

REPORTS AND INQUIRIES

Social Policy in Non-Metropolitan Territories

Since the end of the Second World War the non-metropolitan territories have undergone a remarkable evolution, both economic and social. For a variety of reasons, however, this evolution has not proceeded at the same rate in all the territories nor, within one and the same territory, in town and countryside; and with it have come a host of social problems and the need for clearly defined social policies.

In its activities in this field the International Labour Organisation is advised by the Committee of Experts in Social Policy in Non-Metropolitan Territories.¹ The conclusions adopted by this Committee at its first three sessions have covered such questions as migrant labour, penal sanctions for breaches of contract of employment, productivity, vocational training and workers' housing, among others. The work of the Committee at its Fourth Session is summarised below.

The Committee of Experts on Social Policy in Non-Metropolitan Territories held its Fourth Session at Dakar, French West Africa, in December 1955. The agenda included the following three items: industrial relations, wage systems and policies, and initial measures of social security in non-metropolitan territories.²

Detailed conclusions were adopted on each of these problems and communicated to the States Members of the I.L.O. concerned.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

In making a detailed survey of the problems arising out of industrial relations in non-metropolitan territories the Committee of Experts undertook a task which was recognised as one of the most important of those facing the I.L.O. at the present time.

As early as its First Session in London in 1947, the Committee had studied some aspects of the problem of industrial relations in non-

¹ Prior to the session described in the present article, it had held meetings in London (1947), Geneva (1951) and Lisbon (1953). The membership of the Committee at present comprises 14 independent experts residing in the following countries or territories: Belgian Congo, Belgium, Dahomey, France (2), Jamaica, Oubangi-Chari, Portuguese Guinea, Portugal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Uganda (2) and the United States.

² See *Industry and Labour* (Geneva, I.L.O.), Vol. XV, No. 7, 1 Apr. 1956, pp. 276-278.

metropolitan territories and the recommendations it made were taken into consideration by the International Labour Conference at its 30th Session (Geneva, 1947) during the final discussion leading to the adoption of the Social Policy (Non-Metropolitan Territories) Convention, 1947, and the Right of Association (Non-Metropolitan Territories) Convention, 1947.

Although at the present time relations between employers and workers in non-metropolitan territories are still frequently limited in scope, the steady rise in the number of wage earners accompanying economic development has proportionately increased the importance of the problems arising out of industrial relations. The preamble to the Committee's conclusions recognised that the nature of the relations between employers and workers was a vital factor in the achievement of social and economic progress and that the past experience of the I.L.O. in this field could be widely used in non-metropolitan territories. The experts added that "the promotion of harmonious industrial and human relations can make a major contribution to the raising of productivity, the fuller employment of human resources, the improvement of working and living conditions and the guaranteeing to the worker of a higher degree of economic security".

Conditions Peculiar to Non-Metropolitan Territories

The Committee's discussions covered a number of general factors which, despite the variety of legal, economic, political and social conditions as between one territory and another, distinguish industrial relations in non-metropolitan territories from those in countries where, owing to the use of modern procedures and techniques, they are fully developed. The experts noted that most of these factors were unfavourable to the growth of collective action in relations between employers and workers or else were calculated to hamper the formation of stable and effective trade unions. This position was due to the scale of migration by workers, the fact that in the majority of territories a very large proportion of the wage-earning population was made up of agricultural workers and domestic servants, the relatively low level of employment of semi-skilled workers, the existence in some territories of acute unemployment and underemployment and, lastly, the problems caused by racial factors, which affected not only relations between employers and workers but among the workers themselves.

Application of the Principle of Freedom of Association

The Committee based its conclusions on the full recognition of the principle of freedom of association and stated that "workers and employers, without distinction whatsoever, should have the right to establish (subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948) and, subject only to the rules of the organisation concerned, to join organisations of their own choosing without previous authorisation". The experts specifically stated that the aim should be to encourage the development of a free, independent, stable and responsible trade union movement. While recognising that it would mark a substantial advance if the Right of Association (Non-Metropolitan Territories) Convention, 1947, were to be implemented, the Committee considered that it should be the

aim of social policy to apply in full in all non-metropolitan territories—by stages if necessary—the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948, and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949.

