



The I.L.O. and Post-War Problems

That the I.L.O. is expected, and preparing, to play a responsible part in planning the transition from war to peace and in post-war reconstruction was clearly shown at the 91st Session of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, held in London from 16 to 20 December 1943.¹ Two members of the British War Cabinet—the Rt. Hon. Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labour and National Service, and the Rt. Hon. Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs—attended the meeting to convey the British Government's welcome to the Governing Body. The speeches they delivered, that of Mr. Bevin at the opening sitting and that of Mr. Eden at the closing sitting, were, however, much more than the expression of a courteous greeting. They dealt in some detail with the British Government's views on post-war reconstruction, and they have therefore a general interest for a much wider circle than was present at the Governing Body meeting or is likely to read its official minutes. They are accordingly reproduced here.

In preparation for the task before the I.L.O., the Governing Body decided that a regular Session of the International Labour Conference—the first since 1939—should open on 20 April 1944, and accepted the invitation of the Government of the United States to hold it in that country. This meeting of the Conference will be held in circumstances unprecedented in the history of the International Labour Organisation, and its Agenda will be much vaster in scope than any which has been submitted to a previous Session. A memorandum indicating briefly the field to be covered has been sent to Governments, and as it shows how the Conference will attempt to deal with some of the problems mentioned in the two speeches which are published here, its text is also given.

Address by the Rt. Hon. Ernest Bevin, M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service

I extend to you on behalf of the Government and the people of Britain a very hearty welcome and I trust that this meeting will be a historic one in the life of the International Labour Organisation.

¹ See page 347 for an account of the proceedings of the Governing Body meeting.

It is two years since the Governing Body last met, and in that time fundamental changes have taken place in the world situation. Then, we were struggling for existence. Today, the military position is very different, so that without letting up in the fight for complete victory over the enemies of democracy, we can find some moments to look ahead to reconstruction and the course which humanity must follow. This is so necessary, for the journey ahead of us lies through uncharted economic seas with hidden rocks, which will require very careful navigation by those responsible for the ships of State, and there will be many unsuspected storms, the riding of which will call for sound judgment, cool brains, and great courage.

Therefore, while the strategists work out their plans for war and the soldiers, the sailors, the airmen, and the men of the mercantile marine fight for victory, it is for us to be engaged in planning the reconstruction that must follow victory.

Many things have happened since we last met, and it is unnecessary for me to recount them in detail. But the fact that Japan has been held, that Russia is driving the enemy from her soil, that North Africa has been cleared, the Mediterranean opened, and the mastery of the air established, together with the battle now raging in Italy, is an augury of what is to come in the freeing of the occupied countries from tyranny and oppression.

You will join with me, I am sure, in deep thankfulness for the courage of our fighting men, the amazing will to victory of our peoples, and the undying faith of those who have been oppressed that liberty will be restored to them.

It is in this atmosphere of courage and faith that your Governing Body, with its splendid past and such great potentialities for the future, meets. The transition from war to peace is going on while the actual battles are being fought. The meetings which have already taken place between the leading statesmen, culminating in the Conferences in Cairo and Persia are evidence that not only are plans for completion of the struggle being made, but that friendship and understanding between the nations are being forged and the ground is being cleared for the laying of the foundation of the new world order that must follow.

Every inch of territory that is cleared, and every group of people that is freed, makes it imperative that there should be the opportunity for ordered civil government to develop, and for confidence and stability to be restored as quickly as possible. The International Labour Office is, therefore, performing a great service in carrying on its work and preparing to assist the liberated peoples to return to their democratic way of life, bringing to them as the

moment arrives succour and advice, and using its influence so that the needs of the common man, who has suffered so much, shall be met.

There is a second stage, however, in the transition from war to peace. As I have said, when we met in this country nearly two years ago¹ we were so much immersed in the immediate necessities of the struggle that it was difficult to visualise peace; we had not even passed to the offensive, and the whole of our energies were being devoted to the struggle without any other thought.

But time moves so quickly. As our forces press on and the dawn of victory rises steadily on the horizon, we must take steps to meet the needs of the transitional period between victory and the settled conditions of peace. But all we do in the period of transition must contribute towards a lasting peace.

This war has been a people's struggle. On the one side, masses have been struggling for the preservation of their souls and the rights of man. On the other, the tyrant has sought to dominate, to enslave, and to crush. From the homes of the common people over wide areas of the world, the sons of liberty have marched into battle. They have suffered frustration and reverses, and the odds seemed overwhelming. But today they are gradually strengthening their grip on the monster that would have destroyed them.

