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LEAGUE OF NATIONS

GENEVA,

September 4th, 1923.

Report on the Work of the High Commission for Refugees

presented by Dr. Fridtjof Nansen to the Fourth Assembly.

SUMMARY.

1. Russian Refugees.

It may be useful, before entering into the details of the work accomplished by the High Commission since the last Assembly, to give a short general survey of the duties with which the High Commission has been charged from time to time by the Assembly and the Council and of the results obtained.

It will be remembered that, during the latter part of 1921, the High Commission was established to deal with the problems raised by the presence of more than one and a-half million Russian refugees scattered throughout Europe. The majority of these refugees were destitute, and their situation was rendered still more serious by the fact that most of them had no passports, or only possessed passports that were recognised by very few Governments. It was because the individual Governments found it impossible by independent action to deal with the problem of these refugees that the League was requested to interest itself in their welfare.

Thanks to the co-operation afforded to the High Commission by the Governments interested in the refugee question, and to the valuable support of many private relief organisations, it has been possible to effect a very substantial improvement in the situation of the refugees, although the general economic depression prevailing throughout Europe has up to the present rendered impossible a complete solution of the problem.

It was recognised from the outset that the problem presented two distinct phases, one being of a transitory nature and consisting of hospitality in various countries, and the other the permanent solution by repatriation to Russia if and when conditions in that country became favourable. Substantial progress has been made in the transitory phase; no fewer than 31 Governments, including Germany and Mexico, have recognised the model identity certificate for Russian refugees recommended by the High Commission. As a matter of fact, of all the countries interested in the Russian refugee problem only China and Turkey have refrained from adopting the identity certificate system, but recent negotiations with the Governments of these two countries encourage the hope that they will not long delay their adhesion to the system. The introduction of this system has not only been of inestimable value to the refugees themselves, in releasing them substantially from their disabilities as "Staatenlose", but has been of considerable benefit to countries where the refugees are concentrated in large numbers, by affording the refugees facilities to travel to other countries where they either have prospects of employment or opportunities to join friends.

The High Commission has in many other ways endeavoured to improve the material welfare of the refugees. For example, the Constantinople problem, which, at the time of the establishment of the High Commission, assumed very serious proportions, and was causing very grave concern to the representatives of the Allied Powers, has been practically liquidated by means of the evacuation of more than 20,000 refugees to 45 different countries.

Constantinople has seen many tragedies, but it is difficult to believe that the catastrophes of the past could have entailed such a sum of human misery as was produced by the three successive refugee waves of Russians, Turks and Greeks.

These three separate hordes of miserable human beings, driven from their homes by the fear of death, ravaged by epidemic diseases and deprived of their power of economic production, have since November 1920 descended upon Constantinople, which, under the Allied occupation, offered at least security.

Constantinople, for hundreds of thousands of human beings, has been the first stage of a long and always painful journey, which led, for those more fortunate ones who survived its rigours, to a new beginning in other countries.

170,000 Russians, 75,000 Turks, 155,000 Greeks and Armenians — these figures give some idea of the refugee problems which have had to be faced in Constantinople.

Some account of what the Constantinople Office of the High Commission of the League of Nations for Refugees has been able to accomplish during the year under review to improve the situation of these various refugees appears in the relevant chapters of the reports.

This record would not be complete without grateful acknowledgment of the valued support and co-operation of the American Red Cross, the American Relief Administration and the Near East Relief, under the leadership of Admiral Bristol, and of the assistance of the Allied High Commissioners and of the diplomatic representatives of the States Members represented in Constantinople, without whose help the solution of the Constantinople refugee problems would have been well-nigh impossible.

To General Harington and to the forces under his command a special tribute must be paid; without his effective aid and sympathy, these problems would probably never have been dealt with so successfully as they have been.

The peculiar conditions prevailing at Constantinople necessarily focussed public attention on the Russian refugee question in that area, but, as a matter of fact, there were at the same time many hundreds of thousands of refugees in Germany and Poland whose plight still gives rise to the very gravest anxiety, whilst the burdens carried by Bulgaria, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and Roumania also call for the most sympathetic consideration. Since the last Assembly, both the Polish and Roumanian Governments have for economic reasons been obliged to insist on the departure of a large number of refugees from their territories, and the High Commission has to record its thanks to them for suspending at its request expulsion decrees directed against certain categories of refugees in order to enable the High Commission, in conjunction with private relief organisations, to secure the satisfactory evacuation of the refugees concerned.

With money obtained from various sources, the High Commission has been enabled to contribute to the welfare of invalids and child refugees and to secure their transfer from time to time to more satisfactory conditions.

It may be interesting here to refer briefly to the manner in which the High Commission has, when sufficient funds were placed at its disposal, been able to accomplish a useful piece of work, not only for the refugees concerned but for one of the Members of the League. The British Government had assumed responsibility for about 4,500 refugees in Cyprus, Egypt and the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and invited the High Commission to assist it in liquidating this responsibility. Within a very short space of time, the High Commission succeeded in transferring the large majority of the refugees in Egypt and Cyprus to other countries, where they were enabled to become self-supporting, and made an arrangement for the liquidation of the problem of the remainder in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. This transaction was completed, with the exception of a few isolated difficult cases, within a few months, at a small cost per head as compared with their annual maintenance, and with advantage to the refugees themselves as well as to the Member concerned.

A considerable movement for a return to their country having manifested itself among certain categories of the refugees, negotiations were opened with the Soviet Government to secure satisfactory arrangements for their reception in Russia. Some 5,000 of the refugees have been repatriated under this arrangement from Bulgaria and Greece, and the High Commission's representatives in Russia report that the concessions obtained from the Soviet Government have been loyally observed.

2. Bulgarian Inhabitants expelled from Western Thrace.

The Council, at its meeting on April 21st, considered, at the request of the Bulgarian Government, the question of the expulsion of certain Bulgarian inhabitants from Western Thrace to different parts of Greece, and requested the High Commission to do all in its power to improve their situation.

In accordance with this request, the High Commissioner instructed his existing organisation in Greece to examine the possibilities of improving the condition of the people concerned, and as a result, in close co-operation with the Greek authorities, has succeeded in securing the issue by the Greek Government of rations and allowances to these people.

The High Commission has further, in conjunction with the Greek Government, examined the possibility of securing the return to their homes of these deportees, and is happy to take this opportunity of placing on record that the Greek Government has been able to see its way to assent to the suggestion made by the High Commission that the moment has arrived when these deportees could be re-established in their homes, and has been informed that effect is already being given to this decision.

3. Asia Minor Refugees.

In compliance with the request made by the Third Assembly, the High Commission has occupied itself very seriously with the problem raised by the events of the latter part of last year in Asia Minor and has used every possible endeavour to bring assistance to the

Greek Government to enable it to deal with the problem caused by the sudden influx of one million refugees into its territory.

In response to the appeal made to the Members at the last Assembly, about £38,000 was made available for the provision of emergency relief pending the introduction of measures on a large scale by the American Red Cross and other relief organisations. From this sum, in addition to emergency relief measures, a grant of £5,000 was made to the Epidemic Commission of the League to enable it to carry out an anti-epidemic campaign in Greece.

From the very outset, the High Commission strongly urged that the problem of the refugees in Greece, if not handled in a practical manner, would result in a catastrophe to the refugees themselves and also to the whole of Greece. It therefore strongly advocated that a satisfactory solution could only be obtained by arranging for the permanent settlement of the refugees on a productive basis, and, in view of the impoverished condition of the country as a result of several years of war, urged that the Greek Government should be assisted in floating an external loan for the purpose. The Council endorsed this view and instructed the Finance Committee to examine the securities which the Greek Government was prepared to offer in this connection, and requested the High Commission, in conjunction with the Greek Government, to prepare a plan indicating how such a loan, if realised, could be employed to the best advantage. Effect has been given to these requests and the Council has already intimated to the Greek Government on what conditions the League would be able to associate itself with the realisation of such a plan. It is interesting to recall that the American Government sent official observers to the Finance Committee and to the Council's Greek Sub-Committee dealing with this question.

In the meantime, the High Commission established a small refugee settlement in Western Thrace, where about 10,000 refugees have been established in 15 new villages, and the results so far obtained indicate that, by a careful co-ordination of the efforts of the Greek Government and relief organisations, it is possible to establish the refugees on the land on a permanent self-supporting basis at a comparatively small cost per head.

The High Commission, in addition to the above activities, has been instrumental in securing the evacuation of no fewer than 156,000 refugees to Greece and of 10,000 Turkish refugees to Asia Minor. Finally, it should be mentioned that the High Commission was urged by the Allied High Commissioners in Constantinople, the Near East Relief and the All-British Appeal to deal with the very serious problem raised by the presence of about 27,000 Greek refugees, who had been deported to Constantinople from Black Sea ports in the months of January and February last, and were being decimated by epidemics. Although the funds placed at the disposal of the High Commission by the last Assembly were exhausted, it was impossible not to respond to these appeals, and the Russian Refugee Delegation of the High Commission in Constantinople was instructed to use its good offices on behalf of these unfortunate people. When the High Commission's Office in Constantinople first took this matter in hand, the death-rate averaged as many as 500 refugees per week and in the San Stefano camp alone as many as 50 per day. Energetic measures were taken to remedy this state of affairs, and in a remarkably short space of time, thanks to the valuable aid of the Turkish Red Crescent, the Inter-Allied Sanitary Commission, the Near East Relief and the All-British Appeal, the mortality was reduced by 90 %, epidemics were entirely stamped out and the death-rate reduced to normal.

The Greek Government was naturally reluctant to receive any of these refugees in Greece while there was any danger of their bringing contagion to the country, and also pointed out that it was impossible to add to the burden already imposed by the presence of a million refugees on Greek territory. The High Commission directed its efforts, as indicated above, towards securing the removal of the first obstacle, and, by obtaining offers from the Near East Relief and the All-British Appeal to provide for the feeding of the refugees for a certain time after their arrival in Greece, succeeded in overcoming the second difficulty. It is a pleasant duty to report that, as a result, the Greek Government has agreed to arrange for the reception of the whole of these refugees in Greece, on condition that the High Commission absorbs a certain proportion into its Western Thrace Settlement. In the body of the report will be found letters from Admiral Mark Bristol, the American High Commissioner, and Lieut.-General Sir Charles Harington, the Officer Commanding the Allied troops in Constantinople, recording their appreciation of the services rendered by the League.

PART I.

RUSSIAN REFUGEES.

I. Resolutions of the Assembly.

The Assembly, on September 28th, 1922, after expressing entire satisfaction with the manner in which the duties of the High Commission had been discharged, passed the following resolutions :

The Assembly, having heard the report of the High Commissioner of the League of Nations for Russian Refugees on the work which he has accomplished during the past year,

Approves this report (A. 84),

And wishes to express its entire satisfaction with the way in which the High Commissioner has discharged the duties entrusted to him, and to record its high appreciation of the services he has rendered to the refugees and to the League.

As the work is not yet finished, the Assembly invites the High Commissioner to continue to apply the same methods of work as hitherto.

It further decides :

(1) To invite the Council to request the Governments of the Members of the League to continue to lend to the High Commissioner the support and assistance which they have hitherto given him, especially as regards the development of the means of general and professional education and the securing of employment for the refugees ;

(2) To invite the Council to draw the attention of the Governments of the Members of the League to the importance of the system of identity certificates adopted at the Conference on the subject held at Geneva in July 1922, and to request those Governments which have not yet given a favourable reply to consider whether they cannot, without delay, bring this system into force ;

(3) To request the Council to provide by international co-operation for the maintenance of the Russian refugees who are incapable of providing for their own livelihood in the States where they are congregated.

II. Identity Certificates for Russian Refugees.

The Conference of Government representatives which met in Geneva from July 3rd to July 5th, 1922, adopted unanimously a model form of identity certificate for Russian refugees, together with an agreed " arrangement " as to the condition of its issue, etc.

The High Commission is very glad to be able to report exceedingly good progress in this connection.

The following 31 Governments, constituting almost all of the countries interested in the Russian refugee problem, have formally adhered to the identity certificate system or adopted it in principle :

Albania	Latvia
Australia	Lithuania
Austria	Luxemburg
Bolivia	Mexico
Bulgaria	Netherlands
Chili	New Zealand
Czechoslovakia	Norway
Denmark	Poland
Finland	Portugal
France	Roumania
Germany	Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes
Great Britain	Siam
Greece	South Africa
Guatemala	Spain
Italy	Switzerland
Japan	

It will be observed that the German Government, which at present affords hospitality to some hundreds of thousands of refugees, and the Mexican Government have also adhered to the system. The adoption by the various Governments of the system of identity certificates has been of inestimable value to the Russian refugees, as it has largely freed them from their disabilities as " Staatenlose " and enabled them to travel to destinations where it was possible for them to obtain employment or join friends willing to support them. It has also been of considerable value to Governments, which could, by this means, ascertain with greater accuracy the number of Russian refugees on their territories and facilitate their departure elsewhere, and more especially to those Governments which, having recognised the Soviet Government, might have found it difficult to recognise the Russian refugees except through the intermediary of the League. Hungary has also notified unofficially her proposed adhesion, but China, which is very closely concerned in the refugee question, has not yet adopted the system, and a special appeal is made to the Chinese Delegation to the Assembly in the confident hope that the Chinese Government's adhesion will not be long delayed.

As a result of representations made by the High Commission to the British, French and Italian Delegations at the Lausanne Conference, Signor Montagna obtained a verbal promise from the Turkish Delegation that its Government would deliver identity certificates to the refugees remaining in Constantinople, on the model recommended by the Geneva Conference. This promise has since been confirmed verbally by Adnan Bey, the Turkish representative in Constantinople, to the Assistant High Commissioner and to the High Commission's representative in Constantinople, who is now endeavouring to bring the matter to a satisfactory

formal conclusion. The fate of the Russian refugees remaining in Constantinople after the departure of the Allies, which at one time gave rise to considerable anxiety, has, by virtue of the foregoing arrangement, been given a satisfactory solution.

III. Constantinople.

Since the last Assembly, very substantial progress towards the liquidation of the Constantinople Russian refugee problem, by the evacuation of refugees, has been made through the action of the League High Commission.

From September 1st, 1922, until the present date, a further 13,500 refugees have been evacuated as a result of individual departures and the despatch of convoys.

(a) *Invalid Refugees* : One of the most difficult problems with which the Constantinople Office has been faced has been the fate of upwards of 1,000 invalids and their families. The evacuation of this exceptionally difficult category has been completed and arrangements have been made with Russian and Bulgarian organisations in Bulgaria for their maintenance and future welfare.

(b) *Evacuation of Workmen and Miners* : No fewer than 1,000 able-bodied men with a number of dependents have been evacuated to Bulgaria, where they have been provided with employment in the Pernik mines. The most pleasing feature of this transfer is the fact that these men, who, for the most part, were entirely destitute in Constantinople, have now become productive citizens in Bulgaria.

(c) *Evacuation of Refugees fed by the American Relief Administration* : It will be remembered that, during the summer of 1922, the American Relief Administration most generously undertook to feed the remaining 10,000 necessitous Russian refugees in Constantinople, on condition that the League made arrangements for their evacuation within a specified period.

As a result of an arrangement concluded by the High Commission with the Bulgarian Government, the Constantinople Office was enabled to offer evacuation to Bulgaria to all refugees fed by this American organisation.

