

INDUSTRIAL COMMITTEES

Programme of Meetings

The *Chemical Industries Committee* which the Governing Body recently decided to set up will hold its first session in France during the first half of 1948. The place and date will be fixed later in agreement with the French Government.

The following fourteen countries have been invited to send representatives to this first session: Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, India, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Other countries may subsequently be invited to take part in the Committee.

The agenda of the first session has been finally approved by the Governing Body in the following terms:

(1) Problems of the industries in the light of recent events and developments.

(2) Working conditions and the organisation of industrial relations in the chemical industries.

A part of the preliminary report to be presented to the Committee by the Office will deal with occupational diseases in the chemical industries.

The *Textiles Committee* will hold its second session in Egypt, in Cairo, during 1948 at a date to be fixed later.

The agenda of this second session has been finally approved by the Governing Body and will include the following questions:

(1) General report, dealing particularly with:

(a) the action taken in the various countries in the light of the decisions of the first meeting;

(b) the steps taken by the Office to follow up the studies and enquiries proposed by the Committee; and

(c) recent events and developments in the industry.

(2) Employment problems, with special reference to recruitment and training.

(3) Industrial relations.

The International Labour Office will devote a part of the general report to be presented to the Committee to the study of developments in the international distribution of the textiles industries.

The *Building, Civil Engineering and Public Works Committee* will hold its second session during 1948. The place and date have not yet been determined, as the Governing Body expressed a wish that this session of the Committee should, if possible, coincide with the international conference on housing and town-planning being organised by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

The agenda of this session has, however, been finally approved by the Governing Body and includes the following questions:

(1) General report, dealing particularly with:

(a) the action taken in the various countries in the light of the decisions of the first meeting;

(b) the steps taken by the Office to follow up the studies and enquiries proposed by the Committee; and

(c) recent events and developments in the industry.

(2) Instability of employment in the construction industry.

(3) Recruitment and training for the construction industry.

(4) Industrial relations.

The *Petroleum Committee* will hold its second session during the second half of 1948. The place of meeting has not yet been decided.

The agenda of this session has been finally approved by the Governing Body in the following terms:

(1) General report, dealing particularly with:

(a) the action taken in the various countries in the light of the resolutions of the first meeting;

(b) the steps taken by the Office to follow up the studies and enquiries proposed by the Committee; and

(c) recent events and developments in the industry.

(2) Recruitment and training for the petroleum industry.

(3) Safety and health in the petroleum industry.

(4) Industrial relations in the petroleum industry.

Second Session of the I.L.O. Iron and Steel Committee

The Second Session of the Iron and Steel Committee of the International Labour Organisation, which had met in its first session at Cleveland, Ohio, in April 1946, was held at Stockholm from 20 to 29 August 1947 in the Swedish Parliament building.

The session was presided over by Mr. Björck, Paymaster-General of Sweden, the Swedish representative on the Governing Body of the International Labour Office. The other representatives of the Governing Body were Sir John Forbes Watson for the employers' group, with Mr. Waline and Mr. Lecocq as substitutes; as Mr. Bengough had not been able to attend this session of the Committee, his place was taken by Mr. Jasinski for the workers' group.

The session was opened by Mr. Gustav Möller, Minister for Social Affairs of Sweden. The Committee appointed two vice-chairmen: Mr. R. Mather (United Kingdom) for the employers' group and Mr. A. Gailly (Belgium) for the workers' group. The chairmen of the three groups were Mr. Li Ping-Heng (China) for the Government group, Mr. R. Mather (United Kingdom) for the employers and Mr. Lincoln Evans (United Kingdom) for the workers.

Fourteen countries were represented at the Second Session of the Committee: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, India, Italy, Luxembourg, Mexico, Sweden, the Union of South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Ten of these countries sent tripartite delegations; Brazil was represented by Government members only, Australia and India by Government and workers' members, and Luxembourg by employers' and workers' members. Altogether, the 14 countries were represented by 69 delegates, 4 substitutes and 14 technical advisers, a total of 87.

WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

Four reports were presented to the Committee by the International Labour Office, one on each of the questions which the Governing Body had placed on the agenda. The first was a general report dealing with steps taken in the various countries and by the International Labour Office since the first session of the Committee, and including also preliminary studies on the effects of technological improvements on employment in the iron and steel industry and on the question of iron and steel statistics. The remaining three reports dealt respectively with the regularisation of production and employment at a high level, minimum income security (annual and other wage systems designed to provide assured earnings), and labour-management co-operation.¹

¹ For notes on these reports, see *International Labour Review*, Vol. LVI, No. 1, July 1947, p. 118, and No. 2, Aug. 1947, p. 245.