Unity of Legislation and Principle of Non-Discrimination

The Committee noted that different legislation for different racial groups existed in certain non-metropolitan territories and that this made it difficult to establish good industrial relations, despite the fact that in most cases this legislation was designed to make special provision for workers belonging to groups that were ignorant of both the aims and the methods of trade unions. Similar conclusions were drawn with regard to the existence of different trade unions for different racial groups in certain territories. The experts accordingly defined two further aims of policy, viz. the same legislation concerning the right to organise should apply to all sections of the community and encouragement should be given to the development of trade unions on the basis of common economic and social interests without distinction of race, national origin or political affiliations.

Development of Employers' and Workers' Organisations

The Committee laid special stress on the need for workers' organisations to concentrate on promoting their members' social and economic interests by industrial action. In view of the weakness of trade union organisations in many non-metropolitan territories and their corresponding vulnerability to acts of anti-union discrimination, particularly with regard to employment, as well as to acts of interference by each other, the experts concluded that consideration should be given to the enactment of legislation giving effective protection to workers or trade unions against such acts. They also recommended a number of other measures to facilitate the establishment, functioning, administration and rapid development of employers' and workers' organisations; these included the following:

(a) The formalities and legal requirements affecting the formation of a trade union or membership of an organisation should be kept as simple as local conditions allow.

(b) Where the registration of a trade union was subject to the discretion of the authorities, provision should be made for judicial review so as to ensure that the formation of trade unions did not require prior permission from the authorities.

(c) Consideration should be given to placing advisory services at the disposal of incipient organisations, through labour departments in the territories, although the operation of such services should not restrict the normal field of activity of trade unions. The Committee noted that it was sometimes difficult to draw a distinction between official assistance to the workers in establishing their organisations and government interference in trade union matters; the experts therefore concluded that constant care should be taken to ensure that this initial assistance was not allowed to prejudice the future development of independent organisations.

(d) It should be borne in mind that the early stages of the development of workers' organisations might be hampered by too intensive

and detailed regulations fixing wages, hours and conditions of work, although policies designed to take this into account should not prejudice the protection given to the workers as a whole.

Education in Trade Union Principles

The Committee recognised that it was particularly important in non-metropolitan territories to encourage the study of industrial relations and to foster contacts between employers and workers as much as possible, not only at the level of the undertaking but also on tripartite bodies such as labour advisory boards. The experts recommended that—

(a) facilities should be developed to enable leaders of management and labour to study general labour-management problems and human relations in industry ;

(b) opportunities should be given to trade union officials to familiarise themselves with appropriate methods for the day-to-day running of the union ;

(c) facilities should be developed for the education of workers and trade union members in trade union principles ;

(d) appropriate measures should be taken to promote all means of organised contact between employers and workers at the level of the undertaking and through joint negotiating machinery at the level of the industry ;

(e) employers, workers and their organisations should be associated in framing labour and social policy and legislation by means of advisory bodies ;

(f) provision should be made for the participation, in equal numbers and on equal terms, of employers' and workers' representatives on wage-fixing bodies.

Principle of Collective Bargaining

The experts strongly emphasised the importance of the principle of collective bargaining and the desirability of encouraging its practice in non-metropolitan territories. The Committee considered that collective bargaining constituted the method of determining wages and conditions of employment that was in the best interests of all parties and was the most conducive to good industrial relations. It therefore recommended that measures should be taken in all territories to guarantee effective recognition of the right to bargain collectively and to facilitate collective bargaining in practice. The experts added that it was desirable to encourage the establishment of employers' organisations adequate to the employment patterns of the territory concerned, and stable, representative trade unions. Consideration should be given in some cases to extending the scope of an agreement negotiated by a sufficiently representative organisation to workers who, while not themselves members of that organisation, belonged to the occupations or industries covered by the agreement, subject, however, to the provisions of Paragraph 5 of the Collective Agreements Recommendation, 1951.

Settlement of Disputes

The Committee adopted a number of conclusions dealing with the establishment of an appropriate procedure for the settlement of disputes.

