

The Twelfth Session of the International Labour Conference : II

UNEMPLOYMENT



The Committee on Unemployment elected the following officers : Chairman and Reporter : Dr. Paranjpye, Indian Government Delegate ; Vice-Chairmen : Mr. Vogel, German Employers' Delegate, and Mr. Findlay, British Workers' Adviser. It had been instructed to consider the special report² submitted by the Office to the Conference, and the Selection Committee had also referred to it two draft resolutions submitted by Mr. Schürch and Mr. Mertens respectively.

The Office report was limited to some international aspects of the problem of unemployment, namely, the relation between unemployment and monetary fluctuations, the international difficulties specially felt in the coal-mining and textile industries, and the influence on the labour market of the migration policy of the various countries. Mr. Schürch in his draft resolution, had manifestly tried to give a practical conclusion to the Office's documentary report, which he followed point by point. Mr. Mertens had laid special stress on the problem of unemployment among miners, and proposed that this question should be placed on the agenda of the 1930 Session.

The Office report was the subject of some rather sharp criticisms, in particular by an employers' delegate, Mr. Cort van der Linden. He expressed the view that the Office was wrong to make its study deal principally with the economic aspects of the problem of unemployment, the competence of the Office, in his opinion, being exclusively social. He would also have preferred the report to deal with the problem as a whole rather

¹ For the first part of this article, cf. *International Labour Review*, Vol. XX, No. 3, Sept. 1929, pp. 321-355.

² *Unemployment. Some International Aspects 1920-1928. Studies and Reports, Series C (Employment and Unemployment)*, No. 13. Geneva, 1929. 222 pp.

than with some special aspects, the choice of which he did not approve of ; in particular, he regretted that the Office had not tried to show the influence on unemployment of high wages and trade union action. Similar opinions were expressed by other members of the Committee. The majority, however, were not convinced, and the Committee finally adopted — after a long discussion and in face of the opposition or reservations of some of its members — a long resolution whose subject-matter included the various points raised by Mr. Schürch and Mr. Mertens.

This resolution, after noting the decision taken by the League of Nations to examine the causes of fluctuations in the purchasing power of gold and their effect on the economic life of the nations, invited the Office to communicate to the competent Committee the results which have already been obtained as a consequence of its studies concerning the effects of monetary fluctuations on the stability of employment of the workers, and to offer its assistance to that Committee in the investigation of various other effects of these fluctuations on the economic situation of the workers.

It then invited the Office to continue its investigations on the problem of employment, industry by industry, and in particular to complete the investigation already in progress for the textile industries. As regards unemployment among coal miners, it invited the Governing Body to examine the desirability of placing this question on the agenda of a forthcoming Session of the Conference, if possible that of 1930. The part of the report dealing with migration was referred to the Governing Body and the Permanent Migration Committee, their attention being particularly drawn to the problem of the recruiting and placing of foreign workers.

Several other proposals made during the discussions were also accepted by the Committee. In particular, the Office was invited to undertake further investigations into the development of public employment exchanges, and the Governing Body was asked to examine suitable means of ensuring the international co-ordination of these public services, as provided in the Washington Convention on unemployment. The Office was also invited to investigate the influence on unemployment of various important economic factors, such as increase of population, the development of new industries leading to a decreased importance of other industries, rationalisation, and scientific management.

Finally, the Committee invited the Office to continue its investigations with a view to ascertaining the principal reasons for variations in the rate of unemployment as between different countries.

The report of the Committee, presented by its Chairman, Dr. Paranjpye, was the subject of a full discussion in the plenary sittings of the Conference, as a result of which it was adopted almost unanimously. It is true that in voting for it the Conference was not putting forward a solution for the grave and world-wide problem of unemployment, as Mr. Gibson, Australian Workers' Delegate, and others would have wished it to do. But it was at least giving the Office and the Governing Body broadly conceived instructions, in accordance with which they will continue their active collaboration in the study of the problem, such study being in fact an essential preliminary to any effective practical measures.

ANNUAL REPORTS UNDER ARTICLE 408

The Committee set up to examine and report on the annual reports made by the Governments, under Article 408 of the Treaty of Versailles, on the application of ratified Conventions appointed the following officers : Chairman : Mr. Pfister, Swiss Government Delegate ; Vice-Chairmen : Mr. C. Tzaut, Swiss Employers' Delegate, and Mr. Kupers, Dutch Workers' Delegate ; Reporter : Mr. Somervell, British Government Adviser.

The Twelfth Session of the Conference broke new ground in the work of this committee. For the first time, the Conference had at its disposal every one of the annual reports — 241 in number this year — due in respect of twenty Conventions. For the first time also the Conference Committee was able to undertake a detailed examination of the application of each Convention individually, whereas in the two preceding years the Committee was mainly concerned with problems of a constitutional and general character.