Such good progress was made in this direction that, after the evacuation of 4,333 refugees to Bulgaria and 1,857 to the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes during the year under review, the gradual cessation of feeding by the American Relief Administration, which concluded its activities in the month of February 1923, instead of being the tragedy it had always threatened to be, passed off entirely without grave consequences.

(d) *Evacuation of Russian Jewish Refugees* : The Constantinople Office has co-operated very actively with the Jewish refugee organisations, especially the Jewish Colonisation Association, and has been instrumental in securing the evacuation of some hundreds of Russian Jewish refugees to Palestine, the United States and other countries.

(e) *Special Evacuation Features* : The departure of the Allied Armies will cause such a change in the economic situation of the town that nearly all those refugees who are now living on a precarious basis of self-support will become entirely destitute.

To meet the claims of this category, the following evacuations have been secured. Some 1,857 refugees, including a large proportion of invalids and persons whose previous political associations were of such a nature as to render their presence in Constantinople, after the evacuation of the town by the Allied Forces of Occupation, dangerous for them, were sent to the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

Amongst groups thus sent were convoys of ex-Wrangel army regiments, who had been employed by the Allied Forces at Kelia and were evacuated on the representations of General Wrangel's representative in Constantinople.

It is interesting to note that, with the evacuation of these persons to employment in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, is satisfactorily concluded the last phase of the great tragedy which occurred in Constantinople in the latter part of November 1920, when General Wrangel's army of approximately 90,000 suddenly arrived in the port as a result of the Crimean evacuation.

(f) *Evacuation of Children and Orphans* : 53 orphan boys between the ages of 12 and 17 have been evacuated to France, where they were received by the High Commission's delegate and handed over to the French organisation the "Placement Familial".

190 persons, of whom 150 were small children from the orphanage of the Russian Red Cross at Bebek and the St. George's College, have been evacuated to Belgium by the High Commission, which also made a *per-capita* grant for the installation and maintenance of the Bebek orphans.

(g) *Co-operation with the American Organisations and Evacuations to America* : Close co-operation with the great American organisations still remains an important feature of the work of this office. The sittings of the League Refugee Co-ordination Committee continue

to afford a medium for the discussion and solution of the various refugee evacuation problems as they arise.

More tangible evidence of the successful co-operation of the League with the American Red Cross and the American Relief Administration is afforded by the fact that, as a result of the united efforts of these two organisations and the League, 598 refugees were sent to America by the High Commission's individual departure scheme. The success of this experiment in co-operation, and the excellent reports received from the refugees evacuated as to their successful absorption in America, encouraged the three organisations concerned to endeavour to send another 1,000, who should enter America in the quota opening on July 1st.

Funds were happily forthcoming and the scheme has been successfully accomplished, and over 1,000 persons have been despatched to America in five convoys.

The selection of candidates for this evacuation was effected by the American organisation the Bristol Disaster Relief Committee, to whom the High Commission was most happy to lend its comprehensive registration data and its evacuation machinery.

A special tribute should be paid in this connection to the Russian Refugee Relief Society of New York, which assumes responsibility for the welfare of the refugees after their arrival in the United States, and particularly to one of its members, Mr. R. J. Caldwell, who, at great personal inconvenience, made a prolonged stay in Europe in order to make a personal study of the Russian Refugee problem.

(h) *Prospective Canadian Evacuation*: The Canadian Immigration Official for Europe has arrived in Constantinople and, working in the Constantinople Office of the High Commission, has registered over 2,000 applicants for emigration to Canada. Seeing that these refugees will all be able to obtain work on arrival, the High Commission is making efforts to raise the money required for their passage, as a loan secured on their wages in Canada.

(i) *Individual Departures*: The number of countries to which the League has been able to evacuate refugees amounts to 45.

(j) *Evacuation of Russians formerly employed with the Allied Forces*: The High Commission's Office in Constantinople has recently been approached by the authorities of the British Army in Constantinople for advice and assistance in connection with the evacuation of Russian and Kalmuck refugees employed with the Forces. A scheme was elaborated by the High Commission and the sum of £4,000 has been allocated by the British Government for the execution of the plan. This is another typical example of the manner in which Members of the League can call upon the expert services of the High Commission for the liquidation of their refugee problems. Some 600 persons have already been evacuated under this scheme.

The High Commission was approached with a request to elaborate a similar plan for the evacuation of French Army employees of Russian nationality. A plan was worked out and evacuations have already commenced.

(k) *Facilities obtained from the Turkish Authorities*: The Turkish Police Authorities, on May 23rd, 1923, by a special order, instructed their sections that Russian refugees leaving Constantinople under the auspices of the League of Nations High Commission for Refugees were to be exempted from paying all taxes, with the exception of 26 piastres per head visa fee.

Russian refugees were also, at the request of the High Commission, exempted from having to produce Turkish identity certificates on departure.

General: When it is realised that practically every country in the world has a standing order to the effect that no Russian refugees may enter its territories and that most of the refugees themselves are completely destitute, some idea can be obtained of the diplomatic and financial difficulties which had to be overcome in order to attain the above results.

All this has been done during a period of crisis and strained relations between the Turkish and Allied authorities in the town, and it should be observed that, despite the difficulties that arose, with regard to the changes in passport control and interior administration, when the Turkish Authorities resumed certain functions after the signature of the Mudania Convention, the High Commission has been able to obtain special facilities for the evacuation of Russian refugees from Turkish and Allied Authorities alike.

It may be justifiably claimed that the existence of a special League machine for the evacuation of Russian refugees has reacted most favourably upon the juridical status and material welfare of those refugees who have not yet been evacuated but who are supporting themselves in the town and district.

There remain in Constantinople at present approximately 11,000 Russian refugees, on whose transfer to the United States of America and Canada the High Commission is concentrating its efforts in close co-operation with the relief organisations of these two countries.

DEPARTURES FROM CONSTANTINOPLE
from September 1st, 1922, to September 1st, 1923.

No.	Destination	Men	Women	Children	Total
1.	Abyssinia.....	3	3	—	6
2.	Algeria	4	2	2	8
3.	Argentina	64	41	25	160
4.	Austria.....	10	9	1	20
5.	Belgium	115	91	170	376
6.	Brazil	9	3	3	15
7.	Bulgaria.....	2,940	673	821	4,434
8.	Canada.....	81	16	3	100
9.	Chili.....	1	—	—	1
10.	China.....	1	—	—	1
11.	Czechoslovakia	105	52	16	173
12.	Danzig	4	—	—	4
13.	Egypt.....	12	8	3	23
14.	England.....	9	12	4	25
15.	Esthonia.....	36	25	15	76
16.	Finland.....	8	9	4	21
17.	France	916	567	288	1,771
18.	Germany.....	156	103	20	279
19.	Greece.....	13	10	3	26
20.	Hungary.....	283	43	9	335
21.	Italy.....	20	22	4	46
22.	Japan.....	1	—	—	1
23.	Java	1	1	—	2
24.	Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes	1,247	471	185	1,903
25.	Latvia.....	12	5	5	22
26.	Lithuania	32	17	5	54
27.	Mexico.....	5	—	—	5
28.	Netherlands	2	1	3	6
29.	Norway.....	1	—	—	1
30.	Palestine.....	151	94	77	322
31.	Persia.....	3	—	—	3
32.	Poland	137	77	39	253
33.	Portugal	17	6	1	24
34.	Roumania.....	15	7	2	24
35.	Russia.....	199	19	9	227
36.	Siam.....	1	1	1	3
37.	Spain.....	7	3	1	11
38.	Sweden	1	—	—	1
39.	Switzerland	1	1	—	2
40.	Syria	306	79	55	440
41.	Thrace	1	1	—	2
42.	Tunis.....	16	9	2	27
43.	Turkey.....	5	1	—	6
44.	United States of America	1,185	568	298	2,041
45.	Uruguay	5	1	—	6
	Total	8,141	3,044	2,101	13,286

IV. Bulgaria.

At the beginning of 1922, the situation of the Russian refugees in Bulgaria assumed a very serious aspect. Their number varied from thirty-five thousand to forty thousand, not including those who entered and enter the country every day. Many of them found work, but large numbers, including practically all the "Intelligentsia", were deprived of means of existence. Refugees were every day moving from one place to another looking for more favourable conditions. With rare exceptions, they were all willing to work, but they lacked adequate recommendations and protection. There were, in particular, many old people, women, children and invalids, whose situation was very uncertain. The existing Russian organisations, which had accomplished exceptionally good work on behalf of the refugees, found their efforts seriously curtailed through lack of funds and official recognition.

It was well known in Bulgaria that an Office of the High Commission had been established in Constantinople with very satisfactory results, and a strong appeal was made to the High Commission by representative Russian organisations that a similar office should be opened in Bulgaria to undertake the protection of the refugees and to co-ordinate the activities of the existing organisations.

This step was further rendered necessary by the transfer to Bulgaria of about 2,600 refugees from Egypt and Cyprus, who up to that time had been maintained by the British Government, but for whom the High Commission was to assume responsibility against a certain cash payment. The care taken of these refugees has been dealt with in an earlier report, but during the last six months many of the Egypt and Cyprus refugees have been assisted to proceed abroad where they have friends or where work has been promised to them. Apart from the Egypt and Cyprus refugees, many other activities have engaged the attention of the Sofia Office. These are enumerated below.

(a) *Invalids.*

Six hundred and eighty-five invalids and one hundred and fifty-six dependents, with hospital personnel, were transferred from Constantinople to Bulgaria. After their arrival in Bulgaria, an arrangement was made with the Russian Red Cross (old organisation) for their maintenance against a consolidated payment. All cot cases were transferred to a Bulgarian hospital on the same conditions as applied to Bulgarians. The office of the High Commission continued and continues to take an active and benevolent interest in the situation of these invalids.

Quarantine arrangements were made on arrival at Varna in the camp established by the High Commission.

(b) *One thousand workmen.*

A further one thousand workmen were transferred from Constantinople; employment was secured for 500 of them through the Bulgarian Government in the Pernik coal-mines and for the remaining 500 through the Ministry of Labour. The Office of the High Commission undertook to accommodate them at Pernik and built the necessary hutments. *The great majority of these 1,000 workmen were dependent on various charities in Constantinople. In Bulgaria, over 95% became self-supporting.*

At the same time, the Office rendered certain services to the American Technical School by bringing 175 pupils from Constantinople.

(c) *Five thousand refugees.*

Political events in Asia Minor in the autumn of 1922 aggravated to such an extent the situation of the Russian refugees in Constantinople that it was considered necessary to make very special efforts to secure the urgent departure of as large a number of refugees as possible. Negotiations were therefore opened with the Bulgarian Government, which very generously agreed to receive no fewer than 5,000 refugees, against a nominal payment of 400 levas per head by way of visa fee.

Slightly over 2,000 have arrived. They were divided into 14 groups and were sent to various places in the provinces. As a result of the efforts of the High Commission, the great majority of these refugees have become self-supporting.

(d) *Permissions to enter Bulgaria.*

At the end of 1922, the Bulgarian Government prohibited all Russians from entering Bulgaria, excepting those recommended by the High Commission. As there were many Russians desirous of entering Bulgaria from other countries, the Sofia Office exercised its privilege in favour of many deserving refugees. About 500 persons have up to the present thus been authorised to enter Bulgaria. Permissions were only delivered to persons whose relations could maintain them in Bulgaria.

(e) *Repatriation.*

In response to the appeal from many thousands of refugees in Bulgaria who expressed the desire to return to Russia, the High Commission opened negotiations with the Soviet Government in order to ascertain on what conditions the Soviet Government would allow such refugees to re-enter Russia. The arrangement which was subsequently made between the High Commission and the Soviet Government in this connection is dealt with in detail in another part of this Report. As far as Bulgaria was concerned, the Soviet Government consented to receive only such refugees as were natives of the Don, Kuban and Terek Provinces, where the economic conditions were considered favourable for their reception.

A special representative of the Soviet Red Cross was sent to Bulgaria to supervise repatriation and deliver the necessary visas authorising the refugees to enter Russia. In a short time a group of 800 persons presented themselves for repatriation. The Soviet Red Cross sent them to Varna; the Bulgarian Government granted them free railway transport; the transport from Varna to Novorossisk and the feeding during the journey were paid for by the High Commission and the Bulgarian Government, which granted a sum of 200,000 levas for the purpose, being 100 levas per head for 2,000 persons.

At the very outset the Office of the High Commission in Bulgaria gave the fullest publicity to the fact that only the repatriation of such refugees as expressed voluntarily the desire to return to Russia could be entertained, and that a signed declaration to this effect would be required from every refugee taking advantage of the repatriation arrangements. After signing the declaration, every refugee received an identity card from the High Commission. The names of the repatriated refugees were put on a list, a copy of which was sent to the High

Commission and another to its representative at Novorossisk. The S.S. "Varna" sailed on January 6th, 1923, with the first convoy of 771 persons. According to information received from the High Commission's representative at Novorossisk and from persons who returned on the same boat, the repatriated refugees were well received by the Soviet authorities.

A second convoy, consisting of 810 repatriated refugees, left on February 19th, a third convoy of 797 persons left on April 1st, and a fourth convoy of 1,062 persons left on May 8th. This latter convoy included 700 Cossacks from Greece, who had made a special appeal to the High Commission for repatriation. The majority of these repatriated refugees belong to the peasant class.

(f) *Assistance given to other Russians in Bulgaria.*

The Office is overwhelmed with petitions received from Russian refugees whose needs are urgent. For many of them the Office is the last resort where they can expect to receive assistance. Some of the applicants are in the greatest misery; others desire to work but have not the necessary recommendations. The Russian organisations do their best to help them but are hampered by limited funds. The help afforded by the Office usually consists of small money grants of 100 to 200 levas, which serve to pay for medical assistance or cost of railway fare to a work centre. The refugees prefer to receive work through the Office, as they are thereby guaranteed a certain degree of protection in case of need. Invalids, old people, women and children who cannot work also receive small compassionate grants.

(g) *Assistance given to refugees desirous of leaving Bulgaria.*

Every day there are some 30 to 40 petitions from refugees asking for the High Commission's assistance to enable them to proceed abroad. The help given by the Office to this category of refugees has, owing to lack of funds, been necessarily restricted. It consisted mostly in obtaining from the foreign legations permissions to enter different countries and occasionally in giving small pecuniary assistance.

(h) *Co-operation with Russian organisations.*

The Office of the High Commission in Sofia has been of considerable service to the Russian organisations, which have been able to apply to it for assistance in case of necessity. Since the Russian Ambassador left Bulgaria, the High Commission's Delegate has acted as a friendly intermediary between the Russian organisations and the Bulgarian Authorities. The Office of the High Commission has, in addition, been instrumental in assisting the Russian organisations in connection with the transfer of groups of refugees from one locality to another, specific recommendations to members, the organisation of hospitals, etc. Moreover, the Organisation of Russian students has been given small pecuniary assistance which enabled a certain number of the students to continue their education at the Sofia University.

(i) *Children.*

A special and permanent assistance is given by the Office to Russian schools which were brought to Bulgaria from Constantinople twenty months ago. The Bulgarian Government originally assigned two million levas for their maintenance, but this fund was exhausted in August 1922. A critical moment then ensued for the schools, but after friendly representations, the Bulgarian Government consented to allocate to this object a part of the sum which was due to the Government as entry money by the Office for other refugees entering Bulgaria. Thus a sum of 1,972,800 levas was made available, which prolonged the existence of Russian schools in Bulgaria for another year.

