

Argentina

A *United Labour Congress* held at Buenos Ayres from 6 to 10 March decided to form the "Argentine Regional Labour Federation". The new body, which will consist solely of trade unions, is to undertake permanent propaganda for grouping the working class in Federal, provincial, and local trade unions. It is to encourage the organisation and centralisation of the workers' big industries, since it has been found that craft unions are not sufficiently strong for the effectual conduct of industrial disputes. As various shades of political opinion are represented in the organisation, the Federation will be strictly trade union in character and respect the intellectual liberty of its members.

South Africa

The fourth annual congress of the *Cape Federation of Trades and Labour Unions* was opened on 15 April in Cape Town. The following important resolution affecting the position of coloured workers was adopted. It stated

Whereas the question of the colour bar has hitherto been the greatest obstacle to the foundation of a National Federation and to a solid working-class movement in South Africa, and, whereas it would be impossible to build up such a Federation whilst leaving the coloured worker out of it, quite apart from its being unjust and against the principle of true trade unionism, this Congress is of the opinion that some basis could be found for a settlement of this thorny problem in such a way as to satisfy the demands of the coloured workers of the Cape, whilst safeguarding the present standard enjoyed by organised labour in the North.

A committee was, therefore, to be appointed to find a definite basis for the constitution of a National Federation to include all workers in South Africa.

Employers' Organisations

EMPLOYERS' organisations continue to voice protests against the rigid enforcement of the 8-hour day. The necessity of making special allowances in certain districts and for certain industries, the need for a transitional period during which extraordinary exceptions to the general principle would be permitted, and the desirability of international co-ordination in the matter of hours of work, are the points most frequently emphasised.

In the United States interest has lately centred on the dependence of prosperity on foreign trade, and the dependence of foreign trade in turn on conditions in Europe and the settlement of the war debts. In France the question of technical training is receiving considerable attention, the general opinion being that the chambers of commerce should take a leading part in this work.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The *International Inter-Parliamentary Commercial Conference* held its eighth session in Paris from 31 May to 3 June 1922. The object of the Conference, according to the first Article of its constitution, is to bring together the commercial committees of the principal Parliaments, with a view to unifying commercial legislation, and thus to assure for those nations participating in its work a more efficacious protection of their interests abroad.

The Conference was attended by representatives of twenty-four nations, the Argentine, Australia, Bulgaria, and Latvia being represented for the first time. Resolutions were passed on the following subjects: exchange and currency, international rivers, international legislation regarding bankruptcy laws, measures restricting export trade, and relations between the International Institute of Commerce and the League of Nations.

The eleventh congress of the *International Federation of Master Cotton Spinners and Manufacturers* was held in Stockholm 14-16 June. It was attended by about two hundred delegates representing twenty countries, including five countries which were guests of the congress on special invitation, viz. Germany, Brazil, Denmark, Austria, and Poland. One of the main subjects of discussion was that of the 48-hour week and its effects on cotton-spinning. This question was dealt with in five papers—three from England, one from France, and another from Italy. All five speakers were in agreement that the introduction of the 48-hour week had resulted in a diminution of production. It was generally stated also that for a number of reasons, such as the poor quality of the cotton raised, the high cost of textile machinery, and labour shortage, it was impossible to make good this diminution of production by using more machinery or improving the efficiency of the methods in use.

Mr. Harold Cliff, secretary of the Oldham Master Cotton Spinners' Association, said that the majority of employers agreed that a 48-hour week in itself was desirable and should tend to the physical and social welfare of the workers, but that the change from 55½ hours per week to 48 hours per week could not be effected abruptly without disorganisation. He pointed out that although the 48-hour week had been adopted by all the important industrial countries of Europe, the limitation did not apply to the United States of America or to India or Japan. He urged that it would have been better to have arrived at a uniform 48-hour week by stages adjusted in accordance with the ability to carry out the change. In view of the establishment of the International Labour Organisation and the terms of the Convention adopted by it, he did not consider it would be advisable to suggest any increase in the hours of work. As so many nations had already adopted the principle, a useful purpose would be served if the congress urged upon the International Labour Organisation the advisability of endeavouring to get the principle of the 48-hour week established at the earliest possible moment by all the important countries which had not yet done so. Mr. Henri Manuel, vice-president of the Industrial Association of the French Cotton Industry (*Syndicat industriel de l'industrie cotonnière française*), expressed the opinion that each nation should have "a free hand in introducing such flexibility into the

principle of the 8-hour day as, in its opinion, appears necessary in the economic interests of the world at large and of the nation in particular".

