



The United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture

The recent United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture adopted important resolutions designed as a first step towards the attainment of the third freedom—freedom from want. The Conference contemplated the acceptance by Governments of a formal declaration or agreement recognising their obligation to their respective peoples and to one another henceforth to collaborate in raising standards of living, and the establishment of a permanent international organisation in the field of food and agriculture and its association with other international bodies with related responsibilities. The present article gives a general account of the decisions of the Conference and indicates some of the reasons for which a close relationship between the proposed organisation and the International Labour Organisation will be indispensable.

THIS Conference, meeting in the midst of the greatest war ever waged, and in full confidence of victory, has considered the world problems of food and agriculture and declares its belief that the goal of freedom from want of food, suitable and adequate for the health and strength of all peoples, can be achieved.

(1) The first task is to complete the winning of the war and to deliver millions of people from tyranny and from hunger. During the period of critical shortage in the aftermath of war, freedom from hunger can be achieved only by urgent and concerted efforts to economise consumption, to increase supplies and distribute them to the best advantage.

(2) Thereafter we must equally concert our efforts to win and maintain freedom from fear and freedom from want. The one cannot be achieved without the other."

These opening words of the declaration embodied in the Final Act of the United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture¹ measure the extent of the revolution in men's minds which has occurred since the problems of post-war readjustment were under consideration a quarter of a century ago. Then men spoke of "the prescription of open, just and honourable relations between nations" as the keynote of a new world order. For this somewhat abstract approach has now been substituted an outlook which, while neither ignoring nor belittling the ethical and juridical aspects of the problem of world order, also includes a realistic appraisal of the importance of the economic foundations of the people's livelihood—food, clothing, shelter, and the other elemental needs of common folk.

It is of profound significance that the first United Nations Conference should have been concerned with food, "the most basic of all human needs", as President Roosevelt described it in his address to the Conference. The declaration that freedom from want and freedom from fear go hand in hand represents a reaffirmation with a new urgency of the conception that a lasting peace "can be established only if it is based upon social justice" which represented so revolutionary a departure when it was first formulated in the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation a quarter of a century ago. It is a matter of legitimate pride to the International Labour Organisation that the welfare conception of international organisation, the stone which the builders relegated to Part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles, has now become the cornerstone of the new edifice which the United Nations are endeavouring to

¹ The United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture, convened by the United States Government, met at Hot Springs, Virginia, from 18 May to 3 June 1943. The Conference was attended by official representatives of the following forty-four Governments and authorities: Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, French Delegation, Great Britain, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, India, Iran, Iraq, Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippine Commonwealth, Poland, Union of South Africa, U.S.S.R., United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia.

The Conference divided its work between four sections, dealing respectively with consumption levels and requirements, the expansion of production and adaptation to consumption needs, the facilitation and improvement of distribution, and recommendations for continuing and carrying forward the work of the Conference. The Final Act adopted contains thirty-three declarations, resolutions and recommendations, and has been published, together with a summary of the Conference's work by the Secretary General and the reports of the four sections mentioned above, in U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE: *United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture. Final Act and Section Reports* (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1943).

The International Labour Office submitted to the Conference at its request a *Memorandum on the Interest and Activity of the International Labour Organisation in problems relating to food and other essential agricultural products*.

construct. The objective of their endeavours, as President Roosevelt declared to the Conference, can be simply stated:

It is to build for ourselves, meaning all men everywhere, a world in which each individual human being shall have the opportunity to live out his life in peace; to work productively, earning at least enough for his actual needs and those of his family; to associate with the friends of his choice; to think and worship freely; and to die secure in the knowledge that his children, and their children, shall have the same opportunities. That objective, as men know from long and bitter experience, will not be easy to achieve. But you and I know also that, throughout history, there has been no more worth-while, no more inspiring challenge. That challenge will be met.

At the United Nations Food Conference it was met in preliminary fashion at the level of technical preparation. The Conference reached unanimous agreement upon an outlook, and that was in itself a substantial achievement. The long-range value of the Conference will, however, depend in large measure upon the extent to which the acceptance of its conclusions is insisted upon by great masses of public opinion, without whose support the policies advocated cannot be made effective. In this respect events since the Conference have already shown that the situation is not free from elements of serious anxiety.

