

A resolution urging that the United Nations and those associated with them should promote in every way the economic and social recovery of the occupied countries and pledging the fullest support of the International Labour Organization in this effort was carried unanimously by the Conference.

It is proposed, in the remainder of this report, to comment more fully on certain matters associated with the Conference proceedings more particularly from the point of view of New Zealand's interests, obligations, and responsibilities. The complete text of the recommendations, resolutions, and declarations adopted will be found in the Appendices attached.

OTHER DECISIONS

Decisions of some importance which were made at Philadelphia, other than those already noted, included the readmission of Costa Rica to membership of the I.L.O.; and the adoption of a Resolution expressing the hope that a free, independent, and democratic Austria will soon resume her participation in the Organization. Lastly, it was decided unanimously by the three Electoral Colleges representing the Government, the employers', and the workers' groups respectively that the duration of the mandate of those States or persons elected to the Governing Body should continue only until the next ordinary session of the International Labour Conference.

The Electoral College of the Government Group further decided to confirm for the period stated the mandate of the six States already occupying elective seats on the Governing Body—i.e., Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Norway, Poland, and Yugoslavia. Elections to fill the two vacant seats resulted in Peru and Greece receiving absolute majorities on the first ballot, Australia, who was nominated by New Zealand, being narrowly defeated. Present membership of the Governing Body, including employers' and workers' representatives, is shown in Appendix III.

The Twenty-sixth Session of the International Labour Conference differed in at least one important respect from other international gatherings which had been held during the preceding year. It was not a Conference called together to build up an entirely new organization; the I.L.O. was already a going concern, with a quarter of a century's record of solid accomplishment behind it. As the United States Secretary of Labour said in her opening address, "The experience and techniques which the I.L.O. has built up, the faith that is put in it by the people of so many lands, and above all its character as an organization in which representatives of workers and employers have established rights to participate, give it a strength which no newly created instrument could possibly equal."

It will be evident from the Agenda that the Philadelphia Conference differed substantially in scope and nature from previous International Labour Conferences. It would not have been unexpected, therefore, in view of this fact and in view also of the limited time that was available for preparation and prior consultation on the part of Governments, employers', and workers' organizations, if the Conference had found itself unable to proceed as rapidly or as smoothly as usually has been the case with I.L.O. meetings. It was very soon made evident, however, that any such fears were without foundation. On the contrary, it was the consensus of opinion that the progress made at Philadelphia between 20th April and 12th May, when the Conference concluded, more than fulfilled the most optimistic expectations. This success was due in part to the excellent arrangements made by the Office, particularly in the matter of conference documentation, and in part to the determination of delegates to face up to their responsibilities by dealing courageously with practical problems and not merely confining their decisions to vague generalities.

Evidence of this determination was to be seen in the decision of the Conference to suspend the Standing Orders so that the reports of the Committees on social security, employment, and dependent territories could be adopted as recommendations by this Conference rather than be made subject to the normal double-discussion procedure under which they would be referred to Governments for their observations and placed on the Agenda of the next Conference with a view to the eventual adoption of draft conventions. Although a strong case in favour of the latter course was presented by those who urged it upon the Conference, the overwhelming majority of delegates were strongly of the opinion that the matters which were the subject of recommendations had been thoroughly and carefully considered by the respective Committees—that failure to adopt firm recommendations at this session would be interpreted as an unnecessary and unfortunate postponement of action that could not be long delayed if it was to be effective—that only by the acceptance of positive and immediate recommendations on matters of post-war social policy with respect to which the Governments and peoples of the world were looking to the I.L.O. for a practical lead would the Conference succeed in fulfilling its essential purpose.

The 1944 Conference differed, too, in at least one other important respect from previous sessions of the I.L.O. It marked a point of departure for the Organization in the "inauguration of wider concern with social justice and of a more comprehensive approach to the problems of a lasting peace directed towards fulfilment of the social aspirations of the mass of the world's people" (1).

The necessity of the I.L.O. widening the area of its responsibility if the organization as "the social conscience of mankind" was to play a full and useful part in attaining post-war social objectives, both nationally and internationally, had long been recognized. This necessity emerged very clearly during the New York Conference of 1941, at which preliminary suggestions had been made as to how the organization might best meet the new and urgent requirements of a changed world situation. It remained to the Philadelphia Conference, however, to elaborate these suggestions in the form of a concrete programme of action.

"THE DECLARATION OF PHILADELPHIA"

The first task of the Conference, therefore, was to formulate and to place on record a restatement of the essential aims and purposes of the International Labour Organization which, while reaffirming the fundamental principles on which its work has always been based and on which it should continue to be based, would take account also of present-day social objectives and of the new and extended responsibilities that the Organization must assume in order to fulfil these aims and purposes.

The task of drafting, in the form of a solemn Declaration, this restatement of I.L.O. aims and purposes was referred by the Conference to a special drafting committee, which announced in presenting its report that it had been guided by the consideration that the final draft of the Declaration should be one