



**WORLD LABOUR
PROBLEMS
IN 1930**

**A RECORD OF THE FOURTEENTH
SESSION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR
CONFERENCE**

4^D

217
FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR
CONFERENCE

JUNE 10—28, 1930

INTRODUCTION

THIS year's Conference was attended by a record number of States. Of the whole membership of the League only four countries were not officially represented: Abyssinia, Argentina, Norway and Salvador. The Norwegian Government sent an observer, thus continuing its relations with the Organisation although the workers of Norway still contend that the Conference is too moderate in its attitude to merit their support; an observer from Turkey was present for the third year in succession, and for the first time one from Mexico, showing the interest which the Conference arouses in countries outside the League.

Thirty-five of the delegations were complete, *i.e.* they comprised Employers' and Workers' as well as Governmental delegates. Sixteen distant States which are non-industrial had only Government delegates; some of these—as the Dominican Republic—had not been represented before, and others had explained in former years that a full delegation could not be sent for financial reasons. The composition of the Conference was as follows: 86 Government delegates, while delegates for the Employers and the Workers were 35 in each case. There were 87 advisers for the Government, 63 for the Employers and 65 for the Workers.

The British delegation numbered 26 official members. The delegates were:—*For the Government* :—Rt. Hon. Margaret Bondfield, P.C., J.P., M.P., Minister of Labour, and Mr. Shinwell, M.P., Secretary for Mines, (Mr. Humbert Wolfe, C.B., C.B.E., Principal Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Labour, and Mr. R. V. Vernon, C.B., Assistant Secretary, Colonial Office, acted both as substitutes and advisers for the titular delegates). *For the Employers* :—Mr. Forbes-Watson, Director of the National Confederation of Employers' Organisations. *For the Workers* :—Mr. E. L. Poulton, O.B.E., J.P., Secretary of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives, member of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress; Mr. A. A. Findlay acting as his substitute during the earlier part of the Conference.*

* Advisers attached to the British delegation were:—*(For the Government)* : Mr. W. H. Coles, D.S.O., Assistant Principal, Home Office; Mr. W. L. Cook, O.B.E., J.P., Conciliation Officer and Assistant Labour Adviser, Mines Department, Board of Trade; Mr. J. S. Nicholson, Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Labour; Mr. J. J. Paskin, Principal Officer, Colonial Office; Mr. G. H. D. Pryor, Principal Officer, Mines Department, Board of Trade; Mr. E. H. Richards, Chief Clerk, Solicitor's Department, Ministry of Labour; Mr. R. C. G. Somervell, Principal in charge of the International Labour Division, Ministry of Labour. *(For the Employers)* : Mr. J. S. Boyd, Secretary of the Shipbuilding Employers' Federation, member of the General Purposes Committee and Council of the National Confederation of Employers' Organisations; Mr. C. A. Carlow, Managing Director of the Fife Coal Company, Ltd.; Mr. R. Clive, member of the Institution of Mining Engineers, Secretary, South Yorkshire Coal Trade Association; Mr. H. Kay, Secretary of the London Employers' Association, Ltd.; the Wholesale Clothing Manufacturers' Federation, the Joint Council of Textile Distributors' Associations, etc., member of the General Purposes

The Agenda was very heavy; originally it included the submission of two draft Conventions, Forced Labour and Hours of Salaried Employees, with two Recommendations on each subject. As a result of the resolution on coal-mining conditions passed by the Ninth Assembly of the League—and the Technical

Committee and Council of the National Confederation of Employers' Organisations; Mr. H. S. Kirkaldy, Assistant Secretary of the National Confederation of Employers' Organisations; Mr. W. A. Lee, C.B.E., Secretary of the Mining Association of Great Britain, member of the Council of the National Confederation of Employers' Organisations. *Substitute Advisers* : Mr. P. Howling, General Secretary of the National Chamber of Trade Incorporated; Lt.-Colonel J. H. Nicholson, General Manager and Agent of the Cowpen Coal Company; Mr. J. E. Ryan, Hotels Superintendent of the London and North Eastern Railway, member of the Executive Committee of the Hotels and Restaurants Association, member of the Council of the National Confederation of Employers' Organisations; Mr. W. D. Wright, Vice-Chairman of the Monmouthshire and South Wales Coal Owners' Association. *(For the Workers)* : Mr. A. A. H. Findlay, General Secretary, United Pattern-makers' Association, member of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress; Mr. J. Bromley, M.P., General Secretary, Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, member of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress; Mr. J. Hallsworth, Industrial General Secretary, National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers, member of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress; member of the Executive Committee of the International Federation of Commercial, Clerical and Technical Employees; Mr. H. H. Elvin, General Secretary of the National Union of Clerks and Administrative Workers; member of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress; Mr. A. J. Cook, Secretary, Miners' Federation of Great Britain, member of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress; The Rt. Hon. Thomas Richards, P.C., Acting President Miners' Federation of Great Britain, Secretary, South Wales Miners' Federation, member of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress. *Substitute Adviser* : Mr. W. P. Richardson, Treasurer, Miners' Federation of Great Britain, General Secretary, Miners' Association of Durham. *Secretary to the Delegation* : Mr. C. J. G. Dugdale, Staff Clerk, Ministry of Labour.

Preparatory Conference held in January to carry out the Assembly's proposals—another draft Convention had to be considered by the Fourteenth Session of the International Labour Conference. In the course of the Salaried Employees Committee's deliberations a third Recommendation was added to the two previously drafted. It is plain therefore that there was an immense amount of detailed work to be handled in committee before the result of this work could come before the full Conference. In addition there was the committee dealing with Standing Orders and that which is entrusted with the consideration of Reports furnished under Article 408 on ratification and application of Conventions—the report under Article 408 having already been examined by a committee of experts some weeks before the Conference opened. The Selection** and Credentials Committees do not make less demand on their members because they are concerned mainly with the business and the proper conduct of the Conference; the decisions of these two bodies must necessarily be based upon a wide knowledge of the constitution of the International Labour Organisation and practical experience of its working.

ELECTING THE PRESIDENT

Mr. Ernest Mahaim (Belgian Government Delegate) was unanimously elected President of the Conference, on the proposal of Miss

** Miss Bondfield was Chairman of the Selection Committee, her place being taken by Mr. Wolfe on June 16, when her Parliamentary duties obliged her to leave Geneva.

719
Bondfield; the Chairman of the Employers' Group seconded, and the representative of the Workers' Group spoke in support, as is traditional on these occasions. In their speeches, as in the welcome expressed by the German, Japanese, Spanish and Chilean Government delegates, there was a sincerity and warmth which was reflected in the applause of the whole gathering.