GENERAL POLICIES ENDORSED BY THE CONFERENCE

While all the resolutions adopted by the Conference are important, five may perhaps be regarded as of outstanding significance as expressions of general policies.

The dependence of welfare on world order is postulated by the resolution concerning international security, which declares that "freedom from want cannot be achieved without freedom from fear" and that "policies of aggression and the fear of aggression have induced the uneconomic employment of human and material resources, the development of uneconomic industries, the imposition of barriers to international trade, the introduction of discriminatory trade practices, and the expenditure of huge sums on armaments". The resolution therefore recommends that Governments:

By virtue of their determination to achieve freedom from want for all people in all lands, affirm the principle of mutual responsibility and co-ordinated action to establish such conditions of international security as will make possible an expanding and balanced world economy.

The declaration of principle already mentioned elaborates further the conception that welfare must be the keynote of our post-war endeavours:

(3) There has never been enough food for the health of all people. This is justified neither by ignorance nor by the harshness of nature. Production of food must be greatly expanded; we now have knowledge of the means by which this can be done. It requires imagination and firm will on the part of each Government and people to make use of that knowledge.

(4) The first cause of hunger and malnutrition is poverty. It is useless to produce more food unless men and nations provide the markets to absorb it. There must be an expansion of the whole world economy to provide the purchasing power sufficient to maintain an adequate diet for all. With full employment in all countries, enlarged industrial production, the absence of exploitation, an increasing flow of trade within and between countries, an orderly management of domestic and international investment and currencies, and sustained internal and international economic equilibrium, the food which is produced can be made available to all people.

(5) The primary responsibility lies with each nation for seeing that its own people have the food needed for life and health; steps to this end are for national determination. But each nation can fully achieve its goal only if all work together.

(7) The first steps towards freedom from want of food must not await the final solution of all other problems. Each advance made in one field will strengthen and quicken advance in all others. Work already begun must be continued. Once the war has been won decisive steps can be taken. We must make ready now.

Resolution II of the Conference, in addition to providing for the establishment of a permanent organisation in the field of food and agriculture, recommends that Governments should "recognise and embody in a formal declaration or agreement the obligation to their respective peoples and to one another, henceforth to collaborate in raising levels of nutrition and standards of living of their peoples, and to report to one another on the progress achieved". The resolution contemplates that by this formal declaration or agreement each participant would recognise its obligation:

- (i) To raise the levels of nutrition and standards of living of its own people;
- (ii) To improve the efficiency of agricultural production and distribution;
- (iii) To co-operate, so far as may be possible, with other nations for the achievement of these ends;
- (iv) To undertake to submit periodically to the other participants, through the permanent organisation, reports on the action taken and the progress achieved towards these ends.

The general philosophy inspiring the work of the Conference is more fully stated in Resolution XXIV, concerning the achievement of an economy of abundance. This resolution states the following five broad principles:

- (1) The first cause of hunger and malnutrition is poverty;
- (2) The promotion of the full employment of human and material resources, based on sound social and economic policies, is the first condition of a general and progressive increase in production and purchasing power;
- (3) The sound expansion of industry in undeveloped and other areas, with

equality of access to materials and markets, serves also to expand production and purchasing power and is therefore indispensable to any comprehensive programme for the advancement of agriculture;

(4) Tariffs and other barriers to international trade, and abnormal fluctuations in exchange rates, restrict the production, distribution, and consumption of foodstuffs and other commodities;

(5) Progress by individual nations towards a higher standard of living contributes to the solution of broader economic problems, but freedom from want cannot be achieved without effective collaboration among nations.

On the basis of these principles the Conference recommends that the Governments represented, by virtue of their determination to achieve freedom from want for all people in all lands, should affirm the principle of mutual responsibility and co-ordinated action:

(a) To promote the full and most advantageous employment of their own and all other people and a general advance in standards of living, thereby providing for an increase in both production and purchasing power;

(b) To promote the uninterrupted development and most advantageous use of agricultural and other material resources for the establishment of an equitable balance between agriculture and industry in the interest of all;

(c) To secure for agriculture the stimulus of additional purchasing power through the sound development of industry;

(d) To assist in the achievement of these ends by all appropriate means, including the supply of capital, equipment, and technical skill;

(e) To maintain an equilibrium in balances of payments, and to achieve the orderly management of currencies and exchange;

(f) To improve the methods and reduce the cost of distribution in international trade;

(g) As an integral part of this programme, to reduce barriers of every kind to international trade and to eliminate all forms of discriminatory restrictions thereon, including inequitable policies in international transportation, as effectively and as rapidly as possible.

