee started the enquiry by defining the origin, object and scope of the enquiry, analysing the situation and laying down the methods for carrying out the work.³

In Central and Eastern Europe, countries are relatively poor in capital, predominantly agricultural, with small and medium proprietors. Domestic capital is limited and dear; there are legislative, judicial and fiscal difficulties in obtaining it; while in many countries the debtors have been relieved by reductions of debt and extensions of the period of payment, these measures have not solved the problem, but have only postponed it and, meanwhile, have impaired the credit position.

The real object of the League must therefore be to define principles and rules which would foster agricultural credit and provide States with the basis for legislative, judicial, fiscal or technical financial reforms.

¹ Document G.E.S.115.1938.
A beginning should be made with the agricultural countries indicated by the Assembly, but information should be obtained from any sources likely to prove useful, including countries relatively rich in capital.

In order to carry out this enquiry, M. Tardy, Honorary Director of the Caisse nationale de Crédit agricole, in France, was appointed, and will have the help of one or two collaborators. He or his principal collaborator is visiting Poland, Czecho-slovakia, Greece, Roumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Finland, Yugoslavia, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, and attending the general assembly of the International Institute of Agriculture at Rome and of the International Confederation of Agriculture at Prague, and the International Congress of Agricultural Credit at Naples. In preparation for their journeys, the Governments of the countries concerned have been asked to give them every facility and to furnish them with certain information on the system of organisation.

It is anticipated that the results of this enquiry, at least in a preliminary form, and limited to the countries mentioned, may be ready for publication before the discussions of the next Assembly.

IV. Economic Intelligence.

The work of the Organisation which comes under the general denomination of economic intelligence falls into two parts: first, research — i.e., the collection of information, mostly statistical, its presentation and publication — and, secondly, efforts to improve the methods used by Governments in preparing that information.

The first part of the work consists, of course, mainly of the preparation of the principal publications of the League. Since the last report to the Assembly, the following have been issued:

The World Economic Survey, 1936/37, which was published during the last Assembly, dealt mainly with the period from August 1936 to the end of July 1937. After an introductory discussion of the effects of the Tripartite Agreement of September 1936 in remedying price discrepancies and providing a greater measure of exchange stability, the Survey proceeded to analyse
the various factors of economic expansion during the period considered, such as increased prosperity in raw-material-producing countries, rising industrial productivity, and the marked recovery of world trade. The improvement of labour conditions, the movement for higher wages, the increase in prices, the rise in long-term interest rates, the "gold scare" and the fall in security prices in the second quarter of 1937 were other aspects of recent economic developments studied in this volume.

The next edition of the Survey will be issued in time for the coming Assembly.

The volume called *International Trade Statistics, 1936*, gives foreign trade statistics of sixty-five countries for the years 1934-1936. For most of the countries, there are seven tables showing respectively imports and exports of merchandise (by years and by months), imports and exports by principal countries, imports and exports by principal articles, imports and exports of bullion and specie, and, finally, imports and exports by classes of the International (Brussels, 1913) Classification.

In addition, the volume contains a series of tables showing imports and exports grouped according to the classification drawn up by the League Committee of Statistical Experts under the terms of the International Convention relating to Economic Statistics (Geneva, 1928). The adoption of this new classification, which consists of a "Minimum List" of 456 commodities, was recommended by the Council of the League in September 1935. As a result, about twenty countries have sent in statistics based upon it.

This publication condenses into a handy single volume an immense quantity of statistical material produced by practically all the Governments of the world.

The volume on *Balances of Payments, 1936*, analyses the international accounts of thirty-six countries in recent years, as against twenty-nine countries in last year's edition. All the principal trading countries of the world are included, except Italy, for which no data are available since 1930.

To enable students of international economic relations to draw useful conclusions from the material compiled in this volume, most of the statements for individual countries — though not
all — are based on a special form which was sent to Governments, the full text of which is included in the volume. Comparable figures for the following principal groups of items are given for practically all countries represented: merchandise, interest and dividends, other services, gold, and capital items subdivided into long-term operations and short-term operations.

A synoptic chapter is devoted to a detailed analysis of recent tendencies in international business transactions. The changes in the balance on current account of creditor and debtor countries, the international movements of capital from one country to another, the effects of the recent improvement in world trade and the increase in the prices of raw materials upon the balances of payments of creditor and debtor countries are examined. Attention is likewise paid to tourist traffic, emigrants' remittances, capital and gold movements.

Most of the detailed statements given for individual countries are accompanied by a summary table showing the balances and, for the last few years also, the totals of all inward and outward payments. For the sake of easy comparison, these balances have been converted into United States gold dollars and have been entered in a synoptical table which is a feature of the chapter on recent tendencies.

One of the tables shows that the aggregate balance on account of current international business transactions of the three principal creditor countries — i.e., the United States, the United Kingdom and France — was passive in 1936 by 259 million gold dollars as compared with 134 millions in 1935. This, of course, means that a reciprocal change has taken place in the aggregate balance of debtor countries and that the strain to which these countries had been put in their international transactions has relaxed. It would appear, however, that the tendency for trade conditions to change in favour of the debtor States has been reversed since 1936.

An interesting sign of the general improvement in economic conditions up to 1936 is the rise in international payments on account of tourist expenditure — by nearly 40% between 1934 and 1936.

The League publication on money and banking was again issued in two parts in the late spring of this year, the first being
a general *Monetary Review* and the second a *Study of Commercial and Central Banks*.

The League brings together in this annual series information about currencies and banks all over the world. The developments of the last three or four years are reviewed in the first volume; the figures for forty-nine countries on which the *Review* is based are given in the second.

This year, there is an important addition. A complete balance-sheet is given with explanatory notes for each of the forty-four central banks of the world, and the *Review* deals with such important points as their increasing influence on the money markets and how they have been affected by the expenditure and borrowing of Governments and State control.

Other chapters deal with subjects of current interest — for instance, "hot money", gold hoarding and "sterilisation", currency disturbances, exchange control, the supply of money and its effect on prices, production and interest rates, and the recent stiffening of laws governing commercial banks, often in the interest of the small depositor.

This is the only publication which covers the main branches of banking in the great majority of countries and in which the statistics on the subject are arranged so that readers can compare one country with another, and obtain facts and draw conclusions about the world as a whole.

Finally, a further issue was made of the *International Trade in certain Raw Materials and Foodstuffs by Countries of Origin and Consumption*.

This volume, the second of its kind, is an attempt to secure on the basis of special import records specially furnished to the League, more satisfactory information on the movement of goods from the producing to the consuming countries than was hitherto available from the ordinary national statistics of foreign trade. As exporters are frequently unable to state where the goods exported are actually consumed, especially in the case of staple products, imports statistics have been used for the compilation of tables illustrating the international trade in thirty-five important raw materials and foodstuffs. Each table shows the quantities imported by the consuming countries classified according to the countries of origin of the commodities concerned. As
the tables of this new volume are practically world-wide — they cover 122 countries and territories, compared with forty-two in the first volume — it has been possible to add up the imports of all consuming countries from a given producing country, thus enabling the producing and exporting countries to see where their products have been consumed.