This applause signified a general recognition that Professor Mahaim is a great International lawyer, that at the Peace Conference he took an active part in the deliberations of the Labour Commission which drafted Part XIII of the Treaty, and that he has represented Belgium at the Washington Conference and at every general International Labour Conference since. But most of those present had known him as the intrepid pioneer of international social progress, and as one of the small band who founded the International Association for Labour Legislation, which by faith and courage and intimate knowledge of industrial risks won the old diplomacy to accept international conventions for the protection of the workers: notably one stamping out perhaps the worst of all industrial diseases (by securing the prohibition of the use of white phosphorus in match manufacture). Even the youngest delegate from the most distant country has learned that the Association was the direct forerunner of the Permanent International Labour Organisation as we know it to-day. Valued by his colleagues for his upright character and the geniality, which nevertheless, marks an inflexible will when right

and justice are concerned, every group in the Conference regards Mr. Mahaim as a friend, and the words used by Government, Employer and Worker delegates in proposing him as their President were the expression of a common feeling of respect, trust and affection.

PRELIMINARY DECLARATIONS

After the Conference had held some purely formal meetings needed to decide what Committees should be set up and to receive nominations from the groups desiring representation on these bodies, the (fifth) Plenary Session considered—under the Conference Standing Orders—whether there should be a general discussion on the three items of this year's agenda or on any of them. No wish was expressed for preliminary discussions. The Dutch Government did indeed suggest that such a discussion might usefully be held on Item I (Forced Labour), but the proposal found no seconder, and the only other speaker on the point (Portuguese Government) stated that since the subject had been already studied and the Committee was about to examine it in detail he thought there would be little value in a debate until the Committee had reported.

Miss Bondfield asked leave to make a general statement on the position of the British Government in regard to Item II (Hours of Work of Salaried Employees) as the later discussion in the Plenary would take place after she had left Geneva. She said the Government had already informed the Office that they did not know enough about the facts to give a definite opinion

770
during this Conference. In preparing the Bill already introduced which was to permit ratification of the Washington Hours Convention the consideration of commercial employees was not included in any of the consultations. Her Government proposed to proceed on the basis of ascertaining the facts with regard to regulation of hours in occupations hitherto unregulated, and had appointed a Select Committee of the House of Commons to go into the question of Shop Assistants. Meanwhile their representatives would attend the Committee as observers hoping to profit by its deliberations. Recommendations proposing enquiry into the conditions of work in hotels, restaurants and theatres were now on the Conference Agenda at the instance of the British Government which at the moment would prefer merely to extend these enquiries to other classes of employment. The purpose was not to retard progress, but to assist it.

Mr. Elvin, on behalf of the Salaried Employees of Great Britain, declared that for some years past the British Government had had at its disposal all the information necessary to enable it to support a Convention on their Hours of Work. The Select Committee mentioned above had been appointed merely for parliamentary purposes and not because it was essential. There was no reason why the British Government should not support a Convention of the kind proposed.

The only comment on Item III (Hours of Work in Coal Mines) was made by Mr. Oersted (Danish Employer) speaking for the

Employers' Group as its Chairman. He alluded to the fact that the preparatory work on this subject had not been carried out in accordance with the Standing Orders of the Conference (which set out the self-imposed 'double discussion' procedure inaugurated some four years ago) and, further, pointed out that the preparatory work (the Technical Conference in January) had been confined to certain selected countries. His group 'reserved the right to discuss at a later stage' whether the proposals in the Report before the Conference (setting forth the conclusions arrived at by the chief European coal-producing countries) were in order. It was not committed to accept the establishment of a precedent which might limit the rights of countries not so far invited to express their views. But it may be noted that Mr. Oersted made no proposal to hold a general discussion.

ITEM I

FORCED LABOUR

This Committee had 45 members (15 from each group). It held 16 sittings. Its officers were: *Chairman*, Mr. Jules Gautier (French Government); *Vice-Chairmen*, Major Cayen (Belgian Employers' Adviser), and M. Besteiro (Spanish Workers' Adviser); *Reporter*, Mr. Vernon (British Government).

At the outset Mr. Gautier, who was Chairman of the Forced Labour Committee in 1929, paid a moving tribute to the energy, ability and

721
selfless devotion of Mr. Grimshaw to the cause of subject peoples, adding that the successful issue of last year's discussion was mainly due to his work. He appealed to the Committee to honour Mr. Grimshaw's memory by producing such a Convention as he had worked for and could have approved.

In view of the thorough exploration of the principles involved which was undertaken at the first discussion a year ago the Committee decided to enter at once on a detailed examination of the texts of the Convention and Recommendations drafted by the Office on the basis of the replies to the questionnaire sent to the Governments. There was complete agreement in the Committee that it was desirable to lay down the principle of the abolition of forced labour in all its forms. (A few members would have preferred a Convention concluded among the Colonial Powers to one of general application, but this view was not pressed). It was also agreed that during the transitory period—until the desired abolition could be brought about—limitation of forced labour to public purposes should be enforced and that the labour permitted for these purposes should be strictly regulated.

Broadly, the 31 Articles of the Convention may be said to fill in the outlines of the 1929 questionnaire. Following the principles agreed upon, which are recited in Article 1, the salient points with which the Convention deals are: the definition of forced or compulsory labour; the authority for having recourse to it; the cessation of the practice of delegating this

authority to subordinates; percentage of population which may be called out (adult males only being in question); the age limits to be observed, the maximum time for and the distance to which workers may be taken; their medical examination, habituation, rates of wages, hours of work and rest; complaints touching conditions of labour; and—finally—inspection, the reports (under Article 408) to the International Labour Office and penalties for the illegal exaction of forced or compulsory labour.

Serious division of opinion on the Committee was confined to a few points. The most outstanding were:

- (a) A time limit for the complete suppression of forced labour. Various opinions were advanced—ten years, five years, or an indeterminate period. The compromise arrived at was on a paragraph submitted by Mr. Vernon for the British Government. It provided that the question of complete suppression shall again be considered at the expiration of a period of five years after the coming into force of the Convention.
- (b) That the employment on public works of men called up under compulsory military laws should not be deemed forced or compulsory labour. This came up on a subsection of Article 2 (Definition), and on this point there was a sharp divergence of opinion, and great difficulty was experienced before the sub-section took its final form. The British and French

111

Government view conflicted. The British Government, supported by the Workers' Group, proposed the wording that work imposed under compulsory military law should be 'work of a purely military character.' The Secretary-General put in a compromise text which would have permitted the use of the 'second contingent' under French conscription law with reconsideration at the end of five years, but neither Mr. Vernon nor the Workers could see their way to accept it. The British amendment was carried by 19 votes to 18, and the French and Portuguese Governments then formally declared that its adoption would make it impossible for their Governments to accept this part of the Convention.