As in previous years, the Committee took as the basis of its deliberations not only the Second Part of the Director's Report, containing the summary of the annual reports, but also the report submitted by the Committee of Experts which, in response to the wish expressed by the 1928 Conference, was reappointed by the Governing Body on the basis of tacit renewal from year to year, and which, in accordance with its terms of reference, had conducted a preliminary examination of the annual reports from the

Governments. In order to facilitate the examination of the application of each Convention separately, the Committee appointed six special reporters from among its members in addition to the general Reporter, and the twenty Conventions under consideration were distributed among these reporters for detailed examination from the point of view of the concordance of national legislation with the provisions of the Conventions. The reports submitted to the Committee by the special reporters, in a summarised form and as modified in the light of the supplementary information spontaneously furnished by the Government Delegates of the countries in respect of which observations had been made, were submitted to the Conference as an appendix to the general report. In preparing their reports for the Committee the special reporters also took into account the questions raised by the Committee of Experts in previous years, and it was thus possible to see how in many cases those questions had been solved either simply by more detailed explanation or by the adoption of more precise administrative or legislative measures.

In the course of the general discussion with which the Committee concluded its work, a number of suggestions were put forward with regard to the annual reports themselves and the Committee of Experts. The Committee emphasised the importance of the Governments giving in their annual reports as detailed information as possible on the practical application of the Conventions, not only in the metropolitan territories but also in the colonies. It was also pointed out in the Committee that under the existing practice Governments were not called upon to render a report under Article 408 until a complete calendar year had elapsed subsequently to their ratification. It was felt that to call for a report in the first instance upon even a comparatively short experience of the application of the Conventions would be useful in reminding the Governments of the importance of bringing the necessary legislative or administrative measures into force.

As regards the Committee of Experts, the Committee was unanimous in appreciating the great value of its work, and expressed the hope that every facility would be given to the Experts to enable their examination to be conducted with the necessary thoroughness and attention to detail. The suggestion was made by certain members that it might be desirable to add to the Committee of Experts an element endowed with the

practical experience of the conduct of industry, either by establishing contact with employers' and workers' organisations or by some other means. The Committee also noted with interest the suggestion put forward by the Experts themselves regarding the possibility of establishing more direct contact between themselves and the Governments concerned. These suggestions will in due course be submitted to the Governing Body for consideration.

The machinery which the Conference and the Governing Body set up pursuant to a Resolution passed by the Eighth Session of the Conference, in order to enable the Conference to make the fullest use of the information contained in the annual reports submitted by the Governments under Article 408 of the Treaty, has only been in operation for a period of three years. It is, however, already possible to say that each succeeding year has yielded results of increasing value, so that the information now available on the application of ratified Conventions in the various countries is far clearer and fuller than ever before. Perhaps the most gratifying feature of the experience of the last three years is the good will with which the Governments have furnished supplementary information with regard to the situation in their countries, in response to observations made by the Committee of Experts or in the Conference. Mr. Humbert Wolfe, British Government Delegate, speaking in the plenary Conference during the discussion on the report of the Committee, was not exaggerating when he said that although the origin of the Committee "was attended with doubts, and a good deal of opposition, as year by year passes it becomes increasingly clear that no individual action taken by the Conference has been more fruitful of results in the present, or is more likely to be fruitful of results in the future, than this Committee."

The report of the Committee was unanimously adopted by the Conference.

STANDING ORDERS

Once again the chairmanship of the Standing Orders Committee was entrusted to Mr. Mahaim, Belgian Government Delegate, who also undertook the duties of Reporter. He was assisted by Mr. Oersted and Mr. Jouhaux, representing the Danish employers and French workers respectively, as Vice-Chairmen.

Procedure in the case of Revision of a Convention

The Standing Orders Committee was charged with the examination of the reports submitted by the Governing Body to the Twelfth Session of the Conference in accordance with a resolution adopted on 12 June 1928 by the Eleventh Session concerning the procedure to be followed in the case of the revision of Conventions.