As a result of further efforts on the part of the Office, private subscriptions were secured which enabled boots to be provided for these children during the winter months, and provision was made for the continuation of the schools, which would otherwise have had to close down.

Finally, shortly before the meeting of the Assembly, negotiations with the Bulgarian Government were brought to a happy conclusion, and resulted in arrangements being made for a further substantial contribution of 500,000 levas per month by the Bulgarian Government, which will assure the maintenance of the schools for some considerable time to come.

The Sofia Office has continued to preserve good relations with all local and foreign authorities, and a special tribute should be paid to the Bulgarian Government for the unflinching consideration with which it has met the numerous demands made by the High Commission, and especially for the exceedingly generous manner in which it has responded to appeals on behalf of the refugees.

V. Greece.

The number of Russian refugees in Greece is steadily decreasing, owing to the measures taken by the Office of the High Commission in Athens. Since July 15th, 1922, the number has been diminished by 30%.

Since the beginning of its work, the Office has evacuated from Greece 2,743 refugees.

In April, about 1,000 refugees, who had for some time made individual and unsuccessful efforts to return to Russia, were repatriated *via* Varna under the arrangement made by the

High Commission for the repatriation of Russian refugees from the Balkans. Not more than 2,000 refugees now remain in Greece. Of these, only about 900 require assistance, but they are almost exclusively invalids.

Reduced visa fees and travelling facilities have been obtained for the refugees.

The Office has been the means of securing employment for numbers of refugees, and is a medium for numerous enquiries regarding lost relations and friends. It has also been instrumental in lending legal aid and protection.

Over 220 Cossacks were evacuated to employment in France in August as a result of negotiations between the High Commission's Delegate in France and the French Government.

In addition, contributions have been made by the High Commission enabling some hundreds of individual refugees to travel to countries where they could obtain employment.

Finally, at the request of the Greek Government, which had most generously continued to make an allowance to certain Russian refugees in the Salonica Camp, but, in view of the heavy demands from its own refugees, found it impossible to continue this contribution, the High Commission is giving its serious attention to the possibility of making a sufficient sum available for the complete liquidation of the Russian refugee problem in Greece.

VI. Austria.

In spite of the critical economic situation in Austria, it must be most gratefully acknowledged that the Austrian Government has invariably afforded the High Commission every possible co-operation in connection with the Russian refugee question in that country.

Although there were very serious obstacles to the adoption of the identity certificate system, the Austrian Government was one of the first to signify its adhesion, on condition that the Delegate of the High Commission accepted the responsibility of recommending the Russian refugees entitled to these certificates.

It is true that numerically the Russian refugee problem in Austria is not a considerable one, but the geographical position of the country renders it an important transit centre for refugees travelling to other countries, and the Austrian Government has very largely facilitated this difficult work by affording free transit visas to all Russians who have to traverse its territory.

The Delegation of the High Commission has taken steps to regulate all kinds of questions relating to the protection of Russian refugees. It has had, on many occasions, to intervene on behalf of the refugees to enable them to obtain entry visas, to help them to find work, to obtain exemption from certain luxury taxes on foreigners, etc.

A Russian Advisory Committee, composed of representatives of the principal Russian and Ukrainian organisations, meets regularly, and has for its object the co-ordination of the different activities on behalf of the refugees and the maintenance of close contact between the High Commission and the refugees.

Thanks to gifts received and to the organisation of collections, a small temporary shelter has been erected in Vienna, composed of 30 beds, for the use of refugees passing through Austria.

1,800 applications from Russians desirous of leaving Austria have been dealt with by the Vienna Office. Besides this, free meals are distributed to very necessitous refugees. Help of every kind, which it is impossible to detail within the scope of this report, has been granted to the refugees as far as the limited funds permitted.

Overlapping of relief efforts has been prevented by the close co-operation of the High Commissioner's Delegate with the Comité International de la Croix-Rouge, the "Save the Children" Fund, the Union internationale de Secours aux Enfants and the European Student Relief, to whom a special tribute is due for their devotion to the cause of the refugees.

About 150 refugees per month have been repatriated by the Soviet Legation in Vienna, which, at the invitation of the High Commission, is considering whether these refugees could not be afforded the concessions conferred by the arrangement made for the repatriation of the Russian refugees from the Balkans.

For reasons of economy, it had been decided to close the Delegation of the High Commission in Austria at the end of July, but, in response to the urgent request of the Austrian Government, which pointed out that such a contingency would necessitate the denunciation of its adhesion to the identity certificate system and the termination of the recognition of the Russian refugees as such, the High Commission has agreed to continue its Delegation in Austria until the end of the year.

VII. Hungary.

In the interests of economy, the Delegate of the High Commissioner in Austria was in March last also charged with the work on behalf of the Russian refugees in Hungary.

An Advisory Committee of the most important Russian refugee organisations was formed, similar to the Committee sitting in Vienna, and steps have been taken to co-ordinate the activities of all agencies working for Russian refugee relief.

The Hungarian Government has promised all possible facilities and has intimated its willingness to adopt the identity certificate system.

The Hungarian Government also generously consented to receive 1,000 Russian refugees from Gallipoli, and the first convoys have already arrived in Hungary.

Applications have been received from some hundreds of Russian refugees who desire to return to Russia, and negotiations have been opened with the Soviet Legation in Vienna on their behalf.

VIII. France.

In September 1922, the Delegate of the High Commission organised the reception of 20 Russian orphans arriving from Constantinople. The Placement Familial took charge of these children and placed them with agricultural families in France.

A second group of 26 boys arrived under the same conditions from Constantinople on November 23rd. They too were immediately placed in the same manner as the first group, and, on February 5th, 1923, a further 54 boys arrived at Marseilles.

The work could have been continued on substantial lines in connection with other countries but the interested Russian organisations preferred to leave the children in Slav countries.

In March 1923, the High Commission transferred from Constantinople at its own expense the Russian Red Cross Orphanage. Its reception at Marseilles, its transit through France and its arrival at Namur, the provisional residence of this institution, were entirely carried out by the High Commission, which spent on this transfer about 18,000 French francs. This institution consisted of 100 children and about 20 adults, forming the personnel. Thanks to the initiative of the Delegate, several groups of Russian workers were transferred from Constantinople and Salonica to France, where they found employment.

One of the principal activities of the Delegate consists in affording legal assistance to the refugees. Numerous emigrants approach him daily with requests for assistance. In all of these cases an intervention is required which is often very long and complicated, but is almost always rendered less difficult by the extreme benevolence with which the Delegate is received by the competent authorities.

The general condition of the Russian refugees in France can be considered as fairly satisfactory during the past year. Practically all the Russian refugees have been evacuated from Corsica to France, where they have been provided with work. The same remarks apply, with the exception of some isolated groups, to the emigrants in Tunis and Bizerta. Without being accused of exaggeration, one can state that every Russian refugee able and willing to work in the capacity of an agricultural, industrial or manual worker can find in France remunerative employment. On the other hand, one can observe, especially during the last period, a pronounced movement towards France of the Russian, living in Germany, Austria, the Balkan countries and even in Russia itself.

A very important measure has been taken as regards Russian university students. In accordance with the proposal of the French Government, the French Parliament voted a credit of 450,000 French francs in favour of young Russians who were obliged to discontinue their studies in their own country, but who are desirous of resuming them in France. In this way, about 200 young people are supported by means of scholarships at the expense of the French Government.

A group of 512 ex-Russian soldiers or prisoners of war from Germany were repatriated to Russia in June, and, at the request of the French Government, the representatives of the High Commission in Russia are taking a benevolent interest in their welfare.

IX. Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

High appreciation has been registered in previous reports of the generosity of the Serb-Croat-Slovene Government in affording hospitality to some thousands of Russian refugees. It is probably not generally known that this State shelters no fewer than 55,000 refugees, involving an exceedingly heavy charge on its national exchequer. In spite of this heavy burden, the Government has, on many occasions during the past year, signified its willingness to receive still more of these unfortunate people and has afforded them every possible facility to obtain a living on its territory. Many refugees have succeeded in finding work. On the other hand, the situation of those who have not been able to do so has become appreciably worse on account of the depreciation of the dinar and the consequent rise in the cost of living.

The activities of the Delegation at Belgrade are chiefly as follows :

(a) *Transfer of the refugees formerly maintained by the British Government to the charge of the Serb-Croat-Slovene Government.*

On the termination of the negotiations for the transfer of the above-mentioned refugees in October 1922, the Serb-Croat-Slovene Government undertook responsibility for 1,500 of these refugees against a payment of £18,000.

(b) *Evacuation from Constantinople.*

The course of events at Constantinople during the autumn of last year rendered it necessary to secure the evacuation of as many Russian refugees as possible without delay. Negotiations were opened to this end with the Serb-Croat-Slovene Government, which consented to receive, under certain conditions, as many as 5,000 of these refugees. Some hundreds of refugees have been transferred to the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes under this arrangement, and the operation is still in progress.

Free transport by rail for all new arrivals on the way to the interior has been obtained. A grant of 139,200 dinars has been made to the Sanatorium of Kanlidja, which belongs to the Russian Red Cross (old organisation) for maintenance during the first four months of its settlement in Serbia. A grant has also been made to the Union of Zemstvos and Russian Towns, which enables it to feed the 467 refugees called the "Baratoff invalids" for a period of three months. Other refugees have received a large measure of assistance. In addition, the three portable kitchens belonging to the High Commission and brought to Serbia on the "Lazareff" have been lent to the Russian Red Cross (old organisation) and to the Union des Invalides.

(c) *Assistance to refugees crossing Serbia to different destinations.*

The movement of the refugees has been facilitated by securing for them transit visas, either free or at reduced rates. A particular tribute is due to the following Governments in this connection: Austria, Hungary, Italy, Germany, France and Bulgaria.

Through the intervention of the Delegate of the High Commission at Belgrade, many refugees were able to obtain temporary *permis de séjour* in Belgrade in order that they might set their affairs in order or look for work.

(d) *Free transport by rail for refugees.*

The Ministry of Ways and Communications has granted to the refugees finally leaving Serb-Croat-Slovene territory the privilege of free transport by rail throughout the Kingdom.

(e) *Assistance to students.*

On the recommendation of the High Commission's Delegate, the European Student Relief sent a special representative to the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and, as a result of the enquiry made in conjunction with the High Commission, has generously brought considerable assistance to the Russian refugee students in that Kingdom, and has enabled a considerable number to follow university courses at the Gratz University or to complete their studies in other ways.

(f) *Co-operation with the International Red Cross Committee, the Union Internationale de Secours aux Enfants and the "Save the Children" Fund.*

The International Red Cross Committee, the Union Internationale de Secours aux Enfants and the "Save the Children" Fund have, on the recommendation of the High Commission's Delegate, distributed relief to a large number of Russian refugee children, utilising the services of the High Commissioner's Delegate in determining the most necessitous cases. The International Red Cross Committee has, in the same manner, performed valuable work in reuniting refugee families in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and Bulgaria.

(g) *Assistance afforded to Serb-Croat-Slovene subjects in Russia.*

At the request of the Serb-Croat-Slovene authorities, the High Commission's Delegate has undertaken, with considerable success, the repatriation of Serb-Croat-Slovene subjects who desired to leave Russia and on whose behalf fruitless efforts have been made through other agencies.

In conjunction with, and at the request of, the American Red Cross, arrangements have been made for several Serb-Croat-Slovene families to join their breadwinners in America.

X. Germany.

Since the beginning of the present year the position as regards Russian refugees in Germany has undergone a marked change: a considerable number of able-bodied men, who were employed in the different industrial enterprises in Germany, have become unemployed as a consequence of the recent economic crisis and have been compelled to leave Germany in order to look for work elsewhere. The majority of them have found employment in France and Belgium. In spite of this, the total number of refugees in Germany has not decreased, owing to the fact that numerous refugees from the eastern frontier have taken their place. Thus, not the number but the composition of the refugees in Germany is altered; and there are still about 600,000.

Many of them succeed in earning their living and are even able to offer employment to their countrymen or to contribute towards the needs of Russian charitable organisations.

The Central Committee of the Russian Red Cross (old organisation) and the Committee of Zemstvos and Towns, both of them having central offices in Paris, have in Berlin their representatives, who, to the extent of the means at their disposal, organise medical assistance, the finding of employment, etc. The international "Save-the-Children Fund" contributes, through the channel of the Delegation of the High Commission, a sum of money intended to be used chiefly for the distribution of milk among the children in the Russian camps in Hanover and Wünsdorf. Finally, the Russian American Committee, presided over by Mme. Julia Grand, Princess Cantacuzène, is sending from New York a monthly sum (provisionally guaranteed for three months), which is used mostly for distribution of food, through a local sub-committee.

The united efforts of the charitable organisations are insufficient to meet the needs of the refugees and even to prevent actual suffering from hunger of all those who are unable to gain a livelihood owing to age, infirmity, and, latterly, to scarcity of employment. Many of their number who would be willing to look for work in other countries have no funds to pay their travelling expenses, and those who have gone abroad have left their families in Germany. A very small minority have decided to return to their native country, in spite of the risks which they run in view of the fact that they formerly fought against the Soviets, but the Soviet authorities are not always willing to grant this category of Russian refugees permission to return to their country. Nevertheless, the tendency to go back to Russia is becoming more marked, and it will very soon be possible to indicate the extent to which the Delegation may assist this movement.

The High Commissioner's representative went to the United States, where he has undertaken certain negotiations for the purpose of securing the admission to America of an additional number of Russian immigrants over and above the specified annual quota, and also of obtaining funds to cover the cost of their passage.

The infirm and the children in the camps are fed by the Russian-American Committee mentioned above. In order to relieve as many refugees as possible, the rations have been reduced to a minimum quantity per head and are not sufficient for their normal nourishment. Moreover, the wooden huts in the camps are not suitable for permanent dwellings, especially in winter, when it will be impossible to obtain the sums required for heating their huts.

There are two Russian secondary schools in Berlin. The Academic Group, where the teaching is given in Russian, and the St. George's School, where the teaching is carried on in two languages, Russian and German. Both these institutions are in the direst straits, especially the second; the boarders at the school, who number 50, are underfed and live under insanitary conditions.

The Delegation is endeavouring to obtain the funds required to remedy this state of affairs. It is hoped that the Committee on Intellectual Co-operation may take an interest in this question, especially as regards the supply of books, school manuals and equipment, which are almost non-existent in the two institutions.

As the Delegation has no funds at its disposal, its efforts are mainly directed to the organisation of relief work. On more than one occasion, the action which it has taken has led to the initiation of undertakings which could only be accomplished by the joint efforts of several organisations.

Thus, in the general report for 1922, mention is made of an agreement concluded between the European Student Relief Federation, the German Red Cross, the Y.M.C.A. and the Delegation of the High Commission for the purpose of establishing a Russian Students' Hostel in Berlin. As this experiment was completely successful, it was repeated during the present year, and a home for the accommodation of indigent Russian refugees passing through Berlin was established in the Tempelhofer-feld. This home, which is to be known as the "Nansen Heim", will be the outcome of the united efforts of the German Red Cross Relief Association for Russian citizens in Germany and the Delegation. A third undertaking consists of the opening of free lodgings for poor students of the Russian Scientific Institute in Berlin.