The congress eventually adopted the following resolution concerning the 48-hour week in the cotton industry :

The congress, which has considered the information given in the addresses delivered during the meeting concerning the effects of the introduction of the 48-hour week and has discussed the situation in its entirety, is convinced that the 48-hour week which has been introduced in the different countries, either by legislation or through agreement with the workers' organisations, has proved economically unsound and is fatal to both the employers' and workers' best interests.

NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

France

The Federation of Employers' Organisations in the French Textile Industries (*Union des syndicats patronaux des industries textiles de France*) held its annual general meeting on 30 May in Paris, all the large textile centres being represented. Among the resolutions passed those relating to hours of work, social insurance, and vocational education and apprenticeship were of particular interest.

The Federation considered that owing to the fact that the hours of attendance in the transport and mining industries do not always coincide with the hours of effective work, legislative action should be taken to provide for a more flexible system than the one at present prevailing. It is suggested that 300 hours overtime a year supplementary to the normal 48-hour week should be allowed in all industries on application by the management of any enterprise. In its resolution on social insurance the Federation expressed the opinion that the Government Bill at present under consideration should be set aside and that Parliament should confine itself to developing health insurance. With respect to vocational education and apprenticeship the Federation considered that the chambers of commerce working in conjunction with the organisations concerned should continue the valuable work they are performing in this field and that no new organisation should be substituted for them.

A recent enquiry into the working of the 8-hour day in France, conducted by the *Renaissance politique, littéraire et artistique*, obtained the opinions of important employers' organisations on this vital question. The Association of Metal and Mining Industries in Mechanical, Electrical, and Metal Engineering (*Union des industries métallurgiques et minières de la construction mécanique, électrique et métallique*) stated that increases in staff ranging from 45 to 50 per cent. were necessitated by the Eight Hour Day Act in branches engaged in continuous processes. In furnace work not of a continuous nature and in machine work a fall in output of approximately 18 per cent. had resulted. There was no possibility of any general compensation for the reduction in hours of work by means of an improvement in equipment. The Association considered that 300 additional hours overtime per year should be allowed for a period of not less than seven years.

The Central Committee of French Coal Mine Owners (*Comité Central des houillères de France*) reported that the effect of the Eight

Hour Day Act had been to reduce the effective hours of work by an amount varying between 16 and 18 per cent. The concurrent fall in output per worker had amounted to 20 per cent., taking underground and surface workers together, and 26 per cent. for underground workers alone. This reduction in hours of work and even greater reduction in output had considerably increased the cost of production. It is declared that the Act cannot be maintained in its present form or be strictly applied without entailing serious economic consequences.

The Federation of Employers' Organisations in the French Textile Industries (*Union des syndicats patronaux des industries textiles de France*) stated that in the textile industries, in which machinery plays a great part and the speed at which the machinery is worked has already reached its maximum, the reduction in output was directly proportional to the reduction in hours of work. The Federation demanded that 300 hours overtime per annum should be granted to all industries.

The General Secretary of the Management Board of the chief French railway companies stated that it had been found necessary to employ 100,000 additional workers, equivalent to 40 per cent. of the total staff, and that the output of the workers had fallen off by 30 to 40 per cent. The increase in costs amounted to 1,100 million francs per annum for the six chief railway systems, 800 millions representing increased expenditure on staff and 300 millions interest and sinking fund on the capital borrowed in order to pay for the new equipment and the material required by the increase in staff. The necessary modifications of the present system could be introduced by means of Administrative Regulations. A number of regulations relating to the work of station staff had been drafted by the railways and submitted to the Minister of Public Works. They provided that the working day should refer to hours of effective work and not to hours of mere attendance; that the 8-hour day should be calculated on an average over a period covering the whole year; and that as a transitional measure 300 hours overtime a year should be permitted.