The Monthly Bulletin of Statistics has been regularly published with additional tables and diagrams on subjects which are of special interest at the time of publication.¹

The possibility has presented itself this year of placing economic and financial information before the public in another way. The Otto Mønsted Foundation has generously offered, through the Danish Government, to place at the disposal of the League a considerable sum of money in order to demonstrate by means of graphs the interdependence of nations and the effects of the recent depression. Steps have been taken to ensure that the proposed exhibition should possess the desired international character, and ways and means are being considered for arranging a permanent exhibition of graphs relating to current economic and financial conditions. The Committee of Statistical Experts has been asked to give its advice and will report before the next Assembly.

The Committee of Statistical Experts has pursued its work of trying to improve methods of preparing statistics, which it has now been doing for ten years since the coming into force of the Convention on International Statistics. The range and technical complexity of the subjects with which it is attempting to deal emerge from a mere enumeration of the items on the agenda of its meeting in July of this year, the results of which will be available for the Assembly. They are as follows: revision of the minimum list of commodities for international trade statistics; statistics of the gainfully-occupied population, of timber, of housing and building, of capital formation and of balances of payments; indices of industrial production, price and quantum indices of foreign trade.

¹ The forthcoming issues of the World Economic Survey, the Statistical Year-Book, the Review of World Trade and World Production and Prices will be treated in Part II of the annual report.
But a special word should be said on the first two items. The minimum list of commodities has now been adopted by as many as twenty-five countries. More countries than ever applied the Brussels Convention, concluded in 1913 for presenting trade statistics on a common basis. This fact shows that the method of submitting to Governments a model resulting from a scientific expert enquiry may lead to more far-reaching results than the attempt to obtain agreement by diplomatic Convention.

The work on gainfully employed population is the first attempt to establish international rules on a uniform basis for recording this kind of statistical information, and it is of course of particular importance in view of the forthcoming decennial census in 1940.

In conclusion, it should be mentioned that, with the generous financial help of the Rockefeller Foundation, the Organisation has been able to take action of a different kind in order to promote an improvement in the methods of collecting statistics. It has been arranged that senior officials of the central statistical offices of a number of countries shall make study tours in order to ascertain the most advanced methods of preparing statistics on certain subjects in which they feel they may gain from the experience of others. Fifteen Governments have desired to avail themselves of these facilities, and two others have been asked whether they wish to do so. Two tours are now taking place, and three or four others will have been begun before the end of the year. Eleven countries with advanced statistical organisations and methods have expressed their willingness to give the help required for these tours.

It is hoped that it may be possible to extend, during the next year, the system now begun, which ought, by the exchange of experience, to give a stimulus to efforts being made in many countries for the improvement of their statistics.
8.

COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSIT.¹

I. DISPUTE RELATING TO THE REORGANISATION OF THE RAILWAYS OF THE FORMER AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN MONARCHY.


Having received a fresh request from the above-mentioned railway company in October 1936, the Council referred an interlocutory question to the Permanent Legal Committee of the Communications and Transit Organisation.² It examined that Committee's final report in September 1937 (ninety-ninth session), and decided to refer the matter once more to the arbitrators appointed by its resolutions of May 26th and 30th, 1933.³ The arbitral proceedings are still in progress.

II. CO-ORDINATION OF TRANSPORT.

This problem was placed on the agenda of the Communications and Transit Organisation in virtue of an Assembly resolution of 1935.⁴ Having been instructed to obtain information on the subject, the Secretariat defined and classified the various aspects

¹ The wireless station of the League of Nations is dealt with in a separate chapter, page 207.
of the problem and sent a detailed questionnaire to Governments. The great majority of the Governments have replied. The Secretariat is now engaged in systematically classifying the ample material thus obtained. This will take some time, owing to the extent and complexity of the problem.

The 1937 Assembly laid special stress on the importance of the question, which affects not only the various transport undertakings and their users, but also, in a very direct way, the whole national economy of the different countries.

Once the work of classification has been completed, the resulting text will be submitted to a committee of experts competent to deal not only with the point of view of communications, but also with the special economic and financial aspects.

III. Road Traffic.

Codification of Road Law.

The Assembly, at its seventeenth ordinary session (October 1936), had recommended the Communications and Transit Organisation to pursue actively its work of international codification in the sphere of road traffic and signalling, and to consider the expediency of revising the existing conventions, and particularly of regrouping, if necessary, the provisions contained in them with a view to obtaining a more systematic whole.

In pursuance of this recommendation, the Committee on Road Traffic proceeded, in April 1938,¹ to a preliminary examination of the two Conventions of April 24th, 1926, regarding motor traffic and road traffic respectively, with a view to their revision, taking into account the proposals made by certain groups of road users. The modifications in the provisions of these Conventions proposed by the Committee were designed to allow for the development of road traffic and the present state of technique as regards the construction both of motor vehicles and of roads.

In this connection, it made adjustments in the text concerning the conditions to be fulfilled by motor vehicles in order to be

¹ See its report, document C.203.M.111.1938.VIII.
admitted to international traffic, and particularly in the provisions regarding braking and lighting and the special accessories with which such vehicles must be fitted. It added a paragraph concerning the utilisation by the driver of certain devices with which the vehicle must be provided. The Committee also considered the possibility of using national certificates and licences for international traffic requirements instead of the international documents provided for under the 1926 Convention on Motor Traffic. Another part of the proposals refers to the duties of drivers and other road users, and particularly to the driving of vehicles and animals and to pedestrians and cyclists.

The examination undertaken by the Committee should, in its opinion, be followed by a more detailed study by a small committee to be appointed later.

*Unification of Statistics relating to Road Traffic Accidents.*

In accordance with the decision taken by the Council on September 16th, 1937, the Secretary-General communicated to the Members of the League of Nations and to the non-member States the report of the Committee on the Unification of Statistics relating to Road Traffic Accidents,¹ with a request to draw up their statistics on this subject as far as possible in accordance with the recommendations contained in the report and in the tables annexed thereto. Although the time-limit for the receipt of the observations of Governments does not expire until the end of 1940, the replies already received show that the Committee's work has met with a favourable reception from several Governments.

*Road Signals.*

The Committee on Road Traffic recommended, at its 1937 session,² various measures for supplementing certain road signals. This recommendation has been communicated to the Governments of the States Members of the League and the non-member States, some of which have already stated that they have adopted the proposed solution.

¹ Document C.276.M.179.1937.VIII.
² See its report, document C.322.M.217.1937.VIII.
Simplification of Road Traffic Documents.

Another recommendation relates to the adoption of a uniform model for national driving licences and national registration cards. Its purpose is to facilitate the recognition of these documents abroad. A number of States have already concluded bilateral agreements with a view to the mutual recognition of national traffic documents.

The recommendation in question has been communicated to the Members of the League and to the non-member States. The replies hitherto received show that several States contemplate the adoption of the proposed models.

Unification of the Direction of Road Traffic.

The Committee on Road Traffic has already considered on several occasions the question of the direction of road traffic. In 1927, it made a recommendation in favour of the unification of the direction of traffic on the European continent; in 1937, it made a fresh examination of this problem, the importance of which is increasing in proportion to the development of international traffic. In 1937 too,1 the Committee recommended certain preparatory measures to be taken by the European States concerned in order to hasten the adoption of the rule that all traffic should keep to the right. The Communications and Transit Committee has since instructed it to extend its study to the non-European States. In this connection the Committee is considering sending to these States a questionnaire asking for information on the present direction of traffic in their territories, what modifications have been made in the relevant rules in past years, the reasons for such modifications, and what changes are now being contemplated.