In particular it called for the establishment of conciliation machinery operated in conjunction with employers' and workers' representatives, together with appropriate arbitration facilities for the parties concerned, where necessary. In addition the Committee suggested that, where the law provides for restrictions in respect of strikes and lockouts, governments should take the responsibility for encouraging the setting up of suitable machinery for joint negotiation in the occupation, industry or undertakings concerned.

WAGE SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

Conditions Peculiar to Non-Metropolitan Territories

In setting out to define an appropriate wage policy for non-metropolitan territories the Committee found it necessary to take into account a number of general factors which characterised the economic and social position in the majority of territories and dictated the nature of the problem, particularly throughout tropical Africa.

In the first place the experts noted that the very low productivity generally encountered was due in part to the fact that the majority of the populations concerned were still engaged in a subsistence economy. In such an economy they could neither expand their own resources sufficiently nor acquire suitable equipment to cope with the progressive exhaustion of the arable land or the effects of overpopulation resulting, in some regions, from constant demographic pressure. With regard to wage earners, it was noted that the large scale of temporary migrations was one of the main reasons for low output, since the instability of the workers prevented them to a large extent from acquiring any skill and forced them to accept the low wages normally paid to unskilled labour, while giving them at the same time no prospect of bettering their position by their own efforts. The Committee attached great importance to the increasingly widespread phenomenon of de-tribalisation and took into consideration the undesirable economic and social consequences that were liable to be produced by an influx of population into urban or industrial centres if at the same time the de-tribalised workers were unable to find regular and adequately paid jobs. There could be no doubt that wage earners were more exposed to hardship than other sections of the population, since they acquired fresh habits of consumption and expenditure and were completely or partly cut off from the way of life that was bound up with subsistence farming.

The experts recognised that, although wage earners only formed as yet a very small proportion of the active population, they were steadily increasing in number and it was to be expected that governments would give growing attention to wage policy as part of their general economic and social programmes, particularly since more often than not governments employed more than half the actively employed labour in their territories, and hence had an example to set in the matter.

The Committee noted that few governments had hitherto practised satisfactory wage policies that fitted into their economic development plans. It was also noted, however, that over the past 20 years there had been increasing government intervention in the fixing of workers' wages; this had largely taken the shape of legislation regulating the establishment of minimum wages. It was recognised that the existence of wage fixing machinery did not in itself constitute a wage policy that

would give the workers a reasonable share in the enhanced prosperity brought about by economic development and, above all, by the rapid progress in recent years of industrialisation and mechanisation in the majority of territories.

Definition of a Wage Policy

It was with the foregoing considerations in mind that the Committee defined its recommended wage policy for non-metropolitan territories. The experts stated in their conclusions that the overriding aim should be to raise the workers' living standards and to give them a fair share in the general prosperity of the territory. Accordingly, it should be the common objective of governments, employers and workers to establish wages at the highest levels that the economic circumstances of each territory permit. The Committee emphasised that no satisfactory wage policy could be applied unless the workers and their families were stabilised at or near their places of employment, except in the case of those engaged on essentially temporary and seasonal work. It also considered that wage earners should enter fully into the economic and social life of the community that they had joined as a result of taking employment. The Committee therefore concluded that governments and employers should aim, as economic development progressed, to raise minimum earnings to a level sufficient to support stabilised family life without the need for assistance from outside sources away from the place of employment to supplement the family income.

The Committee noted that it was difficult to strike a balance between the workers' needs and what was economically practicable. The experts accordingly considered that a fundamental examination of wage policy in relation to economic development programmes should be made at the very least in all those territories where no step of this kind had recently been taken. They added that this examination, which could be undertaken independently of the normal procedure for fixing minimum wages by a special body comprising the authorities, the employers and the workers, should set out to make a realistic assessment of what the levels and structure of wages should be, having regard to the reasonable needs of the workers, calculations of living costs and the capacity of the territory to bear the expenditure necessary to achieve a satisfactory position, together with the needs of further economic development.

