



I.L.O. Notes

During the Session which it has just held at Geneva, the Governing Body considered the Office's report on the proceedings of the Santiago Conference. In the course of the discussion concerning the action to be taken on the various resolutions adopted by the Conference, all the speakers, and especially those who had been at the Santiago meeting, stressed the importance of the results achieved. Some of them pointed out the possible effects of the work of the International Labour Organisation on the progress of labour legislation in South America. Evidence was also given of the collaboration that the Organisation can expect on the part of the American States. Between the tendency towards uniformity of labour conditions and regional differences there are possibilities of reconciliation which must be sought by conferences on the lines of the one just held at Santiago. Various speakers accordingly expressed the wish that such conferences should be held regularly.

In a formal resolution the Governing Body expressed its satisfaction at the Office's report. It instructed the Director to give immediate effect to those resolutions which merely request that their contents should be communicated to the States concerned by way of information. As regards the others, the Director was requested to bring them to the notice of the competent committees and to give them the fullest consideration in any proposals he may have to make relating to the subject-matter of these resolutions.

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In pursuance of a resolution adopted by the last Session of the International Labour Conference, the Governing Body has just decided to set up a Permanent Agricultural Committee. This proposal, as Mr. Jules Gautier, member of the French delegation, pointed out when seconding the resolution at the Conference, "is the result of a series of negotiations, conversations, and even positive actions which began in 1921". In 1921, in fact, the Conference recommended the formation of a Joint Agricultural Commission on the same lines as the Joint Maritime Commission. No effect, however, was given to this recommendation. It is true that a Mixed Advisory Committee was set up to co-ordinate the work of the Office and of the International Institute of Agriculture. More recently, too, the Governing Body set up a Committee of its own members with the special task of studying agricultural questions of particular interest to the International Labour Organisation. But wider collaboration with the interests

concerned was necessary if in studying the problem of agricultural labour due allowance was to be made for the general elements of the social and economic development of agriculture in the various parts of the world. This necessity was further strengthened by the agricultural depression, with its far-reaching effects on the social structure of agriculture, and by the policy adopted by the various countries in their attempts to find a solution for the problems of agricultural labour within the framework of a new organisation of agriculture as a whole. The setting up of a Permanent Agricultural Committee is intended to provide the Governing Body and the Office with the relations with the agricultural world and the opinions of experts which they need at a moment when, as suggested by the Conference, they are preparing to intensify their study of working and living conditions in agriculture. For this reason the new Committee will include not only representatives of the three groups of the Governing Body, but also representatives of the principal international institutions and organisations which are concerned with the aspects of agricultural problems dealt with by the International Labour Organisation, and individuals chosen so as to ensure adequate representation of all classes of the agricultural population.

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The Governing Body has further decided to set up a Correspondence Committee on Workers' Spare Time. The appropriateness of this decision is shown by the reports and documents which were submitted last summer to the International Conference on Workers' Spare Time, and have recently been published by the Office in its series of Studies and Reports. A considerable movement is in progress in many countries with the aim of helping the workers to make a good use of their spare time. Experiments in this direction are of very varied forms and work through a great variety of organisations. The resulting activities differ widely from country to country, and there is often no possibility of benefiting by the experience of similar organisations elsewhere. The object of the new Correspondence Committee will be to facilitate the co-ordination of existing efforts by the international exchange of information.

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The reports which the Governments have to submit each year on the application of the Conventions they have ratified have been examined as usual by the experts appointed for the purpose. In transmitting their report to the Governing Body, the experts note with satisfaction the constant improvement in the sending in of these reports. Out of 630 reports due this year from the Governments, 584 were received in time to be examined by the experts; only 46 were missing. Last year 80 reports were missing out of 601 due; in 1934, 86 out of 522. On examining these figures more closely it is found that the improvement they show is principally due to the States of Latin America. In 1935 the number of reports received from these States was 79 out of 135; this year it is 131 out of 150. This is significant proof of the growing attention paid by the Governments to their obligations in regard to the Conventions they have ratified.