Generalisations of this order regarding economic policy are, however, seriously incomplete unless accompanied by adequate measures to ensure that the abundance which such policies would permit is effectively made available to the people. Resolution XXVI concerning special national measures for wider food distribution partly fills this gap. It recommends that the Governments represented:

Accept the responsibility of making it possible, so far as it is within their power, for each person in their respective countries who is without an adequate diet, to improve his diet in the direction of obtaining the physiological requirements of health, adopting such of the following, or other, measures as are designed to fit local conditions and institutions:

(a) Adequate social security measures, such as family allowances, social insurance, and minimum wages;

(b) Some form of direct action to make protective foods available free, or at low prices, to groups with inadequate diets;

(c) Special attention to assisting such groups as pregnant women, nursing mothers, infants, children, aged persons, invalids, and low-paid persons.

The same resolution also recommends that food distribution measures should be co-ordinated with programmes to increase food production and to bring about adjustments in agriculture and fishing which will, on the one hand, encourage the production and distribution of the foods most lacking in the diets of the country, and adapted to the soils and climates, and, on the other hand, provide an adequate standard of life to persons engaged in farming and fishing.

The report of Section I, which dealt with consumption levels and requirements, indicates some of the implications of these statements of policy. It paraphrases as follows the words of the Mixed Committee on Nutrition of the League of Nations, written in 1937: "The application of modern knowledge about nutrition has only just begun; it is opening up entirely new perspectives for the improvement of human welfare." "Taking the world as a whole", it points out, "the picture is one of world-wide under-consumption, leading to malnutrition and its attendant evils." This is quite apart from the situation created by the war, which has reduced the world's food supply, affected consumption in almost every country, and led to scarcity and famine in countries occupied by the enemy, thus creating a formidable relief problem, "which, as recovery from the war takes place, will merge into the broader problem of increasing production and raising consumption throughout the world as a whole". Given the will, however, "we have the power to build in every nation a people more fit, more vigorous, more competent, a people with longer, more productive lives, and with more physical and mental stamina than the world has ever known". The report outlines human dietary requirements and points out the bearing on nutrition policies of water supply, health administration, housing, education, the direct acceptance of responsibility by public authorities for bringing the needed foods free or at low cost to vulnerable groups of the population, and measures to improve the quality of foods.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the significance of the unanimous approval given to these findings of broad policy by the United Nations Conference at a time when the successive impacts of economic crisis and war have forced the most far-reaching reconsideration of economic fundamentals of modern times. The acceptance of expansionist economics by official international bodies began with the resolutions concerning economic policy adopted by the

International Labour Conference during the world economic crisis of the early nineteen-thirties.¹ The views expressed in those resolutions are now no longer pioneer views; they have become established doctrine.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON PARTICULAR PROBLEMS

Apart from these resolutions formulating general lines of policy the Conference adopted a number of others dealing with particular problems which are in the main of a more technical character.

Short-Term and Long-Term Changes in Production

One important group of resolutions concerns changes in production in the short-term period, co-ordination in the short-term period, the adjustment of production in the transition from the short-term to the long-term period, and long-term production policy.

The resolutions on the short-term period emphasise that during that period short-term needs must prevail over long-term policies. Countries whose agriculture has been impaired should, for instance, in the immediate post-war period:

... utilise to the full their agricultural resources to bring about a rapid increase in food production, even if this involves a departure from the use of the resources which in the long run will be required, and even if it delays a return to production policies which are desirable for technical, economic, or nutritional reasons (for instance, in Europe there may need to be a concentration in the first years on vegetables, bread grains, and other products where production can mature quickly and which yield more calories per acre than livestock).