IV. Signalling at Level-crossings.

The Special Committee appointed to frame a preliminary draft convention on this subject 2 in the light of the observations

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1 See its report, document C.322.M.217.1937.VIII.
submitted by the Governments on the draft prepared by it in 1935, met in April 1938. It drew up a general report in which it explained the problem from its technical and legal aspects. This report is accompanied by a preliminary draft convention containing provisions mainly of a formal character, to which are attached technical regulations regarding signalling at level-crossings. The preliminary draft convention is also accompanied by a number of recommendations which, in the Special Committee's opinion, might usefully be embodied in the Final Act of a future conference.

This report will be submitted to the Committee for Communications and Transit, which will consider at its next session whether the preliminary work is sufficiently far advanced for reference to the Council.

It will be remembered that the 1937 Assembly expressed the hope that in view of the importance of the problem for the security of road and rail and the safety of human life, an international convention might be concluded at a conference to be summoned by the Council in the near future.

V. Public Works.

In pursuance of the resolution adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1937, the Governing Body of the International Labour Office has set up the new International Committee on Public Works. In accordance with the statutes of this committee, the competent bodies — which include the Communications and Transit Organisation of the League of Nations — will be entitled to be represented. The Committee held its first session in June.¹

¹ This session was held too late to permit of an account of its proceedings being given here.
9.

HEALTH QUESTIONS.

In April 1937, the Health Committee drew up its programme of work for the three years of its term of office — *i.e.*, until the end of 1939. This three-year programme has therefore been in operation for about a year. The main ideas on which the programme was based and the plan of work will be described below.

I. RURAL HYGIENE.

Last year's Assembly adopted two resolutions on the Intergovernmental Conferences on Rural Hygiene organised by the Health Committee: that held in Java for the countries of the East (August 1937) and that which is to meet at Mexico City for the American continent (November 1938). It also fixed July 1939 as the date of the European Conference on Rural Life which is dealt with in another part of this report.

These three Conferences all have a common origin — namely, the European Conference on Rural Hygiene of 1931. They relate to different continents and therefore have to take into account the conditions peculiar to the areas considered, but they are similar in scope. While that of the third has been enlarged in accordance with a recommendation of the Health Committee, its purpose, like that of its predecessors, is to ascertain the principles applicable to the improvement of health conditions in rural areas. Thus steady progress is being made with this

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2 The questions of biological standardisation and housing will be dealt with in Part II of this report (document A.6*(a)*.1938).
3 See page 116.
task, which will no doubt be a long one. It is a subject to which the Health Organisation has devoted the greatest attention and which occupies a leading place in its present programme.

Intergovernmental Conference of Eastern Countries on Rural Hygiene (Bandoeng, August 3rd to 13th, 1937).

In its report,¹ the Conference asked the Health Organisation to facilitate collaboration between the Eastern administrations and to give them its technical assistance. It will be responsible for collecting and distributing the documentary material prepared with regard to the surveys of public health conditions recommended by the Conference, for maintaining contact with the investigating countries throughout, for collecting and making available information on the experiments made in rural reconstruction, for co-ordinating research on nutrition and, in general, for co-operating in the work proposed by the Conference, and particularly in the studies on the methods of combating tuberculosis, pneumonia and plague.

The execution of this programme will be mainly in the hands of the Singapore Bureau and its Advisory Council. Arrangements have already been made for this purpose, but it would be premature to describe them here. Several health administrations are taking steps to apply the Conference’s recommendations. British India, Indo-China and Siam are drawing up plans of study and programmes of action in liaison with the Singapore Bureau, which is holding itself at their entire disposal. The Nutrition Commission is preparing, with the help of Far-Eastern experts, a plan of work which will be co-ordinated by the Nutrition Research Laboratory at Coonoor (India).

Intergovernmental Conference of American Countries on Rural Hygiene.

This Conference will be held at Mexico City from November 10th to 20th next. The Committee to which the technical preparation of the Conference has been entrusted — which includes a representative of the International Labour Office — visited Mexico City and Washington in December 1937 to draw up the

¹ Document A.19.1937.
agenda in full agreement with the Mexican Government and the Director of the Pan-American Sanitary Bureau. The Mexican Government has also appointed a Committee of high officials to co-operate in the technical preparation of the Conference, and has kindly offered all the requisite material facilities.

Invitations to the Conference were sent out in February 1938. So far, the Argentine Republic, Canada, Colombia, Guatemala and Peru have signified their intention of sending representatives. The agenda consists of the following five chapters:

1. Organisation of rural medical and health services;
2. Selected problems of disease in the rural environment;
3. Medical and health survey of a rural region;
4. Nutrition in rural districts;
5. Conditions of rural life (housing, rural sanitation, rural betterment).

On May 12th, 1938, the Council appointed Dr. Leonides Andreu Almazan, Director of the Mexican Department of Public Health, as President of the Conference.

*European Conference on Rural Life (1939).*

In accordance with the decisions of the Commission entrusted with the preparation of the European Conference of 1939, the Health Organisation will be responsible for the technical preparation of the Conference’s work on the health conditions of the rural populations, medico-social policy, nutrition and rural planning.

The Health Organisation will submit to the Conference a general comparative study of the state of health in certain typical rural areas of Europe. This monograph will describe the demographic situation of these areas, the death rate and the incidence of the diseases which particularly affect the rural population and rural life.

As regards medico-social policy, the object will be to place at the Conference’s disposal the results of the work done by the Health Organisation since the European Conference of 1931, to show the effects of this Conference, to utilise the experiments already carried out in the prevention and treatment of disease,
to define the conceptions underlying the health organisation, planning and equipment of the rural areas of Europe and to pay special attention to certain diseases which are still prevalent in rural areas, such as typhoid fever and tuberculosis, and those affecting man and live-stock, such as brucellosis.

As regards nutrition, the Health Organisation will submit to the Conference the results of the investigations made in certain rural communities to determine their state of nutritition and their food consumption — i.e., to ascertain whether their diets are adequate and to discover the measures required to remedy any dietary defects noted. Certain special studies are in progress, one of which is designed to supplement the material already collected on the question of milk,¹ while the other relates to the composition and nutritional value of bread.

All these various questions will be dealt with in a monograph on nutrition in the rural areas of Europe.

The Health Organisation has already studied at length the hygiene of housing, sanitation, community planning and rural planning. Supplementary studies are to be undertaken in the countries of Europe to provide the Conference with a general view of the question.

II. MALARIA COMMISSION.

The fourth general report of the Malaria Commission was published at the end of 1937.² It is entitled "The Treatment of Malaria", and is based on the results of experiments made in 1935 and 1936 to compare the efficacy of certain new synthetic drugs with that of quinine in the treatment and prophylaxis of malaria.

The chief of these new synthetic drugs were atebrin and plasmoquine, employed in carefully determined conditions, either separately or together.