In all of the three above-mentioned cases, the Delegation has, in addition to initiating the movement and to obtaining the premises free of charge, adapted these premises for use as dwellings on payment of a comparatively small capital sum to cover the cost of maintenance.

As larger numbers of Russian refugees are now leaving Germany and going to other countries there has been an increase in the applications for assistance made to the Delegation, especially in connection with visas.

On the recommendation of the Delegation, the various Consulates make a reduction in practically all cases of persons in straitened circumstances, or even give visas free of charge. The applications made to local authorities on behalf of Russian organisations or charitable societies are increasing in number, and are generally received favourably. There is evidence that the authorities regard the Delegation with an esteem which is increasing in proportion as the League of Nations gains a hold upon public opinion.

The Government experienced considerable technical difficulties in putting the Identity Certificate system into operation, but the High Commission has been given the assurance that these certificates will now be issued to all refugees who apply for them.

XI. Roumania.

In the spring of this year the High Commissioner's attention was called to the fact that it was the intention of the Roumanian Government to expel for military reasons about 10,000 refugees from Bessarabia into Russia. Many of these refugees had lost their Russian nationality and could only enter Russia at grave personal risk. The High Commission is very glad to be able to inform the Assembly that immediately after the attention of the Roumanian Government had been called to the position of these refugees, it refrained from carrying out any mass expulsions. It moreover agreed only to apply the decree which had been passed in connection with these refugees to cases of an undesirable character after reference to the central government, and to allow the majority of the refugees to remain in Bessarabia provided that the interested organisations could make arrangements for their satisfactory evacuation elsewhere.

The interested organisations, in conjunction with the High Commission, have made every endeavour to give effect to this request.

XII. Poland.

The Polish Government also felt compelled to make arrangements for the expulsion of a very large number of refugees who had entered its territory since October 1920 in an illegal manner. These refugees were alleged to have left Russia not on political grounds but for economic and other reasons, and were causing the Polish Government considerable embarrassment. The Polish Government felt constrained to take measures to remedy this situation and issued a decree providing for the expulsion of all non-political refugees by April 15th, 1923, but at the same time emphasised that all refugees who could establish that they were seeking refuge in Poland for political reasons would be allowed to remain. The position of these refugees was particularly painful in view of the fact that, not having registered with the Soviet Legation in Warsaw by January 1st of this year as Russian subjects, they had lost their Russian nationality and would not be allowed to enter Russia.

In response to urgent representations made by the representatives of interested refugee organisations, the High Commission addressed an appeal to the Polish Government begging it to suspend the operation of the decree until such time as arrangements could be made for the satisfactory evacuation of the refugees. In response to this appeal, a communication was received from the President of the Polish Council, from which it was evident that the Polish Government was prepared to place the most lenient interpretation possible on the decree and was prepared to issue permits in certain cases, postponing the date of departure until September 1st, 1923, provided that energetic measures were taken to secure the early evacuation of the refugees concerned.

The High Commission, in co-operation with the interested refugee organisations, is taking energetic measures to secure the evacuation to the United States and other countries of the refugees threatened with expulsion, and some thousands of visas have already been promised.

Negotiations are taking place with the Soviet authorities for the repatriation of all the refugees who express the desire to return to Russia on the lines of the arrangements in force for the repatriation of Russian refugees from the Balkans. The High Commission's delegate has also approached the Polish authorities with a request for permission for the refugees not already registered with the Polish to do so in order that their position may be regularised and also as a measure of assistance to the authorities themselves.

A limited fund is also being placed at the disposal of the High Commission's delegate for the payment of the transport expenses of refugees who have obtained employment in other countries.

XIII. Finland.

The Government of Finland adopted on October 1st, 1922, the model identity certificate for Russian refugees. These certificates are issued to the refugees free of charge by the Chief of Police.

There are at present some 30,000 Russian refugees in Finland, including 9,000 Carelians and 5,000 Finns from Ingria.

Only a very small number of Russian refugees have been repatriated during the last year.

The position of all the refugees in Finland — Russians, Carelians, etc. — is one of great hardship; those in the first category mentioned suffer most through their ignorance of the languages of the country.

The position of the aged and of the children is particularly distressing. The Russian schools (totalling 9 throughout Finland) can only accommodate one half of the children of school age (about 1,000). The schools are maintained by Russian charitable organisations,

but these are now at the end of their resources, and there is consequently a danger that the schools will have to be closed.

The question of the education of the Russian refugee children is the most serious of the Russian refugee problems in Finland.

The Finnish Government and the Finnish Red Cross are endeavouring to meet the needs of the Russian charitable organisations by distributing an allowance of food to the most necessitous of the refugees and to the pupils of the Russian schools.

In view, however, of the absence of special funds at the disposal of the Government, this assistance can only be rendered to a limited number of the refugees.

In addition, the Finnish Government helps to support (1) the six hospital ambulances organised by the Russian Red Cross, in which the refugees receive free medical attention, and (2) an establishment organised by the Russian Committee in Finland for the benefit of the aged and needy among the refugees.

The sum of 120,000 Finnish marks has been received and distributed among the refugees through the Finnish Red Cross, and, through the same agency, travelling expenses to Germany, Belgium, etc., have been paid to a number of Russian students to enable them to continue their studies.

XIV. Lithuania.

The adhesion of the Lithuanian Government to the model identity certificate proposed for Russian refugees has enabled the refugees to demand permission to enter Lithuania and to receive transit visas. The very limited number of certificates delivered up to the present — 50 or 60 in all — suggests that the Lithuanian Government intends to place a strict limit on the number of certificates delivered to the Russian refugees living in Lithuania. It prefers to furnish its refugees with ordinary *permis de séjour*, which cannot be used for purposes of identification. As these *permis de séjour* may be withdrawn at any moment by the authorities, the majority of Russian refugees residing in Lithuania run the risk of being obliged to leave the country. The delegate of the High Commission has made friendly representations to the Government in order to secure the issue of identity certificates to all the refugees.

XV. Latvia.

The condition of the Russian refugees in Latvia has noticeably improved during the period from the month of August 1922 up to the present time, thanks to the economic recovery of the country and to the adhesion of the Latvian Government to the identity certificate system.

More than 4,000 identity certificates have been so far distributed. According to the statement of the Minister of the Interior, these certificates are granted immediately (1) in case of a journey abroad, or (2) at the special request of the refugee. The certificates granted by other Governments are also *visé* by the Latvian authorities in the same way as ordinary foreign passports.

XVI. Esthonia.

Esthonia has treated the refugees with the very greatest consideration. In Esthonia no official restrictions of any kind exist which prevent the Russian refugees from seeking work or from being admitted to different employments or professions. Owing to the economic situation, everyone capable of work has an opportunity of earning his living.

The fact that the Esthonia Government has refused to introduce the system of identity certificates constitutes a very real disadvantage to the refugees living in Esthonia. The Government, however, visas such certificates granted by other Governments.

XVII. Far East.

In December 1922, the High Commission was asked by the Russian Red Cross to consider the question of the legal protection and material aid of about 22,000 Russian refugees who had fled from Vladivostock and established themselves on the coasts of China, Corea and Japan. In response to this request the High Commissioner immediately got into touch with representatives of the Japanese and Chinese Governments, from whom he received assurances that everything possible was being done by official and private bodies to improve the situation of these unfortunate people. Both Governments emphasised, however, that the presence of these refugees on their respective territories presented a difficulty which required outside help in order to reach a satisfactory solution. The Japanese Government

particularly emphasised that the present situation could not be allowed to continue indefinitely and that, in the near future, the Japanese Government would be obliged to terminate it either with the assistance of neighbouring countries or of the League of Nations.

The situation of the refugees in China would appear to be more difficult still. As many of the refugees concerned are men who have recently been engaged in military activities against the Soviet Government, it is to be hoped that the Chinese Government will not insist upon their repatriation except against approved guarantees for their protection.

Dr. J. A. Greig, of the Irish Presbyterian Mission at Kirin in Manchuria has consented to act as the Delegate of the High Commission for Russian Refugees in the Far East.

XVIII. Advisory Committee of Private Organisations.

A meeting of the Advisory Committee of Private Organisations for the Relief of Russian Refugees was held on April 20th. Numerous important questions were discussed and several resolutions adopted, of which the following are the principal :

1. The Committee trusts that special efforts may be made in the matter of relief to the infirm, to children and to the sick.

2. The Committee hopes that the High Commissioner will consider the possibility of extending his activities to the Far East, and of appointing a special delegate in that region.

3. The Committee, having considered the proposal that the League should take an active part in improving the standard of living in Russia, with a view to the solution of the difficulties arising out of the refugee problem, requests the High Commissioner to submit to the Committee a general report on the question of the economic and social reconstruction of Russia, and to add such recommendations as appear suitable.

4. The High Commissioner is requested to make friendly representations to the Austrian Government, pointing out that the *numerus clausus* recently introduced in the Technical Institute of Vienna is hampering the working of the High Commissioner's scheme for assisting students who are refugees from Eastern Europe.

5. The Advisory Committee recommends that the High Commissioner's delegate in Poland should convene an Advisory Committee of representatives of the relief associations to co-operate with the High Commissioner in Poland.

The Advisory Committee further invites the relief organisations which co-operate with the High Commissioner in Poland to constitute a Financial Committee to collaborate with the High Commissioner's Office in making the financial arrangements for the evacuation of the refugees.

6. Having regard to the present critical situation of Russian refugees in Poland and Roumania, and trusting that the High Commissioner will proceed with the negotiations and action which have already been begun with a view to surmounting the difficulties of the present situation, and having regard to the fact that a certain number of refugees show a desire to return to their country, the Advisory Committee requests the High Commissioner to enter into negotiations with the Russian and Ukrainian Governments with a view to obtaining the largest possible measure of protection and relief for refugees who desire to be repatriated under conditions which will allow them to regain their rights of citizenship and such protection as will enable them to re-establish their homes and resume their social and economic activity.

7. In view of the fact that the approaching cessation of the American relief work at Constantinople and the passing of that city under Turkish rule will radically transform and render peculiarly difficult the position of the refugees who have been the object of such unremitting care on the part of the High Commissioner, the Advisory Committee expresses the hope that the High Commissioner will not abandon the problem of evacuating the refugees, but will continue to devote his energies to its solution until such time as all persons who cannot remain at Constantinople under the new regime have been evacuated and transported to other countries.

8. The Advisory Committee considers that the work of the High Commissariat and of the Advisory Committee should continue.

XIX. Repatriation.

The negotiations with the Soviet Government on behalf of refugees who expressed the desire to return to Russia, referred to in the report to the last Assembly, have been pursued and resulted in the following exchange of letters with the Soviet Government :

Letter from the High Commission to the Soviet Government confirming Conversations with Representatives of the Soviet Government.

“ 1. The Soviet Government undertakes to extend the full privileges of the General Amnesty Decrees of November 3rd and 10th, 1921, to all Russian Refugees repatriated under the auspices of Dr Nansen's High Commissariat for Russian Refugees in conjunction with the Repatriation Delegates of the Soviet Government, notwithstanding any provisions of the Decree of December 15th, 1921, or any other Decree to the contrary.

“ 2. The Soviet Government agrees to allow Mr. John Gorvin and Dr. Nansen's other duly accredited representatives in Russia free access to all refugees repatriated under Dr. Nansen's auspices in order to establish the fact that such refugees enjoy the full privileges of the above Amnesty Decrees.

“ 3. The Soviet Government agrees to allow delegations from such repatriated refugees, up to one per cent. of their number, elected by the refugees themselves, to return to the countries from which they have been repatriated to inform their compatriots regarding the reception arrangements made for repatriated refugees in Russia.

“ 4. Not more than 2,000 refugees per month are to be repatriated under these arrangements. Such refugees are to be natives of the Don, Kuban and Terek Provinces only and must declare that they return to Russia of their own free will. Such refugees, however, will not be entitled to repatriation until they have been formally passed by both a Repatriation Delegate of the Soviet Government and Dr. Nansen's Delegate. Any refugee, therefore, who does not comply with these formalities returns entirely at his own risk.

“ 5. The Soviet Government undertakes that their Repatriation Delegates shall confine their activities exclusively to repatriation work.

“ 6. The Soviet Government declares that none of the treaties it has made with other Governments contains provisions which are to be interpreted as in any sense designed to interfere with the work of Dr. Nansen for Russian Refugees. ”

Letter from the Soviet Government to the High Commission in reply.

“ 1. Those Russian refugees now abroad who have not benefited by the Amnesty Decrees dated November 3rd and 10th, 1921, and who may in future be re-established in Russia through the joint action of Dr. Nansen and the Repatriation Committee of the Red Cross of Soviet Russia — that is, with the express consent of the Soviet Russian Government — shall be considered as entitled to a complete amnesty and as being reinstated in all their civil rights in accordance with the Decree of December 15th, 1921, and with the subsequent instructions for the execution of that decree.

“ 2. The Soviet Government authorises Mr. John Gorvin and the other duly and regularly accredited representatives of Dr. Nansen in Russia to communicate freely with all refugees repatriated through Dr. Nansen's efforts, with a view to ascertaining that such refugees are enjoying the full advantages of all the legal consequences of the Amnesty Decrees and the special provisions mentioned or included in Article 1 of the present declaration.

“ 3. The Soviet Government authorises a delegation of from 20 to 50 men elected by each first group of repatriated refugees to return to the foreign country from which the refugees came in order to inform the rest of their fellow-countrymen of the reception which they met with in Russia.

“ 4. The average monthly number of refugees who may be repatriated by Dr. Nansen shall not exceed 2,000. Until further special arrangements are made, these refugees must be natives of the Don, Kuban and Terek Provinces, and must have made a formal statement that they are returning to Russia at their own desire and of their own free will. Moreover, they shall in no case be repatriated until their application has been duly considered by the Repatriation Committee of the Red Cross of Soviet Russia and by the representative of Dr. Nansen.

“ The Soviet Government undertakes no responsibility in regard to any refugees who may return to Russia without fulfilling these two formalities.

“ 5. In accordance with your statements made on December 22nd, 1922, Dr. Nansen's organisation will defray a portion of the charges entailed by the transport of refugees in course of repatriation until they enter Russian territory. In the case of refugees in Bulgaria, the share payable by the Nansen organisation is fixed at 10/- out of the total amount of 17/-. The remaining 7/- will be paid either by the repatriated refugees themselves or by such public institutions, associations or persons as may set aside funds for use by Dr. Nansen in the work of repatriation.

“ In the case of refugees residing in countries other than Bulgaria, the proportion of the cost of transport during repatriation to be defrayed by the Nansen organisation shall be determined by special supplementary agreements.

“ The Soviet Government will in no case undertake to defray any charges in respect of the transport of Russian refugees in course of repatriation before they enter Russian territory.

“ It need hardly be added that :

“ 6. The work of the Soviet Repatriation Committee will be strictly confined to its direct and immediate duties.

“7. No clauses or provisions in any Treaty concluded with foreign Powers by Russia or by the Republics which constitute the Pan-Russian Soviet Union can form the basis of any obstacle to Dr. Nansen’s work for the repatriation or relief of Russian refugees or to the participation of any person or organisation therein.”