The Committee urged the need to obtain the most detailed information possible on the current structure of wage differentials so as to provide guidance to the authorities responsible for fixing wages and to the parties to collective bargaining. Such information could also help to secure the most useful distribution of labour for economic development. The experts therefore recommended that the appropriate authorities in each territory should make a periodical general survey of the structure of wage differentials in respect of different levels of ascertained skill and in different occupations.

After noting that some territories had different wage scales for workers of different origins, the Committee concluded that these territories should introduce wage scales providing full coverage of all degrees of skill and qualification applicable to workers who possessed the necessary competence, without regard to race. In this connection attention was called to the desirability of applying, as regards all workers in non-metropolitan territories, the provisions of the Migrant Workers

(Underdeveloped Countries) Recommendation, 1955, dealing with admission to skilled jobs without discrimination.

Wage Fixing

While conceding that collective agreements between employers and workers were normally the best way of fixing and adjusting wages and should, therefore, be actively encouraged, the experts recognised that in some non-metropolitan territories the populations were not all sufficiently advanced to make use of collective bargaining machinery. They noted that many territories, in accordance with Article 14 of the Social Policy (Non-Metropolitan Territories) Convention, 1947, possessed statutory systems whereby minimum wages could be fixed in the absence of any arrangements for fixing them by collective agreement.

The Committee concluded that bodies should be set up on a territorial, regional or industry basis; there should be an independent chairman, with equal numbers of employers' and workers' representatives, nominated where possible by their organisations or appointed in consultation with such employers' and workers' organisations as existed. These bodies would be responsible for fixing wages by statutory means, so that a minimum wage or minimum wages could be established or adjusted, either as the need arose or at regular intervals.

Family Budget Inquiries and Cost-of-Living Indices

It was recognised that it did not seem possible to make any realistic assessment of the minimum needs of a worker and his family except on the basis of family budget inquiries. Accordingly, in order to ascertain the incomes and expenditure of workers and the goods and services they could obtain with their incomes, the experts recommended that governments should examine the practicability of making family budget inquiries in association with experts on nutrition and, if possible, with the co-operation of the employers' and workers' organisations.

The Committee suggested that, as a basis for calculating the cash needs of the worker and his family, cost-of-living indices regularly compiled and designed to measure changes in the cost of maintaining the pattern of consumption indicated by a fixed list of goods and services should also be regularly maintained.

Systems of Wage Payment

It was noted that systems of payment by results were spreading very slowly in the majority of territories and that, generally speaking, although systems of payment by the task or on a piece-work basis were sometimes used, particularly in agriculture, wages were still paid in the main on a time basis. The Committee added that any policy regarding the systems of payment likely to provide incentives and to increase the workers' productivity could, in the majority of non-metropolitan territories, only be settled after an exhaustive review of the subject. They therefore recommended that the governments concerned should consider, when appropriate, taking advantage of the facilities available through the International Labour Organisation to obtain up-to-date information on systems of payment by results and to receive missions of experts with practical experience of this point.

The Committee came to a number of conclusions regarding the operation of various systems of wage payment. It was considered that payment on a time basis, which was the only method capable of being used in all circumstances, could be improved in many cases by granting bonuses for quality. The experts concluded that systems of payment by the task, as at present used in many territories and principally in agricultural employment, should not be encouraged. They agreed that such systems, which were chiefly employed because they required little supervision and made it easy for the employer to reckon the cost of labour, tended to discourage regular work and might result in placing an undue premium on leisure. Where systems of payment by the task were best suited to local circumstances and should therefore continue to be used, the Committee recommended that the task should be clearly defined so that it corresponded in fact to a worker's average output in a given time. In order to encourage workers to perform a number of tasks equivalent to a fair day's work, it was suggested that remuneration for these or task work should be so adjusted as to ensure that the workers could earn more than on ordinary time rates for similar work. Some general considerations on systems of payment by results were put forward for the consideration of governments: the methods used in introducing and applying the systems should, where possible, be chosen in consultation with the workers; it was added that in applying these methods of payment it was important to ensure that the workers were fairly paid and that any improvement in the quality and quantity of the work did not have an adverse effect on their health; systems of payment by results should only be encouraged where there was sufficient supervision to ensure that the quality of the work was maintained, where rates of pay were clearly defined and where the workers' interests were safeguarded by a guarantee of payment on a time basis in the event of any unforeseen difficulty. It was also important that the method of reckoning the total wage and the general working of the system of payment should be readily understood by the workers. To this end output bonuses should be paid as soon as possible after the work to which they related, so that the worker could see a clear link between the bonus and his efforts.

