

so dependent upon overseas markets for its produce as New Zealand, upward movement of sea freights may influence its ability to compete successfully in the world's markets. The delegates assumed that New Zealand producers would not wish to continue to take advantage of sub-standard working conditions on the ships that it hires. Further, Australia was represented, and to the extent to which it is confronted by a similar problem New Zealand's point of view may be presumed to have been put to the Copenhagen meeting.

Noticeable features of the Seattle discussions were the stubbornness of the employers' group, which unflinchingly resisted every claim for deviation from current practice, and the tendency of the workers' group to regard the Conference discussions as a bargaining-table from which they aimed to secure improvements even on the most advanced conditions. Even with the Government group there appeared in one Committee to have been a failure to have regard for a reasonable legislative viewpoint, having reference to the conditions operative in countries from which ratification was all-important. Thus on one occasion it appeared that the agreed terms of a proposed convention were such that it may have failed acceptance by the plenary session or, had it secured acceptance, that ratification would have been almost impracticable of attainment.

In contradistinction to the comment contained in the previous paragraph, it is necessary to remark on the action of the United States employers' delegate in urging reconsideration of a record vote excluding near-trade or coast-wise shipping from the Hours, Wages, and Manning Convention, thus securing a reversal of the decision. This was probably of direct and lasting benefit to a considerable number of seafarers. Taken as it was in the late hours of the night, this decision to exclude illustrates the confusion that resulted from the forced pace that was imposed during the last week of the Conference. This course of action may have been justified by the circumstances, advanced arrangements for transport of staff back to Montreal having been made previously. It is nevertheless extremely undesirable that discussion of a subject of that magnitude should be pursued in haste, and it is to be hoped that the future holds no repetition of such a happening.

A comparison of the conclusions of the Conference with the present law and practice in New Zealand will indicate that the latter is generally in advance of the standards set in Seattle. Those standards, however, were necessarily minimum ones to be placed before members having legislation that is relatively backward. Thus the standards could not be made so far in advance of the most backward nations that use of them as a legislative aim in those countries would be entirely impracticable, at any rate during a measureable period. Therefore, for the workers of those nations whose standards are already well advanced the conclusions of the Conference are only of indirect benefit—*i.e.*, they are of assistance only so far as they operate to uplift those workers who, as a result of lower standards, may be a danger in a competitive sense in that they may be the innocent means of undercutting freights, &c., to the disadvantage of the workers with advanced standards.

Immediately prior to the opening of the Conference, Mr. Jackson was approached regarding his acceptance of the office of Chairman of the Food and Catering Committee. It was felt that this proposed appointment was a gesture to New Zealand that could not be ignored. Hence it was arranged for Mr. Lawrence to attend the Committee on Wages, Hours, and Manning, while Mr. Jackson undertook the responsibilities of the Selection Committee, the Food and Catering Committee, the Vacation Holidays Committee, and the Accommodation Committee. Unfortunately, because the hours at which the Committees met overlapped, it was necessary to discontinue attendance at meetings of the Accommodation Committee.