- (c) The proposal of the original draft (in agreement with the replies of certain Governments) was that an exception to the suppression of forced labour for private persons or companies might be made when these were acting as contractors for the execution of public works duly authorised by the competent authority. The British Government and the Workers' Group had amendments to delete this paragraph. Their amendments were defeated in committee, but in the full Conference the paragraph was deleted and the exception is therefore not admitted by the Convention.
- (d) The normal period of working hours. A long discussion took place on this. The

Workers pressed for an eight-hour day, but did not carry it. It is laid down that hours 'shall be the same as those prevailing in the case of voluntary labour,' overtime also at the prevailing rates, and that all forced labourers shall have a weekly day of rest.

(e) The question of complaints on conditions of labour. The Workers' Group wished to include 'negotiations,' but as this presupposed organisation of the forced labourers it was not accepted. Forwarding of complaints (which admits the intervention of an intermediary if a worker cannot make them in person) and rules ensuring that they 'will be examined and taken into consideration' are to be included in regulations of the competent authority.

(f) Compulsory cultivation. This gave rise to much discussion, the Belgian Government, in particular, holding that it was necessary for certain undernourished peoples and further that it had an educative value. There was much hesitation in accepting the second paragraph of the Article (19) in this sense, although it finally went through, the Indian Employers' amendment to delete the paragraph being rejected by 21-14. In the full Conference this vote was reversed, and only compulsory agriculture for food production was admitted.

The Conference vote on the Convention as a whole was 78 for and 12 against on the draft

773
Convention as amended in the Conference after the discussion of the Committee's report on June 26. The French, Belgian and Portuguese* Governments voted against, and also the Belgian, Finnish, French, South African, Swiss and Yugoslavian Employers.

On the final vote two days later, when the Convention came back to the Conference from the Drafting Committee, the position was improved, the vote being 93 to 0.

The French and Belgian Governments explained the reason of their abstention, France for the reasons given on the disputed points in the Committee and Belgium because compulsory agriculture for educative purposes was excluded.

It was clear from the first that a Convention which the British Government could support and ratify would not be satisfactory from the French point of view. The divergence of principle on the question of using conscripted labour on public works alone made it out of the question to produce a Convention which would be acceptable to both countries.

The Workers' Group put in a Minority Report on the Convention on certain points which they had failed to carry in the Committee, but expressly stated in their report that 'it should be clearly understood that they would adopt the Convention' as drafted by the

*The Portuguese Government delegation sent a written statement to the President (which appears in the last number of the *Provisional Record*), saying that it found itself 'unable to accept a Convention containing principles and details of regulation that it deems incompatible with national sovereignty and the autonomy of Portuguese colonial administration.'

Committee or in 'whatever might be its final text.' It will be seen from the account of the position in the Committee as given above that some of the amendments of the Workers' Group which were rejected in committee were accepted by the Conference.

It should be added that the Convention will come into force twelve months after any two States of the Organisation have ratified it, and that a report upon it—giving an opportunity of revision—must be presented to the Conference by the Governing Body every five years.

The Recommendation concerned with indirect compulsion to labour dealt with the artificial increase of economic pressure upon populations to seek wage-earning employment. The French and Portuguese Governments stated that since the Recommendation raised questions of colonial and economic policy it could not be accepted; for similar reasons the South African Government was of opinion that more consideration was needed. The Committee adopted the Recommendation by 22 votes to 9, and the Conference final vote upon it was 91 to 0. There was a second Recommendation; this dealt with regulations issued in application of the Convention. It included the printing of texts of laws and administrative orders in native languages and their oral communication to the workers. Article IV recommends that recourse to forced or compulsory labour for transport should be prohibited when animal or mechanical transport is available.

The second Recommendation was adopted by the Committee by 25 votes to 3, and on the

229
final vote in the Conference by 91 to 1. The single vote against was that of the Albanian Government.

ITEM II

Hours of Work of Salaried Employees

This Committee had 68 members; 34 were Government members, while the Employers and Workers had 17 representatives respectively, each of these having two votes in order to equalise their voting strength with that of the Government Group. It held 12 sittings.

The officers of the Committee were:—*Chairman*, Mr. Anselmi (Italian Government); *Vice-Chairmen*, Mr. Oesterberg (Danish Employers' Adviser) and Mr. Smit (Dutch Workers' Adviser); *Reporter*, Mr. Gascon y Marin (Spanish Government).

The scope of the Convention remains as proposed in the Office text. In the first section of Article 1 there is no attempt to make distinctions between different classes of work, the scope is determined by enumerating the establishments in which they are employed. The Office list was accepted. This includes commercial and trading establishments and commercial or trading branches of any other establishments, also, 'in so far as they are not deemed to be industrial,' those which are both commercial and industrial. Postal, telegraph and telephone services are included, and any establishments and administrative services in which the employees are mainly engaged in office work. As proposed by the Office it is left to the competent authority in each country to

define what constitutes a purely industrial (or agricultural) establishment.

The Office draft excluded, by Clause 2 of Article 1, employees in hospitals, hotels, restaurants and clubs, also those in theatres and places of public amusement. By an amendment moved by the Workers' group, adopted by 44-40 votes, the committee decided to include the classes of employees in these establishments excluded by the Office text, but only if they were 'employed in commercial, technical, administrative or office work.'

According to the Office text, establishments carried on exclusively by the employer's family or 'serving as instruments of the Government of the country' might be exempted from the application of the Convention by the competent national authority, as also persons in positions of management, travellers, agents, etc., working outside. An addition of some importance, which was endorsed by the Conference, was that 'persons employed in a confidential capacity' might also be exempted. The Committee decided against the optional exclusion of the family business, and the paragraph was deleted, but it was reinstated when the draft of the Convention was submitted to the Conference.

That 'hours of work' should mean the 'time when the employee is at the disposal of the employer' presented little or no difficulty (Article 2), but Articles 3 and 4 gave rise to many amendments and much discussion. In the Office draft 48 hours in the week and 8 in the day were proposed; the maximum laid down

225
for the week might be so arranged that 'hours of work in the day do not exceed 10 hours.' The New Zealand worker urged that for employees in offices and shops the weekly limit should be reduced to 44 hours, the Polish Government and worker jointly moved a 7 hours' day and a 42 hour week for office employees, as was also proposed by the Italian worker, while for these the British worker (Mr. Hallsworth) demanded a 38 hour week. In the end Articles 3 and 4 were adopted by the Committee in the wording of the Office draft; this was maintained in the Conference.