Protection of Wages

In view of the fact that this question had already been comprehensively examined by the International Labour Organisation, both generally and with reference to the non-metropolitan territories, the Committee recommended that governments should consider the possibility of applying, where this had not yet been done, the provisions of the international instruments dealing with the protection of wages, viz. the Social Policy (Non-Metropolitan Territories) Convention, 1947, the Protection of Wages Convention, 1949, and the Protection of Migrant Workers (Underdeveloped Countries) Convention, 1955.

It was noted that most of the provisions of these instruments, particularly those of Articles 15 and 16 of the 1947 Convention, were already widely applied. The experts emphasised the desirability of examining with special care the possibility of taking action in accordance with Articles 8, 10 and 11 of the Protection of Wages Convention, 1949, dealing respectively with deductions from wages, attachments and assignments, and the priority of wages as a privileged debt.

INITIAL MEASURES OF SOCIAL SECURITY

The third item on the agenda of the Committee of Experts dealt with workmen's compensation and other initial measures of social security in non-metropolitan territories.

From the beginning of the discussion, after noting the extreme diversity of social, economic and political conditions, and recognising that in each non-metropolitan territory these conditions were likely to determine to a large extent the initial measures of social security that might be considered, the Committee agreed that there could be no question of planning the introduction of social security measures in non-metropolitan territories in accordance with a universally applicable theoretical pattern. The experts noted that the existing enactments varied widely, while great numbers of regulations had been issued or amended in most of these territories since the end of the last war in order to cope with the steadily growing number of contingencies.

In studying the problem of introducing social security—defined as a combination of measures to enable the population to maintain its means of subsistence and to preserve and recover its health—the Committee was forced to take account, to a greater extent than in the case of the other items on the agenda, of a number of general features characterising the majority of the territories. It was clear to the experts that the same general factors that partly governed the problems arising out of industrial relations and wage policy, largely dictated, owing to their decisive influence on the needs of all sections of the population, the possibility and degree of urgency of introducing social security measures. Chief among these factors were—

(a) the fact that the majority of the active population was engaged in a subsistence economy and was made up of independent workers drawing a livelihood from family or tribal agriculture and still lived in a communal type of social organisation based on tribal or family custom where there was a collective responsibility for protecting members of the community against such contingencies as old age, death of the breadwinner, sickness or invalidity ;

(b) the fact that the majority of wage earners were employed in agricultural work that required no specialisation ;

(c) the existence of conditions unfavourable to the introduction of social security measures, e.g. the absence or inadequacy of any system of registering births, marriages and deaths ; polygamy ; illiteracy among the workers and even the small employers in rural areas ; the scantiness of communications ; and the difficulty of keeping a check on migrant workers ;

(d) the introduction of economic and social development programmes in the majority of non-metropolitan territories in recent years, resulting in the steady growth of industrialisation and mechanisation in agriculture and an increasing demand for skilled labour, which in turn had changed certain traditional features of social life so that some sections of the population had become permanent wage earners and no longer formed part of the communal pattern.

The Committee of Experts put forward its conclusions bearing in mind the circumstances of the present position and the principles laid down over the past decade by various international instruments dealing with social policy in non-metropolitan territories and minimum standards of social security in the underdeveloped countries.

General

The experts recognised the need for all non-metropolitan territories to take action to ensure that the present means of existence of the majority of urban and rural populations were maintained, and emphasised that it was essential to pay particular attention to certain classes of wage earners who, being in permanent employment and cut off from their customary way of life, could no longer rely on the solidarity engendered by the family or tribal community, and were consequently vulnerable to the ordinary risks of life and to fluctuations in employment.