A standard Article which appears in all Conventions adopted by the Conference during the eleven Sessions held between 1919 and 1928, lays down that "at least once in ten years the Governing Body of the International Labour Office shall present to the general Conference a Report on the working of this Convention, and shall consider the desirability of placing on the agenda of the Conference the question of its revision or modification". Since Part XIII of the Treaty of Peace contains no conditions regarding the procedure to be followed in the case of revision or modification of a Convention, it was necessary to lay down, in the Standing Orders of the Governing Body and of the Conference, the conditions of application of the above-mentioned clause in the various Conventions. The Governing Body had already inserted in its own Standing Orders, in the form of Article 7a, the new conditions governing the procedure for placing the question of the revision or modification of a Convention on the agenda of the Conference. These conditions cover the first phases of the procedure of revision which come exclusively within the province of the Governing Body. It was necessary for the Conference to provide in its own Standing Orders for the phases of the procedure following the placing on the agenda of one of its Sessions of a proposal for revision. It was, in fact, a question of adapting to the actual case of the revision of a Convention the conditions of Article 6 of the Standing Orders, which governs the procedure of the Conference. On the proposal of the Standing Orders Committee, the Conference adopted a new Article 6a governing the procedure of the Conference in the case of the revision of a Convention. The principal clauses of the new Article may be summarised as follows :

When the Governing Body has decided to place upon the agenda of a Session of the Conference the revision in whole or in part of a Convention, the International Labour Office will submit to the Conference draft amendments drawn up in accordance with the conclusions of the report of the Governing Body

recommending the revision in whole or in part of the Convention. These draft amendments must correspond to the question or questions in respect of which a proposal for revision has been placed on the agenda.

The discussions and the decisions of the Conference are thus restricted to the questions placed on its agenda by the Governing Body. This rule restricting the liberty of the Conference formed the subject of a long discussion in the Committee. The Employers' Group, in fact, maintained that such a condition was prejudicial to the complete liberty of the Conference and ran counter to the Treaty itself. It considered, moreover, that the various provisions of a Convention formed one complete whole and that the Conference could not, in fact, usefully consider the revision of a Convention unless it could examine all the provisions it contained. The majority of the members of the Standing Orders Committee and of the Conference did not, however, accept this point of view. Most delegates considered that, in virtue of Article 400 of the Treaty, the Governing Body has the unquestioned right of settling as it sees fit the agenda of the Sessions of the Conference. The exercise of this right being subject to no reserve or condition whatever, there could be no doubt that the Governing Body can limit the scope of the proposals for the revision of Conventions which it places on the agenda of the Conference, in the same way as it can limit the scope of a new question which it submits to the Conference. Furthermore, it is generally admitted that the discussions and decisions of an assembly must be confined to the questions placed upon its agenda. In the circumstances, it appeared that, in calling attention to these principles in the Standing Orders of the Conference, the task of its Presidents would be considerably facilitated without in any way infringing the terms of the Treaty. Stress was also laid upon the fact that the complete liberty of the Conference would thus be in no way prejudiced. Under Article 402, paragraph 3, the Treaty does in fact give to every Session of the Conference the right to place on the agenda of the following Session, by a majority vote of two-thirds, questions that it may desire to consider and that have not been placed on its agenda by the Governing Body. If, therefore, in a particular case the Conference was of opinion that the proposals for revision placed upon the agenda by the Governing Body were insufficient, it would be possible for it to place upon the agenda of the following Session, in accor-

dance with the above-mentioned terms of Article 402, proposals for revision relative to points other than those submitted by the Governing Body.

Certain terms of the original Article 6 were included in the new Article 6a with slight modifications in order to adapt them to the special case of revision, whilst others, particularly those concerning the double-discussion procedure, were declared to be inapplicable to the case of revision. The new Article 6a of the Standing Orders of the Conference as a whole, in the form in which it was put forward by the Committee, was adopted by the Conference by 75 votes to 11.

The Conference was also called upon to take a decision upon two questions concerning the legal mechanism of revision in the first place, whether there should be a special clause in the Convention effecting revision stating that the old Convention is abrogated, and, in the second place, in what form the Convention effecting revision should be drawn up. The first question formed the subject of a long and interesting debate in the Committee, during which no member of the Committee put forward a definite proposal to insert in the Convention effecting revision a provision stating that the old Convention was abrogated. By adopting the report of the Committee, the Conference thus implicitly admitted that it had not, in fact, the power to abrogate a Convention which it had already adopted and which had been ratified by States Members. It therefore follows that, in the event of revision, the new Convention and the old Convention will continue to exist side by side at least so long as States Members desire to be bound by the old Convention. In regard to the form of the Convention effecting revision, it was agreed that this should be a self-contained legal instrument, or, in other words, that it should include both the unamended provisions of the old Convention and the new revised provisions.

The Standing Orders Committee had also to consider the standard Articles to be included in a Convention effecting revision and in future ordinary Conventions. The Article relating to revision was modified on two points. In order to avoid, in the future, the period of uncertainty concerning the fate of a Convention as the result of the lack of precision in the wording of the present Article, the Conference decided to substitute for the words "at least once in ten years" the words "at the expiration of each period of x years after the coming into force of this Convention". In order to express more clearly the difference

in meaning between the words "revision" and "modification" used in the original draft of the Article, the Conference decided to substitute for the formula "revision or modification" of a Convention the words "revision in whole or in part".