The experiments in question were essential to enable the Malaria Commission to provide the health administrations with

¹ See below, page 100.
both scientific and practical information on the combating of malaria by the curative and preventive treatment of malarial populations. The health services of the countries in which malaria is prevalent were anxious to know how far the therapeutic and prophylactic value of the new synthetic drugs justified their use. The question as a whole is fully dealt with in the Commission’s fourth general report.

III. OPIUM.

Application of Articles 8 and 10 of the 1925 Geneva Convention and Article 11 of the Convention for the Limitation of Manufacture.

In October 1935, the Health Committee decided that preparations made from tincture or extract of Indian hemp should be brought within the scope of the international Conventions. However, some Governments only accepted this decision with certain reservations. The Committee accordingly considered that these reservations should be examined, in order, if possible, to restate its former decision in fuller and more detailed form and to secure the unanimous approval of the contracting parties (October 1937). The question is under consideration.

Codeinism.

As the Governments of Canada and the United States of America had drawn attention to certain cases of codeinism discovered in their territory in recent years, the Health Committee was requested, at the suggestion of those two countries, to include the problem of codeinism in its work. For this purpose, it consulted certain scientific institutions and psychiatric and pharmacological experts. It is also engaged on the preparation of a report based on a critical analysis of all that has been published on the question up to the present. The results of this work will be placed at the disposal of the Advisory Committee on Traffic in Opium.

Determination of the Morphine Content of Opium and the Cocaine Content of Coca Leaves.

In 1930, the Health Committee was invited to have a standard method worked out for the determination of the morphine
content of raw opium, with a view to this method being adopted for the practical control of the manufacture of morphine. After study extending over three years, an expert committee succeeded in establishing a procedure which is now known as the "international method". Since that time, the experts have carried on their work with a view to eliminating certain defects inherent in this method of assay, at the same time comparing it with other methods. They have also done similar work with regard to the cocaine content of coca leaves.

In October 1937, they placed on record the fact that methods of cocaine assay are now definitely fixed for both coca leaves and raw cocaine. So far as the morphine assay is concerned, they came to the conclusion that the international method, notwithstanding such defects as may still attach to it, presents certain advantages over others so far known.¹

## IV. Nutrition.

The Technical Commission on Nutrition held its third session in November 1937.² Its report will shortly be published in the *Bulletin of the Health Organisation*.

At its first two sessions, the Commission endeavoured to define, in the light of modern conceptions of physiology, what principles of nutrition would most suitably ensure the rational development and optimum maintenance of the organism. The result of its work was the "General Report on the Physiological Bases of Nutrition".³

At the end of the report, there appears a list of ten questions which the Commission recommended for further study. They are as follows:

A. Assessment of the nutritional state of children.
B. Nutritive food requirements during the first year of life.
C. Minimum vitamin and mineral requirements.
D. Minimum fat requirements.

¹ These methods were described in the *Bulletin of the Health Organisation* of April 1938.
³ Published in the *Bulletin of the Health Organisation* of September 1936.
E. Proteins.
F. The relative nutritive value of different cereals according to the degree of milling.
G. The extent to which the increasing consumption of sugar is detrimental to health.
H. Influence of climate on food requirements.
I. The extent to which diets in common use fall below the standards recommended in the report.
J. The optimum amount of milk required at different ages.

The Commission's report was communicated to the learned societies and scientific institutions of several countries with a view to securing their observations and their co-operation in the aforesaid studies.

The Technical Commission could not hope to make a systematic attack on all these ten questions at once. It therefore concentrated its attention in 1936 and 1937 on the first five and the last.

At the end of 1936, a meeting was held of the rapporteurs appointed by the learned societies and scientific institutions mentioned above, for the study of the first two questions — namely, the assessment of the nutritional state of children and nutritive food requirements during the first year of life. These meetings drew up two reports, the first recommending three kinds of enquiries to detect malnutrition, and the second containing recommendations on the diet suitable for infants.

At its session in November 1937, the Technical Commission examined these two reports, and formulated certain technical conclusions regarding them.

The next three questions — minimum vitamin and mineral requirements, minimum fat requirements and proteins — were scientific problems falling within the exact scope of the Commission's first report. When the Commission met last November, it made a careful review of present-day knowledge of these questions and embodied its findings in the first four chapters

1 Published in the Bulletin of the Health Organisation, April 1937.
of its new report. It came to the conclusion that it was essential to carry on the study of the factors influencing the utilisation of calcium, phosphorus and iron.

Last November, the Commission also reviewed the question of milk.

In the second half of 1936, the Health Committee had organised a special enquiry into the hygienic problems involved in the production and distribution of milk. In addition, the Technical Commission had asked one of its members to submit a report on the optimum amounts of milk required at different ages (Question J).

Thus, the Technical Committee had to examine the whole of the milk question. In its report on the physiological bases of nutrition, the Commission has already fully defined its attitude to the question of the place which milk, on account of its special qualities, should occupy in a rational diet. Last November, it endeavoured to show, in the light of recent research, why milk is a foodstuff of such paramount importance, especially during the period of growth. It also emphasised the necessity of eliminating the dangers of milk as a vehicle for bacterial infection. Lastly, it pointed out how skimmed milk might be turned to account.

The report, which will appear in the Bulletin of the Health Organisation in June 1938, will accordingly contain the conclusions of the Commission on the first five and the last of the questions on its programme of work; the other four will be dealt with in subsequent studies.

Some remarks, however, should be made on questions H (influence of climate on food requirements) and I (extent to which diets in common use fall below the standards recommended in the report).

As regards the first, the programme of subsequent work must pay ever-increasing attention to countries in tropical and subtropical parts of the world. In November 1937, the Commission took note of the report of the Conference and drew up a preliminary programme of work to be carried out chiefly

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in the Far East. It will give this programme further consideration at its next session. These studies will probably be co-ordinated by the Nutrition Research Laboratory at Coonoor (India).

The study of the second question (Question I) has already been begun. To answer it with any degree of accuracy, it is essential to carry out dietary surveys with the object of gaining a clearer insight into actual nutritional conditions in urban and rural districts. If, however, the results of such surveys are to be comparable, there must first be agreement as to the method to be followed.

That is why, last November, the Commission set forth its conclusions as to the technical methods of carrying out investigations for the purpose of estimating actual consumption of foodstuffs.

A study of the food intake of urban and rural populations will therefore play a prominent part in the programme of work for 1938.

So far, the National Nutrition Committees and the institutes and schools of hygiene in Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Finland, France, Hungary, Poland, Roumania, Sweden and Yugoslavia have intimated their intention to continue or to undertake enquiries of this kind. Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia have already made arrangements for the purpose. In January 1938, Miss H. K. Stiebeling, of the Department of Agriculture at Washington, visited these three countries on behalf of the Health Organisation in order to assist the competent authorities in the organisation and co-ordination of the contemplated enquiries.

It will be remembered that the Government of Chile had asked for the help of the League of Nations in order to study the state of nutrition among the Chilian population, and that Professor Burnet (France) and Professor Dragoni (Italy) had visited Chile in 1935 on a study mission.

In June 1936, following the report prepared by these experts, the Technical Commission drew up for the Chilian authorities,  

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1 These studies on nutrition in Chile are dealt with in the last chapter of the Technical Commission's report mentioned above.
at their request, a series of recommendations as to the measures to be contemplated in order to improve conditions of national nutrition and to provide for the continuation of the enquiries.