It was the consensus of the Conference that, despite all efforts to increase production, supplies of essential foodstuffs and certain other agricultural and marine products and of the necessary instruments of production, such as fertilisers and machinery, and the means of international transportation, would all be inadequate to meet basic requirements in the transition period, which might extend for several years after the cessation of hostilities; and that it was therefore "essential for the preservation of life to secure, through equitable distribution, the maximum advantage from such supplies as may be made available". The Conference accordingly recommended that Governments should:

For so long after the war as shortages continue, affirm the principle of mutual responsibility and co-ordinated action for:

(a) The increased production of necessary foodstuffs and other essential agricultural and marine products by all possible means, subject only to the

¹ Cf. I.L.O.: *International Labour Code*, pp. 565-569.

exigencies of war, in each country where such expansion can be accomplished economically, either now or in the future;

(b) The transportation, distribution, and utilisation of such products;

(c) The prevention of speculative and violent fluctuations in the prices of food, the instruments of production, and other necessities, including industrial goods, under the conditions of scarcity that appear certain to prevail after the war;

(d) The post-war readjustment of agriculture to achieve a progressive and balanced expansion of production and consumption throughout the world.

After the short-term period there must be an adjustment of production. To this end the Conference made the following two recommendations:

(1) That countries whose agriculture has been impaired should progressively modify their short-term allocation of resources to conform more closely to the long-term plan aimed at better nutrition and greater efficiency in production (for instance, in certain parts of Europe this might mean increasing the production of milk products as herds can be re-established, accompanied by declining production of grains);

(2) That countries which will have been producing during the short-term period more than normal output because of freedom from enemy action in the war, or which have undertaken new lines of production, should progressively adjust the allocation of agricultural resources to conform to a long-term co-ordinated production plan for the best use of these resources on a world scale, based on better diets for their own people and on the international demand for nutritionally better food.

The resolution on long-term production policy recognises that a secure, adequate, and suitable supply of food should be a cardinal aim in every country; that this can be achieved only as part of a world-wide policy of industrial and agricultural expansion; and that in order to secure this result producers should receive a fair return for their products. In order to attain the highest nutritional standards, a progressive expansion and, where necessary, reorientation in agriculture will be required, and it is therefore desirable "to formulate a body of principles which are applicable to agricultural policy in appropriate form in all countries". The principles recommended by the Conference include the following:

(a) That the inherent natural and economic advantages of any area should determine the farming systems adopted and the commodities produced in that area;

(b) That farming systems should be so designed as:

(i) To maintain soil fertility at levels which will sustain yields and ensure adequate return for labour;

(ii) To protect crops and livestock from major pests and diseases;

(iii) To favour steady employment throughout the year;

(These three ends, in general and save in exceptional circumstances, can best be assured by balanced mixed rotational farming and by avoidance of single-crop production, or monoculture);

(c) That production of nutritionally desirable foods which can be obtained from elsewhere only with difficulty or not at all is a special obligation of the agriculture of every country.

The Conference also recommended that, subject to these principles and with the object of expanding the production of the foods needed for its people, each nation should undertake to direct its policies towards the following goals:

(a) Increasing the efficiency of production in present producing areas through the introduction, as rapidly as conditions permit, of better farming methods, suitable modern equipment, improved varieties of crops and strains of livestock, and soil conservation practices;

(b) Developing any suitable undeveloped areas, where this is economically feasible, through the use of such measures as clearing the land and large-scale drainage and irrigation projects;

(c) Fostering desirable changes in the pattern of production, designed to give greater emphasis to foods rich in vitamins, minerals, and proteins;

(i) By encouraging the production, particularly in areas near consumption centres, of such products as vegetables, fruits, milk, eggs, and meat, which are relatively perishable and high in value and which are also the foods required in greatly increased quantities for better nutrition;

(ii) By encouraging the expansion of livestock production in areas capable of growing or economically shipping in the necessary feedstuffs;

(iii) By limiting the production of bulky, easily stored and transported energy foods, in areas where they cannot be produced efficiently;

(iv) By encouraging the production in single-crop areas of a greater diversity of foods for home use, since these areas are, in general, distant from the sources of perishable products and are particularly in need of improved diets;

(v) By likewise encouraging more diversified and adequate home food production in all farming areas, so that rural people may have more and better food, while eliminating the margin between producer and consumer.

Measures to implement these aims are suggested, and it is recommended that each nation should submit periodic reports to the proposed permanent organisation and that, with a view to balancing production and consumption, the permanent organisation should "consider to what extent and by what means such reports might contribute to international collaboration both on a regional and on a world basis in the field of agricultural production".

This long-term programme of technical development is complemented by recommendations concerning education and research, the conservation of land and water resources, and the development and settlement of land for food production.