The Conference also decided that it was desirable to include in future Conventions a new Article to make clear what will become of a Convention if it is subsequently revised by a new Convention. This Article lays down that the ratification of the Convention effecting revision automatically involves the denunciation of the revised Convention irrespective of the time limit ; that as from the date of the coming into force of the new revising Convention the old Convention is no longer open to ratification by Members ; and that the revised Convention remains in force for such Members as have ratified it but do not ratify the new Convention. The object of this Article was to reduce, to a certain extent, the difficulties that might result from the co-existence of two Conventions on the same subject.

The standard Articles as a whole, as proposed by the Standing Orders Committee, were adopted by the Conference by 73 votes to 9.

The Double-Discussion Procedure

The Standing Orders Committee was of the unanimous opinion that the procedure followed during the last three Sessions of the Conference gave rise to serious difficulties. It considered especially that it was impossible for so large an assembly as the Conference to undertake satisfactorily the drafting of a questionnaire. It therefore put forward certain proposals, which the Conference unanimously adopted, with a view to improving the present procedure. As the result of these proposals the procedure will in future be as follows.

The International Labour Office will draw up, subject to approval by the Governing Body or by a Committee of the Governing Body appointed for the purpose, a report on the items of the agenda. This report will not necessarily include a questionnaire, but will fix as completely as possible the points on which it is proposed to consult the Governments. After a discussion of this report the Conference will decide, by the approval of conclusions or resolutions, the points upon which the Governments are to be consulted.

The International Labour Office will then draw up, on the

basis of the above decisions of the Conference, the questionnaires to be submitted to the Governments.

The Conference made the necessary alterations in paragraphs 4, 5, and 6 of Article 6 of its Standing Orders to cover the modifications entailed by this procedure.

The Use of a Non-official Language in the Discharge of an Official Duty in the Conference

On the proposal of the Italian delegation the Conference had referred to its Standing Orders Committee the question whether, according to the Standing Orders, members appointed by the Conference to occupy official positions are entitled to use a non-official language in the discharge of their duties. At the suggestion of the Committee, the Conference decided to refer this question for consideration by the Governing Body.

TELEPHONIC INTERPRETATION, ETC.

The Selection Committee appointed a Sub-Committee to examine questions relating to interpretation, and in particular, to telephonic interpretation.

The report of the Sub-Committee was submitted by the Selection Committee to the Conference and approved by the latter. In this report the Sub-Committee noted the progress made since last year in the interpretation of speeches by telephone. It put forward certain suggestions for the improvement of the present system, particularly as regards the type of apparatus to be used. It laid particular stress upon the important progress made by the interpreters in instantaneous translation, and noted that it was now possible for the stenographic record of the instantaneous translation to be used for the *Provisional Record* of the Conference. The accuracy of the *Record* could doubtless be further improved by the use of the "recordaphone", which had been employed for the first time this year; the Sub-Committee urged that the experiments with this machine should be continued at the Session of the Conference to be held in October 1929.

Finally, the Sub-Committee expressed the opinion that the projector, used to throw amendments on a screen during the discussions of the reports of committees, had certainly been of use, and that the experiment with this instrument should be continued.

RESOLUTIONS

The Selection Committee chose as its Chairman Mr. Valdès-Mendeville, Chilean Government Delegate, and as Vice-Chairmen Mr. Olivetti, Italian Employers' Delegate, and Mr. Draper, Canadian Workers' Delegate.

One of the duties of the Selection Committee is to consider the draft resolutions put forward under Article 12, paragraph 7, of the Standing Orders of the Conference. Under Article 7*b*, paragraph 2, of the Standing Orders the Committee "shall decide what resolutions are to be discussed by the Conference at each sitting". Furthermore, for several years past it has been agreed that the Selection Committee should not confine itself merely to fixing the order of the discussion of the resolutions, but that it should enter into negotiations with the authors of the resolutions, and suggest modifications of form that may shorten the discussions in the Conference and render more likely the adoption of the resolutions themselves. It is, however, understood that the text of the resolutions can only be modified with the agreement of their authors and that in no case can the Committee prevent a resolution, properly put forward, from being discussed in the Conference.

This year, as in the preceding year, the Selection Committee set up a special Sub-Committee to examine resolutions, to negotiate with their authors with a view to making modifications that might appear useful, and to make a report to the Selection Committee itself.