The maintenance of the health of the population was held to be a fundamental aim of policy. The Committee recommended that governments should maintain, and where necessary restore, public health by means of public medical services and should adopt curative and preventive measures as part of a health and social policy capable of providing adequate medical care to the population as a whole, free of charge and without means tests. It was also agreed that protection against natural risks was particularly important in so far as it constituted the best guarantee of maintaining the means of subsistence for the predominantly agricultural majority of the population. The experts accordingly requested governments to take such measures as soil conservation, pest control, the prevention of plant and animal diseases and the improvement of farming techniques and practices. It was suggested that these measures should be supplemented by schemes based on insurance principles, mutual aid or government assistance as appropriate to protect agricultural communities against loss of crops and livestock through natural catastrophes or diseases. A number of other measures were recommended because of their effectiveness in alleviating poverty in the case of such contingencies as sickness, unemployment, underemployment and old age; these recommendations dealt with the improvement of systems of land tenure, better marketing and credit facilities and the encouragement of house ownership, particularly when combined with ownership or right of use of a small plot of land.

The Committee recognised unanimously that it was hardly possible under present circumstances in the majority of non-metropolitan territories to consider the immediate introduction of general social security schemes covering all the principal risks and that therefore it was necessary to consider for each territory the adoption of an order of priority in the coverage of the various risks, taking account of the available economic and administrative resources and flexible enough to be adapted to the evolution of the needs of the populations as new social security measures were introduced.

Workmen's Compensation

The Committee noted that workmen's compensation had been introduced in nearly all non-metropolitan territories but that the standards of the schemes were not always satisfactory, despite the urgency of the problems created by the spread of industrialisation and the steady growth in the number of wage earners. The experts asked governments to give consideration to their very detailed proposals, so that satisfactory standards of workmen's compensation could be achieved in all the territories.

They made a number of proposals to extend the scope of the legislation on this subject: it was agreed that all discrimination based on

race or nationality should be abolished in so far as the general principles of compensation were concerned ; the progressive elimination of any restrictions based on the cause or type of accident or the nature of the undertaking or excluding from the scope of existing regulations wage earners in certain occupations, particularly agriculture, in so far as they were not protected in some other way, was recognised to be desirable ; it was considered that compensation for occupational diseases should follow the same general principles as for employment injuries.

The experts added that one of the aims of social policy should be to provide the victims of employment injuries or occupational diseases with the fullest possible medical care and that there should be no discrimination based on race. In no circumstances should the cost of such medical care be borne by the victim of an accident or an occupational disease ; where, by reason of special circumstances, the full cost of medical care could not be made a charge on the employer or the insurer, the cost should be assumed by the public authority.

It was considered that eligibility for payment of cash benefits should not vary according to the period of service, but that the amount should be related to the wage in the case of temporary incapacity and to both the wage and the degree of incapacity in the case of permanent incapacity.

In order to provide the worker, in the event of temporary incapacity, with an income that was not too disproportionate to the income he could normally expect if he had not been injured, the Committee considered that the full normal wage should be paid in respect of the day on which the accident took place, that the waiting period should not exceed three days, that the benefits should normally be paid at the same intervals as the wage and, lastly, that the daily benefit should be equal to not less than half the normal wage, including payments in kind.

Turning to ways and means of providing adequate compensation in the event of permanent incapacity or death, the experts concluded, *inter alia*—

(a) that one of the aims of social policy should be to eliminate lump-sum payments as far as possible and that only in well defined cases and by order of the administrative or judicial authorities should provision be made for annuities to be commuted into a lump sum ;

(b) that provision should be made for the grant of supplementary compensation in cases of permanent total incapacity where the injured person required the constant assistance of another person ;

(c) that a reasonable allowance for burial expenses should be paid ;

(d) that, in territories where special conditions obtained regarding the number of persons who could claim to be dependants, provision should be made to define the persons entitled to benefit as such ;

(e) that a child who had lost both father and mother should receive a benefit higher than would otherwise be paid in his case ;

(f) that the procedure for review and adjustment of benefit rates should be established by law.

The experts considered that in cases where the accident or disease was fatal or where there was an incapacity for work for a period at least equal to the waiting period, there should be an obligation on the employer to notify the competent authority, and that an administrative or judicial inquiry should be carried out if the accident or the disease was of a serious nature.