The principles recommended in these resolutions are explained in greater detail in the report of Section II of the Conference, which studied the expansion of production and adaptation to consumption needs. In regard to the long-term programme, while

recognising that each agricultural region or area is in a sense a special problem, the report indicates certain basic principles governing the redirection of production resources and attaches special importance to improvement in farming systems and practices, credit facilities, co-operative services, land tenure systems, educational procedures whereby knowledge may be effectively disseminated among agricultural producers, and research in unsolved problems that may constitute barriers to the most productive and efficient utilisation of resources. It summarises the problem as being "one of maintaining the optimum level of productivity consistent with ensuring the preservation of basic resources for future generations"; this involves irrigation, fertilisation, drainage and clearing, and reliance on developments in crop rotation, new and locally adapted varieties of crops, improved tillage instruments, conservation structures, methods for disease and insect control, and so forth. One of the major obstacles to increasing agricultural production is agricultural overpopulation, which, by holding down the incomes of rural people, forces the farmers to produce crops which will supply the minimum energy requirements of the rural inhabitants and does not provide sufficient scope for the production of protective foods. Even the widespread adoption of more efficient agricultural techniques and the shifting from extensive to intensive agriculture, the development of owner-operated family size units, and the development of new lands, "offer only limited possibilities for absorbing populations now engaged in agriculture". The report therefore looks to public works, industrialisation and, to a limited extent, migration, for the solution of the major obstacle to increased agricultural production presented by agricultural overpopulation:

Public works, especially long-time programmes including the type of works that expand the opportunity for production and distribution of agricultural products, are one possibility which may be applicable in some countries.

The real clue to the solution of the problem of agricultural overpopulation lies in industrialisation. This is not only the best means of providing opportunities for surplus man-power, but is also necessary if we are to raise the general level of living and enable those who remain on the land to obtain an adequate livelihood. Overpopulated agricultural areas are deficient areas for all types of agricultural and industrial products. Unless income levels can be raised, however, their potentialities as a market for foreign and domestic industrial products remain essentially undeveloped. Along with industrialisation the development of public and private service occupations offers important employment possibilities.

Commodity Agreements and Food Distribution

An important resolution was adopted concerning international commodity agreements. It recommends that;

A body of broad principles should, through further international discussion, be agreed upon regarding the formulation, the provisions, and the administration of such international commodity arrangements as may be deemed feasible and desirable and should include assurance that:

(a) Such arrangements will include effective representation of consumers as well as producers;

(b) Increasing opportunities will be afforded for supplying consumption needs from the most efficient sources of production at prices fair to both consumers and producers and with due regard to such transitional adjustments in production as may be required to prevent serious economic and social dislocations;

(c) Adequate reserves will be maintained to meet all consumption needs;

(d) Provision will be made, when applicable, for the orderly disposal of surpluses.

These recommendations are amplified in the report of Section III of the Conference, which considered the facilitation and improvement of distribution. The report points out that "the most carefully prepared plans for expanding production will be nullified unless there is assurance that the people of the world will have ready access to the goods produced", and that arrangements for distribution should be devised in the interests of the consumer rather than of the producer groups:

Hitherto, in our anxiety to correct specific imperfections in the economic system, we have too often lost sight of the major objective and have placed undue emphasis upon induced scarcity to increase the purchasing power of specific groups. Although not too obvious at the time when such devices are introduced, it becomes abundantly clear from the point of view of the economy as a whole that the multiplication of devices for restricting production is contrary to the general social interest. Discussions at the Conference pertaining to problems of distribution have been marked by an acute consciousness of this fact. Throughout, emphasis has been laid upon the desirability of a progressively expanding economy of plenty as opposed to a contracting economy of scarcity.

It is an essential feature of the problem that in many countries the mass of individual farmers are relatively unorganised as compared with industrialists, and the farmer must therefore sell his product in a market and at a price over which he has very much less control than the industrialist. It is therefore idle to expect a balanced economy to arise out of measures aimed at the general price level alone:

Equally important is the relationship between individual prices and products. In this connection, basic requirements are: (1) national and international action to eliminate deflationary influences on agricultural income in order to maintain equitable balance between the purchasing power of agriculture and industry; (2) action to restrain monopolistic practices, the effect of which is to restrict production; and (3) machinery for taking care of the temporary gluts and shortages that are so typical of agriculture.