The greatest difficulties were encountered on the Article dealing with overtime; in the first section of the article, as drafted by the Office, it was proposed that the public authority should determine by regulations certain permanent exceptions to the general rule governing overtime. In some measure the difficulties were due to a difference of opinion among the Governments as well as to the opposite views expressed by the employers and workers. The taking of the vote was postponed after two protracted sittings, and the Committee met again in twenty-four hours' time to consider a compromise text put in by the Office, setting out the classes of persons for whom permanent exceptions should be determined under regulations of the public authority. Roughly these include those whose work is intermittent, those who must carry out preparatory or complementary work which must necessarily be performed outside the usual hours, or employees in shops and establishments situated where the

nature of the work, size of the population, etc., render inapplicable the usual working hours. (Such cases do arise in sparsely populated agricultural areas, as in Canada or similar countries where the working farmer may have to come great distances at the end of the day to lay in his stores.) The rate of pay for overtime was settled at 'not less than one-and-a-quarter times the regular rate,' as in the Office draft.

Several delegates made declarations before the final vote was taken. Mr. Wolfe stated that the British Government would abstain from voting for the reasons given by Miss Bondfield before the Committee began its labours; nevertheless, he wished to make it clear that the Government earnestly desired an international regulation of salaried employees' hours 'at a reasonably early date.' Miss Stafford (Irish Free State Government) explained that in framing replies to the 1929 questionnaire her Government arrived at the conclusion that it would be impossible for them to support a Convention based on those lines.

The Convention was adopted by 78 votes to 31. The British Government abstained, the British Employer (Mr. Forbes Watson) and Worker (Mr. Poulton) voted against, as did the Employer and Worker of South Africa. Only two Governments voted against: Irish Free State and Japan; 32 Governments voted in favour of the Convention.

The three Recommendations were adopted by 103 votes to 18. The British Government voted for, the Employer against. The first two Recommendations were concerned with the

226
regulation of hotels and restaurants and theatres as indicated by Miss Bondfield in her statement to the Conference. The third suggested investigations into the hours of employees in hospitals, etc., on the same lines, *i.e.*, to obtain information where no statutory regulations exist and to enquire into the application of regulations in cases where they have been issued.

ITEM III

Hours of Work in Coal Mines

It may be remembered that a 'Preparatory Technical Conference' (convened by the Governing Body) met in January, 1930, to examine and report upon the questions of hours, wages and other conditions of employment in coal mines. This procedure was suggested in the resolution unanimously passed by the Assembly of the League at the Ninth Assembly (September, 1929) with the object of enabling the *International Labour Conference of 1930* to arrive at 'practical international agreement' on such of these questions as the Preparatory Technical Conference should decide to refer to it. At the Preparatory Conference there was a consensus of opinion in favour of securing uniformity in the matter of miners' hours; it was recommended that a report on wages be prepared by the Office for submission to the 1931 Conference and that reports on other specified points in working conditions should be prepared and presented at future Conferences. But it was suggested to the Governing Body that the *draft of a Convention*

on Hours of Work should be placed on the Agenda of the 1930 Conference.

The Preparatory Technical Conference had before it a report specially prepared by the Office on Hours of Work and legislation regulating them in European and other countries. The conclusions of the Enquiry into 'Wages and Conditions in Coal Mines' and the data upon which they were based (representing the ground covered in the 'Grey Reports' on law and practice which are used in the 'first discussion' of any subject on the Conference Agenda) were also in the hands of the Preparatory Conference.* A draft outline of a Convention, comprising the provisions considered compatible with most national regulations, *but without any suggestion as to the number of working hours which might be proposed*, was put in merely to facilitate the January discussions. During these discussions all the essential factors in the question of Hours of Work in Coal Mines were carefully examined by the Preparatory Conference, and, subsequently, in cases where the text of the Minutes seemed to be at all obscure, the Office obtained from the Governments concerned such supplementary information as appeared necessary. It therefore became possible for the Office to complete the skeleton convention in the form of the draft submitted

* This Enquiry, carried on under the supervision of a sub-Committee of the Governing Body (*Chairman* : Mr. Wolfe), has issued its reports in the 'Studies and Reports' series of International Labour Office publications, and the reports have been completed in the *International Labour Review*. All the material, therefore, was available to the delegates of this year's International Labour Conference.

727
for the consideration of the International Labour Conference of June, 1930.

This was the situation when the Committee on Hours of Work in Coal Mines began its work. It consisted of 48 members (16 for each group), and held 19 sittings. Its officers were:—*Chairman*, Dr. Brauns (German Government); *Vice-Chairmen*, Mr. Lee (British Employers' Adviser) and M. Dejardin (Belgian Workers' Adviser); *Reporter*, Mr. Shinwell (British Government).

Lignite Mines

As at the Preparatory Conference, there was considerable discussion before agreement was secured as to whether these should be covered by the Convention or excluded from it. Three days the Committee debated this question, for Germany and some other countries were deeply interested in lignite production. The two factors which weighed against its inclusion in the Convention were (a) that the Office had not been able to submit the lignite report in time for the Committee members sufficiently to consider all the aspects of the question, and (b) that the bulk of lignite, especially in Germany, is, to a large extent, produced on the surface,* so that the conditions of the workers in lignite are not comparable with those of hard coal miners. It was decided to exclude

* Mr. Shinwell gave figures when he presented his report to the Conference. He said, 'the total output of lignite in the European countries is 220 million tons; the amount of lignite which could have been included in the present Convention, had we decided that lignite should be brought in, is 55 tons'; but the '*millions of tons produced on the surface would not have been included.*'

the relatively small amount of lignite which is mined in conditions which can be considered similar to that of hard coal mining, and to support the policy of a future Convention which should deal with the bulk of the lignite-getting industry. Accordingly, Article 1 of the Coal Convention defines a mine as one 'from which hard coal alone or principally hard coal in addition to other minerals is extracted,' but it is laid down in the second and third paragraphs of the Article that the regulation of hours of work in lignite-mining will be dealt with at the 1931 Conference, and that, until a Convention on the lignite workers' hours is brought into operation, each State ratifying the Coal Convention undertakes to apply the provisions of the Washington Hours Convention in the lignite-mining industry.