I have said it is a people's war—total war. It has meant the utilisation of every ounce of energy that the manpower of the nations could pour out. It has meant privation and sacrifice. Victory, when it comes, will be a victory won by all the people; and the peace that is made must be a peace for the peoples—one which has predominantly in mind the needs and hopes of the masses.

In the past the mainspring of policy in the western world, as could be seen from the national budgets, has been finance. Our prosperity has been measured by accumulation of wealth in terms of money without due regard to the real wealth of a nation—the well-being of the whole of its people.

Unemployment had fallen upon us, not because we have not had the ability to produce—that exists as never before, and commodities, which are another and better form of wealth, can now be turned out like water. It was in the sphere of distribution that we had failed. Humanity had been caught up in a vortex of speculation and maldistribution, so that the efforts and ability of the producer were not turned into happiness and well-being for the consumer.

¹ Cf. *International Labour Review*, Vol. XLVI, No. 1, July 1942, pp. 1–43: "The I.L.O. and Plans for a People's Peace: The London Meeting of the Emergency Committee, April 1942".

I believe that the essential need for the future is not a financial budget but a human one.

Year by year the Governments should study prospective demand, taking into account failures of harvests, and anything that can be foreseen which would dislocate the world. With this an ordered economy could be planned, so that if the trade of individual countries contracted at home, it could expand abroad, or, if it contracted abroad, capital development could be turned on at home and so keep the measure of consumption stable.

It is not impossible to deal with cycles of boom and depression if Governments have the facts before them in advance, just as they have had the financial facts in front of them hitherto. In other words, we must make our statistical forecasts in the form of the right use of manpower and not only of money. This may be difficult in areas with large peasant populations; but if the more highly developed countries do this, then they are bound to take into account what is happening among primary producers. In other words, information will flow from the ends of the earth, and Governments should be in possession of it and be able to shape their policy accordingly to help to lift the backward and maintain stability among themselves.

I am aware that the International Labour Office has conducted many enquiries in the past, but if the International Labour Organisation is to be effective, enquiries and knowledge must be collected at the source and forwarded to a central organisation, so that a world picture can be obtained.

I want to congratulate the Office on continuing to issue the excellent *International Labour Review*, the *Legislative Series*, which has been an indispensable source of information, and the valuable Studies and Reports. I am glad you have continued to issue these publications, and the work you have undertaken in research will now enable you to play a very active part in post-war reconstruction.

May I at this stage be permitted to refer to our own country?

I am glad to be able to say that the British Government has decided to ratify the Maritime Convention relating to sickness insurance (No. 56), while in our collective agreements we have more than given effect to all the other decisions of Geneva in 1936. It will be remembered that at that time, I promised—not then as a member of the Government, but speaking for the Workers' group—the other maritime countries that, if the Convention was adopted, we in this country would see to it that it was carried into effect here. Now I am happy to say that in the actual collective agreements we have more than surpassed what was recommended in Geneva in

1936. Also the application of draft Conventions Nos. 50 (Recruiting of Indigenous Workers) and 65 (Penal Sanctions, Indigenous Workers) has been extended, and we have applied those Conventions now over the whole British Empire.

The British Government has recently done a great deal to improve labour conditions in the British Empire. In many colonies there is at present no real organisation amongst the workers of a protective character, and the Government recognises that it must act as trustee for the peoples concerned until they have the necessary experience and organisation in the industrial field to look after themselves. In the meantime, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in consultation with my Ministry and the Trades Union Congress, has appointed labour officers to assist in this work in the various colonies. Some, I am glad to say, have come from the trade unions and some from my own Ministry.

To come nearer home. In this war we are talking not of "homes for heroes", as we did in the last war, but of "food, work, and homes for all". I must confess I have little use for high-sounding phrases which are mere slogans. What is needed is something real which can be translated into action.

On the whole, I think we are making much better preparation for peace in Great Britain than in the last war, and we are profiting from our experience and our mistakes on that occasion.

One of the things I would put foremost, if we are to build a right peace, is the maintenance of stability when the war ends so that the Government can reach sound decisions for the economic life of the nation. And what applies to us applies equally to other nations.

Of course, I am aware, as you must all be, that the desire for profit is very great, and that there is a cry for the removal of controls—sometimes, I am afraid, from those who want to take advantage of a nerve-racked people. On the other hand, the nation as a whole is determined that there shall be an orderly transition from war to peace, and the people will not easily be deceived by mischievous slogans. Because of this our policy is being devised on a practical basis; and although this is an international body, I may perhaps be forgiven for enumerating some of the provisions we are making in Great Britain.