Discussing commodity agreements and "buffer stock" arrangements, the report states that there was general agreement at the Conference that international agreements were destined to play an important role in maintaining balance between supply and demand, at least for a number of commodities, although opinions differed on the nature of the regulation which should be adopted. There was also unanimity on the point "that the world, after the war, should follow a bold policy of economic expansion instead of the timid régime of scarcity which characterised the 1930's".

The resolution on commodity agreements accordingly recommends:

That international organisation should be created at an early date to study the feasibility and desirability of such arrangements with reference to individual commodities and, in appropriate cases, to initiate or review such arrangements to be entered into between Governments, and to guide and co-ordinate the operations of such arrangements in accordance with agreed principles, maintaining close relations with such programmes as may be undertaken in other fields of international economic activity to the end that the objective of raising consumption levels of all peoples may be most effectively served.

The need for collaboration covering related fields of international economic activity is also mentioned in a resolution on special international measures for wider food distribution, which recommends study by the proposed permanent organisation of "measures to meet the needs of countries with inadequate supplies, and the machinery needed for this purpose, distinguishing between methods which would be used in the case of famines following catastrophes, and in the case of countries where the available food supplies are generally inadequate", and urges that the problems of developing special international measures for wider food distribution in the latter case should be studied in connection with plans in the countries concerned "for the long-term development of the national resources, and for raising the technical skill and the level of living of their workers, and that the above-mentioned permanent organisation collaborate with the International Labour Office on this question".

Resolutions on Questions Affecting Farm Labour

A number of other resolutions which do not mention the International Labour Organisation overlap with work which has been or is being undertaken through the Organisation. In general the adoption of such resolutions by a technical conference with no power to commit Governments is to be welcomed. Such resolutions are in the nature of reaffirmations of policies which have been advocated in and by the International Labour Organisation, and

cannot but strengthen the forces which are endeavouring to secure the effective application of those policies. When the stage of implementing the resolutions is reached, however, the matter will clearly require further review in a broader perspective than was possible at the Food Conference and with full opportunity for all interested parties to participate in the discussions and decisions. The Interim Commission which the Conference resolved to set up for the purpose of framing a plan for a permanent organisation will no doubt bear this in mind when considering whether the functions of such an organisation could appropriately include the submission to member Governments of recommendations for action with regard to "problems of agricultural population and farm labour"—a function hitherto discharged by the International Labour Organisation which established during the years immediately prior to the war a Permanent Agricultural Committee, representative of agriculture, to develop this aspect of the work of the Organisation.¹

Specific illustrations of the danger of overlapping are afforded by some of the resolutions adopted at the United Nations Conference.

The resolution concerning occupational adjustments in rural populations, for instance, recommends that occupational training should be provided and that "labour bureaus should be set up where necessary". The first of these recommendations is a welcome endorsement of the principle of the *Vocational Education (Agriculture) Recommendation, 1921*²; but the latter went further than the Food Conference resolution in that it specified that vocational agricultural education should be available to agricultural wage earners on the same conditions as to other persons engaged in agriculture, and provided for reports to the International Labour Office on the measures taken to develop vocational agricultural education.³ The recommendation that labour offices should be set up is an equally welcome reaffirmation of the *Unemployment Convention, 1919*, which has been ratified by thirty countries, and was only the starting point of an attempt by the International Labour Organisation, crowned with ever-increasing success during the quarter of a century for which it has been continued, to promote

¹ Cf. *International Labour Code*, pp. 773-793. The legal competence of the International Labour Organisation to deal with agricultural questions was upheld by the Permanent Court of International Justice on 12 Aug. 1922. For the text of the Court's opinion on the subject, see *Publications of the Permanent Court of International Justice*, Series B, Nos. 2 and 3, p. 9, or I.L.O.: *Official Bulletin*, Vol. VI, pp. 339-351.

² *International Labour Code*, Articles 284-285, pp. 164-165.

