

Generally speaking, the particular proposals made in the income security recommendation have reference to the organization of a social insurance system in the traditional European pattern rather than to the kind of social security scheme operative in New Zealand. Thus, while the detailed suggestions as to the manner in which the basic principles and objectives of income security should be given effect to are not, for the most part, either applicable or appropriate to New Zealand conditions, these principles and objectives are, in fact, for all practical purposes fully met by the New Zealand Social Security Act—albeit, as a result of somewhat different legislative and administrative provisions from those contemplated in the recommendation. It was with some satisfaction, therefore, that the New Zealand delegation was able to state, with reference to practically every proposal considered, that the provision which had already been made under the New Zealand scheme was at least as comprehensive in scope and as adequate in response to the actual or presumed needs of beneficiaries. From the point of view of both scope and liberality, indeed, the New Zealand scheme in most respects is clearly considerably in advance of the Conference recommendations, far-reaching and forwardlooking though these undoubtedly are.

Somewhat the same considerations apply to the recommendation concerning medical care, although in this case provision is made for rather greater flexibility, in that alternative methods of organization are offered, the specific suggestions set forth being based on the assumption that countries desiring to develop medical-care schemes will select as a guide either one of two distinct types of service according to the degree of development that has already taken place and the varying nature of the problems to be solved.

Thus the Conference recommendations have reference either to a social insurance medical-care service with supplementary provision by way of social assistance to meet the requirements of needy persons not yet covered by social insurance or, alternatively, to a public medical-care service.

In either case the principle is affirmed that all members of the community, whether or not they are gainfully occupied, should be covered. Similarly, it is urged that complete preventive and curative care should be available at any time or place to everybody on the same conditions, without any discrimination of an administrative, financial, or political nature. It is further recommended that either form of service should furnish all varieties of care that can appropriately be given by the medical and allied professions and by hospitals, including both general-practitioner and specialist care, dental and nursing care, maternity services, maintenance in hospitals, convalescent homes, sanatoria, or other medical institutions, and, so far as possible necessary dental, pharmaceutical, or other medical or surgical supplies. The principle is laid down that the optimum of medical care should be made available through an organization that ensures the greatest possible economy and efficiency by the pooling of knowledge, staff, equipment, and other resources. To achieve these aims it is suggested that medical care should preferably be furnished by group practice at centres working in effective relation with hospitals. Stress is placed on the importance of the doctor-patient relationship and on the necessity of affording beneficiaries the right to choose their doctor among the general practitioners working for the service, subject to reasonable conditions. The importance also of securing the whole-hearted support and participation of the medical and allied professions, of adequately remunerating their members, and of securing the highest standard of service is similarly stressed.

Finally, the recommendation proposes that the administration of the service should be unified with appropriate health areas, which should be sufficiently large for a self-contained and well-balanced service and which should be centrally supervised.

In addition to these two basic recommendations, the Conference adopted a third recommendation relating specifically to social security for persons demobilized from the Armed Forces and from war industry, and two resolutions—one aimed at the safeguarding of the social insurance rights of displaced persons, including particularly foreign workers recruited to work in German war industry, and the other at the promotion of international administrative co-operation on social insurance problems.

On the first question, the recommendation advocates unemployment allowances for persons discharged from war industry who are not covered by unemployment insurance (a contingency that would not arise under New Zealand conditions), mustering-out grants to demobilized service men and women; and the grant to Service personnel on discharge of social security rights similar to those which they would have possessed had they remained in civil employment during the war.

On the second question, the resolution is drafted in the form of unilateral obligations to be imposed on Germany and her satellites by the peace settlement. The following(1) is a convenient summary of the proposals contained in this resolution:—

“The basic feature of the proposals is the repayment to the country of origin of the contributions paid by the recruited workers under the social insurance system of the recruiting country. The Conference invited the Governing Body to set up a technical committee to draft the precise clauses for insertion in the peace settlement.

“The Conference also approved in principle proposals on two other related matters. First, Germany and its satellites should be required to pay indemnities for losses caused by them to the social insurance institutions and to insured individuals of the occupied countries. Secondly, the provisions of the peace settlement relating to any transfer of territory should include the obligation of the ceding country to pay over to the successor country the reserves corresponding to the accumulated social insurance rights of the population of the territory. These proposals are also to be worked out in detail by the technical committee.”

On the third question, the resolution requests the International Labour Office to continue and extend, along a variety of lines, its past successful efforts in developing the active co-operation of all interested Governments in social security matters—e.g., through the exchange of technicians, the standardization of statistics; the organization of courses of technical training and the examination of the possibility “of international or multilateral agreements which would establish bodies responsible for performing common functions in the field either of finances or of administration.”

(1) *International Labour Review*, July 1944.