The High Commissioner is very pleased to be able to report that, on the whole, the Soviet Government has very loyally observed these guarantees. Lists of the refugees passed for repatriation were compiled by the High Commission’s delegate in Bulgaria in conjunction with the Soviet Red Cross delegate in that country and copies were transmitted to the competent delegates in Russia in order that they might keep in touch with the refugees after their arrival. The Soviet Government has allowed a delegation chosen by the repatriated refugees themselves to return to Bulgaria to report on the reception arrangements, and the High Commission’s representatives in Russia are allowed free access to the repatriated refugees in order that they may also satisfy themselves regarding the compliance with the Soviet Government’s guarantees. About 6,000 refugees in all have been repatriated from Bulgaria and Greece under this arrangement and up to the present moment no serious breach of the arrangement has been reported by the High Commission’s delegate in Russia. It is true that one or two of the repatriated refugees have been arrested for minor offences, but the High Commission’s delegates in Russia were immediately allowed to intervene with the Soviet Government on their behalf. On the other hand, a small number of refugees were returned from Novorossisk as unacceptable to the Soviet Government, but it will be agreed that this was preferable to their being allowed to land and ultimately interned in Russia.

In August the arrangements for the repatriation of the Russian refugees from Bulgaria were temporarily interrupted and the Soviet Red Cross Mission departed for Russia. In view, however, of the continued desire on the part of large numbers of Russian refugees in that country to return to their homes, as evidenced by the rapid congregation of some hundreds at Varna, the port of embarkation, the Bulgarian Government invited the High Commissioner to arrange for the introduction of a new Soviet Red Cross Mission into Bulgaria, in order that effect might be given to the wishes of the refugees. The Bulgarian Government also requested the High Commissioner to associate with these negotiations the repatriation of a large number of Bulgarians at present in Russia.

The High Commission is at present in communication with the Soviet Government on these subjects and there is reason to believe that it may be possible to give effect to the desires of the Bulgarian Government and of the refugees concerned.

A certain number of refugees have also been repatriated from Austria, France, and Germany, and the High Commissioner has been pleased to respond to requests made that his representatives in Russia should take a benevolent interest in the welfare of these refugees after their arrival in Russia. Although many of these refugees had not returned to Russia under the arrangement made by the High Commissioner with the Soviet Government and were not therefore entitled to the concessions conferred by that arrangement, the Soviet Government has consented to allow the High Commissioner’s representatives in Russia to acquaint themselves with the arrangements made for the reception of the refugees in question.

A report just received from the High Commissioner’s Delegate in Russia states:

“The first transport of the 325 refugees the reception of whom was reported on by the High Commissioner’s representative arrived at Novorossisk from Varna in October 1922. The High Commissioner’s representative, acting under a mandate of October 8th, 1922, from the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, was present at the arrival of the refugees, who were almost entirely Cossacks of the Kuban and Don districts. A special repatriation camp had been prepared at Novorossisk, and, although the accommodation was rough, the rooms were clean, and the Government had provided rations for the refugees on arrival. The refugees who arrived in a good state of health were disembarked in an orderly manner, and during their few days detention at Novorossisk for medical clearance and examination of the papers, the High Commissioner’s representative received every facility from the Head of the Political Department and was permitted to be present at the examination of the refugees.

“The terms of the amnesty were applied in the case of officers as well as soldiers, although the former were not mentioned in the decree; and notices were posted and published in the Press notifying the refugees on arrival at their homes to communicate from time to time with the representative of the High Commissioner in Moscow.

“The questions contained in a formal enquiry sheet asked by the State Political Authority, the answers to which were filled in by the refugees on arrival at the port, together with copy of the Press notice, are available for reference in the offices of the High Commission in Geneva.

“After bathing, disinfection, vaccination and examination, the refugees were given a certificate to carry them to their native villages and sent on by rail direct to their homes except in the cases of officers or men of any education, who were further submitted to a lengthy examination in Rostov-on-Don. The movement through Rostov was reported on satisfactorily.

“In November 1922 the representative of the High Commissioner visited the *stanitzas* in the Don and Kuban areas and had personal interviews with many of the men who had previously returned to Russia at their own expense. He found that their economical position during the early part of 1922 had been exceedingly difficult but that, in spite of the hard

conditions then prevailing in Russia and restrictions on their liberty of movement, the greater part of the men were content to be with their families and able to work the land and had no desire to return to Bulgaria, Serbia or the other places from which they had come.

"In view of the uncertainty of living conditions in Russia during the winter 1922-23, any extensive movement of refugees from Bulgaria to Russia was not advocated until the spring and summer of 1923. It was hoped, as indeed proved to be the case, that there would be a steady improvement in the general economical position, especially in the Cossack districts of the Don, Kuban and Terek, which are producing-areas.

"In January 1923, 197 refugees arrived at Novorossisk from Constantinople, and favourable reports were received from the High Commissioner's representative regarding their reception on arrival.

"The next transport of refugees under the protection of the High Commission arrived on January 10th by S.S. 'Varna', when 732 refugees whose applications had been approved by the representative in Bulgaria of the Russian Red Cross were rapidly disembarked, passed through the camp and sent to their homes. On February 23rd, 833 refugees arrived by the S.S. 'Belgravian'. On April 5th a further 832 Russian refugees arrived by the S.S. 'Belgravian'. The reports of the High Commissioner's representative at Novorossisk regarding their reception were quite satisfactory. By this steamer arrived a delegation of 26 members of the Cossack agricultural organisation in Bulgaria (subsequently liquidated and replaced by the Union for return to the home country) of whom three returned to Bulgaria to report on the reception accorded to the Russian refugees. In their interview with the representative of the High Commissioner, the members of this Delegation expressed themselves as quite satisfied with the way in which the Russian Soviet Government was handling the repatriation problem within Russia. The Soviet Government, however, now takes the line that the return from Russia of these Delegations is unnecessary and that the reports of the representatives of the High Commission should be sufficient to assure people abroad that the refugees receive proper treatment in Russia.

"On May 11th there arrived by S.S. 'Varna' at Novorossisk, 1,068 refugees who were sent quickly and without incident to their homes. On July 26th 653 refugees arrived by S.S. 'Ignat Sergeeff' and on July 31st, 274 by S.S. 'Bug'.

"From October 1922 there had been five detentions of refugees at Novorossisk by the Political Administration. The reason for their arrest was that false entries had been made on the enquiry forms and insufficient information given. In all cases the men were released after a short imprisonment.

"In May 1923, under arrangement made between the French Government and the Russian Soviet Government, the movement of Russian refugees from France commenced through Petrograd and Novorossisk. From the reports of the High Commissioner's representative in those ports, who, however, owing to the separate arrangement made between the two Governments, took no active part in supervising the arrival of these refugees, the arrangements made for the reception were satisfactory, although in the case of Petrograd there has been considerable delay in clearing the refugees from Gatchina."

The Commissariat for Foreign Affairs agreed to leave in the hands of the refugees returning to Russia the personal certificates stating that the emigrant had returned to Russia according to the agreement concluded between the Russian Soviet Government and the High Commission. In cases where it was necessary for the State political authority to retain these documents for identification purposes, a certified copy was issued to the emigrant in the presence of the High Commissioner's representative.

In cases of arrest of refugees, the Government Political Authority and the Commissariat for the Interior have agreed to afford to the High Commissioner's representative facilities for making personal enquiries in the prisons and places of detention.

As far as the personal liberty of the refugees on arrival at their homes is concerned, it was noted during the inspection visit in October 1922 to the Don area that the returned emigrants were in no worse position than the rest of the population as regards personal liberty, but enjoyed the complete freedom of movement which has been granted to the latter. It was found during a visit to the Terek area in August 1923 that the movement of the emigrants is more restricted and they have during a three to nine months period to report once a fortnight to the local representative of the Political Authority. The cases of arrest which have been brought to the notice of the High Commissioner, either in Russia or through the representatives abroad of the High Commission, have at once been taken up by the Central Authorities in Moscow and with the local authorities and explanations have been given, except in the case of a recent enquiry regarding the statement made abroad that a certain few repatriated officers who do not figure in the register of men repatriated under the High Commissioner's protection have been summarily dealt with. At the request of the High Commissioner's representatives in Russia, the State Political Authority is now having an examination made into those assertions. As far as officers and "intellectuals" who have been included in the lists of men repatriated under the arrangement made between the Russian Soviet Government and the High Commissioner are concerned, it is true that they have been detained in Rostov-on-Don for periods up to three or four weeks for examination as to their past history and they have had difficulty in finding employment in the towns. It has been found that the reports issued abroad regarding the wholesale execution of repatriated men are absolutely without foundation as far as the refugees who have been repatriated

under the agreement between the High Commissioner and the Russian Soviet Government are concerned, a list of whose names and addresses is kept in the Moscow office of the High Commission.

From the enquiries which have been made in all parts of Russia, not only by the High Commission's representatives but by delegates of the relief organisations working in affiliation with the Nansen Relief Mission, it may be stated that the Russian Soviet Government have dealt fairly with the refugees who have arrived prior to, or apart from, the arrangements between the High Commissioner and the Russian Government, though in these cases, in the absence of lists of the emigrants arriving, no precise statement regarding particular cases can be made.

The obligations which the Russian Soviet Government entered into with the High Commission have been fulfilled, but it should be pointed out that far more effective reception arrangements could be made and reports as to the condition of the refugees obtained if the European Governments passed the whole question of repatriation through one channel.

XX. Refugees taken over from the British Government.

In May 1922, the High Commissioner relieved the British Government of responsibility for 4,600 Russian refugees in Egypt, Cyprus, Touzla and the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in consideration of a payment of £150,000. Arrangements were made whereby the Serbo-Russian State Commission assumed responsibility against a capital grant for 1,500 of these refugees in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The majority of the refugees from Egypt, Cyprus and Touzla were evacuated to Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Government had allowed the refugees to move freely in Bulgaria, thus considerably facilitating the problem of finding them employment. Very little sickness was to be found among these refugees, which was largely due to the work of a mixed medical board, consisting of a British army doctor, a Russian Red Cross doctor, and a Russian doctor attached to the High Commission. By the end of the year such substantial progress had been made with the liquidation of the problem of these refugees that only a few difficult categories remained a charge on the High Commission, and this at a small cost per head as compared with their annual maintenance and with advantage to the refugees themselves as well as the Member concerned.

PART II.

BULGARIAN INHABITANTS EXPELLED FROM WESTERN THRACE.

The Council, on April 21st, 1923, passed a Resolution requesting Dr. Nansen, as High Commissioner for Refugees, to do all in his power to improve the condition of the Bulgarian inhabitants expelled from Western Thrace.

In conformity with this Resolution, Colonel Procter, Deputy High Commissioner, who had proceeded to Greece in connection with the plan for the permanent establishment of the Greek refugees, was invited to enquire into the situation of these persons and to consider what effect could be given to the Council Resolution.

It appeared that the Greek Government had found it necessary for military reasons to expel temporarily about 6,000 of the Bulgarian inhabitants from Western Thrace to the interior of Greece, but the Deputy High Commissioner was informed that these persons would be returned to their homes as soon as improved local conditions in Western Thrace should render such a measure possible.

It was ascertained that a certain amount of hardship had been experienced by these deportees as a result of an order sent out by the Greek Government to discontinue relief to Greek refugees, which had been interpreted by the local authorities as applying also to the Bulgarian deportees. On the intervention of the Deputy High Commissioner, however, the Greek Government immediately gave instructions not only for an allowance of two drachmæ per day to be made to the Bulgarian inhabitants but in addition a bread ration of about one-third kilo. daily, the payment of two drachmæ per day to be made operative as from the time of their expulsion. These allowances were similar to the allowances made by the Greek Government to the Greek refugees.

I. *Bulgarian Deportees in Thessaly.*

The main body of Bulgarian deportees arrived at Volo in three separate convoys of 950 on March 25th, 1,000 on the 27th, and 1,000 on March 30th, followed by smaller groups of two or three families. They had been dispersed throughout Thessaly in 49 villages which lie on either side of the railway-line running from Larissa to Velestino and from Velestino to Demerli.

For the reasons mentioned above no distribution of flour took place before April 5th and a certain amount of hardship resulted. Subsequently special distributions of flour were made on April 28th and May 22nd.

Some of the deportees were housed in tenements similar to those of the inhabitants of the villages in which they were distributed, but the majority of the people, through lack of other accommodation, had been quartered in barns, stables, and empty flour mills and in any other vacant accommodation which could be requisitioned.

Blankets had been issued to them and the general conditions appeared to be clean and sanitary. There was fortunately very little sickness among the deportees and medical attendance was provided free of charge.

It should be pointed out that the deportees had been distributed in the richest agricultural areas in Thessaly and many of them were able to earn from 5 to 12 drachmæ per day by means of agricultural labour.

Families were kept together as much as possible, and on the whole it was reported that the situation of the Bulgarian deportees was at least as good as, and in certain respects better than, that of the Greek refugees in the same region.

II. *Deportees on the Greek Islands.*

About 2,000 of these deportees were sent to Crete. These refugees were given allowance of two drachmæ per day and received a bread issue of 300 grammes from the military authorities. The majority of those on the Island of Crete were satisfactorily accommodated, but the deportees in the region of Rethymos were only lodged in the citadel. It was, however, thought unnecessary to transfer them to the empty barracks in the neighbourhood as it was the intention of the Greek Government to return them to their homes at the earliest possible moment.

At the request of the Bulgarian Government, the Assistant High Commissioner, in the middle of August, discussed the whole of this question with the Greek Government in Athens and received an assurance that steps would be taken to return the whole of these deportees to their homes in Western Thrace in the near future, and information has been received that this operation has already commenced.

The 2,000 deportees in Crete have already been repatriated, whilst the return of the 4,000 concentrated in Thessaly and on the Island of Cerigo is in progress and will be developed as the villages of the deportees are evacuated by the Greek refugees who were accommodated in them temporarily through lack of other shelter.

The Greek Government is to be congratulated on accepting this solution of a somewhat difficult question.

PART III.

NEAR EAST REFUGEES.

1. **Introduction.**

On September 19th, 1922, the Assembly adopted a Resolution recommending that the High Commissioner of the League be authorised to utilise the services of the Russian Refugee Organisation to assist in the relief of refugees from the Near East and for the administration of money collected for this purpose.

On September 25th, 1922, the Assembly passed the following further Resolution :

The Assembly,

“Having heard the statement of the Earl of Balfour, and recognising the extreme urgency of bringing effective aid to the refugees in the Near East, for which purpose financial assistance from the various Governments would be of the greatest value :

“Decides that its Members will at once place the situation before their respective Governments, recommending an immediate and adequate financial contribution to Dr. Nansen’s organisation.”

In response to this appeal, the British Government made an immediate offer of £50,000 on condition that other Members of the League made available between them a similar amount,

The following contributions were received as a result of this offer :

Japan.....	10,000	yen
Switzerland	15,000	Sw. frs.
Brazil	£1,000	
Canada.....	135,120	Sw. frs.
Denmark	£1,000	
New Zealand	£1,000	
Sweden.....	£1,000	
Norway.....	£1,000	
Spain.....	£2,000	
Luxemburg	20,000	Belgian francs.

The total of these contributions was estimated at £19,208 sterling, and the British Government promptly made like sums available to that total as and when they were received from the other Governments, so that £38,416 sterling have been received in response to the appeal to the Assembly.