³ A survey of measures taken, based in part on such reports, was published by the International Labour Office in 1929 under the title *Vocational Education in Agriculture* (Studies and Reports, Series K, No. 9, Geneva, 1929).

the general development of adequate employment services. The same resolution also indicates certain sketchy principles concerning migration which should serve to focus public attention once again on issues dealt with in much greater detail in the migration provisions of the *International Labour Code*¹, in the conclusions of the Conference of Experts on Technical and Financial Co-operation with regard to Migration for Settlement of 1938², and in the resolutions concerning migration for employment and for settlement adopted at the Second Labour Conference of American States Members of the I.L.O.³ Notable progress towards the implementation of the recommendation made by the Food Conference that "steps should be taken to provide for the economic security of the migrants" could be made by general ratification of the *Maintenance of Migrants' Pension Rights Convention, 1935*.⁴ A further suggestion by the Conference that "where emigration is possible, an international organisation should support arrangements to provide adequate safeguards for the settlers and for the countries concerned, and to facilitate the movement through other appropriate means" recalls the establishment by the I.L.O. immediately prior to the war of a Permanent Committee on Migration for Settlement.⁵ The effect of all these various proposals, approaches, and obligations upon each other clearly requires much further consideration.

Further illustrations of the same point are afforded by the resolution concerning agricultural credit and that concerning land tenure and farm labour. Both of these questions are being studied by the International Labour Office, in pursuance of instructions received from the Emergency Committee of the Governing Body in April 1942 at a meeting at which fourteen Governments and the employers' and workers' groups were represented.⁶ Co-ordination of effort is clearly essential if the waste of public money and creation of confusion and conflict are to be avoided. A particularly striking illustration of the dangers of lack of co-ordination is afforded by the Food Conference resolution concerning co-operative movements, which recommends that full information regarding the development of co-operation should be made available through the permanent organisation proposed by the Conference. For a period of twenty years such information has in fact systematically been made available by the International Labour Organisation in a manner which has given a large measure of satisfaction.

¹ Articles 851-893, pp. 519-542.

² *International Labour Code*, pp. 705-711.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 844-847.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Articles 586-608, pp. 360-370.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 711.

⁶ For details, see "The I.L.O. and Plans for a People's Peace", in *International Labour Review*, Vol. XLVI, No. 1, July 1942, pp. 1-43.

So vast is the task outlined by the resolutions of the Food Conference, so urgent the need to build up an economy of abundance on a world-wide basis, that duplication and conflict would constitute in an outstanding degree a betrayal of the common purpose of the proposed organisation and the I.L.O.

Marketing

The need for co-ordination is by no means confined to the relations between the proposed permanent organisation and the I.L.O. A similar need in other fields is suggested by a group of three resolutions concerning marketing. The first of these deals with Government and other national services in marketing, and recommends that the proposed permanent organisation should, *inter alia*, investigate and, if practicable, assist in the adoption of "international grade standards for agricultural and marine commodities" and of machinery for controlling their use in international trade; assist and advise Governments and other national organisations in the establishment in each country of adequate grade standards and technical advisory and inspection services; promote the standardisation of containers, both nationally and internationally; assist in the formulation, extension and improvement of national and international standards of nutrient content and purity of all important foods; and consider the formulation and adoption of international standards or minimum requirements for drugs, insecticides, fungicides, fertilisers, and other materials used by agricultural producers. Improvement of the supply and co-ordination of information and statistics on prices and supply and demand, consumer research and research into improved methods of processing, preservation, storage, packaging and transport and into the economics of marketing, are among the other functions suggested for the proposed organisation.

The second of these resolutions concerning marketing recommends, *inter alia*, that Governments should "take steps to secure the provision of adequate processing, transportation, and distribution facilities required for improving the nutritional levels of their populations", to utilise to the full important new technological developments in food preservation, transportation, and marketing, and to examine and rectify transport deficiencies, both internally and in connection with export and import trade, with the assistance of any international body concerned with international transport.

The third of the marketing resolutions recommends that Governments "take all practicable steps to reduce marketing, processing,

storage and distribution costs, and margins between producers and consumers, particularly by the elimination of unessential services not required by producers or by low-income consumers", and that the proposed permanent organisation should collect and disseminate information on such costs and margins in different countries and in international trade, on the factors by which they are determined or influenced, and on the steps taken by Governments, by co-operative associations, and by private enterprise to reduce them.

The Conference also adopted resolutions concerning the improvement of national diets, the diets of vulnerable groups, malnutrition and disease, deficiency diseases, dietary standards, non-food products, and fish and marine products.