The Federation of Economic Organisations (*Union des intérêts économiques*) drew attention to the fact that almost all chambers of commerce, a large number of commercial and industrial organisations, and several general and municipal councils had repeatedly demanded that the Eight Hour Day Act should be amended and that wider exemptions should be allowed to producers. The Lyons Chamber of Commerce demanded that permission be given to work two more hours a day for a period of five years. The Limoges Chamber of Commerce considered that the application of the Act should be suspended until the world economic situation allowed of the conclusion of an international agreement on the question. The Toulouse Chamber of Commerce held that the Act should be put into operation by stages, with extensive exemptions determined by a consideration for the character of the work and the period of effective work. The Tours and the Indre-et-Loire Chamber of Commerce demanded that parliament should, without infringing on the principle of the Eight Hour Day Act, delay its application during the period of national reconstruction, or should allow wide exemptions, taking into account the economic situation of the country and the requirements of various industries and districts. The Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce suggested that, wherever necessary, normal hours of work should be

increased during a given period, after consultation with the organisations concerned.

The Central Committee of French Shipowners (*Comité central des armateurs de France*) stated that the 8-hour day was introduced into the mercantile marine "it might almost be said on the condition that the French example was followed by all maritime nations, or, if not, that a compensatory system should be introduced to indemnify French shipping against this fresh burden". As it was, other maritime nations had failed to follow the example set. Statistics were quoted showing the increased cost attributable to the introduction of the 8-hour day. The Central Committee of Shipowners demanded that, with a view to resisting international competition, the Eight Hour Day Act be suspended until the reorganisation of labour on board ship has been made the subject of an international agreement.

The Apprenticeship Committee of the Association of Metal and Mining Industries, mentioned above, has drawn up a report on the reorganisation of the training courses in national technical schools. This report, having been approved by the affiliated employers' associations (*chambres syndicales*), has now been submitted to the Under-Secretary of State for Technical Education, who is engaged on the task of reorganisation. The Apprenticeship Committee draws attention to the obviously inadequate supply of technical schools. It states that the five schools in existence cannot turn out more than 350 technically qualified workers a year. As regards the training itself, it is maintained that more time should be spent in the workshops, that there should be a greater number of workshops in each school, and that it is essential to give the students a far more complete general education. It is suggested that the programme for the national technical schools should provide for the instruction of two or three times the present number; a period of training of four years, the first three of which should be devoted to general instruction and the fourth to specialisation; and an increase in the number of workshops, including those fitted up for joiners, fitters, turners, smiths, and foundry workers, and at least one adapted to the special requirements of the locality. It is also recommended that pupils taking manual training should be allowed to specialise after the second year in order to develop their technical skill.

The Association of French Engineers, Boilermakers, and Foundry Masters (*Syndicat des mécaniciens, chaudronniers, et fondeurs de France*) has also given its views to the Under-Secretary of State for Technical Education on the reorganisation of national technical schools. It points out that the number of national technical schools is inadequate and expresses the opinion that the abolition of state workshops should not involve that of the apprenticeship workshops, as it considers that the creation of new technical schools would be greatly facilitated by the existence of these organisations. In addition, it makes suggestions as to the details of a four years' curriculum of technical instruction in the various crafts.

A meeting of presidents of chambers of commerce was held in Paris on 23 May, 120 chambers of commerce being represented. Among the resolutions passed was one adopted on vocational education and apprenticeship, as follows:

At the instance of the Lille Chamber of Commerce, this meeting: considering that the Act defining the functions of the chambers of

commerce assigns to them all work of value to commerce and industry, and particularly vocational education and apprenticeship. . . . ;

that independent chambers of crafts would only be permissible if the chambers of commerce did not exist or had failed in their duties ;

that a large number of chambers of commerce have shown their firm intention of organising vocational education and apprenticeship ;

that, moreover, existing schemes of vocational education and apprenticeship must be respected ;

that it would be a serious mistake to try to impose the same rules on all industries and all districts ;

Protests against the error and injustice of any Act depriving the chambers of commerce of their rightful functions and considers further legislation relating to vocational education and apprenticeship unnecessary.