Since that time, the Minister of Public Health of Chile has communicated the text of several decrees promulgated by the authorities of his country with the object of remedying the deficiencies which had been noticed and, in addition, the steps taken towards the co-ordination of subsequent studies. The Commission observed that this plan was of the greatest interest.

V. Physical Fitness.

In placing on its programme the question of physical fitness, the Health Committee had in view investigations similar to those it is conducting in the sphere of housing and nutrition — that is to say, the defining of the physiological bases of rational physical training adapted to different ages.

In May 1937, it consulted certain experts as to the lines on which the work should be conducted. Two months later, two technicians were requested to carry out a study tour which took them to Copenhagen, Lund, Amsterdam, The Hague, Paris, Warsaw, Rome, Vienna and Prague. The purpose of the tour was to supplement the recommendations of the experts and to study the possibility of carrying them into effect.

Lastly, in order to complete this exploratory stage, the Committee requested Dr. Wroczynski, Chief Medical Adviser to the Ministry of National Education, Warsaw, to draw up a report\(^1\) on the various factors influencing the maintenance of physical well-being. The author first examines the harmful aspects of our civilisation and the physical condition of the present generation. He then goes on to explore the relationship between physical condition and medical science, heredity and constitution.

The following part is devoted to an exhaustive examination of the methods of assessing physique. Lastly, an attempt is made to determine the various physical exercises suitable for children, for girls during puberty and adolescence and for adults.

\(^1\) Published in the *Bulletin of the Health Organisation*, Volume VI, No. 4.
In his conclusions, Dr. Wroczynski shows that, considering the progress of civilisation, the physical defects of the population are still too numerous and too serious. Up to the present, methods and systems of physical education have not produced any clearly demonstrable effect on the health of the masses, doubtless because the present state of our knowledge is not as yet sufficient to enable us to base them on accurate scientific data. Inordinate athletic competition is particularly harmful, and it is much to be deplored that the practice of sport should degenerate in this way.

The Health Committee then decided (February 1938) to go into the substance of this question and to apply the method which has proved so effective in the sphere of nutrition and housing — namely, to encourage the setting-up of national committees in different countries, whose representatives will form a commission on physical fitness.¹

VI. ENQUIRY INTO THE RESULTS OF THE RADIOLOGICAL TREATMENT OF CANCER OF THE CERVIX UTERI.

This enquiry dates from 1929. At that time, the Health Committee had observed that there was a very genuine increase in mortality from uterine cancer, despite the progress accomplished in the treatment of this form of cancer by radium and X-rays. It had therefore planned a detailed enquiry into the various methods used in the principal clinics where favourable results had been achieved. In this way, it was hoped that the misapprehensions existing with regard to the value of radiological treatment would be dispelled, and that the different administrations would be able to utilise the results achieved in planning their future action.

It had been decided that the patients treated in certain clinics would be carefully followed over a period of five years, so as to take into account the possibility of relapses. The first report appeared in July 1937.² It relates to the patients treated in

¹ The Health Committee appointed Professor H. Laugier (France) as Chairman of this Commission and the following as Rapporteurs: Professor J. Dill (United States of America), Professor E. Hansen (Denmark), Professor B. A. McSwiney (United Kingdom) and Dr. C. Wroczynski (Poland).

² Document C.H.1225.
1930 in six clinics in the United States of America, Belgium, the United Kingdom, France and Sweden. A second report is expected shortly on the patients treated in 1931 and followed during the subsequent five years.

VII. Teaching of Hygiene.

In 1937, the Health Committee organised an enquiry into the present methods of instruction and the syllabus of the principal schools of hygiene of Europe. The principal object was to bring up to date the report which appeared in 1930 (document C.H.888) under the signature of Professor Carl Prausnitz.

The new report had to record the changes which had taken place during the past five years, particularly under the influence of the economic depression. These changes have affected the activities of the institutions themselves and their relations with the health administrations. For this reason, the factors influencing the development and work of the institutes and schools of hygiene have been mainly dealt with. These factors are connected chiefly with the social and economic background of the country, local tradition, and to some extent the influence exercised by the Health Organisation and the International Health Division of the Rockefeller Foundation.

The report then gives a full description of the way in which schools of hygiene are organised, and makes general observations about the work of these schools (full-time health service, training of health staff, training in hygiene of medical students and graduates; relations between national health insurance institutions and the institutes and schools of hygiene).

The same issue contains the recommendations made by the directors of these institutes and schools with regard to the organisation and resources of the institutions, the various types and their fundamental task — to promote the teaching of hygiene and to interest students in this subject.

1 Published in the Bulletin of the Health Organisation, April 1938.
2 The Institutes considered are those of the United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Roumania, Spain, Turkey and Yugoslavia.
Here it is necessary, not only to provide special teaching for future health officers, but also to give appropriate instruction to medical students who, as the practitioners of the future, will be responsible for the collaboration of the medical profession in health work and social insurance. While this collaboration is essential everywhere, it is of particular importance in rural areas, and special measures should be taken to attract and retain there a sufficient number of medical men.

The institutions in question should not only devote attention to teaching and research, but should also endeavour to help in public health work and support educative propaganda.

VIII. Maternal and Infant Welfare.

The question of maternal mortality and morbidity was one of the items on the Health Committee’s programme of work. It accordingly organised last year a collective study tour, which took place in August and September 1937. Its object was to prepare a report dealing, on the one hand, with the organisation of maternal welfare services, and, on the other hand, with the causes of maternal mortality and morbidity.

The experts who took part in this study tour shared between them the task of visiting the following countries: Austria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, England and Scotland, Finland, France, Italy, Poland, Sweden, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Yugoslavia. In each country, they carried out their investigations according to a programme laid down by the national administration.

The report is now being prepared.

IX. Epidemiological Intelligence Service.

No important change has occurred in the working of this Service, although modifications of detail have been made in the form of its publications.

1 These experts were:

Dr. Barbara MacEwen, who was responsible for the local enquiries into maternal mortality undertaken on behalf of the Ministry of Health of the United Kingdom, which are dealt with in the “Report on an Investigation into Maternal Mortality”, published in 1937;

Dr. Gabrielle Henry, of the Interdepartmental Social Insurance Fund of Seine and Seine-et-Oise;

Dr. Tibor Bielek, Inspector of Child Welfare in Hungary;

Dr. A. Stampar, expert attached to the Health Section.
The *Epidemiological Report* is again appearing monthly. It provides a sort of statistical supplement to the *Weekly Epidemiological Record*. For this reason, the publication in the latter of certain data on pestilential diseases which are not transmitted telegraphically has been abandoned.

The *Epidemiological Record* now contains notes on current epidemics, or on recent developments in connection with certain contagious diseases. In this way, the reader is spared the difficulty he might otherwise have experienced in judging whether the facts reported are normal or exceptional.

Moreover, a section has recently been introduced into the *Epidemiological Record* providing regular information on the work of the Health Organisation.

The following studies are at present in course of preparation: Brucellosis in France, by Dr. Taylor, Dr. Hazemann and Dr. Lisbonne; Spirochetosis ictero-haemorrhagica, by Professor Schüffner. In addition, a number of statistical and epidemiological articles on tuberculosis, typhoid fever, brucellosis and general mortality in rural districts, will shortly be published.