The men who have fought this war will not be content with unemployment after it. One of the fundamentals must be the maintenance of full employment, and everything—whether it is exchanges, currency, or economic organisation—must be designed to achieve that end: the British people will be satisfied with nothing less.

Statesmen will not, on this occasion, as they did on the last,

succeed in deluding the people with fine words which they fail to translate into the economic system afterwards. We are dealing with an entirely different generation, and if order and stability are to be maintained, both Parliament and the Government must be honest and straightforward in what they promise.

Of course, there are great opportunities. In agriculture we are determined to maintain a high standard. Already we are highly mechanised. It may surprise this meeting to know that ours is the most highly mechanised agriculture in the world. No country in the world can equal the amount of mechanical power used per man that is being used at present in Great Britain. Consideration has been given to hours of labour, and an improved standard of living has been achieved. This must be maintained, for the rural worker in this country has made a tremendous contribution to the victories we have achieved.

We shall have to rebuild all our damaged cities. But not only must we replace what has been only damaged by the enemy; we must wipe out the terrible legacy of the nineteenth century—the mean streets and the slum dwellings which have done so much damage to our citizens. You cannot get a demand for the better-quality goods which industry can provide unless you build homes in which people can enjoy and appreciate them.

Mining, too, is an industry which must be reorganised. It has been striking recently to see the general recognition of the danger which the miner faces, now that it is no longer limited to the miner himself. The need for coal has caused us to place the obligation of winning it on all classes. No-one who has heard the controversy that has gone on in this country can doubt that almost every home now has some realisation of the conditions of the miner's work. The mines are now the concern of every class, and the importance of coal to the nation is realised as never before. If, as I believe, the miner with his risky and arduous work is now better understood than ever before, we may hope for some solution of a most difficult problem.

It is striking that some of the greatest scientific successes of this war, which have put us in advance of the enemy, have come from industries which cater for our leisure and amenities. In the light of this the organisation of leisure and the improvement of our amenities is not a loss but an economic gain. It stimulates invention and scientific research, and indeed it might be said that every advance in leisure produces almost a new industry.

We shall no longer be able to afford not to employ our disabled people. People handicapped by accident, whether in war or industry, who are not allowed to work are a liability. It is vital that

they should be allowed to produce to the limit of their capacity. In fact, however, with proper training and with the great developments that have taken place in artificial limbs, rehabilitation, and medical treatment, the majority of such people can be restored to 100 per cent. capacity.

A Bill is now before Parliament which will make it an obligation on employers to employ disabled persons.

Then, too, we are thinking about the men who are serving in the armed forces, and we propose to amend the law to facilitate their reinstatement in civil employment. The question of social security for these men is very vital; for if they have fought for us, they have an undeniable claim that the community should look after them.

We have been impressed with the need for reconstruction in our national system of education—both in the cultural and in the technical field. Much has been done in these fields in the last hundred years, but we have not done nearly enough to care for the adolescent. We intend in future to look upon the adolescent not so much as an employee but as a charge of the State, who is allowed to work for an employer only if there is proper provision for his training and development.

We have accepted the principle that there shall be a comprehensive national health service, from which everyone in the State will be entitled to the very best medical treatment that can be obtained. We believe that health is a great asset that must not be allowed to deteriorate.

In fact, these things are to be our new national assets. We have lost foreign investments, but these need not concern us if we have a strong, virile nation with great creative impulses and opportunities. Nature is bounteous in her provision of raw material and her harvests, and it only needs the application of a healthy, virile nation to these gifts to turn them into real wealth for the benefit of the community.

We are determined to redevelop those areas which have become overcrowded and which have been blitzed through enemy action, and to develop them on a planned basis. It used to be said that we had an Empire on which the sun never set: but unfortunately there were far too many homes into which it never shone. That has now to be remedied, and if war, with all its hideousness, has turned the nation's mind along the right lines, that is some compensation. But to do this we must be guided by what is right for the people, who in the end will impose their own discipline voluntarily upon themselves. *Laissez faire*, as we understood it in the past, will not do, nor must vested interests be allowed to stand in the way.

Preconceived notions of economic doctrine cannot be allowed to hamper us—the needs of the present age cannot be met with nineteenth century economics.

Of course, these needs are not limited to Great Britain. If civil war and more bloodshed are to be avoided in those countries that have suffered invasion during this war, it is imperative that the United Nations should take resolute action and assist in the establishment of a good social foundation for the people as speedily as possible.

I am glad to know that the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration has now been set up.¹ It will pay us to use it to the full. It will not be a gift if we restore these countries. It will be an insurance against future disasters.