Great Britain

The *National Alliance of Employers and Employed* was originally formed for the purpose of providing a joint organisation representative of employers and workers, but its initial work has hitherto necessarily been carried on to a great extent through the enterprise of individual leaders. It is understood that the Alliance is now about to adopt a new constitution based on due representation on all committees of the employers' associations and trade unions or branches of trade unions making up its membership. The business of the Alliance will be conducted by the general meeting of members, a general council, and a national executive committee. In addition, area committees are to be formed wherever found desirable. On all committees employers and employed are to be represented in equal numbers. The employers' federations officially represented upon the executive of the Alliance include the Federation of British Industries, the National Federation of Iron and Steel Manufacturers, the Brassfounders' Employers' Association, the Associated Chambers of Commerce, the Incorporated Federated Association of Boot and Shoe Manufacturers, the Central Landowners' Association, and local associations and federations of employers and chambers of commerce in those districts where area committees of the Alliance have been formed.

Serb, Croat, and Slovene Kingdom

A regular meeting of the Industrial Employers' Federation (*Zemaljski Savez Industrialaca*) took place on 28 May at Zagreb under the presidency of Mr. S. Alexander. In his address to the meeting Mr. Alexander emphasised the loss in production resulting from the introduction of the 8-hour working day, accentuated in the case of the Serb, Croat, and Slovene Kingdom by the inferior efficiency of labour as compared with more advanced countries. He strongly advocated a prolongation of the hours of labour, with the object not only of increasing production, but also of ameliorating the material conditions of the working classes. The proposed measure for the insurance of workers was severely criticised as tending to impose fresh burdens upon industry, which was already overwhelmed by taxation.

United States

The tenth annual convention of the *Chamber of Commerce of the United States* was held in Washington on 16 to 18 May. It was estimated that five thousand leading business men from all parts of

the country were in attendance. Besides the general sessions of the convention, group sessions were held on domestic distribution, civic development, fabricated production, finance, foreign commerce, insurance, natural resources, transportation and communication by railways, merchant marine and highway.

Mr. Joseph H. Defrees, President of the Chamber of Commerce, in his address to the convention, reviewed the growth of the Chamber since its organisation ten years ago. During that period, he stated, it had increased from a membership of 65 chambers of commerce to 1,400, while its staff had grown from two to 280. Mr. Defrees declared that the principal problem before American business men today was the task of restoring Europe.

Mr. Herbert Hoover, Secretary of Commerce, indicated the steps which, in his opinion, were prerequisite to the stabilisation of European affairs. Resolutions were adopted by the convention urging that the United States obtain official representation on the Reparations Commission and take its place with the other nations of the world in the International Court of Justice; reiterating its confidence in the principles of the Federal Reserve Banking System; declaring in favour of the extension of government aid essential to the maintenance of an adequate privately owned and privately operated merchant marine under the United States flag as a necessary safeguard for the commercial advancement of the United States; opposing proposals for the abrogation of the power exercised by the Interstate Commerce Commission to correct inter-State transportation rates; expressing deep appreciation of the services rendered by the Department of Commerce in collecting and distributing general information respecting foreign and domestic commerce; and recommending that the constituent members of the Chamber of Commerce encourage and make possible the attendance of their secretaries at the National School for Commercial Secretaries, which gives instructions in the methods and technique of chamber of commerce administration, both on account of the value of the training to the secretary and because of the benefits his organisations would receive.

The annual convention of the *National Association of Manufacturers* was held in New York 8 to 10 May. Mr. John E. Edgerton, President of the Association, in his annual address to the convention stated that the proportion of consumers to producers was too large and that the energies and talents of too many people were engaged in the processes of distribution. He thought that the principal factor in the continued high cost of living was the number of those "whose chief activities are to regulate, inspect, denounce, tax, plunder, and otherwise live upon those who are trying to produce something".