X. SINGAPORE BUREAU.

In addition to its normal work, which has been intensified by reason of events in the Far East and their epidemiological consequences, the Eastern Bureau has, in accordance with the decisions of its Advisory Council, carried out investigations into current health problems such as the prevention of epidemics of smallpox on board ship and the prevention of the transmission of cholera by aircraft. It has also collaborated with health administrations in the East in work undertaken by the latter as a result of the decisions of the Bandoeng Rural Hygiene Conference, especially in connection with health surveys, whether general or confined to certain diseases such as tuberculosis.

New or increased financial subsidies from Australia, Burma, the Federated Malay States, the Netherlands Indies, French Indo-China, New Zealand and the Philippine Islands have brought evidence of the interest taken by numerous countries in the Bureau's work.
The annual report of the Bureau for 1937 contains a detailed study, accompanied by a series of maps and graphs, of the incidence of infectious diseases during 1937 in the area served by the Singapore Bureau. It is of interest that, last year, twenty-four vessels were notified as being infected with cholera, twenty-three with smallpox, fifty-four with chicken-pox, and thirty-one with measles. As far as smallpox is concerned, there is a definite seasonal incidence in the first six months of the year. No vessel recognised as plague-infected has arrived at an Eastern port for more than three years.

The nine wireless stations which regularly broadcast the *Epidemiological Bulletin* free of charge have for the most part given up long-wave broadcasting in favour of short waves. The consequence was that certain areas, particularly in Australia and in South Africa, had some difficulty last year in picking up the message. This difficulty had to be met by various provisional measures, and there is under consideration the possibility of transmission by the Radio-Nations service.

The report contains, in addition, an account of research work being carried out by laboratories situated in the Eastern area. In this respect, the Bureau acts as a centre of information between those who take an interest in this activity.

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1 Document C.H.1326.
10.

TECHNICAL COLLABORATION
BETWEEN THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND CHINA.

I. ANTI-EPIDEMIC WORK.

Since the last report was presented,¹ a fundamental change has been made in the technical collaboration between the League and China.

In September 1937, the Chinese Government requested that technical assistance should be given to central and provincial Government departments in the prevention and control of epidemics and the general relief of the civilian population and refugees. Accordingly, the League Assembly, considering the possibilities of the spread of epidemic disease within Chinese territory, as well as across frontiers and overseas, voted in October last a maximum, non-recurrent appropriation of two million Swiss francs for the execution of an anti-epidemic campaign, adapted, as regards geographical area and methods of action, to the needs of the situation.

Acting on instructions received from the Council, a special Sub-Committee of the Health Committee drew up a technical scheme, based on the following general principles: The Chinese authorities themselves would assume responsibility for the execution of the plan, with the aid of medical officers and organisers of wide experience, grouped in three units, and provided with adequate sanitary material. In addition to the despatch of these units, a reserve stock of supplies should be established on which all units would be able to draw. On the termination

of the scheme, the material and equipment placed at the disposal of the experts would become the property of the Chinese Government.

The Sub-Committee suggested that an Epidemic Commission should be set up, consisting of the head of the Chinese Health Administration, the Medical Adviser of the League of Nations to that Administration, and the three Epidemic Commissioners leading the units. This Commission would ensure the necessary co-ordination between the units, the Chinese Administration and the League in Geneva.

Three medical units, under the leadership of Professor Mooser, Dr. Robertson and Surgeon-General Lasnet respectively, were accordingly organised and left Europe for China in the early days of December 1937, together with sufficient medical supplies to start work in the field. Furthermore, a reserve stock of drugs was despatched, and was concentrated at Hong-Kong, where the base has been established.

The three units began their operations at the beginning of February in the following areas:

- No. 1 unit (Dr. Mooser), Sian (Shensi);
- No. 2 unit (Dr. Robertson), Changsha (Hunan);
- No. 3 unit (Surgeon-General Lasnet), Nanning (Kwangsi).

All the reports so far received emphasise the close liaison which has been established between the League units and the central and provincial Governments. In each case, the League unit, with the necessary Chinese medical and auxiliary staff, is incorporated in the local health administrations, and, at the same time, is in close touch with the Central Government through a special Chinese Medical Liaison Officer. In this collaboration, every effort is being made, not only to meet present emergencies, but also to strengthen and, where necessary, facilitate the organisation of the permanent health work, particularly in rural districts. It is thus hoped that the present League assistance to China will have more than temporary results, and will serve to develop on a sound technical basis the collaboration in health matters given prior to the outbreak of hostilities, ultimately constituting a permanent contribution to the welfare of China. Moreover, the reports received from the units stress the great increase, both among local and central authorities, of interest
in anti-epidemic work which has followed the arrival of the League's units.

The Government has placed a lump sum of 160,000 Chinese dollars at the Epidemic Commission's disposal, as a special epidemic grant, for the operating expenses of the Chinese units.

It is of interest to summarise the plan of campaign which each of these units is endeavouring to initiate in its respective area.

No. 1 Unit (Dr. Mooser).

The first medical unit is working in the far north-west. Its headquarters are at Sianfu, the capital of Shensi Province. Facilities for the care of the sick exist in the small town of Yennan. The regional central hospital is situated in thirty-eight caves on the loess slope of the Pagoda Mountain. Fifteen additional caves are being dug. There is a small laboratory.

In general, the first unit has set to work on the following lines:

It was found particularly necessary to establish a laboratory for vaccine production, in view of the difficulty of communications between the north-west and the east of China. The centre of production is at Sian. A second centre has been established at Lanchow, capital of Kansu.

Sanitary and health services in the towns and cities of the north-west have been started with the ultimate object of setting up a modern health service in that province. Branches in Yennan and Chengchow have started similar work, and delousing stations are under construction there as well as at Sian and Kaifeng.

As it is not possible to undertake large-scale sanitation work, the activities of the unit are limited to the improvement of sanitary conditions in refugee camps, and the provision of advice and experts to the local authorities.

At the present time, large-scale vaccination is being carried out against smallpox, and later, immunisation against typhoid and cholera will be carried out as widely as possible.

In the meantime, half a million doses of smallpox vaccine have been purchased at Hong-Kong and 200,000 doses of dried vaccine from Bandoeng. The unit thus has at its disposal about 1,000,000 doses which, in addition to the supply in the hands of the provincial governments, the Red Cross Society and the Army Medical Service, will be sufficient to cover the needs of
the region for this spring. Dr. Laigret has prepared at Hanoi 1,600 doses of typhus vaccine, which have been sent by air to No. 1 unit for the vaccination of the personnel of the unit.

An isolation hospital with 200 beds has been organised at Sian, and similar hospitals will be established elsewhere as necessity requires.

In view of the importance of private medical care for refugees, the collaboration of Red Cross units has been secured.

A survey of the plague situation in Yuling is to be made as soon as the Yennan branch can spare staff to undertake it.

In all the areas, public health propaganda is to be carried out as far as possible. Talks and health lectures are being organised, and use is being made of posters, handbills and leaflets.

Collaboration has been established with the North China branch of the International Red Cross at Kaifeng and in Cheng-chow. This has taken the form, as far as the unit is concerned, of the construction of delousing stations, the provision of vaccines and the training of personnel in sanitary work. As far as may be practicable, the unit will attend to epidemic and public health problems in the various areas in which the International Red Cross is operating.