The Committee made a number of recommendations regarding the procedure in case of dispute, the precautions needed to ensure that fair benefit rates were fixed, and payment guarantees in the case of debts owed to injured workers in respect of compensation. It was agreed that in principle employers should be compelled to insure themselves in respect of industrial accidents and occupational diseases and that the exceptions to this rule should be prescribed by law. It was added that this obligation should be discharged, as soon and as far as was possible, under a system of insurance not carried on for profit; and that, pending the introduction of such systems, provision should be made for special guarantee funds administered by the public authorities to ensure payment of benefits if there was any default on the part of the employer or insurance company.

The Committee emphasised the desirability of insurance schemes supervised and guaranteed by the public authorities, which, properly planned and administered, might become the basis for more complete social security schemes, by bringing within their scope schemes covering other contingencies.

Sickness

On the subject of coverage for sickness, the experts pointed out the possible relationship between the degree of sickness, the general standard of living—including the level of wages—and, above all, the standard of nutrition, and considered that it was hardly possible for the majority of non-metropolitan territories to contemplate the immediate introduction of medical services based on a social insurance scheme. While agreeing that the provision of medical services for workers by undertakings should be encouraged, the Committee wished to emphasise the need for priority improvement of the public health services so as to put them in a position to provide the whole of the population with satisfactory curative and preventive care free of charge and without a means test, due regard being had to existing facilities for sections of the population provided for by other means.

The Committee discussed the circumstances in which a worker should draw cash benefit in the event of incapacity caused by sickness. It was considered that employers should, in principle, be required to pay sick workers compensation equal to the amount of their wages during a limited period, which might vary in proportion with length of service. The period during which sickness compensation was payable might also be governed by the nature of the employment contract and any future regulations should have regard to local conditions and in particular to the workers' ability to insure themselves against sickness.

Maternity

The experts recognised that it was necessary to expand maternity protection in all the territories as part of a general public health policy, but that it was particularly important to give protection to women workers by providing them as early as possible with a maternity insurance scheme, which could be run in conjunction with compulsory government-controlled and guaranteed systems of insurance against employment injuries and occupational diseases.

In its conclusions the Committee recommended that the standards laid down by various international instruments regarding maternity

protection for women workers should be put into general effect without delay. These standards relate to the extent of medical care, benefit to compensate for loss of earnings during maternity leave, prohibition of work before and after confinement, entitlement to nursing breaks, extension of maternity leave in the event of sickness certified as arising out of pregnancy or confinement, and prohibition of dismissal by the employer while the worker is on maternity leave.

Invalidity

In view of the special conditions prevailing in the vast majority of non-metropolitan territories, the experts felt unable to recommend the immediate establishment of a general system of invalidity insurance. However, they requested governments to explore the possibility of introducing a general scheme of invalidity insurance by stages and to extend assistance to invalids of insufficient means by encouraging the creation of mutual aid societies and extending the action of social services in this field.

Old Age

The Committee considered that the need to cover the contingency of old age, at least for established workers, had increased during recent years in many territories as a result of the establishment and development of a permanent de-tribalised wage-earning sector; this need on the whole had been confirmed by the fact that the number of old people had tended to increase as a result of the general improvement in conditions of health. It was recognised that a study should be made at the present stage of the possibility of introducing old-age insurance schemes for wage earners in permanent employment; the transitional measures that governments could consider in establishing such schemes included the following:

(a) increased assistance to destitute old people in general, under schemes wholly financed by governments, e.g. by opening additional old people's homes or villages or extending the usual forms of assistance, using the recipient's age, residence and income as the only criteria;

(b) the development of such private provident funds as might already exist;

(c) the encouraging of *ex gratia* grants of pensions or gratuities by employers to their aged workers with a long record of service;

(d) the establishment where opportune of schemes financed exclusively by employers for the benefit of aged workers;

(e) the possibility of agreements among the competent authorities, in territories where labour migration was important, whereby employers of migrant workers should make contributions to the government of the territory of emigration, such contributions to be earmarked for funds providing retirement pensions or gratuities for these workers;

(f) the limitation of old-age insurance to certain categories of workers in the early stages, beginning with those workers who had actually broken off all ties with their tribal *milieu* or, more generally, with workers in industrial and commercial concerns employing a sufficient number of permanent workers;

(g) the postponement of the payment of survivors' benefits in favour of widows and orphans to a later stage of the development of old-age pension schemes.

