I have the honour to call the attention of the President of the Council of the League of Nations to the following Memorandum concerning the present Famine in Russia and to request that the Council of the League may take an early opportunity of considering the proposal which I venture to lay before it.

Memorandum. by Dr. Nansen.

1) The Assembly of the League of Nations at its Second Session in September, 1921, agreed to Resolutions on the subject of the Famine in Russia, from which the following are extracts:

(1) "The Assembly considers it an urgent necessity to combat the famine in Russia, and further considers that all efforts should be encouraged which...aim at alleviating this scourge....

"The Assembly further expresses the desire that the Governments of all countries may interest themselves in the efforts of their national associations and may grant them to the greatest possible extent such material and moral support as they may need............

(11) "In view of the statements made by members of the Committee on behalf of their Governments to the effect that these Governments do not think that under present circumstances they can grant official credits, the Assembly is of opinion that this fact settles for the time being this side of the matter, and disengages the possible responsibility of the League of Nations.

Nevertheless, the League does not disinte-
forts which are being made to solve it. It will rest with the Council of the League to take up the question, should circumstances so demand, and should it consider that its intervention could prove both useful and effective."

(II) I am of the opinion that sufficient Governments have taken an active share in the work of relief now being carried out in Russia to justify the Council of the League in considering whether the time has not come at which it should "take up the question" and examine whether or not "its intervention could prove both useful and effective."

For the present situation in Russia seems to XXX me to be one which the Council of the League, which represents the society of civilised States, cannot afford on any ground to neglect. For according to the reliable reports which have reached me from many different sources, the famine which is now raging is far greater in extent and far more disastrous in its consequences than anyone had predicted at the time when the Assembly of the League considered the matter six months ago. Even in the Volga provinces of Russia, to which it was then expected that the famine would for the most part be confined, the number of people affected and the number of people who are doomed to die is far greater than was then expected. But, in addition to the Volga provinces there is now raging as the result of the drought of 1921, a terrible famine in great areas of the Ukraine, in the whole of the Caucasus and in the Republics of Armenia and Georgia.

And the problem of the famine involves not merely the question as to how many people will die of starvation during the course of the present spring and summer. It involves the further question as to whether in all the regions which are affected, regions which include
the richest granaries of Russia— it will be possible in the early future to re-establish the agricultural activities of the population and the economic life upon which the prosperity and well-being of these provinces, and in great measure, of the whole of Russia, inevitably depend.

(III) A number of the principal Governments of Europe have recently agreed to call a European Conference at Genoa to consider questions concerning the economic reconstruction of Europe. Many great and important questions are to be considered at that Conference. But according to the information which is at my disposition, the question of the famine in Russia does not figure directly upon the agenda. Yet it seems evident to me that the question of the famine is vital to European reconstruction. The reestablishment of the economic life of Central Europe is the first and most important condition of the revival of the prosperity of Europe. Yet the economic life of Central Europe cannot be restarted until Central Europe is once more able to carry on with Russia the trade which before the war constituted the greatest single factor in its prosperity.

And it further seems evident to me, for a number of reasons which there is no necessity here to enter, that trade between Russia and the outside world cannot be established on a proper footing until the famine has been stopped. The question of the famine seems to me, therefore, to be vital to the whole question of European reconstruction.

(IV) Similarly, the Government of Poland has recently acted on the invitation of the President of the Council of the League and has summoned a Conference of European States to meet at Warsaw under the auspices of the League, to consider the present situation concerning epidemic disease and the measures which must be taken by the Governments to combat the present grave danger of the spread of epidemics from Russia to Europe.
The information contained in the reports of the Epidemics Commissioners of the League of Nations, upon which the Polish Government has based its action, indicate that the present situation in Russia, so far as epidemic disease is concerned, is a very terrible one. They give figures and facts as to the prevalence of Typhus, Relapsing Fever, Typhoid Fever and Cholera, which it would be difficult to believe were they not put forward by so high an authority. They prove conclusively not only that the present situation is a grave menace to the wellbeing and even to the public health of Europe, but that epidemics in Russia are now so widespread and so deadly as to constitute an absolute bar to the revival of foreign trade with Russia, and to all hopes of the effective economic reconstruction of that country.

But it further appears from these reports that the principal cause which has led to the spread of epidemics on their present scale has been the movement of large masses of refugees fleeing from the regions which have been stricken by the famine. They indicate that such movements of refugees are still in a certain measure going on, and that they may be expected on an immense scale as soon as the end of the winter weather makes it possible to travel by road. There is therefore, the prospect that within a very few months millions of people who have passed through a terrible winter under the perpetual menace of starvation, and who are treated by a repetition of this experience next year, will migrate from their homes in search of countries where food may be obtained. These migrations
greatly increase the gravity of the danger to Europe from the spread of epidemic disease. The fact that they are to be expected on a great scale, as well as the other facts given in the reports of the Epidemics Commissioners of the League of Nations, lead to the conclusion that only by stopping the famine can the migrations which result from the famine be stopped, and that again only by stopping the migrations can the present epidemic situation be satisfactorily and adequately dealt with.

(V) There is no occasion for me here to dwell upon the grave problems connected with the transport system of Russia and many of the other economic difficulties which will have to be overcome by the authorities of the Russian Government before the economic reconstruction of their country can be hoped for. It is sufficient for me to say that in my view I see small hope that the Russian authorities will be able to deal with the present situation without the assistance of the outside world. I hold, moreover, the view that only by inter-governmental action on a considerable scale can the assistance which is required be rendered. I do not however suggest that the Council of the League should immediately and on the basis of the information which no doubt it has already at its disposition, undertake the consideration of the assistance which can be given to Russia. I venture merely to propose that the Council of the League should establish a Commission to carry out an impartial enquiry into the facts of the present situation, into the importance of these facts & their relation to the prosperity of Europe and of the world, and into the measures which it is possible and desirable to take to deal with this situation. I consider that such a Commission should consist of a small number of persons, perhaps 5 or 7, that it should
consist of persons of high international authority and with special competence in matters of economics, agriculture and transport, and that none of its members should be of Russian nationality, appointed by the Council with the agreement of the authorities of the Russian Government. I consider that it would not lie within the proper function of such a Commission to consider any of the political aspects of the problems connected with the famine. These aspects will no doubt be adequately dealt with at the Conference of Genoa. I consider that the Commission should confine its attention to preparing a complete Report upon the economic and humanitarian aspects of this grave problem. I further consider that the Commission should be appointed with the very least possible delay and should undertake its duties immediately.

I am satisfied that the appointment of such a Commission by the Council of the League would be fully in accord with the fundamental purposes of the League of Nations, that it would in no way conflict with the objects which are being sought at the special conferences which have been mentioned above, but would rather assist and complete the work of these Conferences; and that in appointing such a Commission, the Council would be acting in fullest accordance with the spirit and the letter of the Resolutions of the Assembly which have been quoted above.