The definition of the term 'worker,' as put forward by the Office, was accepted: 'Any person occupied underground in a coal mine' . . . 'excepting persons engaged in supervision or management who do not ordinarily perform manual work.'

The time spent in the mine is calculated from the time 'when the worker enters the cage in order to descend,' to when he leaves it after re-ascending. If access is by an adit, time is reckoned from the worker passing through its entrance to his return to the surface.

The definite figure for hours proposed in the Office draft was $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours a day and 45 hours a week, with $7\frac{3}{4}$ hours a day and $46\frac{1}{2}$ a week, for a transitional period of three years. The Workers' Group stood for a 7 hour day from bank to

228
bank; Mr. A. J. Cook appealed to the Governments to respond to their unanimous demand. The British Government put forward a bank to bank $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours' day with a 45 hour week. The German Government submitted an amendment for a $7\frac{3}{4}$ day bank to bank, and later consideration by a future technical Conference of further reduction in hours. Not one of these proposals was carried. The Office suggestion was negatived by 19 votes for, 24 against, 3 abstentions, the three amendments as follows: Workers': 16 votes for, 27 against, 2 abstentions; British Government: 18 votes for, 27 against, 3 abstentions; German Government: 15 for, 24 against, 8 abstentions. For the Employers' Group, the French Employer moved an 8 hours' day and 48 hours' week. This was thrown out also: 19 for, 24 against, 4 abstentions.

Having reached an *impasse* in regard to the principal object of the Convention, the Committee, on the suggestion of the Chairman, decided to continue the discussion on the other Articles, reserving the right to consider the possibility of filling in the gap before its proceedings terminated. The next day Mr. Shinwell read a statement reminding the Committee that the British Government held the opinion that the Convention should provide for a $7\frac{1}{2}$ hour day, bank to bank. (As British Government delegate he had voted against the other proposals.) But in view of the deadlock created by the voting on the previous day, he had come to the conclusion that the German Government amendment was the best obtain-

able at the moment and would therefore accept it. Nevertheless, his vote 'did not, in any way whatever, prejudice the question which would arise in July, 1931, in Great Britain.' The Chairman then recalled the declaration he had made on the possibility of reverting to the filling in the gap left by the failure to carry any vote deciding on the number of hours which might be worked. At this juncture, Mr. Lee, the British Coal Owners' representative, declared that his group could not accept that any vote should now be taken on the number of hours to be inserted in the Convention. The Chairman emphasised that a further vote on Article 2 was quite regular; he was supported in this view by the Committee—23 votes to 2—the Employers abstaining. As a consequence of this decision, Mr. Lee and the whole of the Employers' Group withdrew, and did not again attend the Committee. The following day the German Government's revised amendment was put to the vote. In its new form it stipulated that 'within three years at the latest after the coming into force of this Convention, the possibility of a further reduction in hours of work shall be considered and a decision taken.' The amendment was carried by 23 votes to 2, with 5 abstentions.

The 'spread-over': this principle, set forth in Article 5 of the Office draft, was not well received by the greater part of the Committee; it was rejected by 23 votes to 1 and the Article containing it disappeared.

Overtime gave a considerable amount of trouble. One hour a day and fifty hours a year

229
were permitted in the Office draft under regulations of the public authority—for intermittent workers or on work impossible to carry out in normal hours. To meet exceptional economic requirements other workers might be employed overtime up to 75 hours a year. The hour was reduced to half an hour during a discussion on a detailed amendment introduced by the German Government. But the Workers' Group resisted overtime other than for 'individual hewers where the work is necessary on technical grounds or for the full resumption of the next shift.' The offer to substitute 60 hours in the year in place of 70 did not reduce the opposition of the Workers' Group to overtime (apart from accident or *force majeure*), for it was feared it would whittle away what the miners stood to gain by the reduction of the working day. Overtime for productive work was therefore ruled out.

When the Committee reported to the Conference, and submitted the Convention as drafted, the Employers formally opposed the Convention being put to the Conference. Their spokesman was Mr. Oersted, Chairman of the Group, who based his argument upon a 'double discussion' procedure having been introduced, under the Standing Orders, since 1927. The President of the Conference, who has long been Chairman of the Standing Orders Committee, showed that under Article 403 of the Treaty, the Conference has the right to regulate its own procedure, and Mr. Wolfe reminded the Conference that when this particular Standing Order was passed, they were

assured that in urgent cases it could be suspended. But, encouraged by the Government delegates of Italy and Poland, the Employers persisted that this could only be a 'first discussion,' seeing that all the States Members were not represented in January. In the end, a record vote was taken to settle the question. The contention advanced by the Employers received no sanction, only 33 votes being cast in favour of it, and 79 against.

This question disposed of, some amendments to the Committee's draft were considered by the Conference. The most important, in view of its effect upon the final issue, was the German amendment on overtime, which had previously been rejected in Committee. It was re-introduced in its entirety, and was now moved by the German Government delegate in the name of the Governments of Austria, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Sweden and Yugo-Slavia. Only 41 votes were cast for the amendment, 44 against, and the Article dealing with overtime was adopted by 79 votes to 5 in the exact form in which it had been accepted by the Committee. The six remaining Articles of the Convention, including that naming the seven coal-producing countries whose ratification would bring it into force, were passed *nem.con.* This was on Friday, June 27, and the result of the record vote taken on the Convention as a whole, *before it was sent to the Drafting Committee*, was 75 for and 33 against. The final text was in the hands of the Conference next day, and the usual deciding record vote was taken; it came out at 70 for and 40 against. The two-thirds

230
majority not being attained, the Convention was not adopted. Of the States which moved (and lost) the overtime amendment the previous day, Austria, Hungary, Poland and Yugo-Slavia voted against, Germany and Czechoslovakia abstained, Sweden alone of the Group moving the amendment voted for the Convention. A turnover of four votes would have saved it.

In the face of objections advanced by *European* non-coal-producing States, Italy, in particular, to the exclusion of Overseas countries from the January Conference—even to the point of attempting to invalidate the Convention on this ground—it is noteworthy that both the Australian and Canadian Governments voted for it. Indeed, the Canadian Government* delegate, Dr. Riddell, pointed out to the Conference that if it were to function normally on this occasion when the first 'regional Convention' was submitted, the non-European Delegations must not abstain from voting.