The first meetings were given over to discussion of the general report, and a large number of delegates took part. Subcommittees were appointed to examine the three other questions on the agenda and reach conclusions on the basis of their examination of the three reports already mentioned. The report on regularisation of production and employment at a high level contained chapters on the past history of employment fluctuations in the steel industry, present prospects in the iron and steel industry, proposals for reducing short-term employment fluctuations, stabilisation of the output of certain steel products, and the steel industry as a factor in achieving full employment in the economy as a whole. The report on minimum income security described systems of guaranteed wages in general and systems of guaranteed wages in the iron and steel industry. The report on labour-management co-operation dealt with freedom of association, co-operation in fixing wages and conditions of work, and co-operation in the technical and economic field. Each of the three subcommittees held several meetings and presented reports and resolutions for examination by the plenary sitting of the Committee. Several other questions were also dealt with during the general discussion and resolutions on these subjects were submitted by individual members to the Steering Committee, acting in the capacity of a Resolutions Committee; these were presented to the Committee and adopted at the end of the session.

Regularisation of Production and Employment at a High Level

The subcommittee on regularisation of production and employment at a high level was composed of 21 members (7 Government members, 7 employers' members and 7 workers' members). It appointed at its chairman Mr. Stanes (United Kingdom Government member) and as vice-chairmen Mr. Fonda (United States employers' member) and Mr. Malvaux (French workers' member). After a short discussion of the questions referred to it, the subcommittee appointed a Working Committee to propose a programme of work; the principal divisions adopted by the latter were as follows: Production: (a) raw materials, (b) equipment and (c) manpower; Consumption: (a) statistics, (b) standardisation of steel products, (c) stimulation of the demand for steel products and development of new uses for steel, (d) timing of orders for steel placed by public authorities, and (e) machinery for co-ordination.

The resolution adopted by the subcommittee falls into two parts. The first part, concerning production, stresses the urgency of supplying the industry with raw materials, especially coal and coke, the great need for equipment and financial and technical assistance, and the desirability of regular meetings between producing and consuming countries in order to compare plans and establish forecasts of probable consumption levels during the coming years. The first part of the resolution also deals with questions relating to methods of vocational training and retraining, systems of employee promotion, methods employed to recruit foremen and similar grades from the workers, and the effects of technological improvements on employment.

The second part of the resolution, concerning consumption, deals with the purchasing policies of steel consumers, the elimination of unnecessary varieties of steel products, production for stock, public investment policy, and an auxiliary stream of investment from highly industrialised to less developed areas. This second part of the resolution calls for action, as appropriate, by the Governing Body, by the United Nations, by Governments, and by employers' and workers' organisations.

The resolution was adopted as a whole by the Committee at its sixth plenary sitting by 55 votes to nil.

Minimum Income Security

The subcommittee on minimum income security consisted of 21 members (7 Government members, 7 employers' members and 7 workers' members). Its officers were as follows: Mr. Narayanan (Indian Government member), chairman; Sir Lewis Jones (United Kingdom employers' member) and Mr. Lincoln Evans (United Kingdom workers' member), vice-chairmen. As the question of wages had been placed on the agenda of the 1948 Session of the International Labour Conference, the position in regard to the resolutions appearing as appendices to the Report was somewhat changed, and the attention of the subcommittee was drawn to the question whether it was advisable for the conclusions of its work to take the form of resolutions containing concrete proposals which might prejudice the decisions of the Conference and hamper its discussions. The workers' members expressed the view that the Conference dealt with industry as a whole, while the Committee was limited to the iron and steel industry. Industries were of varying structure and at different stages of development; social reforms which were impossible to achieve in some industries might be quite capable of development in others. The Committee, in fact, by examining certain questions from this point of view, could only facilitate the work of the Conference. The workers' members drew attention to the intermittent nature of employment in the iron and steel industry and stressed that the Committee should try to create an international trend in the direction of a guaranteed minimum weekly wage. The employers' members on their side declared that at the present juncture the Committee was not in a position to make a useful study of the question and still less to give a considered opinion in the form of a resolution or a recommendation; the question ought, therefore, to be referred to employers' and workers' organisations, which could then provide the Office with the additional information required.

The workers' members submitted a text on guaranteed weekly wages. The employers' members pointed out that wages were not the only element in the workers' income but were supplemented by social security benefits, family allowances, holidays with pay, etc. Since they did not accept the workers' members' text, the employers' members submitted a text of their own, which noted that the question of wages had been placed on the agenda of the next session of the Conference and recommended that the Office should collect the necessary information on this question in the

countries concerned and prepare a report for submission to the Conference, which could thus be properly informed of the practices in vogue.

The subcommittee finally discussed a draft Memorandum to the Governing Body on the question of Minimum Income Security in the Iron and Steel Industry; this draft gave rise to a wide discussion and the plenary sitting adopted paragraphs 1 to 6, 10 and 11 by 53 votes to nil, and paragraphs 5, 7, 8 and 9 by 38 votes to 14.