In the majority of cases, the authors of the resolutions, after negotiations which were occasionally somewhat difficult, agreed to the modifications which appeared necessary to avoid objections being raised in the Conference itself regarding the form of the resolutions. In point of fact, certain modifications of form occasionally touched upon the actual substance of the resolutions. It would seem, moreover, that the importance and nature of the modifications suggested to the authors varied with the conception of each individual member of the Sub-Committee of the part to be played by the Selection Committee in regard to resolutions. This was particularly noticeable in the case of the resolution concerning the application of labour legislation to the nationals of certain States which enjoy the privilege of extra-territorial jurisdiction or similar privileges, submitted by Mr. Tchou, Chinese Government Delegate. This draft resolution

formed the object, in the Sub-Committee, of a lengthy debate, during which divergent opinions were expressed concerning the powers of the Selection Committee with regard to resolutions. A certain number of modifications proposed by the members of the Sub-Committee were accepted by Mr. Tchou, who was, however, unable to agree to certain changes suggested.

While these negotiations were proceeding, one of the members of the Sub-Committee, Mr. Oersted, laid before the Selection Committee, during the consideration of other draft resolutions, a proposal to define more precisely the powers of the Selection Committee in regard to resolutions. This proposal, which had been prompted by the difficulties encountered during the discussions in the Sub-Committee, was submitted to the Conference by the Selection Committee in the following form: "The Selection Committee proposes that the Conference should request the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to consider what method could be adopted — if necessary by inserting certain provisions in the Standing Orders — to lay down a procedure for draft resolutions submitted by members of the Conference."

As this proposal was adopted by the Conference, it will be for the Governing Body to submit precise proposals on this subject to a future Session of the Conference.

In submitting this proposal to the Conference, the Committee had given expression to the doubt as to its competence regarding the consideration of resolutions. It therefore found itself in a somewhat embarrassing position when seized by the Sub-Committee on Resolutions of the modified text of Mr. Tchou's draft resolution referred to above. Mr. Tchou's text did, in fact, raise questions of the highest importance of a social and even of a political nature. In merely referring to the Conference the modified text of Mr. Tchou's draft resolution, the Committee laid stress upon the fact that there were no definite rules as to how far it might intervene to propose modifications even of form in the text of draft resolutions. It also pointed out that it had considered it desirable to submit to the Conference the proposal put forward by Mr. Oersted in this connection.

The various draft resolutions submitted to the Conference after examination by the Selection Committee were adopted, with the exception of the draft resolution submitted by Mr. Tchou, referred to above, which, when put to the vote, received 53 votes for and none against. As, however, a quorum had not been

reached the resolution was not adopted. The other resolutions concern the following questions :

Draft resolution concerning the organisation of work in shifts in mechanical sheet-glass factories, submitted by Mr. Müller, German Workers' Delegate, and Mr. Mertens, Belgian Workers' Delegate ;

Draft resolution concerning the question of insurance against old age, invalidity and death and the question of the rights of foreign workers in the case of old age, invalidity and death, submitted by Mr. de Marffy-Mantuano, Hungarian Government Delegate ;

Draft resolution concerning the financial resources necessary to the progressive development of the work of the International Labour Organisation, submitted by Mr. Jouhaux, French Workers' Delegate ;

Draft resolution concerning the underground work of women and young persons, submitted by Mr. Matsuoka, Japanese Workers' Delegate ;

Draft resolution concerning the organisation and representation in the Conference of workers in colonies and non-white workers, submitted by Mr. Joshi, Indian Workers' Delegate ;

Draft resolution concerning equality of treatment between national workers and coloured foreign workers, submitted by Mr. Ma Cheu Chun, Chinese Workers' Delegate ;

Draft resolution concerning the application of Article 405, paragraph 5, of the Treaty of Peace of Versailles, submitted by Mr. Matsuoka, Japanese Workers' Delegate ;

Draft resolution concerning the recruiting of bodies of workers in one country with a view to their employment in another country, submitted by Mr. Tchou, Chinese Government Delegate ;

Draft resolution concerning the revision of the Washington Hours Convention for Japan and India, submitted by Mr. Joshi, Indian Workers' Delegate.

It now remains for the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to consider what action can be taken in regard to these resolutions.

THE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A number of sittings were as usual devoted to the discussion of the Director's Report to the Conference. Although only a

limited time was available for discussion, there were 57 speakers on the Director's Report, as compared with 43 last year.