Laboratory facilities are given free of charge to all local hospitals and physicians, and medical as well as specialist advice and assistance is rendered to local hospitals, if found necessary.

No. 2 Unit (Dr. Robertson).

The second unit is responsible for anti-epidemic work in the central provinces of Hupeh, Hunan, Kiangsi, and also to some extent in South Anhwei, Chekiang and Fukien. Its headquarters are at Changsha, in Hunan.

The unit was able to co-operate closely with the provincial and national health authorities.

The presence of the League anti-epidemic units for one year should be utilised to strengthen existing public health organisations so as to have lasting useful results. Moreover, for the sake of the maximum of efficiency in utilising available resources, the whole anti-epidemic scheme has been incorporated into the provincial health administrations and their services, and everything is as a rule done in their name and with their approval.
The second unit has joined with the National Health Administration of China to form a Central China Epidemic Prevention Unit on which the health services of the provincial governments are represented.

The first step was to undertake an epidemic survey in these provinces and to establish a system for reporting cases of cholera, typhoid and paratyphoid, smallpox, epidemic meningitis, diphtheria, plague and typhus. This reporting system is functioning well in Kiangsi and is being improved in Hunan and Hupeh. There have been small outbreaks of smallpox and sporadic cases of cholera, with an increasing number of cases of meningitis and diphtheria. More serious conditions are expected as summer approaches and the condition of the numerous refugees becomes worse.

A big campaign of inoculation against cholera and of anti-smallpox vaccination has been undertaken by the unit, in conjunction with the local health authorities and the Chinese Red Cross. The latter also has a number of organisations in the field, which are maintaining close touch with the Epidemic Commissioners of the League. The Commission has also opened a campaign against malaria, of which there is a severe outbreak in the north-west of the province of Hunan.

Refugee populations seem to accept preventive work such as inoculation and vaccination much more readily if it is combined with the general work of a clinic which at the same time looks after minor ailments. A supply of ointments for skin diseases, the treatment of eye complaints, the distribution of a few comforts and of foodstuffs to supplement an inferior diet make all the difference between success and failure in measures for anti-epidemic prevention.

The provincial health authorities are seconding the efforts of the League Epidemic Commission by helping to establish isolation hospitals at various centres.

The Epidemic Commissioner’s report emphasises that these enterprises cannot be financed from the Epidemic Commission’s funds, and must be sponsored by the provincial health authorities and helped out by the Red Cross and other relief distributing organisations.

He urges that efforts should be made to send supplies of cod-liver oil and vitamin B1 containing substances to combat beri-beri among the refugees.
The anti-epidemic campaign in Central China, which is being conducted through the Central China Epidemic Prevention Unit, also includes the setting-up of delousing stations for refugees. The provincial governments of Hupeh, Hunan and Kiangsi are taking an active part in the anti-epidemic work and are allocating additional funds to strengthen their health services. It seems that the Health Service will be able to meet the emergency in the spring and summer, since larger appropriations than had been expected are available. This is partly due, in the Epidemic Commissioner's opinion, to the influence exerted by the presence of the League of Nations units.

No. 3 Unit (Dr. Lasnet).

The third unit is operating in the south-west of China. Its head quarters and base laboratory are at Nanning, with annexes at Wu Chow and Canton. As in the case of unit No. 2, this section of the League Epidemic Commission is working in close co-operation with the national and provincial health authorities. The area covered by the work of the unit — Kiangsi to Kwangtung — is very large, with a population of 46 millions. The Epidemic Commission has divided the area into a number of health districts, in each of which there is a Chinese public health officer in liaison with the local doctors and the administrative authorities.

The need for a larger number of Chinese units, including a doctor, a secretary and an assistant, and of a high degree of mobility with adequate motor transport, lorries, etc., is stressed in the Epidemic Commissioner's report.

The first work undertaken (as in the case of No. 2 unit) was the preparation of an inventory of the local sanitary resources, a study of the epidemic situation, and the establishment of liaison with the local authorities. The latter included the development of close co-operation with the various existing organisations through which epidemiological information could be obtained — e.g., hospitals, local practitioners, missionary hospitals and local officials. At the same time, an intensive propaganda campaign was carried on through these agencies amongst the general public.

Anti-smallpox vaccine is being produced on a large scale in the base laboratory, and a vaccine for typhus is being prepared.
A campaign of anti-cholera and anti-smallpox vaccinations has been begun.

Measures are being taken to combat malaria, and preparations are being made against the danger of big epidemics of cholera, plague and other diseases breaking out in spring and summer.

* * *

In conclusion, it may be said that the work so far accomplished has been satisfactory, and that the organisation of the anti-epidemic campaign is being firmly established. It must be remembered that the funds put at the disposal of the Commission for its work, though representing a high percentage of the League budget, were limited in relation to the vast problems to be solved.

The work entailed involves a certain amount of danger to the members of the units. The isolation hospital at Hanyang, where part of Dr. Robertson's unit was installed, was destroyed in the course of an aerial bombardment on April 29th last. Two Chinese members of the unit's staff were killed, and three wounded. While it is to be hoped that such casualties may not occur again, the risk still remains.

Much of the success of the work is due to the harmony which exists between the League Commissioners and their Chinese colleagues, a factor which is always of paramount importance for the success of activities involving international collaboration and assistance.¹

¹ The following material gifts and facilities have been received:

The Netherlands and Netherlands Indies Governments, desiring to participate on their own account in the work of medical assistance to China undertaken by the League, have made a gift in kind to the value of 50,000 florins.

The Danish Government has given 5,000 doses of tetanus anti-toxin and one million units of diphtheria anti-toxin, while the Danish Red Cross has contributed a further 10,000 doses of tetanus anti-toxin and two million units of diphtheria anti-toxin.

The firm of Bayer, at Leverkusen in Germany, has supplied the mission with 2 kilogrammes of atebrin.

The Peninsular and Oriental Steamship Company has agreed to convey to China, free of charge, the goods entrusted to it.

The Compagnie française des Messageries Maritimes granted a 50% reduction in fares to those members of the mission who travelled on its ships.

The firm of Jardine, Matheson and Company, of Hong-Kong, has undertaken to receive, store and re-despatch into China all stores intended for the mission. It has also placed the whole of its administrative organisation, which is extensive, in the disposal of the Secretariat without charge, the League merely refunding expenditure actually incurred by the firm.
II. OTHER FORMS OF TECHNICAL COLLABORATION.

Although the Epidemic Commission has, to a great extent, superseded the normal technical collaboration with China, there still remain two engineering experts¹ who were placed at the Chinese Government’s disposal before the outbreak of hostilities.

It will be remembered that reference was made last year ² to the creation of a planning office at Nanking, accredited to the National Economic Council, in the organisation of which these two experts were directly employed. This planning office was mainly concerned with hydraulic and road problems. Owing to the present situation in China, its work has been temporarily suspended. However, the two experts continue to render valuable services to the Chinese Government within the scope of the technical activities for which they were originally appointed.

¹ M. Bourdrez and M. Maux.
EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON RURAL LIFE.

The last Assembly, having fixed July 1939 as the date of the European Conference on Rural Life, requested the Council to determine its scope and agenda and to arrange for all the requisite preparatory work.