Towards the end of December 1922, the British Government intimated that as its offer had not produced the desired effect and as it was impossible to keep it open indefinitely, it had decided to terminate it on December 31st, 1922.

In August 1923, the French Government made an offer of 670,000 French francs on condition that the British Government completed its original offer of £50,000, but subsequently consented to make this contribution if the British Government agreed to make available a similar amount. The British Government, however, has replied that it could not accede to this request, but it is most earnestly hoped that the French Government will, in view of the urgent necessity for funds in connection with the development of the Western Thrace Settlement, nevertheless consent to make this generous contribution.

2. Emergency Relief Measures undertaken by the High Commission.

Immediately after the last Assembly, the High Commissioner proceeded to Constantinople, Eastern Thrace and Athens to carry out an enquiry into the problem of the refugees in the Near East and established close contact with the Greek and Turkish authorities and with the leaders of the relief organisations which had begun to bring assistance to the refugees.

He was prepared to make a tour of inspection in Asia Minor, but was unfortunately not able to carry this desire into effect. He endeavoured to do what he could, however, to assist the Turkish Red Crescent to alleviate the distress in that area. 200 tons of flour were despatched to Smyrna, and 10,000 destitute Turkish refugees at Constantinople were transported to their homes on the shores of Asia Minor in time to carry out their autumn cultivation. Furthermore, medical supplies — especially vaccine and serum — were sent to the Turkish Red Crescent through the Epidemic Commission of the League.

Already 900,000 refugees had arrived in Greece, including 300,000 from Eastern Thrace and at least some 50,000 Armenians, to whom the Greek Government was distributing relief.

The refugees from Asia Minor had left their homes with such precipitation that they had only the summer clothes which they were wearing and were without either shelter or winter covering.

The Greek Government had made every possible effort to distribute these refugees throughout the country in such a way as to permit of their absorption among the population. This question did not present insuperable difficulties in connection with the refugees from Eastern Thrace, who for the most part were agriculturists, and considerable progress was made in their establishment on the vacant lands of Macedonia and Western Thrace. There were, however, very serious difficulties in connection with the establishment of the whole of the refugees from Asia Minor and of the urban populations from Eastern Thrace.

One of the most important uses of the funds made available by the Members of the League, in response to the appeal addressed to them at the last Assembly, was the provision of substantial quantities of flour to the refugees on the Islands of Samos and Chios, whose situation had become very precarious. This flour was obtained and distributed in these islands within a few days after the Assembly had adopted a Resolution in favour of assistance to the Near East refugees. Direct relief was also carried out by the representatives of the High Commissioner in Western Thrace.

In addition, 150 tons of flour were sent by the High Commission to some of the devastated towns on the southern shores of the Sea of Marmora. Assistance was also afforded to the Turkish authorities in the provision of shipping for the repatriation of refugees from Constantinople to Smyrna and other parts of Asia Minor.

Very high tribute had to be paid to the noble work carried out by the American Red Cross, which lost very little time in introducing measures for the feeding of the refugees and were instrumental in the early days in saving over 800,000 refugees from literal starvation. The American Red Cross continued its relief activities in Greece on the same generous scale up to the end of June 1923, and even at that date they were feeding no fewer than 500,000 refugees.

It is almost impossible to describe the utter destitution which prevailed among hundreds of thousands of refugees during last winter, when absolutely no provision for shelter was

available for them either in the way of tents, hutments or even the most elementary accommodation. Their deplorable situation was still further accentuated by the almost entire absence of blanket covering or of adequate winter clothing. An effort was made by the High Commission to overcome the latter difficulty and, thanks to the devoted efforts of the All-British Appeal, loyally supported by the British Ex-Service Women's Associations, a direct appeal was made to the public through the courtesy of certain large business houses, which circulated it to hundreds of thousands of their customers; the sympathy of over 13,000 parishes was enlisted through the churches, and the League of Nations Union interested the members of its 1,200 branches in the effort. In a very short space of time no fewer than 200,000 articles of clothing were rushed to Greece and proved of inestimable value to the destitute refugees.

The weakened resistance of the refugees, accentuated by insufficient food and the severe winter conditions, very rapidly brought epidemics in their train. The mortality among babies and their mothers soon reached alarming proportions and in many camps smallpox began to break out. Typhoid, cholera and, above all, typhus were expected to follow, and it was imperative that immediate steps should be taken to render the Greek municipal authorities every possible assistance in combating these dangers. The High Commissioner was fortunate enough to secure in this connection the co-operation of the Epidemic Commission of the League, which, with the sum of £5,000 placed at its disposal from the funds contributed by the Members of the League, carried out a very valuable anti-epidemic campaign among the refugees and undoubtedly contributed very largely to bring about the comparative immunity from epidemics among the refugees during the recent months.

3. Exchange of Populations.

On October 2nd, 1922, the High Commission left for Constantinople, having telegraphed to Mustapha Kemal Pasha, with the object of entering into direct relations with the Turkish Government at Angora. In the course of several interviews with Hamid Bey, the diplomatic representative at Constantinople of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Dr. Nansen pointed out the various questions with which he desired to deal, particularly the question of an exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey.

On October 15th the High Commissioners of France, Great Britain, Italy and Japan resident in Constantinople formally invited Dr. Nansen to take all possible steps to endeavour to reach an agreement regarding an exchange of populations between the Greek and Turkish Governments as soon as possible, independently of the peace negotiations.

Dr. Nansen was further informed by the Greek Government that it was very desirous that he should arrange such an agreement.

On October 23rd, Dr. Nansen received a telegram from Mustapha Kemal Pasha stating that the proposed exchange was acceptable in principle but that it would have to be considered by the Government at Angora. At Dr. Nansen's request, the Greek Government furnished him with a document giving him full powers to negotiate the desired agreement.

On October 30th, he was informed by Refet Pasha, Governor of Thrace, newly arrived from Angora, that the President of the Council of Ministers at Angora agreed in principle with the exchange of populations, excluding Western Thrace, and empowered Hamid Bey to conduct the necessary negotiations with the High Commissioner of the League. On October 31st, Dr. Nansen conferred with Hamid Bey, who informed him that the Angora Government only permitted him to negotiate on the basis of a total and enforced exchange of populations, from which the population of Constantinople would not be excepted. Dr. Nansen said that he not could limit the discussion in the manner proposed by Hamid Bey and suggested that the Turkish representative should ask his Government for further instructions, while he, on the other hand, would ask the Greek Government whether it would accept total and enforced exchange of populations, including the population of Constantinople, as a basis of discussion. Hamid Bey preferred not to consider any points of detail concerning the exchange while awaiting the decision of his Government.

On November 2nd, Hamid Bey having to depart suddenly to attend the Peace Conference at Lausanne, Dr. Nansen addressed a memorandum to the Government at Angora setting forth his sincere desire to obtain a solution of the question and asking the Government to inform him whether it was prepared to negotiate without delay, and independently of the peace negotiations, an agreement for the exchange of populations on the basis of a voluntary emigration of the racial minorities in Turkey and Greece, including the civilians detained in Asia Minor.

He further enquired if it were prepared to appoint delegates with full powers to conclude with Greek representatives, and under his auspices, an agreement which would be submitted immediately for ratification by the two Governments. The Greek Government informed Dr. Nansen that it could not agree to a total and enforced exchange of populations, including that of Constantinople. Dr. Nansen kept the High Commissioners of the Allied Powers informed of the progress of these negotiations and explained that, in his opinion, it would not be possible to negotiate an agreement on the lines suggested by the representative of the Angora Government even if the Greek Government had accepted the proposal.

Dr. Nansen received no reply to his memorandum of November 2nd to the Angora Government.

He subsequently attended the Peace Conference at Lausanne and proposed to the representatives of the invited Powers that negotiations should be renewed. Lord Curzon, the President of the First Committee of the Conference, asked Dr. Nansen to make a statement on the subject. Dr. Nansen complied and urged that, if an exchange of populations was to be effected, it should be effected in time to enable at least a considerable portion of the exchanged populations to be enabled to cultivate the land of their new farms during the coming spring.

The question was referred by the First Committee of the Conference to a Sub-Committee presided over by Signor Montagna. Dr. Nansen attended the meeting of the Sub-Committee and submitted a further statement on the situation, suggesting in what way the wishes of the two parties might be harmonised, but emphasised that a compulsory treaty of exchange could only be satisfactorily carried through if both the Turkish and Greek Governments acted with absolute loyalty and good faith.

The recommendations then put forward were ultimately substantially adopted by the Lausanne Conference.

4. Western Thrace Refugees' Settlement.

In his Report to the Council on April 22nd, the High Commissioner emphasised that in making the arrangements for the settlement of refugees in Western Thrace, the end in view was to give an example of reconstructive work by the definite establishment of the refugees on a self-supporting basis in as limited a period as possible.

The plan was briefly summarised as follows :

(a) The guiding principle was not indiscriminate charity, which tended to the degeneration of the refugees, but encouragement to work for themselves and thus become producers of wealth and independent citizens as soon as possible.

(b) The main plan was, first, to establish village settlements under canvas for about 10,000 refugees, and later, with the assistance of the Greek Government, to enable the settlers to build houses and thus release the tents for still further settlers.

(c) The refugees were to be fed, organised and their general welfare in other ways cared for until their crops could be reaped or until such earlier date as they should become self-supporting.

(d) To organise skilled and general workers and to establish them in such occupations as their previous lives and training fitted them.

(e) To maintain a hospital for the care of the refugees and to work for the maintenance of a high standard of health.

Many of the refugees evacuated by the High Commission from Asia Minor and Eastern Thrace to Western Thrace arrived in October 1922, for the most part in a state of complete destitution. As a preliminary relief measure, a series of food stations and hospitals, with rations for 10,000 refugees for a period of three months, was immediately organised by the High Commission, and a hospital and base camp for 10,000 persons were despatched to Western Thrace. This hospital, the funds for which were raised by Lady Rumbold, provided for the requirements of the refugees in an area of 500 sq. miles. In April the British Red Cross took over the hospital and enabled its valuable work to be carried on until July 15th. Since January over 9,000 patients received treatment.

The local representative's instructions, however, were not limited to the material relief of the situation, but authorised him to enter into liaison with the local authorities with a view to the establishment in definite areas of the refugees on a permanent basis.

As a result of negotiations entered into between the representative of the High Commission and the local authorities in Western Thrace, an area of land between Gumuldjina and Porto Lagos, consisting of 100,000 Greek acres, was allocated for this purpose. Farm-houses and hutments were to be erected in rotation with the assistance of the Greek Government, and as these were completed the tents were moved to other areas.

By the middle of February, substantial progress towards the establishment of the refugees was reported, and up to the present time the following villages have been established :

(A) Existing villages in which refugees were accommodated mostly in houses.

Tushchuk Keui	Phanar (in tents)
Kutchuk Keui	Seriyeri
Ortaji	Mesheler
Urumbelli	Orta Kislak
Biatl	Palazli
	Chaibas

(B) New settlements — in tents.

Procteria	Ana Keui
Treloaria	Kirchiflik
Mourhan	Kara Bunar (vicinity of)
Sougoulou	Tepe Chiflik

(C) The following settlements, accommodating approximately 4,000 persons, having obtained sufficiently good crops to carry them over to the next season, have been struck off the feeding strength :

Tushchuk Keui	Orta Kislak
Kutchuk Keui	Ortaji
Haskeui	Palazli
Urumbelli	Mourhan
Seriyeri	Anakeui (old section)
Mesheler	Chaibas

It was expected that, by the end of August, when the maize and tobacco crops would have been gathered, the following villages only would remain on the feeding strength: Kara Bunar, Phanar, Ana Kevi (new section) and a certain number of families in Sougoulon, Procteria and Treloaria.

To deal with work other than farming, a Labour Bureau has been established in offices at Gumuldjina.

In addition, the following industries have been started: Charcoal-burning, brick-making, lace and embroidery work, carpet manufacture, lime and wood industries. Many of these quickly became self-supporting, particularly the charcoal-burning industry, which worked on a profit-making basis from the early days of the settlement, and during last winter supplied fuel to the entire district.

In addition, the refugees in two settlements have been encouraged to take up the cultivation of mulberry-trees, with the result that 11,000 trees have been planted in one settlement and 5,000 in another. These plantations promise to become among the largest in Greece, and should enable the refugees interested to establish a very big silkworm industry.

Although the High Commission initiated this enterprise and provided the refugees concerned with rations for the first few months, it would have been quite impossible to make consistently satisfactory progress had it not been for the hearty co-operation of the Greek Government and the valuable support of the All-British Appeal and the "Save the Children" Fund, which have provided for the feeding of the refugees since April, and to the British Red Cross and Lady Rumbold, who provided for the hospital services.

The All-British Appeal, in addition to the feeding of the refugees above referred to, has despatched to Greece 200,000 articles of clothing as a result of the High Commissioner's appeal, and has made a grant of £1,000 for the establishment.

It is satisfactory to note that the work accomplished by the High Commission has met with the high appreciation of the Greek authorities, as shown in the following extracts from communications received by the Secretariat.

(a) *"League of Nations, Geneva.*

"Refugee mission League of Nations under command Colonel Treloar in Western Thrace displaying splendid effort reconstructive work settlement on to land destitute refugees Anatolia, Pontos, Caucasus and Eastern Thrace. Humanitarian scheme of mission progressing with success. Eight new villages established, several others planned. Ploughing, sowing progressing. Meantime permanent shelter provided Greek Government helping. Missions industries department comprising carpet lace embroidery laundry charcoal fuel and others increasing continuously. Greece grateful for untiring and systematic humanitarian work. Earnestly beg Colonel Treloar be granted further authority extend action most necessary throughout whole country. Only Western Thrace area about 50,000 destitute families needing help and organising.

Governor-General Thrace :

DACCIOS."

(b) *"Le Préfet d'Hèbre, S. Grégoriou,
à Monsieur le Colonel Treloar.*

"Mon Colonel,

"A l'occasion du transfert à Gumouldjina du siège de la Mission de la Société des Nations, permettez-moi de vous exprimer, en ma qualité de représentant du Gouvernement dans le Département d'Hèbre et au nom des réfugiés de Dédéagatch, ma plus profonde gratitude.

"Vous êtes venus ici dans les moments les plus difficiles. Par l'entremise de vos représentants, Monsieur le Colonel Crichton, ainsi que Messieurs K. Kaufman, Celebrovsky et Monro, vous avez su organiser, ravitailler, secourir, assister à des milliers de réfugiés errant sans abri ni ressources aux alentours et aux deux gares de Dédéagatch.

"Ce fut là une tâche noble et grande, inspirée du plus haut esprit humanitaire ; et les réfugiés de Dédéagatch, ceux qui resteront, comme ceux qui continueront à jouir des bienfaits de votre protection, s'en souviendront toujours, le cœur ému.

"En vous exprimant ma plus vive reconnaissance pour tout ce que la Société des Nations a fait dans cette région, je ne me fais que l'interprète d'un sentiment général, et cela a été pour moi un devoir de vous le faire savoir.

"Veuillez agréer, etc.

Le Préfet :

(Signé) S. GREGORIOU."

Similar appreciative views have been expressed by the Ministers for Agriculture and Relief and by the representatives of the large private organisations, the Near East Relief, the Society of Friends, the All-British Appeal, the "Save the Children" Fund and the British Red Cross.