Even more than last year the speakers tended to devote less of their time to describing social conditions in the countries they represented, and more of it to international problems, which are the natural subject of the discussions of an International Labour Conference. At previous Sessions representatives of Governments that had reason to believe that their social legislation was little known abroad have given detailed accounts of the situation in their countries, and in many cases have replied to criticisms from their workers' representatives or have even made statements that have given rise to such criticisms. There were very few discussions of this kind at this year's Session of the Conference. National conditions were for the most part left to the Director's Report itself; explanations or supplementary information were given, but in general the discussion of purely national questions was reduced to a minimum. Even in the exceptional cases in which national conditions were discussed at length — for example, in the case of China, India, Japan, and Italy — they were discussed not so much for their own sake as in connection with international problems and with the object of clearly showing the importance of these international problems for each of the Member States. But it is not surprising that these international problems should form the subject of a particularly full and thorough discussion at a Conference at which more States were represented than ever before, and which was dealing for the first time with such vast questions as that of native labour in distant countries.

The Conference could not, of course, fail to deal with the question of the ratification of Conventions, which is as it were the element that binds the States Members together and symbolises the work of the Organisation as a whole. The Director's Report for this year records a gratifying increase in the number of ratifications. The average number of new ratifications in previous years was 40; and the number reported last year was 57; the number reported to this year's Session was 79, and several more were received during the Session.

There was as usual some discussion of the progress made. No one denied that this was considerable, but many of the workers' delegates — Mr. Caballero, Mr. Joshi, Mr. Mertens, Mr. Poulton — pointed out that it might be and ought to be still greater and that the number of non-ratifications was larger still.

However, another workers' representative, Mr. Serrarens, pointed out that progress was also slow in other spheres of international activity and that the results achieved on the questions of customs tariffs, commercial treaties, and other international economic questions were certainly not greater than those achieved by the International Labour Organisation.

A number of speakers referred to the factors that tend to hinder ratification and the difficulties encountered in individual countries. A series of speakers — Mr. Iwasaki, Mrs. Kjelsberg, Mr. Mannio, Mr. Oersted, Mr. Olivetti, Mr. de Souza — said that Governments desiring to ratify Conventions with which their national legislation was already more or less in agreement were often prevented from doing so because the Conventions were much too detailed. It may be pointed out in this connection that, generally speaking, the Office, in preparing the first drafts of Conventions, tries to avoid going into more detail than is necessary to make the Convention effective, but that the Groups at the Conference itself often propose a large number of detailed clauses with a view to making the Convention as complete as possible. An example of this may be found in the Draft Convention concerning the protection against accidents of workers employed in loading or unloading ships, which was discussed at this year's Session.

The discussion of the Director's Report appears to justify some degree of optimism as regards the future progress of ratification, for a number of Government representatives announced the intention of their countries to ratify further Conventions in the near future.

One ratification which was specially discussed was that of the amendment to Article 393 of the Treaty of Versailles, involving an increase in the size of the Governing Body. References to this question were made by other delegates besides those of the oversea countries which are specially concerned. In particular, Monsignor Nolens, Netherlands Government Delegate, raised the question of why Italy has not yet ratified this amendment to the Treaty.

The discussion of the Hours Convention, which from every point of view occupies the first place among the decisions of the Conference, was comparatively short this year. Mr. Müller attributed this to the results of the British elections and referred to the high hopes of social progress they had raised in the Workers' Group. Mr. Poulton, British Workers' Delegate, not

only encouraged these hopes, but also made a direct appeal to the new Government of Great Britain for speedy ratification. It was one of the most dramatic moments of the whole Session when Mr. Wolfe, representing the British Government, stated in reply that the British Government proposed to take the necessary steps to ensure ratification at the earliest possible moment and that the Government would take account both of the Washington Convention and of the London agreement. Mr. Forbes Watson, British Employers' Delegate, on the other hand, once more expressed a desire for the revision of the Hours Convention, and suggested that the Conference should give its most careful consideration to the question of revision. Earlier in the discussion, Mr. Oersted, Danish Employers' Delegate, said that without entering into a discussion of this difficult problem, he would refer to the debate that had taken place in the Governing Body in March and that he made all the necessary reservations on the question.