I am glad that the International Labour Office was invited to send observers to the meeting at Atlantic City, and thus place at the disposal of the organisation for relief its wide experience and knowledge of migration and standards of living. I cannot, of course, visualise what the final settlement of Europe and the other occupied countries will be, but I am certain that some movement of population will be necessary, and no one can lend greater assistance in this task than the International Labour Organisation.

I am sure that we are all grateful to the Office for giving its services to the Interim Food Commission², and I can speak on behalf of the whole of my colleagues in His Majesty's Government when I say that we desire to be associated with the I.L.O. wherever possible for post-war reconstruction work. But while I attach great importance to securing the association of the International Labour Organisation with all the bodies set up by the United Nations to deal with all these problems, I attach even greater importance to what the I.L.O. itself must do in the field where it is primarily responsible.

I look upon it as the body which will be charged with the duty of assisting Governments through its advice to give effect to Article 5 of the Atlantic Charter.

The Constitution of the I.L.O. lends itself to this purpose. After all, the I.L.O. sprang largely from the brain of a workman—our great and now departed friend George Barnes. He saw in such a body the chance to bring the great occupational groups of the world together and through their association to make a useful contribution to the peace of the world: in other words, by their

¹ For an account of the First Session of the U.N.R.R.A. Council, see *International Labour Review*, Vol. XLIX, No. 2, Feb. 1944, pp. 145-159: "The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration".

² *Idem*, Vol. XLVIII, No. 3, Sept. 1943, p. 344.

association in industrial relations, labour legislation, and social security measures, to constitute a moral force behind international law itself.

International law as we have known it hitherto has rested upon a very narrow basis. It can be said to have been the code of heads of States, soldiers, sailors, and diplomats. It is perfectly true that it has been a vital code in international conduct, but it was limited. Today, however, if the moral law behind international law is to be strengthened it must become the concern of the ordinary citizen, and it must rest upon sound knowledge and the acceptance of responsibility for it by the peoples as a whole.

Diplomacy has often been secret. It has been handled by a very narrow circle, and even members of Governments have very often not been fully aware of what has been done in their name.

The world is changing; communication and travel have made this planet so small that the whole people have been brought into the discussion regarding relationships with other peoples. A greater responsibility now rests, therefore, on the individual voter and the citizen in his democratic capacity than has ever rested before.

I am a great believer in what I call the value of the "occupational groups". Let miners meet, whatever their race or language, and they will be bound together by coal and their common interests; let railwaymen meet, or seamen; textile workers or workers in the metal trades, or any of the great occupational groups that enter into international trade. Once they are brought together in a room and have discussed common problems, the racial distinction sinks into the background and the common interest of their trade rises uppermost. With the world so small as it is and the development of the conception of the United Nations, I would urge the I.L.O. to give, through the Governing Body, the most serious consideration to bringing together those great occupational or technical groups in order that they may not only discuss comparison between their wages, conditions, output, and things of that kind, but other matters of wide common interest, so that their trades may be so organised as to supply the peoples with their requirements without commercial rivalry or war.

In this the I.L.O. will need the advice of experts. In the field of national government I am a great believer in the value of advisory committees or boards composed of experts and representatives of the employers and the trade unions. Since I took office as Minister of Labour and National Service I have set up many committees and boards, and I have found their collective advice of the greatest possible value in this greatest of all struggles with which the world has been faced.

I am, of course, aware that the I.L.O. made considerable use before the war of the advice of bodies of experts, but I hope it will greatly develop this side of its work.

When I welcomed the Emergency Committee in London over eighteen months ago, it was a great satisfaction to all the friends of social progress throughout the world that the I.L.O. had succeeded in surviving the disruption of a world war. The mere fact that it was alive was a matter for great rejoicing. But why was it alive? For the very reason I mentioned just now. Because it represents an occupational combination and is bound together by matters of common interest and the desire for social progress. Even the war, therefore, has been unable to kill it.

I am glad to find it has not merely been kept alive but that it has taken advantage of the opportunities for activity open to it and has gone further and made more opportunities.

The I.L.O. can never be a servant of any party or any individual Government. It must be international in its outlook; progressive in its approach to world problems of labour and sociology; independent in its approach, but clear in its decisions, so that its work will tend to bring nations together on a common platform and in a common endeavour to raise the standard of life throughout the world.

Unparalleled opportunities are now opening out before the I.L.O. A clear social objective has been formulated in the Atlantic Charter, which I have already referred to. Let me read Clause 5 of that Charter again. The words are familiar to you but they are so important that they bear repetition:

They desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the object of securing, for all, improved labour standards, economic advancement and social security.

