I am sure that the members of the Council are aware that the big women's organisations have for years been working to spread knowledge of the activities of the League. "The women of every country have given their support to the efforts to introduce instruction on the activities and organisation of the League of Nations into the schools. They have done their best to promote mutual understanding between peoples; they are already taking an active part in the League's work in several of its committees, and a number of countries have sent them as delegates to the Assembly."

I think, however, that the members of the Council will agree with me that the Assembly wishes to extend this collaboration still further, and that it is desirable in such an important matter to leave sufficient time to allow of a careful examination of the various possibilities which may arise.

The first step seems to me to be to obtain from various women's organisations suggestions as to how effect can best be given to the Assembly's desire, and I therefore propose that the Secretary-General should be authorised to consult these organisations and prepare a report on the subject for the next Assembly."

Viscount CECIL approved the report. He felt, however, that a report to be submitted to the next Assembly on what the women's organisations could do to help the cause of disarmament would be rather late, and he would therefore ask whether the Secretary-General could prepare a report with regard to that aspect of women's co-operation in time for the next Council session in January.

Count BERNSTORFF supported Lord Cecil's proposal. He, too, had been approached by several women's organisations in connection with the disarmament question.

M. SZE associated himself very warmly with Lord Cecil's proposal.

M. Sokal noted that, according to Lord Cecil's proposal, the first report should be presented to the Council in January. As the Disarmament Conference would begin on February 2nd, it would be difficult to do anything before that date, even if action were taken at the end of January.

M. Sokal drew attention to the fact that there was one way of making it possible for the women's organisations to take part in the Disarmament Conference. The Polish delegation had submitted a proposal to the Third Committee whereby the Governments were invited to appoint representatives of women's associations on their delegations. As this proposal had not been adopted, M. Sokal supported the Rapporteur's proposal, but thought that the women's organisations might be informed that the Disarmament Conference desired to avail itself of their co-operation from the beginning.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL thought that the question of women's co-operation might be divided into two parts: first, co-operation in connection with the Disarmament Conference, and secondly by general collaboration in the work of the League. The Secretariat could ask for observations on the first aspect of the question so as to be in a position to present a report to the Council in January while on the second it would be able to present a report to the next Assembly."

The conclusions of the report and the procedure proposed during the discussion were adopted.


The PRESIDENT presented the following report and draft resolution. 1

"My colleagues will remember that on September 24th, 1931, the Assembly adopted a resolution concerning the spreading of false news through the Press, the text of which is as follows:

"The Assembly:

"Considering that the organisation of peace demands an international spirit freed from all prejudices and misconceptions,

"Convinced of the necessity of ensuring that Press information shall be as impartial and complete as possible.

"Requests the Council to consider the possibility of studying, with the help of the Press, the difficult problem of the spread of false information which may threaten to disturb the peace or the good understanding between nations.

"I need not draw my colleagues' attention to the importance of this problem, which is urgent in the interests of international relations, and at the same time extremely delicate from the point of view of the maintenance of the liberty of the Press and the independence of journalists.

"The Third Committee unanimously considered that this question should be studied by the Government Press Bureaux, in close co-operation with Press circles."

1 Document C.637.1931.IX.
"The Conference of Representatives of Government Press Bureaux, which the Danish Government intends shortly to convene at Copenhagen, might in this respect make a valuable contribution towards the solution of the problem which is before the Council to-day.

"The Danish Government is to be congratulated on this highly opportune step. At the same time the Third Committee also realises that it is essential to approach the principal Press associations, some of which, indeed, have already devoted attention to this question. Without their advice and cordial co-operation, success in this matter is quite impossible.

"I would therefore suggest that we ask the Secretary-General to consult, through the Secretariat, the Press associations which took part in the Press Conference of 1927 and any other Press organisations which may regard themselves as interested.

"I am sure that, once in possession of the results of the Copenhagen Conference and the enquiry organised by the Secretariat, the Council will be in a position to submit to the next Assembly a useful report on this question, which is of great importance to international relations.

"I have the honour to move the following resolution.

"The Council.

"Being convinced that the dissemination of inaccurate news is capable of disturbing international relations;

"And holding that false reports cannot be suppressed without the assistance of Governments, on whom it is incumbent to correct them without delay and of the Press, whose co-operation is essential.

"Takes note of the happily inspired action taken by the Danish Government in summoning a Conference of Representatives of Government Press Bureaux at Copenhagen this winter, and welcomes the opportunity that this meeting will afford for an exchange of views on the question of the dissemination of false news;

"Further, requests the Secretary-General to consult on this delicate question the Press associations previously approached when preparations were being made for the 1927 Conference, and to receive any suggestions made by such Press organisations as may regard themselves as interested,

"And expects to be able to lay before the next Assembly a report on the results of the Copenhagen Conference and of the Secretary-General's enquiry. "

The draft resolution was adopted.


Viscount Cecil presented the following report and draft resolution. 1

"On September 25th, 1931, the Assembly adopted the following resolution:

"The Assembly:

"Requests the Council to appoint for one year a small Committee of Experts to examine the material upon slavery which has been supplied or transmitted by Governments since the signature of the Convention of 1926. This Committee will submit to the Council suggestions with a view to recommending to the next Assembly the measures of assistance which the League of Nations could render to those countries which have agreed to abolish slavery and which request such assistance.

"Further, on the proposal of its Fourth Committee, the Assembly included in the budget for the financial year 1932 an appropriation of 10,000 francs for the execution of this resolution.

"I imagine the Council will wish to comply with the Assembly's request and proceed to appoint the Committee of Experts referred to in the resolution.

"As regards the Committee's terms of reference, these require further definition on certain points. In the first place it should enquire to what extent the Slavery Convention has been successful in putting an end to slavery and what obstacles exist to further progress in this direction. Next it should consider and report, on the basis of the documents submitted to it, by what methods assistance can be rendered to States desirous of receiving it with the object of putting an end to slavery within their territory and whether any modifications of the existing machinery of the League would be desirable with this object. The method of work of the Committee must be left to be determined by that body. It will no doubt give full consideration to the precedents of 1924.

"It will be unnecessary for the Committee to enquire into the question of public or private compulsory labour, which has been entirely separated from the problem of slavery.

1 Document C.637(I).1935.VI.