Among the questions considered by the convention was that of the open shop. One of the speakers thought that there should be an open shop policy in every State of the Union, while a number of others testified to the increased efficiency resulting from the institution of open shop practices. The general sentiment of the convention was overwhelmingly in favour of the open shop.

Resolutions were adopted opposing the payment of a cash bonus to ex-Service men, but approving the grant of technical and general educational assistance, and the giving of generous aid to dependent families of ex-Service men and to disabled ex-Service men themselves, favouring the establishment of a national transportation institute in Washington "under private auspices" and under the direction of men

who "have the confidence of the public and who will conduct its work free from parties and political control"; approving the President's proposal to Congress for the support of a United States mercantile marine; and calling upon the Railroad Labour Board and the Interstate Commerce Commission to make effective such voluntary co-operation as would co-ordinate and synchronise rate revision and labour adjustment.

Mr. Herbert Hoover, Secretary of Commerce, addressed the convention on the subject of trade organisations. He advocated the enactment of legislation which would enable these organisations to file voluntarily a statement of their intentions and purposes with some governmental body. Mr. J. J. Davis, Secretary of Labour, who also addressed the convention, drew attention to the waste resulting from industrial conflicts. As the best method to remedy this he suggested the enlargement of the conciliation work carried on by the Department of Labour and the provision of specially trained men to act as conciliators in the great industries where strikes and labour disputes were chronic. Mr. Davis also referred to the immigration situation. He thought that every precaution should be taken to guard against the admission of undesirable aliens and advocated the establishment of a system whereby prospective immigrants would be examined in the country of departure.

The *Ninth National Foreign Trade Convention* was held at Philadelphia 10 and 12 May. It was attended by some two thousand delegates from all parts of the United States and a number of foreign countries. The convention declaration adopted stated that the productive capacity of the United States was substantially greater than the normal requirements of the domestic market and that, consequently, sustained prosperity depended upon sustained foreign trade. Unemployment, it was considered, would not be reduced to its minimum until the export trade absorbed the last 10 or 20 per cent. of normal production.

The declaration also pronounced in favour of the importation of sound securities, these serving either to liquidate outstanding foreign obligations or to furnish new occupation for American industry. It was stated that the expanding market for foreign securities in the United States had already given practical proof of its usefulness in improving general conditions, and it was important that this market should be further developed. The convention reiterated its declaration of the previous year that the immediate creation of financial machinery to facilitate extension of long-term credits to promote free exchange of exports and imports was imperative. With regard to taxation the convention expressed the view that "the present excessively high income surtax rates drive into tax-free, but unproductive, investment many millions of capital which under wise taxation would find employment in productive enterprise". The convention also favoured the promotion of a United States merchant marine, but considered that until unreasonable regulation, particularly in respect of rates, routes, and services, had been removed, it would be impossible for it to compete successfully with foreign fleets.

A number of speakers declared in favour of the remission in whole or part of the war debts due to the United States, on account of the harmful effect their payment would probably have on foreign trade.

On 16 May announcement was made of the early formation of an *American Construction Council* with Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt as Honorary President. This Council will have as its main purposes the restoration of public confidence in the building industry and the establishment of a union of all the various elements in the industry in an endeavour to raise standards and increase efficiency. A statement issued by the new organisation declares that the 250 national associations in the building industry have learned from experience the large amount of duplicate effort which goes on, and the inability of individual associations to grapple effectively with problems outside their special field; they are accordingly in favour of the formation of a comprehensive organisation which will deal with these common problems.

The intention is to elaborate a code of ethics for the construction industry, to develop a national building code, to set up a research and statistical bureau, to take measures calculated to lengthen the construction season, to eliminate waste, to apply measures of standardisation and dimensional simplification, to develop apprenticeship systems, and to encourage local study and public understanding of building situations. The groups in the new organisation comprise architects, engineers, construction, labour, general contractors, sub-contractors, material and equipment manufacturers, material and equipment dealers, bond, insurance and real estate interests, and the construction Departments of Federal, State, and municipal governments.

Among the employers' associations which will take an active part in the Council's work are the National Lumber Manufacturers' Association, the Associated General Contractors, the National Confederation of Construction Industries, the National Building Congress, and the National Association of Building Exchanges.