What does this mean? It means that the way to peace is advancement in the economic field, the raising of standards of living for everybody, and the placing of social security on a universal basis.

I claim that such a declaration as this reveals an outlook very different from that which prevailed in the last war. The main consideration then was the political aspects of the future: power politics. Now labour and industrial aspects assume their rightful place. This at once constitutes an opportunity but equally a responsibility for the International Labour Organisation.

This meeting of the Governing Body is both a symptom and a symbol.

It is a symptom of the growing desire that the I.L.O. should

bring together Governments, employers, and workers to plan for the future; that it should give tangible evidence to the world that it is conscious of its responsibility and confident in its power.

It is a symbol of the co-ordinated and co-operative action that will be necessary in the labour and industrial sphere to ensure that after the war has been won, the peace shall be really won. We are winning the people's war, and we must make sure of winning the people's peace.

Address by the Rt. Hon. Anthony Eden, M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

My first word must be to thank you for allowing me to come to speak to you this afternoon. I think that His Majesty's Government have already shown evidence of the importance which we attach to this meeting of the Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation by the quite tangible presence of my right honourable friend the Minister of Labour. I am sure you felt that there was something there! For my part, I wanted to come this afternoon as an unworthy substitute for him because of the importance which I attach to your Organisation as a factor in international relationships. I take this opportunity to repeat to you what I said in the House of Commons just over a year ago¹, that I should like to see the International Labour Organisation become the main international instrument to give effect to Article 5 of the Atlantic Charter—improved labour standards, economic advancement, and social security. Here in eight words, it seems to me, is epitomised the social objective of the United Nations.

It is good to set an objective, but we have to work together to give effect to it. If—and this is a big “if”—the International Labour Organisation had not existed, we should find it necessary to try to create it now, because it is only a tripartite organisation like this, which represents Governments, employers, and workers, which can help us to give effect to this social objective which I have described.

I think that we must all be conscious, if we use our imaginations a little, of the dangers as well as of the opportunities that are going to face the world during the transition from the disruption of war—far more utter and complete than anything that the human race has ever experienced before in recorded history—to the settled conditions of peace that we want to establish; and therefore it is good that this Organisation not only exists but continues to enjoy the

¹ Cf. *International Labour Review*, Vol. XLVII, No. 2, Feb. 1943, p. 207.

confidence of the organised workers and the organised employers of freedom-loving peoples all over the world.

In the years between the wars, your Organisation had a difficult experience. So did all international organisations, and so did all foreign secretaries, or at any rate those who belonged to peace-loving countries; the others had all the fun then, the Ribbentrops and so on, but it is not going to be so easy for them in the next instalment! But, difficult as our times were—yours and ours—then, we did lay certain foundations which will endure. Some people may have said of your Organisation that it moved too slowly; others may have said that it moved too fast; but it did succeed in winning and in keeping the confidence and support of the parties concerned. There is proof of that to be found here today, because if you had not achieved that you could not have survived for long the onset of war. But you have survived it; you have acquired sufficient vigour, and you are now actively preparing to play your part in the rebuilding of a shattered world.

So here we have, in this Organisation, a tried instrument ready to hand through which, by consultation with Governments, managements, and operatives, a comprehensive programme of labour and industrial reconstruction can be worked out. A quarter of a century ago, when first this Organisation was established, it was a daring innovation. It was daring in its aims, daring in its constitution, and daring in its machinery. It was an experiment, but it is an experiment which has worked, and that simply because throughout its existence it has shown itself capable of adapting itself to meet changing conditions and to satisfy changing needs. It has shown, like our friend the American Ambassador, the resilience and elasticity of perennial youth.

I read the other day the Preamble to your Constitution, and I found these words in it:

Whereas conditions of labour exist involving such injustice, hardship and privation to large numbers of people as to produce unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperilled. . .

Those words are an expression of one of the fundamental lessons of history, namely, that potent causes of war are to be found in economic and social conditions. In the inter-war period, as I have said, your Organisation struggled manfully by international action to raise standards of living, to improve industrial relations, and to develop social security.

Now a new chapter has opened. At this, the 91st Session of the Governing Body, you are looking to the future. You are planning, as your Chairman has just said, an early Session of the Conference.

You are selecting a comprehensive series of questions to consider at that Conference. Your aim, if I understand it aright, is not only to reconstruct but to revive; you wish not only to help to rebuild the world but to inspire it with a new spirit.