Mr. Oersted also laid stress on the importance attaching to the Conventions drawn up by the Conference from the general economic point of view. Other aspects of the economic question were dealt with by Mr. Olivetti, who raised the question whether the best means of improving the position of the workers was not to be found in the solution of the special economic difficulties of individual countries rather than in a more or less mechanical application of International Labour Conventions. The object of Part XIII of the Treaty, he said, was to prevent States which had introduced or intended to introduce particular social reforms from being placed in a disadvantageous position as compared with other countries. This involved the assumption that an attempt should be made to remove the other causes which placed certain countries under a handicap in the economic sphere. It was the duty of the League of Nations to do this, but it must be admitted that the League had not yet been very successful in the matter. On the other hand, they could not fail to note the increasing economic importance of the new industrial countries, and in particular the imperialistic economic invasion of the United States with its immense resources of raw materials and capital, its large home market, and the spirit of enterprise of its population. The United States was not a Member either of the League or of the International Labour Organisation, and its social policy was widely different from that of the Organisation. It was only because economic conditions in the United

States were quite different that it was possible in that country to pursue a policy of high wages, and it was therefore a mistake to hold up the United States as an example to other countries in this respect. Much could, however, be learnt from America without Americanising Europe. American enterprise and initiative had greatly contributed to the prosperity of that country, and the spirit of collaboration had helped to improve the position of the American workers. Possibly the International Labour Office might find it necessary to revise its own policy in certain respects in view of the example of America.

Mr. Čurčin also emphasised the difference between economic conditions in America and in Europe, and the difference in wage policy that this involved. He drew attention to the increasingly severe competition to which Europe was exposed by the economic policy of America. He questioned whether the Director's Report made sufficient allowance for these economic difficulties. He asked whether employers and workers had understood the signs of the times which called upon them to abandon the dark ways of mistrust and to collaborate more closely with one another.

Conditions in the United States were not discussed solely by employers' representatives. The Spanish Government Delegate, Mr. Gascon y Marín, also referred to them and expressed the hope that the Office would make further investigations and comparisons of American and European conditions, especially with regard to collective labour agreements and works agreements. It was the duty of the Office, he said, to obtain a clear idea of economic and financial conditions in the different countries, but without losing sight of the necessity of social justice, and it must examine possible ways of removing the economic difficulties that stand in the way of international progress in some States.

Dr. Bramsnaes, Danish Government Delegate, asked what progress had been made in the study of social charges in the various countries. He regarded the problem of social charges as primarily a question of economic distribution, and expressed the view that good social legislation was the best foundation for economic progress. At an earlier stage of the discussion, Mr. Jouhaux, speaking on behalf of the workers, also laid special emphasis on the necessity for the Office to concern itself with economic questions.

To sum up the debate on economic questions, it may be said

that from whatever points of view the speakers regarded economic problems, none of them contested their importance from the point of view of social policy. They all recognised the fact that the International Labour Office cannot leave these problems out of account in its work, just as they cannot be neglected in the discussions of the Conference from year to year.

There was, however, one question which played a predominant part in the whole discussion of the Director's Report, not only in the debate on economic problems, where it arose in connection with economic relations with the United States, but also in various other parts of the discussion. This was the question of the universality of the International Labour Organisation. It was touched upon by European speakers, Mr. Mertens, Mr. Poulton and others, and also by speakers representing distant countries, such as Mr. Franco, Mr. Iwasaki, and Mr. Yoshisaka. The same idea underlay the satisfaction expressed at the fact that Brazil has continued to be a Member of the International Labour Organisation although it is no longer a Member of the League of Nations, and the expressions of regret that Argentina was among the few States Members that did not send a delegation to the Conference. It formed the principal feature of the discussions on the position of the Indian Native States with regard to the Organisation. In the same connection important statements were made by Scandinavian representatives on the value from the point of view of the Organisation as a whole of the specially close collaboration between those countries on questions of international social policy. All sections of the Conference recognised that the International Labour Organisation must endeavour to make itself as universal as possible if it is to do its work satisfactorily.

Nothing provides a better justification for optimism as regards the growing universality of the Organisation than the confidence universally shown in it by the Government, employers', and workers' representatives of those countries which at present belong to it. That confidence was of course expressed in different ways; and indeed it could not be sincere unless it was expressed in different ways according to the part of the world, the country, and the Group to which each speaker belonged. It was precisely these differences of tone that made the general harmony so striking. It is hardly possible to give even brief quotations from the expressions of confidence uttered by the various speakers. It may, however, be mentioned that the

Indian employers' representative, Mr. Chetty, said that the Indian employers followed the work of the Office with sympathetic interest. On the workers' side there were many expressions of hope and confidence, especially from representatives of those countries where industry has only recently developed. For example, Mr. Carvalho said that the Brazilian workers were anxious to take an effective part in the work of the Organisation. Mr. Ma Cheu Chun, Chinese Workers' Delegate, said that if he were not himself a pioneer of the Chinese labour movement he could yield his place to the Director of the International Labour Office or to one of his collaborators, who would speak as well as he could of the facts. A more striking expression of confidence could hardly be imagined. On the Government side a representative of another distant country, Sir Atul Chatterjee, Indian Government Delegate, praised the work of the Office in supplying information, and said that the Organisation had established a unique position among the scientific bodies of the world. Mr. Raducano, Mr. Yeremitch and many others also gave assurances of their belief in the Organisation and their desire to collaborate with it. Miss Hesselgren, notwithstanding her special views on the attitude to social questions of women's associations with feminist tendencies, expressed her sincere admiration of the work which the Director had done for the good of mankind. Dr. Bramsnaes, Danish Government Delegate, described the collaboration of the Scandinavian countries in the sphere of international social policy and their relation to the Organisation, and said that when those countries were discussing social questions among themselves, the country with the greatest sympathy for the International Labour Organisation always took the lead.