It was at once proposed by Mr. Sitzler, German Government, to place the question on the agenda of the next Session, which in itself met the objections of those who contended that at this Session there had only been a 'first

* At the 47th Session of the Governing Body, held in October, 1929, when the Assembly resolution (proposing action by 'European coal-producing Powers') was first considered, the three Overseas Government members, representing Canada, India and Japan, consented (with the utmost goodwill) to the question being handled on a European basis and to the method of a Preparatory Technical Conference.

discussion.' But the Italian Government** delegate, Mr. de Michelis, energetically and repeatedly opposed every step which might lead to the question reappearing next year. Finally, the President pointed out that he was proposing to over-ride the Treaty by means of the Standing Orders.

Two votes were taken: the first, according to the usual procedure, to determine whether the Convention should immediately be transformed into a Recommendation; this proposal was rejected by 114 to 0. The second was to ascertain whether the Conference approved the President's ruling on the procedure he proposed to adopt, *i.e.*, to put to the Conference a motion to place the question of hours of work in coal mines on the next year's agenda. By the overwhelming vote of 92 to 2, the Conference supported its President. This was followed by the necessary record vote on the motion that this item should be included in the 1931 agenda. There were 105 delegates who answered 'Yes' to 22 who said 'No.' Only 7 Governments did not vote for the 'inscription': they were Albania, Bolivia, Honduras, Italy, Liberia, New Zealand and Paraguay.

CREDENTIALS

The Committee (which examines credentials which have occasioned protests) had, as always, three members, one from each group, the

** The Italian Government member of the Governing Body opposed at the October meeting the carrying into effect of the Assembly resolution by the methods proposed. Further this Government opposed the consideration of miners' hours and conditions as it considered such a course would be prejudicial to non-consuming countries.

731
Government member, Mr. Valdés-Mendeville (Chile) being *ex-officio* the Chairman.

In the case of the Italian workers' delegate, there was the usual protest of the whole Workers' Group and therefore the inevitable Minority Report signed by Mr. Jouhaux, the workers' representative on the Committee. There was also the inevitable result of the vote in the Conference, *i.e.*, that Mr. Razza's credentials were accepted by the Conference—98 to 29—since Governments either vote 'yes' when this question comes up, or do not record a vote. The Australian, British, Danish and Swedish Governments adopted the latter course. On the credentials of the Advisers to the Italian workers' delegate no protest was received by the Committee.

A difficulty arose on the credentials of the Portuguese worker, for when the protest on that was examined it was found that no 'representative organisation' in the sense of the Treaty existed in Portugal. In the course of the deliberations on the subject it was advanced that existing legislation prohibited the constitution of workers' federations so that a real observance of Article 389 of the Treaty was not possible. The Committee in these circumstances recommended that Mr. Machado's credentials be accepted and the Conference agreed.

An interesting and unusual situation arose in the case of the Swiss Workers' delegation. Here the delegate (Mr. Schürch, Secretary of the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions and deputy member of the Governing Body of the

International Labour Office) raised an objection to the appointment of one of his advisers. The majority of the Committee were of opinion that the Swiss Government had not violated the principles of the Treaty in accepting a candidate proposed by three organisations which were numerically in the minority since there were five central organisations in Switzerland, and that similar action had not been contested at four previous Conferences. The minority report supported the contention of Mr. Schürch, *i.e.*, that the position was not the same, as previously the Swiss Government had made the appointment 'in agreement with the most representative organisations' as required by the Treaty, but this year it had not consulted them, thus making an arbitrary decision and denying the 'most representative organisations' any voice in the matter. Some heat was engendered by this situation; the Conference decided to accept the majority report by 76 votes to 29.

A point of special interest arose on the introduction of four 'substitute advisers' by the British Employers' delegation, these four advisers being in excess of the number allowed by the Treaty (two for each subject on the agenda, which, with the three items of this year, would give the vocational groups six advisers each while the Government was entitled to twelve, on account of its double representation). Substitute delegates appear on every year's list and have always been accepted as the wish expressed by a Government that one or more persons should act as substitutes for a regular delegate. The Credentials Committee drew attention to

232
the appointment of 'substitute advisers' in addition to the maximum number. While considering it an obvious advantage that 'such persons appointed as substitutes should follow the procedure of the Conference and Committees throughout, it seemed equally clear to the Committee that until such time as the post of the regular adviser became vacant they could in no case take any official part in the work.' It was suggested that it might be desirable to introduce amendments in this sense into the Standing Orders of the Conference with the object of 'regularising the presence in the Conference Hall of such persons whose credentials have been officially communicated to the International Labour Office'. The British Workers had also one 'substitute adviser'; in this case Mr. Poulton, the titular delegate, was unable to attend the earlier part of the Conference; Mr. Findlay acted for him and therefore although another adviser took Mr. Findlay's place the number of advisers in the British Workers' Group remained at six.

STANDING ORDERS

This Committee had thirty members (ten from each group). Mr. Mahaim, who, year after year, has been re-elected as Chairman, as President of the Conference was ineligible on this occasion. In his place Mr. Sokal (Polish Government) was elected *Chairman*; *Vice-Chairmen*: Mr. Oersted (Danish Employer) and Mr. Duffy (Irish Free State Worker).

The questions the Committee had to decide this year were not of much general interest or

even of very great moment. For the most part they were details of internal management, so to speak, such as the occasions for the use of telephonic interpretation, composition of Committees, and the official adoption of the methods of handling resolutions which methods had grown up spontaneously as occasion demanded and had become traditional. Further, the question which is always with us and is never entirely solved: the use of non-official languages.

ARTICLE 408

This Committee had 36 members (12 from each group). It held eight sittings. Its officers were: *Chairman*, Mr. Mannio (Finnish Government); *Vice-Chairmen* : Mr. C. Tzaut (Swiss Employers' delegate) and Mr. Müller (German Workers' delegate). *Reporter* : Mr. Kaufmann (Swiss Employers' Adviser).

The Committee decided to carry out its work in the same manner as last year, *i.e.*, to divide the annual reports furnished by the Governments into groups according to the type of Convention with which the reports deal. This was agreed, the groups being as follows:—(1) Hours of work, Weekly rest, Night baking; (2) Women and Children; (3) Work at sea; (4) Agricultural work; (5) Industrial health, White lead, Occupational diseases; (6) Industrial accidents, Sickness insurance; (7) Unemployment, Migration, Minimum wage.

The Committee took as basis the report of the Experts who meet every year some two months before the Conference and carry out a minute examination of the Government replies to the

233
form of questions which the Governing Body has sent to them. This procedure has made it possible for the Conference Committee, and the Conference itself, to secure a real grasp of the information supplied by the different States. The Committee of Experts examined 287 Government reports out of a possible total of 326. It is true that the remaining 39 almost all came in afterwards, and before the Conference opened, but the Experts and the Conference Committee alike stressed the importance of the time-limit for the delivery of the reports being scrupulously observed, as well as the necessity for their being detailed and exhaustive. The Treaty lays down, in no uncertain terms, that the reports 'shall contain such particulars as the Governing Body may request,' and nothing less than exact information in respect of particular Articles of Conventions is satisfactory, neither can the explicit requirements of the Treaty be fulfilled by any statement of a more general character.