This Organisation is in a very real sense an organisation of the peoples, in its tripartite character, and that is without doubt a main reason for its strength and success. It has also kept largely and happily clear of political controversy—and there speaks the politician; “happily clear”, I tell you—working all the time in the field of social betterment. There you have an unrivalled expert experience and expert knowledge. What continues to be required from us—the Governments—is our goodwill and our determination to make co-operation with you a reality; and that is why I wanted to come here this afternoon.

It seems to me that your Organisation has been fortunate in the support which it has received, but it is fair to recognise that that support has been given to your Organisation because it has dealt with problems which every country has to face at home within its own borders, and has dealt with them in a manner which has earned the confidence and the respect of all those concerned. The cruel events of war, as we know only too well, have faced the world with problems greater than those created by the last war, and we have learned by the heavy sacrifice of the two wars certain lessons which I pray we may never forget. Our aim, our country's aim, the aim of the countries here assembled, must be to work together to ensure happiness and a higher standard of life for all our people; and, without waiting for the end of the war, we have begun to establish machinery through which international co-operation can achieve that end. In the political sphere, the groundwork has begun to be laid; and nobody, I should like to say in all seriousness, is helping us more at this time in that work than the United States Ambassador who is at my side at this moment.

It is surely a happy augury that we have pledged ourselves to this great work, all of us—the three great Powers in the first instance, and the others with us—and that none of the United Nations is standing aside. We all know that the tasks which face us will not be easy. We all know that the aim of all men of goodwill must be to make sure that this time victory is a prelude to a lasting peace. Your Organisation has always proclaimed that peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice. There is no short cut—not even you can find it—to the solution of our formidable problems. First must come an objective examination of our difficulties, and then a joint approach on the general lines of policy agreed between us.

As we make progress—and now I speak not only of your work, but of the wider field of international policy—we shall find which organisation is best adapted to deal with each particular set of problems; and amongst these your own Organisation must always play, in my judgment, a prominent part. No single organisation can by itself cover the whole field; each organisation must have its special sphere; but their work must be inter-related and truly and accurately co-ordinated. We, the Governments, are at work already, as I have said, on this problem, and you, I am happy to say, are already associated with some of the organisations doing this work, such as the U.N.R.R.A. and the Food Commission and so on. No doubt as this work develops there will be other organisations and other international bodies with which you will be associated and with whom you will work; but your main task, I repeat, must surely be to help in the formulation of policy in accordance with Article 5 of the Atlantic Charter. Your Organisation will no doubt scrutinise plans for economic and financial reconstruction from the point of view of the social objectives at which you aim, and in doing this you will help to make sure that we steadily pursue the road which the United Nations have chosen to travel.

Our united objective may be simply stated: it is that the world shall be so organised that there shall be employment for all, that it shall be so developed in the interests of the many and not of the few, that on this basis nations will join together to pursue peace and to rid future generations of the threat that has shadowed our own time.

This preliminary meeting of yours is one with which we have been proud to be associated, and I express my good wishes and the good wishes of the Government that I represent to the Conference that you are going to hold, a Conference of the first importance, in the country of our great ally.

We have passed now from the period of general aspirations and general hopes to the actual active organisation for the future. I know that your Organisation will approach that work with a full understanding of the hard facts and with a determination to deal with them in such a way as to provide practical policies which the nations can adopt, and which will enable a peaceful world to be built on a far sounder foundation.

Let me say a final word as Foreign Secretary. In that capacity, I think that I do understand how great is the contribution that you can make to world peace, and I want to assure you that I am at all times ready, if it lies within my power, to help to make your work successful. Sometimes—not often—the Ambassador and I have leisure, and sometimes one tries to look into the future.

Mankind has made a pretty sorry mess of things in these last thirty years, with two great wars. There must be moments when we think that, with the developments of science, were there to be a third war, what could there be left? There must be times when we think that it is the duty of all of us in this room to see to it that our children and our children's children do not suffer as our generation has suffered. It seems to me that we have just this last chance after our victory. An immense responsibility rests on those in whose hands the power lies in the coming years. If I may say so, an immense responsibility rests upon you and upon your Organisation. I know that you will play your part in the cause which we all have at heart, and so I wish you in all sincerity good luck and God speed.

Explanatory Note on the Agenda of the Twenty-sixth Session of the International Labour Conference

The following notes on the scope of the questions on the Agenda of the forthcoming Session of the Conference have been extracted from the memorandum distributed to Governments.

AGENDA OF THE CONFERENCE

The Agenda of the Conference is as follows:

- I. Future policy, programme and status of the International Labour Organisation.
- II. Recommendations to the United Nations for present and post-war social policy.
- III. The organisation of employment in the transition from war to peace.
- IV. Social security: principles, and problems arising out of the war.
- V. Minimum standards of social policy in dependent territories.
- VI. Reports on the application of Conventions (Article 22 of the Constitution).
- VII. Director's Report.