The High Commissioner has also been requested by the Greek authorities to undertake the organisation and administration of constructive work on similar lines throughout Western Thrace and Macedonia. Urgent appeals have been made in this connection for the settlement of the following additional numbers of refugees :

4,000 Anatolian refugees from Constantinople (see Chap. 5). Village sites for these refugees have already been selected by the High Commissioner's representative in collaboration with the Greek Government.

1,000 between Xanthie and Porto Lagos.

2,500 Cavallo, arriving from Constantinople.

10,000 (approx.) from Karagatch.

At the pressing request of the Greek Government, the High Commission has already issued 270 tents for the accommodation of the latter refugees, but any further efforts on their behalf will be governed by the funds made available to the High Commission for this work.

At the moment of writing this report, the following two urgent telegraphic appeals in support of this proposal have been received from the Governor-General of Western Thrace :

(1) "Grateful for humanitarian work done up to date by Nations Mission earnestly beg continuation your valuable assistance for refugees Xanthie, Porto Lagos also others from Constantinople and Karagatch area evacuated as per Lausanne Treaty. — 49167.

Governor-General Thrace : DACCIOS."

(2) "Continuation my wire 49167 just received wire from Minister Relief Doxiades approving absolutely proposed collaboration Nations Mission. Please accept reiterated thanks Government General Thrace. — 49168.

Governor-General Thrace :

DACCIOS."

On several occasions during the past six months, the Governor-General of Macedonia, M. Lambros, most earnestly requested the High Commission to establish at Salonica a Labour Bureau and Industries Department similar to that at Gumuldjina and offered to place suitable offices at the disposal of the High Commissioner's representative. Tentative steps have already been taken in this matter.

It must be emphasised that it would have been impossible to report such important progress had it not been for donations of 2,000 tent capes from the Belgian Government, of 200 bell tents from the British Red Cross and the loan of a number of marquees from the French Military authorities in Constantinople.

5. Anatolian Refugees from Constantinople and the Activities of the Constantinople Office in favour of Greek Refugees.

(a) The Constantinople Office despatched over 200 tons of flour to Smyrna and the devastated towns of the war area to help the Turkish authorities to cope with a food crisis which had arisen in the latter part of September of last year.

As a result of the Greco-Turk operations, some 75,000 Turkish refugees arrived in Constantinople from Black Sea ports, and the Constantinople Office secured the evacuation of 10,000 of the most destitute who could not afford to pay their fares.

(b) Evacuation and relief activities in favour of Greek refugees.

At the time of the last Assembly, some hundreds of thousands of Greek refugees were crowded together in the Islands and other localities which could not support them. The Constantinople office organised the distribution of 500 tons of flour in the islands of Samos and Chios, which served to avert a very serious food crisis in those islands.

The Constantinople Office was instrumental in assisting the evacuation to Greece of no fewer than 156,000 Greek refugees from Constantinople and from Eastern Thrace and in co-ordinating the movement of these refugees and the extensive shipping which was necessary for their transport. It has also closely co-ordinated the activities of the various relief agencies working in and from Constantinople.

(c) Liquidation of the Anatolian refugee problem in Constantinople.

During the months of January and February 1923, the situation of some 27,000 Greek Ottoman refugees from the Pontos and the Black Sea Littoral, who had been held up in Constantinople owing to the inability of the Greek Government to receive them, became disastrous.

Huddled in dark and noisome barracks, sometimes without even a roof to cover their heads, they speedily became the prey of typhus and smallpox and other epidemics, and the death-rate at one time averaged 500 per week.

Ships full of typhus-ridden refugees appeared in the Bosphorus and remained there for days because there was no room in any of the existing camps, very seriously aggravating the situation.

Although the funds at the disposal of the High Commissioner for Greek refugee relief were exhausted, he felt that it was impossible to remain inactive. He was influenced in this opinion by a telegram received from the Near East Relief in the following terms :

Thirty thousand Anatolian refugees in Constantinople: number increasing weekly: situation has developed in consequence of lack of settlement Near East question: therefore responsibility rests on all nations interested: conditions shocking: mortality in some camps approximately *one per cent daily and menace to entire population of Constantinople*. To meet situation adequately we propose immediate execution following plan to be jointly participated in by Turkish Red Crescent League of Nations High Commission for Refugees and Epidemic Commission and Near East Relief: (a) League of Nations Refugee High Commission to perfect co-operation with Red Crescent and undertake (1) sanitation shelter and quarantine all transit refugees in Constantinople (2) in co-operation Greek Government and American Red Cross provide early reception Greek refugees in Greece (3) appropriate a minimum of £10,000; (b) Near East Relief in co-operation with Red Crescent to undertake feeding adequate daily ration and clothing after disinfection at minimum expenditure 100,000 dollars; (c) Turkish Red Crescent to lend its good offices facilities and privileges to successfully further (a) and (b).

The Constantinople Office was instructed to do everything in its power to remedy the situation. Fortunately the All-British Appeal made a first donation of £1,000 and a further £500, which enabled the Constantinople Office to take steps for the relief of the congestion among the refugees and to undertake the disinfection of camps in rotation and anti-epidemic measures generally. A central clearance camp was immediately organised for the refugees to be brought from outlying camps for disinfection, vaccination and inoculation.

It was decided to take over the San Stefano camp, where the mortality had reached from 40 to 50 per day among 2,500 refugees. Some idea of the dangers in this camp may be gained when it is mentioned that within a very short space of time two doctors and a number of other valuable workers succumbed to diseases in caring for the refugees.

Radical measures were undertaken for the cleansing of this camp, and in a short space of time such progress was made that two of the worst camps in Constantinople were liquidated and the refugees drafted into the San Stefano camp. Numbers of refugees were also received from some of the tragic ships lying in the Bosphorus, and by this means some of the unfortunate persons who had been stagnating in the holds of the ships in the Bosphorus were disinfected in the San Stefano camp. In a comparatively short space of time the numbers of refugees in this camp were increased from 2,000 to 7,000, and, in spite of the reception of constantly recurring groups of infected refugees from other camps, the death-rate was rapidly reduced from 40 to 50 per day to three or four.

It would have been quite impossible for the High Commission to make any serious progress in connection with the liquidation of the problem of these refugees in Constantinople had it not been for the whole hearted support and co-operation of the Near East Relief, which during the whole of this period assumed responsibility for the feeding of all the Anatolian refugees in Constantinople and took very drastic anti-epidemic measures at the Selimie barracks under its immediate control.

A pleasing feature of this work has been the collaboration and maintenance of good relations with the Turkish authorities, and unpleasant incidents, only too frequent between the refugees and the Turkish authorities, gave way to cordial co-operation, which was evidenced by several gifts of useful material, disinfection, vaccines, douches, by the Turkish Red Crescent and by several important concessions in the way of duties and taxation from the Turkish Government.

The 30 large tents given by the Polish Government have proved of the greatest possible value in connection with the accommodation of the refugees in the San Stefano camp. In addition, the High Commissioner has to record his gratitude to the All-British Appeal for a gift of £500 worth of clothing and to the British Army of Occupation for £450 worth of medical and other stores.

Among the letters of appreciation received by the Constantinople Office for its services in connection with these refugees, not the least gratifying was one from the Director of the Medical Service of the French Army of Occupation in Constantinople, from which the following are extracts :

... Néanmoins, malgré la réunion de tous ces efforts, la situation des émigrés grecs était encore difficile et incertaine et c'est grâce à l'aide, qui, dès les premiers jours du mois d'avril, nous fut donnée par la Société des Nations, que nous eûmes à notre disposition toutes les ressources pécuniaires et matérielles nécessaires pour juguler les épidémies et améliorer rapidement le sort des émigrés.....

M. Childs, Commissaire pour les réfugiés de la Société des Nations à Constantinople, a rendu, en la circonstance, à l'œuvre des émigrés grecs, des services inappréciables et c'est un devoir pour moi de vous signaler le dévouement, l'activité

et l'esprit d'initiative dont il a fait preuve dans l'organisation du camp de San Stefano, dont il assure la haute direction.....

Alors qu'au milieu d'avril, avec 2.000 émigrés, il y avait de 80 à 85 décès par semaine, un mois après, avec 4.000 réfugiés, le nombre de décès était de 20 à 25 décès par semaine et fin juillet, commencement d'août, avec 7.000 réfugiés, le nombre des décès par semaine, n'est plus que de 5 à 8 en moyenne, ceux-ci mourant pour la plupart de misères physiologiques irrémédiables.....

Le Président est persuadé qu'il est l'interprète de la Commission en remerciant M. Childs de son organisation et en le félicitant des merveilleux et rapides résultats qu'il a obtenus ; il n'y a plus de variole, le typhus est de plus en plus rare et les vaccinations antityphoïdiques qui sont en cours font bien augurer, pour la période d'été, de la situation sanitaire de ce camp, où les émigrés donnent l'impression du calme moral et du repos physique dont ils ont tant besoin.

Et aujourd'hui, au moment où les camps des réfugiés grecs vont disparaître, par suite de l'évacuation des émigrés en Grèce, j'ai tenu à vous rendre compte des bienfaits du concours donné par la Société des Nations à l'œuvre des réfugiés grecs de Constantinople et des résultats très heureux qui ont été obtenus au camp de San Stefano, grâce à la direction intelligente et active de M. Childs, Commissaire pour les réfugiés de la Société des Nations à Constantinople....

It was evident that the very utmost that the High Commissioner could hope to accomplish in Constantinople was purely of a palliative nature, and efforts were made by the Allied authorities to arrange for the evacuation of these refugees to Greece at the earliest possible moment. Unfortunately, the Greek Government found two very serious obstacles in the way of the reception of these refugees :

First, it was stated that it would be in the highest degree dangerous to receive refugees infected with contagious diseases into Greece and thus endanger the lives not only of the large number of refugees already in that country but of the normal population.

Secondly, the Greek Government pointed out that it was already overburdened by the enormous number of refugees already in the country and that the economic situation did not permit of the reception of any more refugees.

The High Commissioner therefore directed his efforts towards the removal of these obstacles. What was done to secure the cleansing of the refugees has already been referred to in detail. The next question was to make it possible for the Greek Government to receive the refugees without throwing further burdens on its depleted resources. The High Commissioner was pleased to report that, by means of the continued co-operation of the Near East Relief, the All-British Appeal and the "Save the Children" Fund, it was possible to make an arrangement with the Greek Government in the middle of August for the immediate transfer of the whole of these refugees against a promise by these organisations for the feeding of the refugees for some time to come after their reception in Greece, the British organisation making it a condition that at least 4,000 of the refugees from San Stefano camp should be absorbed into the Western Thrace Refugee Settlement. This solution met with the hearty approval of the Allied and Turkish authorities, the situation of these refugees having caused the former the greatest possible concern in view of their imminent departure from Constantinople.

6. Greek Loan for the Permanent Settlement of the Refugees in Greece.

From the very outset the High Commissioner emphasised the urgent necessity of a loan being arranged for the Greek Government to enable it to find a satisfactory solution of the refugee problem. He pointed out that the Greek Government, exhausted by ten years of continual warfare, was totally incapable of coping with the situation unaided. The influx of the refugees represented a sudden increase of not less than 20% of the Greek population, and it was doubtful whether even the most stable country in the world could face unaided such a gigantic problem. Such a loan was not only necessary for the establishment of the refugees but also to enable Greece to re-establish on a firm footing its national economy, which was in danger of a complete breakdown, with far-reaching consequences, not only to Greece itself but to the surrounding countries in the Balkans. The situation was further complicated by a great movement of the Greek and Armenian population from Anatolia to Greece. It was alleged that at least 100,000 Armenians and 250,000 Greeks were moving towards the coast to take refuge in Europe.

On February 22nd, 1923, the Greek Government laid before the Council a formal request that it should be assisted in obtaining an international loan of £10,000,000 sterling, which should be used solely for the permanent settlement of the refugees, and, in effect, adopted a recommendation of the High Commissioner on this subject as its own.

The Council decided to refer the matter to the Finance Committee for examination and report.

On April 23rd, the High Commissioner again drew the attention of the Council to the very urgent necessity of effective measures being taken to secure an international loan for the Greek Government to cope with the refugee situation. He emphasised that this had become more and more necessary in view of a communication which the American Govern-

ment had sent to the British, French, Greek and Italian Governments to the effect that the American organisations would not be able to continue their refugee work after the end of June. He added that, if a constructive plan could be worked out for the apportionment of the task and for the gradual solution of the refugee problem, the American relief organisations would be ready to co-operate even after the termination of the emergency relief work on June 30th.

The High Commissioner considered it his duty to warn the Council of the terrible consequences of the withdrawal of American relief at the end of June, as there were no other organisations able to undertake relief on any large scale, and that, unless outside financial help was forthcoming, the refugees were literally faced with starvation in the middle of the summer. The High Commissioner pointed out, however, that such a catastrophe could be averted. The Finance Committee of the League was studying the possibility of granting a loan to Greece and the Greek Government was prepared to offer effective guarantees providing for the redemption of the loan, even at the existing rate of exchange, in less than ten years, and Colonel Procter, the Deputy High Commissioner, had shown, in a report on the High Commission's Western Thrace Refugee Settlement, which was presented to the Council, how the loan could be employed to secure the productive settlement of the refugees in a comparatively short space of time.

The Council, in congratulating Dr. Nansen on the success of his efforts, adopted the following Resolution :

“ The Council, having heard Dr. Nansen's statement as to the position of the refugee problem in Greece ;

“ Understanding that the Greek Government is now engaged in collecting the essential information which the Financial Committee requires in order to examine, in accordance with the authorisation already given by the Council, the practicability of the flotation of a loan on the basis of securities which Greece could offer :

“ Now requests the High Commissariat, in consultation with the Greek Government, to consider whether, if a loan should prove practicable, it would be possible to replace the temporary relief measures that, except in a part of Western Thrace, have hitherto alone been undertaken, by a general plan enabling refugees in other parts of Greece to be settled on the land or otherwise established on a self-supporting basis, and, if so, to prepare a scheme for the purpose ;

“ And hereby appoints a Sub-Committee, consisting of the British, French and Italian members of the Council, with authority to invite the Greek Government to add a fourth member, to receive the reports from the Financial Committee and from the High Commissariat, and to advise the Council at its next session whether the League itself can properly and usefully accept any responsibility or take any action. ”

In conformity with this Resolution, Dr. Nansen invited Colonel Procter, Deputy High Commissioner, to proceed to Greece and obtain on the spot the necessary material.

As a result of his mission in Greece, Colonel Procter prepared a very exhaustive and comprehensive report, which dealt with the whole aspect of the refugee situation in Greece and outlined a practical plan for the permanent settlement of the refugees in the event of funds being made available by means of a loan for the purpose.

The scheme provided for the establishment of a Refugee Settlement Mission, composed of representatives nominated by the Greek Government, the American relief organisations and the League.

Colonel Procter's report was presented to the Greek Sub-Committee appointed by the Council in July last and it is interesting to note that, in its deliberations, the Sub-Committee had the advantage of the presence of an official observer sent by the American Government.

The High Commissioner drew particular attention to the fact that the Finance Committee, in its Report to the Council, had laid emphasis on the necessity of encouraging the voluntary organisations not to abandon their efforts on behalf of the refugees, but to consider their activities as complementary to any constructive work undertaken by the League. On the other hand, the relief organisations were not disposed to exert themselves unless the League was prepared to carry out a constructive policy. The High Commissioner read to the Council extracts to that effect which had recently been received from the Near East Relief, the All-British Appeal and the “ Save the Children ” Fund.