The Conference Committee set out in its report submitted to the Conference the four distinct points upon which criticism is bound to fasten when the annual reports of the Governments are examined.

- (a) Missing, incomplete or late reports;
- (b) ratification without simultaneous or complete application of the ratified Convention through national legislation;
- (c) divergent interpretations of some provisions in particular Conventions;
- (d) application to colonies.

These points came up frequently during the work of examination. The States represented at the Conference all had an opportunity of expressing their views while the Committee was sitting, and although the Committee made no claims to consider itself as a tribunal before which the representatives of States are expected to defend or justify their country, it was noteworthy that—as last year—almost all the Government delegates accepted the Committee's invitation and personally explained the reasons which had actuated their Governments in the cases which had provoked comment.

The Conference Committee not only expressed its thanks to the Experts for their valuable preparatory work, but recorded as its considered opinion that with the increase of ratifications the number of Experts has become insufficient; it proposed to the Conference that 'the Governing Body should be asked to consider whether the sum allotted in respect of the Experts Committee should not be further increased to make it possible both to add to their number and lengthen their sessions.' The Conference would appear to have endorsed this view when it adopted the Report. It may well be that the assembled delegates were convinced that the Committee was right urging that a growing importance should be attached to the question of ratified Conventions, and it is certain that no State could attempt to gainsay the closing words of the report: 'This is a question of life and death to the International Labour Organisation.'

RESOLUTIONS

239

There were only five this year. Mr. Joshi (Indian Workers' delegate) bearing the same name as the delegate of the Indian workers who is a member of the Legislative Assembly and who has been repeatedly at the Conference from the days of Washington, called for a consultation of Asiatic Governments with a view to the holding of an 'Advisory Asiatic Conference.' On a record vote there were 52 for and 11 against; the quorum (78) not having been obtained, the resolution could not be adopted. Mr. Jouhaux (French Workers' delegate) proposed a resolution on Protection and Education of Children; it included the hastening and generalisation of the Conventions protecting children, investigation of means to care for their health, and of giving them suitable general and technical training. Carried 83 to 1. Mr. Müller (German Worker) requested the Governing Body to organise an exchange of views between the Governments of the more important industrial countries on the possibility of agreeing on one or more questions affecting the protection of workers, to the end that Factory Inspectors should pay special attention to these in their annual reports and that the International Labour Office should co-ordinate and publish the information. Carried 80 to 3. Mr. Sokal (Polish Government) proposed that the question of holidays with pay should be placed on the agenda of an early session of the Conference. Carried 84 to 21. Mr. Suzuki (Japanese worker), in view of the failure of the efforts made previously to regulate the enforce-

ment of Freedom of Association by an international Convention, requested the Governing Body to consider the possibility of placing this subject on the agenda of an early session of the Conference. Carried 81 to 5.

THE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

This was discussed at seven sittings, and 46 speeches were made covering a wide range of subjects. The spokesmen, Government, Employers' and Workers' representatives, were drawn from 26 countries out of the 51 which had sent delegations to the Conference. Only a few of the subjects treated can be mentioned here.

Sir Atul Chatterjee (Indian Government) called attention to the urgent necessity of providing adequate funds for the Organisation. For the better discharge of its financial liabilities and for the sake of true economy he hoped it would be possible to come to a satisfactory arrangement on the subject with the League of Nations. (Sir Atul has a scheme for the Assembly's financial vote to be in a lump sum to cover five years, and he holds that if the Governing Body was allowed to handle this, taking one year with another, it would be more economical and that the Organisation would benefit). He mentioned the valuable work being done in his country by the Royal Commission on Indian Labour, adding that at least 5 members of it had been delegates to the Conference.

Mr. Bramsnaes (Danish Government) said he was not satisfied with the number of ratifica-

235

tions in his own country, but that the non-ratification of many Conventions which involved no difficulties for Denmark was due to the resistance of Danish Employers. He spoke of the pressure for reduction of wages, and was of opinion that the international trade union movement should take up the question and establish greater equality, preferably by securing a rise in wages in countries where they are unduly low. The International Labour Organisation, too, should give close attention to general problems involved in the present economic situation and try to find solutions for them. (This speech made a certain impression as coming from a Minister of Finance.)

Mr. Poulton (British Worker) urged upon the Conference that while it was right and proper for it to pass Conventions it was vastly more important to ensure that they were put into operation. If anything could be done to raise the standard of life in China, India and Japan, a great impetus would be given to general progress and prosperity.

Mr. Tchou (Chinese Government) explained to his colleagues that under the new Factory Act—which applied to all power-driven factories employing more than 30 persons—the employment of children under fourteen was prohibited. By the Trade Union Act the right of association had been re-affirmed. The Act on Conciliation and Arbitration had been revived, and had already prevented a number of unnecessary disputes in China.

Mr. Brown (Canadian Government) announced that the Canadian Dominion Govern-

ment had granted the eight-hour day to all federal employees and required its application to federal public works, in accordance with the Washington Hours Convention. Speaking of the difficulty of the Dominion Government in ratifying Conventions which came within the jurisdiction of the provincial governments, he asked whether it might be possible for the Office to record on the ratification chart issued every month the extent of application of individual Conventions in the provinces of Canada and in the States of other federal countries.

Mr. Coleman (Australian Government) thought that perhaps the lack of keen interest in the Organisation's activities in his country was the result of the extremely high social standards in Australia. But he felt it might be fairer to criticise the Governments of the States Members rather than the Organisation itself.

Mr. Lambert-Ribot (French Employer) expressed his satisfaction that the Governing Body had recently taken a definite decision to ask Governments to state the reasons for non-ratification. He suggested that the three Groups on the Governing Body should cooperate in helping the Director to obtain more positive results.

Mr. Wolfe (British Government) said his Government was increasingly aware of the importance and the value of the work of the Organisation. He congratulated the Office 'on another year of work faithfully and well performed.'

THE DIRECTOR'S REPLY

The Director did not attempt to reply in detail to all the speakers. Rather, he sought to convey the impression that the debate produced and to define the main problems confronting the Organisation.