An important statement was also made by Mrs. Kjelsberg, Norwegian Government Delegate. It will be remembered that not long ago the Norwegian Parliament decided to strike out of the budget the item for participation in the International Labour Conference. Mrs. Kjelsberg gave an assurance that Norway still desired to collaborate in the work of the Organisation, that this was the opinion even of those speakers in the Norwegian Storting who had voted against the item in the budget, and that the Norwegian workers' representatives had recognised that their attitude required further consideration.

The expressions of confidence to which different speakers gave utterance were varied by occasional criticisms and sugges-

tions for improvement. Much stress was laid on the necessity of interesting public opinion in the Organisation to a greater extent, making its work better known, issuing its publications in more languages, sending members of the staff on mission to distant countries, and including nationals of still more countries in the staff of the Office. It is not possible to give a detailed account here of the various interesting and valuable suggestions which were made, especially as the Director's Report itself fully recognises the necessity of improved publicity and of closer relations with all countries.

Members of the Conference did not fail to realise that in order to carry out the suggestions which were made, funds would be required, and that the budget of the Organisation is severely limited in this respect. For this reason it was not astonishing that the Conference, departing from its usual practice, this year discussed the budget of the Organisation. It did not of course attempt to take decisions, since by doing so it would have been forestalling the decisions of the Assembly of the League of Nations. A number of speakers, however, including Mr. Jouhaux, Dr. Bramsnaes, Dr. Franco, Mr. Gascon y Marín, and Mr. Miranda, emphatically pointed out that the funds placed at the disposal of the Organisation must correspond to the work it has to do. As has already been stated, this idea was embodied in one of the resolutions adopted by the Conference.

CONCLUSIONS

The general impression produced by the Twelfth Session of the International Labour Conference is one of serenity and untroubled progress. The number of delegates and advisers, the number of delegations, and more particularly the number of complete delegations, were all greater than in previous years. Countries of great economic importance, such as China, whose participation had hitherto been little more than nominal, sent complete delegations to this year's Conference, took an active part in the discussion of the various items on the agenda, and made a number of interesting suggestions. The agenda of the Conference was fully dealt with after careful discussions, and resulted in decisions which promise well for the immediate progress of international labour legislation and for the procedure of the Conference itself. In the sphere of accident prevention important decisions were adopted, and the contents

of the Conventions go in many respects beyond the proposals which the Office had felt it possible to lay before the Conference. The Draft Convention concerning the protection against accidents of workers employed in loading or unloading ships formed the subject of discussions in which the various Groups competed with one another in putting forward suggestions, with the result that it is perhaps more technically complete than any previous Convention. The items on the agenda which came up for first discussion, forced labour and hours of work of salaried employees, formed the subject of detailed discussion by experts. Although the discussions perhaps suffered a little from the imperfections of the procedure under which the Conference itself had to draft the questionnaires, it was nevertheless decided to place both subjects on the agenda of next year's Conference for second discussion, and important preparatory work for the second discussion was accomplished.

The Conference endeavoured to remove the defects of procedure mentioned above by deciding that in future the actual questionnaire is not to be drafted during the first discussion. Another important question of procedure was also settled: the method to be adopted when the revision of an existing Convention in whole or in part has to be considered. The procedure adopted forms the natural complement to that followed by the Governing Body, and appears to provide the necessary guarantees for the stability of international labour legislation. The Conference also decided on standard Articles for new Conventions which correspond to these new decisions as to procedure.

The Conference also adopted a number of resolutions, which will be of greater or less importance for the work of the Organisation in the nearer or more distant future. It is only necessary to refer here to the resolutions on unemployment and on the budget of the Organisation.

In connection with the resolutions, and still more in the debate on the Director's Report, the Conference discussed a large number of questions of general social policy, the economic questions connected with them, and the problems of the Organisation as a whole. In these discussions the speakers placed general international interests in the foreground and individual national problems in the background in a most remarkable way. The Conference was inspired by a truly international spirit, and manifested its firm determination to attain real universality, to improve conditions of labour throughout the world, and thus to contribute to universal peace and social justice.