INFORMATION ON THE ITEMS ON THE AGENDA OF THE CONFERENCE

The Governing Body of the International Labour Office, at its 91st Session (London, December 1943), gave very careful consideration to the choice of the Items to be placed on the Agenda of the Twenty-sixth Session of the Conference.

The Governing Body came to the conclusion that the profound change in the whole war situation—though a hard and costly struggle may still lie ahead—and the beginning of concerted international action to deal with post-war problems, as in the Food Conference at Hot Springs and the First Meeting of the Council of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration at Atlantic City, made it imperative, on the one hand, that international consideration should be given to the social problems that will arise during the last period of the war and after the close of hostilities, and, on the other hand, that the International Labour Organisation should define its own future policy, its programme and its place and status.

The Governing Body considered that it was of the greatest importance, in present circumstances, that the International Labour Conference should be able to discuss these problems and to take decisions concerning them at the earliest possible moment. It was for this reason that it decided to convene the Twenty-sixth Session of the Conference at the earliest date permissible under the Constitution, namely 20 April 1944. The Governing Body did not lose sight of the fact that this period of four months was exceptionally short and that, accordingly, the reports on the Items on the Agenda to be prepared by the International Labour Office could only reach Governments a short time before the opening of the Session. With this situation in mind, the Governing Body instructed the Office to furnish Governments with preliminary information on the nature of the questions which will be dealt with in the reports to be submitted to the Conference as the basis for its discussions. This information is contained in the present memorandum. It is not intended to be exhaustive but merely to furnish Governments with a general indication of the kind of questions which will come up for discussion under each Item on the Agenda by giving as illustrations some of the more important points with which the reports will deal.

Item I—Future Policy, Programme and Status of the International Labour Organisation.

As mentioned above, the Governing Body considered that it was necessary for the Conference to examine the future policy of the Organisation, its programme and its status in the post-war world, more particularly in relation to other international institutions, and to take decisions on these questions.

The Office report on the first Item on the Agenda will deal *inter alia* with the following points:

- (a) Policy and programme of the International Labour Organisation (proposals will be placed before the Conference for the purpose of restating the essential aims of the Organisation by the adoption of a new Declaration of General Principles—on the lines of those contained in Article 41 of the Constitution of the Organisation—or a “social mandate”, to use the term employed by the Conference of the Organisation held in New York in 1941);
- (b) Place of the International Labour Organisation in economic and social reconstruction and its relations with other international institutions;
- (c) Measures to render the functioning of the International Labour Organisation more effective (regional activities, mutual supervision of the application of international standards, competence of the Organisation to deal with economic questions, acceleration of the procedure of adoption of Draft Conventions and Recommendations, rendering of reports by the Governments on Conventions the ratification of which has not been approved by their competent authorities, etc.);
- (d) Status of the International Labour Organisation (financial autonomy, right to take cognisance officially of all decisions of an international character relating to economic and financial matters and to formulate observations and suggestions regarding their social effects, etc.).

Item II—Recommendations to the United Nations for Present and Post-War Social Policy.

Experience after the war of 1914-1918 shows that Governments will feel the need for defining their social policies, and, unless preliminary international discussion takes place, unco-ordinated and possibly conflicting policies may lead to a dangerous state of confusion. The Governing Body therefore considered that the Conference should be asked to proceed immediately to a general examination of social policy, and that the discussions should not be confined to generalities but should deal courageously with the practical problems which are certain to arise and on which Governments are entitled to look to the International Labour Organisation for advice and guidance.

The form of words adopted by the Governing Body for Item II differs in an important respect from that originally contemplated—namely, “recommendations for post-war social policy”. This change was made on the proposal of the representative of the Government of the United States and obtained the unanimous

approval of the members of the Governing Body, including the representatives of the other United Nations who were present. It manifests the willingness of those members of the United Nations who participated in the decision to submit their future international policies in the social field to free discussion and decision by all Members of the International Labour Organisation including those countries which are not members of the United Nations. Naturally the United Nations represented on the Governing Body do not bind themselves, at this stage, any more than the other Members of the International Labour Organisation, to accept in advance any conclusions at which the Conference may arrive. The change made in the wording of the Agenda is, however, a manifestation of their clear desire to apply the principles of democracy to the future ordering of the world. While some of the recommendations which the Conference may make will have a particular application to special situations with which the United Nations may have to deal, the general recommendations for post-war social policy will of course apply equally to all Members of the International Labour Organisation.