When one took stock of the situation it was possible to find many encouraging signs of the continuous development and steady growth of the Organisation. For instance, the increasing number of delegations attending the Conference, more widespread collaboration by means of legislation in conformity with or based upon its decisions, claims for additional national correspondence offices, for seats on the Governing Body and the growing appeal to the Organisation by all classes of workers. But the real problem to-day was whether the Organisation would have the necessary strength, intelligence and resources to meet all the demands which were being made upon it or whether it would surrender to those who wished to limit its activities and tended constantly to raise questions of its competence to handle this or that subject. Between these two courses the Conference seemed to him to have made its choice, and in future the question would be rather how it would be possible to satisfy the aspirations which were finding expression and to bring within the scope of the Organisation the main social currents flowing towards Geneva. After an exposition of the various problems which call for solution from day to day the Director went on to speak of new tendencies which must be taken into account.

Hitherto, the guiding idea had been the universality of the Organisation. The fundamental idea of the Treaty was that the Conference must be a general Conference of all the States Members. The Conventions must be drafted to suit all countries. On these lines they had been working for the past ten years. Yet it was said by delegates from India, Japan and Australia that people in their countries regarded the Conventions as only suited to Europe and the Organisation itself as little more than European. Was not this complaint the sign of regionalism which was tending to develop at the present time among all international institutions? There was a regional movement in Asia, there was a Pan-Pacific movement. There were efforts for a Pan-American or Pan-Latin grouping; and lately there was the suggestion of a United States of Europe. 'The International Labour Organisation,' said the Director, 'should take these movements into account. By ignoring them it would run the risk of alienating the sympathy or of witnessing the settlement, without its intervention, of matters in which States undertake the most substantial and the most efficacious mutual obligations. It would run the risk of seeming to be no more than a great Academic institution, proclaiming general principles, but having no control over their application, International organisations, whether our own or others, cannot leave such movements out of account, but must demand their share in them through their States Members. They cannot tolerate the possibility of being left out of them.'

237

The Director continued: 'There are other facts and other circumstances to which we cannot close our eyes: the application of certain elements of human justice is an obligation on certain countries which had assumed certain responsibilities . . . Here again it may be asked how the need for limited Conventions can be reconciled with the general character of the Organisation. . . . In our view every labour question should be a matter for the Organisation, and it is in the general interest that all should be co-ordinated and controlled here. Progress can be made only by a series of experiments, each made with the consent of all parties. But "where there's a will there's a way." Is there a will? Is there a common faith resolved on overcoming all obstacles? This is a question to ask ourselves after ten years and more especially perhaps in the present Conference. . . . Let us go to the fullest extent into the question of the development of labour legislation, and let us also go to full lengths in examining the economic aspects of the questions before us. . . . Let us calculate the effect of economic circumstances, but not let economic circumstances constitute a barrier to social progress. Let us study economic difficulties, but let it be with the object of overcoming and removing them. . . . The Organisation must persist in its efforts to overcome misery and injustice.'

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

It would be impossible to regard this 1930 Session other than as a notable Conference.

The efficiency of the Committees handling subjects as diverse as Forced Labour and Hours in Coal Mines would alone have made it remarkable. The amount of work courageously tackled and carried through between June 10 and 28 was in itself almost incredible; and was a credit to the industry and determination of the Delegates. It was essentially a Conference where Committee work predominated. The Plenary Sessions suffered for that very reason, and interest in them tended to languish until the concluding meetings. But, in spite of the check in the coal question, the Fourteenth Session of the International Labour Conference will not be remembered as negative in result. It was a milestone. None who took part in it but were aware of this. And all the world over people approach milestones with different feelings—eagerness, regret, or it may even be resentment. So it was at Geneva in June, 1930.

RATIFICATIONS SINCE THE LAST CONFERENCE

At the close of the twelfth Session in June, 1929, 362 ratifications were registered. The last twelve months have not produced more than 30. But, although the present total stands at 392 only, there are 10 more ratifications to come in almost immediately from the Irish Free State, which formally registered ratification of the 1928 Convention on Minimum Wage-fixing Machinery on June 3.

GOVERNING BODY (49TH SESSION)

This session opened June 5. The item on the Agenda which is of particular interest to the general public was the consideration of eight

238

reports on the working of Conventions. It is well known that the Conventions adopted at Washington in 1919, with two of the 1920 Geneva Conventions, were due for submission to the Governing Body in order that it might '*consider the advisability of placing on the Agenda of the Conference*' the question of the modification of one or more of these Conventions. Only if revision should be considered advisable would the Reports upon their working be sent to the States Members for their comments. If no alteration was proposed they would simply be presented to the Conference in the same way in which other reports are submitted to it.

No difficulties arose about passing to the Conference the reports on the four Washington Conventions dealing with Unemployment, Maternity, Minimum Age (Industry) and Night Work of Young Persons, nor yet on the two Genoa Conventions concerning Facilities for Employment for Seamen and Minimum Age at Sea.

Pressure of business made it impossible that before the Conference, the Governing Body should devote sufficient time to such a debate as was expected on the reports on the Washington Hours Convention. This was, therefore, postponed until June 14, with the result that delegates to the Conference who are also members of the Governing Body, had to forgo the traditional half-holiday which they are wont to enjoy on the first Saturday after the Conference week.

On the Convention prohibiting Night Work for Women, the British Government had a proposal for modification. As the Convention is drawn it prevents women engineers who hold a supervising post from carrying out their duties at night. The public is hardly aware that a small but able body of women engineers is to be reckoned with nowadays, and that of this body a large proportion is very highly equipped. No real difficulty in meeting the point was expected, but it was necessary that the Office should prepare a note upon the question raised by the British Government, so this was also postponed.

On June 14 the debate could not be very long sustained on the revision of the Washington Hours Convention, proposed by the Swedish Government in order to bring it into accordance with their own legislation. Two proposals were also made by Mr. Forbes Watson. One was to adjourn a decision, this the Governing Body rejected by 14 votes to 6. The other was to send the Report to the States Members which would have opened revision procedure. By 14 votes to 7, with 2 abstentions, the Governing Body decided that there was no need to contemplate entering the question of the revision of the Washington Hours Convention on the Agenda of the Conference. The report on the working of the Convention will be referred as it stands to the 1931 Conference. The 7 votes for revision were cast by the Swedish representative and the Employers' group. From the outset it was plain that there could be but one issue to the discussion.

The Governing Body agreed that in the Convention on Night Work for Women the modification suggested by the British Government was advisable. Accordingly the report on that Convention will be sent to the Governments, and its revision *in the particular sense indicated* will come up on the Agenda of the 1931 Conference.