PROPOSED MACHINERY FOR CARRYING OUT THE CONFERENCE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

This survey of the recommendations adopted at Hot Springs suffices to show that the United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture was a very notable achievement. As yet, however, these resolutions and reports have only the status of findings by technical experts. Their practical effectiveness will depend in large measure on the provision of appropriate machinery through which permanent international collaboration in the field of food and agriculture can be satisfactorily organised. To meet this need the Conference resolved that an Interim Commission for carrying out the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture should be established, and should be installed in Washington not later than 15 July 1943, each of the Governments and authorities represented at the Conference being entitled to designate a representative, and that the Interim Commission should "perform its work with due regard to the exigencies of the war, through such form of organisation and personnel as it may deem appropriate; and formulate regulations covering its expenditures and submit to the member Governments and authorities a budget and allocation of quota contributions". The functions of the Interim Commission include that of formulating and recommending for consideration by each member Government or authority a specific plan for a permanent organisation in the field of food and agriculture.

In the framing of such a plan the relationship of such an organisation with other international institutions will necessarily require the closest consideration. Food and agriculture, by their very nature, are not self-contained subjects. The United Nations Conference, as was to be expected, found that the welfare approach

to agricultural problems necessarily involved it in consideration of the relationship between agriculture and industry in its broadest aspects; of capital development and credit facilities; of migration, commodity control, marketing, and transport; of "social security measures, such as family allowances, social insurance, and minimum wages", of occupational training and employment services, workers' nutrition, co-operative movements, and of the relation between land tenure and farm labour. It is evident that many of these questions cannot be adequately considered from the standpoint of food and agriculture alone, and that some of them ought not to be approached with any special bias for or against the interests of agriculture. The relationships of agriculture and industry, which are clearly of fundamental importance (as is recognised in all the Section reports as well as in the Food Conference resolutions on occupational adjustments and on the achievement of an economy of abundance) cannot be dealt with effectively through an agricultural organisation alone. The migration of agricultural workers, in regard to which recommendations considerably more comprehensive than those made by the Food Conference were formulated through the I.L.O. prior to the war, cannot usefully be separated from migration problems in general. Credit, commodity control, marketing, and transport, all raise wider problems, for the solution of which no approach based on the needs of agriculture alone can possibly be adequate. Social security and minimum wages, occupational training and employment services, are typical illustrations of general social questions which present special aspects in the case of agriculture but are primarily social rather than agricultural in character. Social security for agricultural workers, for instance, a subject which has been dealt with extensively by the I.L.O.¹, cannot usefully or properly be divorced from the general international co-ordination of social security schemes.

The importance of this aspect of the problem was recognised by the United Nations Conference. The Conference directed the Interim Commission to give full consideration, when preparing a plan for a permanent organisation, to "the relation of the permanent organisation to, and methods of associating it with, other institutions, national as well as international, which already exist or which may hereafter be established, in the field of food and agriculture and in related scientific, economic, and other fields". It also adopted a resolution which referred to the "considerable progress" achieved by various national and international health and nutrition agencies in the study and improvement of diets and

¹ Cf. *International Labour Code*, pp. 297-298, 321-370, 790-793, and 826-842.

food consumption levels in different countries and regions, declared it essential to make full use of the information and experience acquired by these agencies, and recommended that:

In the establishment of the proposed permanent organisation, in any projected regional branches of that organisation, and in any national nutrition organisations, due account should be taken of the work and experience of existing international, regional or national agencies concerned with food, health, and nutrition; and in any such plans, the possibility of enlisting the co-operation of such agencies should be fully explored.

In exploring the scope for co-operation certain conditioning factors must be kept in mind. An effective co-operative relationship between international bodies with related responsibilities can best be secured if arrangements are made to enable all of them to have an appropriate voice in the formulation of policies in which they are mutually interested, since only thus can duplication of effort and the simultaneous pursuit of conflicting policies be avoided and the chances of securing effective results be increased. The International Labour Organisation has a long tradition of co-operation with the International Institute of Agriculture on agricultural questions through a Mixed Committee of the two bodies. It would seem essential to provide for equivalent co-operation at the policy-making level between the I.L.O. and the proposed new organisation for food and agriculture. No sector of the world's economy can achieve freedom from want to-day except by a broad-based co-operative effort to improve living standards in every occupation and every clime. Agriculture and industry can prosper only in the closest relationship with each other. Their common welfare imperatively demands the closest co-operation between all who, charged with the responsibility, are also accorded the opportunity to achieve freedom from want for all men everywhere.