The report which will be prepared by the Office on the second Item on the Agenda will deal more particularly with the following points:

- (a) Social objectives of economic policy (more especially the measures required to be taken internationally and nationally to ensure full employment, social security and rising standards of living);
- (b) The general principles of social policy in its various fields, *e.g.*, conditions of work, social security, child labour, paid holidays, prevention of accidents, industrial relations, industrial hygiene, labour welfare, etc., which should be applied by the Members of the International Labour Organisation;
- (c) The social provisions to be inscribed in any peace settlement or the clauses of a long-term armistice, including measures to be taken for re-establishing free trade union movements and to ensure to trade union organisations the restitution of confiscated property and funds, and the participation of employers' and workers' organisations in the work of reconstruction in their own countries;
- (d) Social policy in the territories of Axis countries occupied by the forces of the United Nations.

It is not proposed that the Conference should aim at the adoption of Conventions or Recommendations in regard to Items I

and II, but that it should formulate its conclusions in a series of resolutions. However, as regards the social mandate, whereby the International Labour Organisation will define its future programme, it would seem appropriate that it should take the special form of a solemn Declaration.

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The Governing Body considered that there were some questions on which the Conference might take more detailed and technical decisions in the form of Draft Conventions or Recommendations, as provided for in Article 19 of the Constitution.

Item III—The Organisation of Employment in the Transition from War to Peace.

The first of these technical questions is that of the organisation of employment, by which is to be understood not so much the question of the motive and general inspiration of economic activity (with which the Conference will deal under Item II), but rather the whole technique of the transfer of manpower from war activity to peace activity, the short-term measures required, the problems of training, of public works, etc.

The Office in its report will therefore submit proposals concerning such matters as the re-employment of members of the armed forces and war workers, measures to deal with such special employment problems as will arise after the war in regard to special categories of workers (young persons, disabled workers, women workers), measures to deal with short-term unemployment, the machinery of employment organisation, etc.

On several of these points the proposals will take the form of drafts for Recommendations, the purpose of which will be to guide the various countries in the elaboration of the necessary measures.

Item IV—Social Security: Principles, and Problems Arising out of the War.

Under this Item a report will be submitted dealing with the question of providing for income maintenance and medical care and containing drafts for Recommendations based on the new tendencies to regard social security as a single problem, requiring comprehensive and rational treatment by preventive and remedial measures, and according equality of treatment as far as possible to urban and rural workers.

In addition to this general question, the Conference will also be asked to consider three questions of more immediate importance for post-war reconstruction, *i.e.*, the maintenance of the social insurance rights of members of the armed forces, the re-establishment of the financial position of insurance institutions in occupied countries, and mutual aid in social security administration.

Further, it will be remembered that, in the Peace Treaties which ended the last war, special provisions asked the International Labour Organisation to deal with the question of the insurance rights of certain populations which had been affected by the drawing of new frontiers. Whether or not a similar problem will have to be faced at the end of the present war, it is already certain that emergency measures concerning the pension rights of displaced persons in Europe are required, and that from the nature of the problem an international decision is necessary. The Office proposes, therefore, to submit to the Conference a draft for an international Convention on this subject.

Item V—Minimum Standards of Social Policy in Dependent Territories.

The Governing Body considered that it would be appropriate and indeed necessary that the International Labour Organisation, in restating its general policy and objectives, should undertake a parallel operation as regards dependent territories. In its report on this subject the Office will suggest that the Conference should lay down the social purposes of economic development in dependent territories, that the Conference should affirm the desirability of the general ratification of the existing indigenous labour Conventions, and that it should adopt a Recommendation formulating certain standards governing general conditions of labour, as, for example, the minimum age for admission to employment, protection of women, general principles of remuneration and wage fixing, protection of wages, general principles of social insurance, freedom of association and encouragement of labour organisations, etc.

Item VI—Reports on the Application of Conventions (Article 22 of the Constitution).

Article 22 of the Constitution provides that the Director shall lay before the Conference a summary of the annual reports made by the Governments on the measures taken to give effect to the provisions of Conventions to which they are parties. Under the regular procedure followed, these reports were first examined by a Committee of Experts, whose observations were submitted to the Conference at the same time as the summary of annual reports.

The circumstances of the war have made it impossible since 1939 to apply this procedure. Nevertheless the Office has continued to request Governments to furnish annual reports on the application of Conventions which they have ratified and a number of these reports have been received. The Conference will therefore receive a summary of the reports rendered between 1940 and 1943.

Item VII—The Director's Report.

In accordance with the Standing Orders, a Report by the Director of the International Labour Office will be submitted to the Conference.