The subcommittee also examined the question of dismissal wage and payment for public holidays. A resolution setting out the views of the Committee on this question was adopted in the plenary sitting by 51 votes to nil.

Labour-Management Co-operation

The subcommittee on labour-management co-operation was composed of 21 members (7 Government members, 7 employers' members and 7 workers' members). The officers of the subcommittee were appointed as follows: Mr. Winslow (United States Government member), chairman; Mr. de Nervo (French employers' member) and Mr. Callaghan (United Kingdom workers' member), vice-chairmen. The subcommittee had been given the following terms of reference by the Steering Committee: (a) questions concerning labour-management co-operation in the iron and steel industry, (b) questions concerning the establishment of national committees for the implementation of the recommendations of the Iron and Steel Committee of the International Labour Organisation and (c) questions of safety in the iron and steel industry.

In a resolution on freedom of association the Committee noted with satisfaction that a resolution concerning freedom of association and the protection of the right to organise and bargain collectively had been unanimously adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 30th Session, and noted that these questions will be discussed at the 1948 session with a view to final decision by way of one or several Conventions, and that questions concerning the application of the principles of the right to organise and bargain collectively, of collective agreements, of conciliation and arbitration and of co-operation between the public authorities and the employers' and workers' organisations will be brought up for first discussion. This resolution was adopted by the plenary sitting of the Committee by 39 votes to nil; the employers' members abstained from voting as they considered that the Committee was not competent to express any opinion on a decision of the general Conference, whether of approval or disapproval.

A resolution on co-operation at the industry level was adopted by the plenary sitting of the Committee by 53 votes to 2, recommending that consideration be given to the setting up in each country, where practicable and where no similar organisation exists, of a national joint consultative committee consisting of representative organisations of the iron and steel employers and the iron and steel workers' trade unions, to make recommendations to their respective organisations concerning the implementing of decisions reached by the Committee and all appropriate measures to raise the standard

of living of the workers and to increase production and output in the industry; and concerning advice and recommendations for submission to the competent authorities on all social and economic questions coming within their competence.

The resolution concerning works committees in the iron and steel industry, adopted by 38 votes to 3, invites the Governing Body to inform the next session of the International Labour Conference that the Iron and Steel Committee looks with favour on the setting up in this industry of works committees representing the trade unions with membership in the establishment, for the purpose of co-operation with the management of such establishments in the progressive betterment of the working and living conditions of the workers and in the continuous improvement of productive efficiency.

The resolution concerning safety and health conditions in the iron and steel industry, adopted by the Committee by 45 votes to nil, is mainly concerned with the establishment of internationally comparable accident statistics in the various countries and with educational campaigns to encourage safety-mindedness.

General Resolutions

Statistics.

The committee unanimously adopted a resolution proposed by the working party on statistics and submitted by the Steering Committee. The resolution recommends that for the purposes of I.L.O. reports and statistics all figures relating to capacity and production of iron and steel should be expressed in metric tons; that figures relating to the production of pig iron, steel ingots and steel for castings and the deliveries of pig iron and steel ingots should be reported monthly, if possible; that figures relating to deliveries should be classified according to finished steel products and separately according to the steel-consuming industries to which the deliveries are made; and that all such figures should relate to comparable dates or periods. Efforts should be made to promote the adoption of a uniform system of reporting forms in regard to capacity, output and deliveries, and of a list of technical and trade terms for international use. Consideration should be given to the possibility of arriving at an international definition of the limits of the iron and steel industry and of its principal subdivisions.

Definition of the Iron and Steel Industry.

The Committee unanimously adopted an excerpt from the 4th report of the Steering Committee concerning a rough definition of the iron and steel industry. For purposes of representation at future sessions of the Committee, the term "iron and steel industry" should include (a) the extraction of iron from iron ores whether in a blast furnace or by any other process, (b) the production of steel ingots, wrought iron and steel for castings, (c) the operations of rolling steel and wrought iron, whether in the hot or cold state, (d) the manufacture of sheets coated with tin, zinc, or other metals, and (e) the drawing of iron and steel wire.

CONCLUSION

The second session of the Iron and Steel Committee, which was the third meeting in the second cycle of Industrial Committee meetings, has given further proof of the soundness of the principle on which the committees are organised. The work of the Committee, as was shown in the general discussion in the plenary sittings, will have made a noteworthy contribution to the examination and solution of the special problems of the iron and steel industry. The resolutions adopted at Stockholm show that the industrial committee as such has passed the experimental stage. At the first session in Cleveland the members of the Committee had been mainly occupied in establishing contact and in discussing the problems of the iron and steel industry in their more general aspects; the presence at Stockholm of many delegates from the first session allowed the Committee to reap the advantage of an element of continuity which was bound to be of great assistance in its work. Concrete proposals were made concerning the regularisation of production and employment at a high level, and the resolutions addressed to the Governing Body will have paved the way for the future work of the Committee.