The Greek Sub-Committee adopted the suggestion contained in Colonel Procter's report, and decided to recommend the establishment of a Refugee Settlement Commission, which would be charged with the responsibility for administering any funds obtained by means of the proposed loan, with the modification that the League should nominate only one member on the Commission, instead of two as proposed in the report. This Commission should be constituted as follows :

One member representing American relief organisations (who should be invited to act as Chairman with a casting vote);

Two members to be nominated by the Greek Government; and

One member to be nominated by the League.

In addition, a person experienced in the work of land settlement should be appointed

as a technical director, unless one of the members of the Commission possessed the necessary qualifications.

Further, the Greek Government was invited to assign at least 500,000 hectares of land fit for immediate cultivation to the Refugee Settlement Commission and to place under the control of the International Debt Commission certain securities for the service of the loan.

The Council approved the Sub-Committee's Report of July 5th and adopted the following Resolution :

“ The Council of the League of Nations has requested its experts to examine the problem of the Greek loan for the refugees and to study a scheme for the settlement of these refugees.

“ The securities offered by the Greek Government appear to be suitable as a basis for the negotiation of a loan, the proceeds of which would be devoted to settling the refugees and ensuring them productive employment. The International Financial Commission, which has been in existence since 1898, might help in the control of these securities.

“ If the Greek Government succeeds in arranging a loan for the purpose, the Council will be willing, after having verified the conditions of the loan, to assist in organising the administration of the funds produced by the loan, in order to give the lenders assurance that the funds will be employed in accordance with the scheme.”

The Council further appointed a small Committee composed as follows :

Dr. Nansen, High Commissioner for Refugees.

One representative of the American relief organisations.

One representative of the Greek Government.

The duties of this Committee were to consider what measures the Greek Government might take for the temporary relief of the refugees until funds become available for this purpose from the yield of the proposed loan.

The Sub-Committee drew particular attention to the fact that the refugee problem could only be solved satisfactorily by means of the continued co-operation of the American and other relief organisations, both in the interval during which the loan was being negotiated and afterwards, for the relief of distress among such refugees as could not be absorbed into the economic life of the country.

Bearing in mind the intimation received from the American Government that further support from the American relief organisations would depend largely on the measure of support afforded by other agencies, the High Commissioner immediately made representations to this end to the Greek Government and to certain European relief organisations, and an immediate reply was received from the Greek Government promising to make available 10 million drachmæ per month for the feeding of the refugees.

The Near East Relief promised to continue the feeding of 60,000 refugees in Greece and elsewhere and to co-operate in further relief work in Greece to the extent of its resources. The All-British Appeal and the “Save the Children” Fund promised to guarantee the feeding of 50,000 refugees and to commence a campaign in Great Britain and the Dominions in order to secure funds for the extension of their activities, whilst Scandinavian organisations also promised substantial support.

The Near East Relief, the All-British Appeal and the “Save the Children” Fund also guaranteed the feeding for a certain time of the 16,000 Anatolian refugees in Constantinople, provided arrangements could be made for their immediate transfer to Greece. Negotiations to this end were therefore opened in the middle of August with the Greek Government, when it was pointed out that the situation of these refugees in Constantinople would become exceedingly precarious after the evacuation of the Allied forces, and that their future would cause the Allied authorities in Constantinople grave concern. As a result of these representations, the Greek Government, with very commendable energy, made immediate arrangements for the transfer of these unfortunate people to Greece and provided the necessary transport for the purpose. The Western Thrace Settlement organised by the High Commissioner yet further assisted the Greek Government in this matter by absorbing 4,000 of these refugees. Full particulars of the steps taken on behalf of these refugees after their evacuation from Black Sea ports have already been given in this report.

The American Government replied to the invitation extended to it to nominate a member of an American relief organisation on the Emergency Relief Commission appointed by the Council, that it considered that the Greek Government was in a position, in view of the food stocks handed over to it by the American Red Cross, of the good crops in Greece, and of the improved exchange, to meet the refugee situation until the beginning of November.

The High Commissioner addressed a communication to the American observer on the Greek Sub-Committee on this subject and invited him to draw the attention of his Government to the following considerations :

(a) The Greek Government did not entirely share the view of the American Government that it was in a position to meet the refugee problem until the beginning of November, but feared that the Refugee Relief Commission would have to take the matter in hand as from the beginning of September.

(b) That a constructive plan, similar to that foreshadowed in the communication from the American Government on June 30th to the British, French, Greek and Italian Governments already referred to, had in fact been worked out, and that substantial contributions to meet the immediate situation had been made by the Greek Government and by other European agencies.

(c) It was feared that the contribution of 10 million drachmæ per month by the Greek Government could not be increased without having recourse to measures which would inevitably produce an unfavourable effect on the all-important question of the flotation of the loan.

In these circumstances, the High Commissioner expressed the hope that the American Government might feel able to recommend the American relief organisations to continue their valuable co-operation with a view to the final and satisfactory liquidation of the whole refugee problem in Greece.

The Greek Government duly accepted the conditions for the flotation of the loan laid down in the Resolution adopted by the Council on July 5th, and intimated that the Greek banks had agreed to underwrite up to one million pounds of the proposed loan. The Greek Government also informed the Council that it had made arrangements with the Bank of England for a provisional advance of one million pounds sterling, contingent on the immediate formation of the Refugee Settlement Commission, and, in view of the very critical situation of the refugees and of the necessity for urgent action being taken to secure their establishment, the High Commissioner recommended the Council, at the beginning of September, to consider the possibility of establishing forthwith the proposed Commission.

In this Report the High Commissioner emphasised once more the paramount necessity of enlisting the fullest possible co-operation of the private relief organisations, particularly in view of the fact that no part of the proceeds of the loan could be utilised for relief purposes. He reminded the Council that, even in the most fortuitous circumstances, the refugees benefiting from the efforts of the Refugee Settlement Commission could not become self-supporting before the next harvest, showing that voluntary relief would have to be developed to the utmost extent on their behalf, whilst in any case there would still remain some hundreds of thousands of children and of infirm refugees who could not be dealt with directly by the Commission. In this connection he once more paid a very warm tribute to the magnificent efforts made by the Near East Relief, the All-British Appeal and the "Save the Children" Fund, and expressed his gratitude for the efforts made by these organisations to continue their co-operation to the extent of their resources.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.

In the relevant chapters throughout this report, reference has been made to the valuable co-operation afforded by the various private organisations working for the relief of the refugees. It would not, however, be appropriate to conclude the report without making a specific reference to the organisations by whose loyal collaboration alone the work of the High Commission has been made possible.

First, it should be recorded that the International Red Cross Committee, under the devoted Presidency of Monsieur Gustav Ador, has from the very inception of the High Commission never failed to afford unsparing support to the High Commission in the various countries in Europe, and in the early days of the High Commission placed the services of the whole of its delegates unreservedly at the League's disposal.

A special tribute must also be paid to the other relief organisations represented on the Advisory Committee to the High Commission, which during the past year have worked in the closest co-operation with the latter body.

An outstanding feature of the work of the High Commission has been the happy relations established and developed with the great American relief organisations. First, the American Relief Administration and the American Red Cross made possible the liquidation of the Constantinople Russian refugee problem; and latterly the Near East Relief has lent its valuable aid in connection with the Greek refugee work.

Finally, the All-British Appeal, the British Red Cross, the "Save the Children" Fund and the Union internationale de Secours aux Enfants have enabled the High Commission at different times to cope with problems which would otherwise have been quite impossible of solution.

The following letters are typical of many received from various Government representatives recording their appreciation of the services rendered by the High Commission.

A. *Letter addressed to the Representative of the High Commission in Constantinople by Lieut.-General Sir Charles Harington, O/C Allied Forces in Constantinople.*

In view of the expected early close of the Allied occupation of Constantinople, I should like to place on record my appreciation of the way in which the refugee problem has been dealt with in Constantinople.

It is a story of which all those connected therewith may be proud. At times it has appeared insoluble and yet we find ourselves in June 1923 with the situation in a better state than it has been at any time previously.

In November 1920, shortly after my arrival, the collapse of General Wrangel's army took place and within a few days we found ourselves confronted with 140,000 Russians who had arrived at Constantinople on some 75 ships in a starving condition.

It was a sight I shall never forget. I went on board one of them to see the conditions. Though the responsibility for protection and maintenance fell on the French, it was a task which no one could stand aloof from. Our soldiers clamoured to help. They could not bear the sight of the ships in Moda Bay.

We soon opened a Relief Fund ; we offered the French any help we could give ; the 28th Division started food kitchens and baths. Many human acts of kindness stand to the credit of our sailors and soldiers during these days. The British Government granted me £20,000 to help the situation.

We formed a camp for 3,000 at Touzla, run by the British officers who had served with the British Mission with General Wrangel — a very useful act and one much appreciated by General Wrangel and the Russians. For many a long day every kind of entertainment was organised in order to obtain money for the Russians. I cannot speak too highly of all the efforts made by the British community, sailors and soldiers, by Lady Rumbold and the wives of British officers, and civilians.

By degrees the Russian situation began to improve as arrangements were made for many thousands to leave. However, it was not long before fresh troubles arose owing to the Greco-Turk operations. A panic set in amongst the population in the Gemlek and other areas. An Allied Commission was sent to investigate the serious reports received. It was quite true that horrible things were happening on both sides. The result was another influx of refugees to Constantinople. Some 75,000 Turkish refugees arrived.

Hearing of the misery amongst them, I went to visit some of the camps myself. A more pitiable sight I never saw. We then tried to help these unfortunate people. Sir Adam Block formed a Committee to help them. Lady Harington made an appeal on their behalf to which a generous response was made in Constantinople and also in India. The League High Commission finished up the situation. About this time, January 1922, there were some 70,000 Russians, 75,000 Turkish refugees and another very dreadful element : 40,000 prostitutes in Constantinople.

Our task seemed hopeless. The calls on charity could not continue. By voluntary help at this time the Americans were feeding some 17,500 Russians a day. The British Relief was feeding 10,000 Russians and 10,000 Turks a day. The work of Colonel Procter, Captain Smith and Mr. Flynn deserves special mention. The future became black indeed. Funds were exhausted. The French could go on feeding the Russians no longer ; similarly the Americans.

Happily the League of Nations machinery was gradually making itself felt — in the only right way — by getting the refugees away. Other countries, Bulgaria, Serbia, etc., opened fields for the Russians, and many thousands have availed themselves of the chance and recently many have gone to America.

After the Greek evacuation of Anatolia, the Turkish refugees were able to return to their homes, which solved that portion of the problem, but another arose in the shape of the Greek refugees from Asia Minor, who began to arrive by thousands, bringing with them many cases of smallpox. It seemed as if nothing could save us from epidemic. Smallpox cases were being shipped in open boats called " caiques " and told to land. I saw one myself with 70 cases on board, of which 24 died before help could be given.

The situation became very serious. I was very anxious for the safety of the forces under my command. There appeared to be no machinery capable of dealing with this avalanche. The Greeks had none — nor had the Turks. Greek doctors were dying fast. One of our Royal Air Force medical officers died also in his attempt to help. Many camps were formed — some thirteen, I think. The death-rate was appalling, reaching some 1,500 a week.

Slowly but surely the Near East Relief and the League of Nations machinery under Mr. Childs have surmounted this great task. His procedure has been admirable. The first step was to stop more Greek refugees from coming here, and then to set up an effective machinery to deal with these here — some 30,000.

As I write, the camps have been reduced to a very few — two principal ones — Selimie and San Stefano ; the death-rate to the normal.

The situation to-day is that there are no Turkish refugees left. There are 17,000 Greeks in well-organised camps and gradually decreasing. 8,000 Russians, nearly all earning their own living, and 7,000 Armenians who are provided for by their own funds.

Since August 1921, the League of Nations has evacuated 20,000 Russians and 8,000 Turks. The League of Nations rendered great assistance in the evacuation of Eastern Thrace

and is now helping to evacuate those Russians who have been employed by the British Army and whose future is consequently precarious.

I can only express my deep admiration for the work done. The picture to-day is wonderful and I never thought possible of accomplishment.

Only those who live here can realise the danger of an epidemic to which we have been exposed.

To those who have worked to avoid it, I express my deep gratitude.

July 2nd, 1923.

B. Letter addressed to the Representative of the High Commission in Constantinople by Admiral Mark L. Bristol, American High Commissioner.

I am greatly pleased to learn that since the Constantinople Office of the High Commission for Refugees of the League of Nations has been established, over twenty thousand Russian refugees have been evacuated, and that since you took charge of this Office in October 1922, eleven thousand Russian refugees have been evacuated to countries where there are possibilities of their becoming self-supporting.

I desire to take this occasion to congratulate you upon the fine work done by your Office. This is a big piece of humane work for the benefit of the Russian refugees and at the same time a great benefit to this city because of the bad economic conditions here.

There are a number of American relief organisations that have had a large share in this evacuation work. There is at present a tripartite agreement by which the American Relief Administration, handling the Laura Spelman Fund, the League of Nations and the American Red Cross are evacuating Russian refugees to America, together with other places in Europe. There are a number of other American relief organisations also associated in this work. All these American relief activities are combined under one Committee, known as the Bristol Disaster Relief Committee for Russian Refugees.

I would like to take this occasion personally to express to you my keen appreciation of the cordial co-operation that has existed between the American activities for Russian relief and the activities of the League of Nations under your direction. Undoubtedly, this co-operation has produced greater and more efficient work of relief and a more economic expenditure of funds. I feel that this co-operation will continue so that this work can be brought to a successful and satisfactory conclusion.

June 26th, 1923.

C. Letter from Dr. Sadreddin, Director of the Health and Social Service of the Government of the Grand Assembly of Turkey to the Representative of the League of Nations High Commission for Refugees at Constantinople.

Having visited the San Stefano camp on August 7th, I have much pleasure in informing you that I consider that the arrangements of the camp of general, including the hospital and water supply, are perfect.

I should like to state also that the refugees, both healthy and ill, are well fed and cared for.

It gives me great pleasure to send you this letter expressing to you my satisfaction.

July 28th, 1923.

* * *

The High Commission has in this way acted as a great clearing-house of relief information and effort, and the success achieved encourages the hope that in the not-distant future a plan may be elaborated for the co-ordination of relief effort on a large scale.

In various parts of this report, references have been made to the manner in which these co-ordinated efforts have been utilised to the advantage of Members of the League in connection with the handling of their refugee problems, and other Members, at present shouldering heavy burdens of this nature, may like to consider the possibility of effecting economies by the utilisation of the expert services of the High Commission in a like manner.

In conclusion, it should be added that the activities outlined above have only involved the League in an expenditure for the past year of 248,000 Sw. frs. for the Russian refugees work and 200,000 Sw. frs. for the work on behalf of the Asia Minor refugees. The duties in connection with the Bulgarian deportees involved no direct charge on the League budget, having been carried out by the other two refugee services.

The High Commissioner ventures to hope that the Assembly will find that these modest funds have been wisely expended, both in the interests of the refugees and of the League, and that due regard will be paid to that fact in connection with the consideration of the Budget of the High Commission for Refugees for the year 1924.