In pursuance of this request, the Council asked the Secretary-General to form a Preparatory Committee. This Committee sat from April 4th to 7th, 1938. It submitted to the Council a report, in which it described the origins of the Conference and defined its objects. On this basis, it then decided upon the Conference's agenda and the programme to be carried out to provide adequate preparation.

On May 13th, 1938, the Council approved this report, which was communicated to all the European Governments. The latter were also asked to state whether they intended to send representatives to the Conference.

1 The Committee was presided over by M. A. Wauters, Belgian Minister of Public Health, and, in his absence, by Professor J. Parisot, President of the Health Committee. The members of the Committee were:

Mr. F. L. McDougall, C.M.G., Economic Adviser to the Australian Government in London;
M. A. Wauters, Belgian Minister of Public Health;
Mr. R. R. Enfield, of the British Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries;
M. Sörensen, Agricultural Adviser at the Danish Legation in London (was not present at the session of April 4th to 7th, 1938);
Professor Jacques Parisot, Member of the Health Council of France, Professor of Health and Social Medicine at the University of Nancy;
M. Rudolf Dzerve, President of the Latvian Chamber of Agriculture;
Professor Witold Staniewicz, former Polish Minister of Agriculture, Professor at the Scientific Institute of Agriculture at Wilno;
Dr. Milosav Stoyadinovitch, of Yugoslavia.

Were also present:
The representatives of the International Labour Office;
The Secretary-General of the International Institute of Agriculture;
M. Louis Tardy, Honorary Director-General of the Caisse nationale de Crédit agricole, of France.

2 Document C.161.M.101.1938.II.B.
I. Objects and Agenda of the Conference.

Since the European Conference on Rural Hygiene (1931), the Health Committee has been dealing with the technical problems raised by the improvement of health in rural areas. This work inevitably went beyond the purely health point of view. There can, indeed, be no improvement in health in rural areas unless there is a parallel improvement in conditions of living. Without nutrition adequate in quality and quantity, without healthy housing accommodation, without rational planning of farm buildings, and without suitable general education — to take only a few examples — no great results can be expected from the creation of dispensaries or laboratories.

The object must, in fact, be to develop logically the notion of prevention — i.e., to place the peasant himself in a position to offer normal resistance to disease. Hygiene can then build on a solid foundation.

It may be objected that this conception is also valid for town populations, and this is no doubt true; but, according to the experience of the twentieth century, the problems of health and sanitation definitely give cause for more concern in the rural districts than in the towns, contrary to what might be imagined. This is why the attention of the public authorities is particularly directed towards the rural areas.

At the same time, the studies made by the technical organisations of the League, the International Labour Office and the International Institute of Agriculture with regard to nutrition and housing have shown that the rural population of many parts of Europe is badly housed and inadequately fed. Lastly, everything seems to prove that general economic progress depends, to a great extent, on the purchasing-power of agricultural workers, and consequently on their conditions of life. For this reason, at the suggestion of the Australian delegation, the Economic and Financial Organisation has been entrusted with work based on the fundamental notion of the standard of living. Similar studies have been carried out by the International Labour Office.

1 As regards the health aspect in particular, see page 95. As regards the economic and financial aspects, see pages 78 and 80.
It is thus the predominant importance of the standard of life of the peasant populations as a factor of economic and social progress which constitutes the *raison d’être* of the Conference. The agenda prepared by the Committee extends to the various spheres in which the public authorities are capable of exercising a favourable influence on the improvement of conditions of life — demographic conditions, land tenure systems and agrarian reform, land settlement, co-operatives, agricultural credit, education, medico-social policy, nutrition and rural planning.

This is a vast programme, and may give the impression that it is desired to organise an international conference on agricultural economy. This is not the case. The essential task of the future Conference is not a technical one; but, on the contrary, to take, as it were, a human interest in the peasant’s life. Those who are responsible for the conduct of affairs at every step in the social scale can greatly help to accelerate the rise of a generation of peasants towards a standard of living higher than that of the previous generation. Hence, the definite purpose assigned to the Conference should be to study the part that the public authorities play, or should play, in endeavouring to bring about an improvement in any aspect of the life of rural populations. It will be able to do useful work by collecting the best documentation on the various forms of rural life in Europe, by organising an exchange of information and ideas, by making known the technical methods adopted in certain countries, the progress accomplished and the difficulties encountered, by laying down certain guiding principles, and, lastly, by ascertaining how the individual efforts of different countries might be supported by appropriate international action.

**II. Preparation of the Conference.**

Since the Conference is to work, as it were, on the living matter, it is essential that the various European Governments should supply it with this matter, each as far as it is concerned. They have accordingly been requested to consider the preparation of a general monograph on national lines, briefly describing the conditions of life of their rural population and the improvements which might be made. It will be an advantage if these monographs avoid all theoretical considerations and concentrate
on showing the special conditions of given areas. An endeavour should be made to deal with subjects which are of special and direct interest to the peasants, and especially to the class of labourers who, in every country, constitute a sort of agricultural proletariat. In this connection, each country has its own special experience determined by its historical and social evolution, by the movements of the population, by the ethnical and geographical environment, or by some special factor of economic and social life. It will therefore be for each Government to adapt the drafting of its monograph to its own peculiar circumstances.

The Governments will no doubt select for this purpose a number of high officials in the branches of agriculture, public health and national education and persons prominent in the agricultural world. It would therefore be an advantage if each Government could forthwith form a small nucleus of persons responsible for assisting in the preparation of the Conference who would later constitute the national delegation. The Preparatory Committee and the Secretariat should maintain contact with these national committees, so as to ensure the necessary cohesion and continuity in the preparation of the Conference.

Lastly, various technical monographs are in preparation. They will relate to the general problems on the Conference’s agenda. They have been distributed by the Preparatory Committee among the various international organisations, and, in some cases, entrusted to experts with special qualifications. The Conference will thus be able to profit by the considerable work already carried out by the Health Organisation, the Economic and Financial Organisation and the Organisation for Communications and Transit of the League of Nations, the International Labour Office, the International Institute of Agriculture and the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation. In this way, each Government will be able to see how the best qualified experts view the solution of the difficulties with which it has to grapple in its own country.

The Preparatory Committee will meet again towards the end of 1938 to examine the national monographs and the technical monographs. It will use this material to prepare a “Principal Preparatory Document”, which will provide the main basis for the Conference’s work.
I. INTRODUCTION.

Administration and Organisation.

The Advisory Committee on Social Questions, which was reorganised in 1936/37, held its second session from April 21st to May 5th, 1938.

In adopting the report on the Committee's reorganisation, the Council of the League of Nations raised the limit for the number of Governments which might be represented on the new Committee to twenty-five. Four vacancies were left open, two of which were filled in 1938 by invitations to Ireland and Yugoslavia, bringing the number of Governments now represented on the Committee up to twenty-three.

As a result of the reorganisation of the Advisory Committee, a number of international organisations which had previously been represented by assessors became correspondent members in 1937. In May 1938, on the proposal of the Advisory Committee, the Council invited six more international organisations to become correspondent members. The Committee thought that a large number of correspondent members would have the advantage of keeping the Committee in touch with voluntary activities and of disseminating a knowledge of its work.