Child Maintenance

Owing to the diversity of the existing economic and social structures and the differences in wage policies, the Committee felt that it was hardly possible in present circumstances to make concrete proposals applying to all territories in regard to the introduction of any formal system covering child maintenance. There was, however, a universal need to develop forms of social assistance rendered to the family by means appropriate to local circumstances in each territory.

Unemployment and Underemployment

The Committee recognised the need to take steps, wherever the problem arose, to promote employment and maintain it at a high level, particularly by registering workers and by recording fluctuations in the labour market. It was agreed that every effort should be made to develop free public employment services that could help to maintain a state of full employment.

FUTURE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

The experts submitted a number of important proposals to the Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation regarding the future work of the Committee.

Several suggestions were made about the geographical scope of its work. In view of the urgent new needs that had become apparent in many parts of Africa in recent years as a result of political and social development, the experts considered that in future they should concentrate increasingly on the problems affecting that continent.

While recognising that the precise geographical limits of its work in Africa could only be settled by negotiation with the governments concerned, the Committee stressed that it was extremely important that it should continue to cover territories that were in the midst of rapid constitutional change, e.g. the Federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland, the Gold Coast, Nigeria and Somaliland. The Committee would welcome the association in its work of Ethiopia and Liberia and would value the continued co-operation of the Union of South Africa.

It suggested a number of ways of making its membership more representative. The experts welcomed the opportunity that had been given at this Fourth Session of the Committee of drawing on a wider range of experience, mainly as a result of the appointment of experts who had been chosen in consultation with the Employers' and Workers' groups on the Governing Body. They hoped that these arrangements would in future become permanent, especially as they enabled valuable contacts to be maintained with the employers' and workers' organisations that were developing very rapidly in some territories of the African Continent. The experts went so far as to suggest that the number of members of the Committee appointed in this way should be slightly increased. While agreeing that its work at the first four sessions had been greatly facilitated by its relatively small size and by the fact that it was made up of independent experts, the Committee expressed the hope that its membership would be sufficiently enlarged to give the opinions of all parties in Africa, south of the Sahara, an opportunity of finding full expression.

In discussing the Committee's future activities and the agenda for its next session, the experts began by pointing out that they had now completed an initial examination of a number of the most critical and pressing problems of labour and social policy in non-metropolitan territories, particularly in Africa. The following questions had been dealt with: general principles of social policy in non-metropolitan territories, migrant labour, penal sanctions, productivity, vocational training, housing, industrial relations, wage systems and policies and initial measures of social security. The Committee considered that it had now reached a stage where it would be useful to make a comprehensive survey of labour and social policy in Africa at its next session. Such a survey would fully reflect the predominantly agricultural character of the African economy and its bearing on the improvement of the living standards of African workers. It was added that such a survey would be based on the reports prepared for the Committee's first four sessions and on information supplied to the International Labour Office by governments and the Inter-African Labour Institute; it would review the action already taken in these territories to give effect to the Conventions and Recommendations adopted by the International Labour Conference as well as to the Committee's own conclusions at its previous sessions.

In the light of such a survey the experts would endeavour to consolidate existing texts, together with the Committee's conclusions and any other relative material, into a handbook of labour policy and industrial relations. This handbook would contain, amongst other things, an account of the way in which these instruments were applied in practice, and could prove extremely useful in many non-metropolitan territories in Africa and elsewhere. The Committee felt that when this had been done it would be in a better position to plan ahead.

The Committee was most appreciative of the opportunity which had been afforded to it by the French Government and the Government of French West Africa to meet for the first time in Africa. It considered that the fact of its having met in that continent had already made a significant contribution towards a wider appreciation of its work and the work of the International Labour Organisation generally. On the completion of their work the experts expressed the hope that they would be able to hold further meetings on the African Continent.
