

LABOUR INSPECTION IN INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE

Article 427 of the Treaty of Peace of Versailles contained a statement of a number of methods and principles regarded at the time as being of special and urgent importance. One principle was that each State should make provision for a system of inspection in which women should take part in order to ensure the enforcement of the laws and regulations for the protection of the employed. Following the adoption by the International Labour Conference of a number of Conventions, it became desirable that a declaration as to a proper framework of an inspection system be made. Hence the fifth session of the Conference devoted its attention to this subject, the result being the issue in 1923 of a recommendation "concerning the general principles for the organization of systems of inspection to secure the enforcement of the laws and regulations for the protection of the workers." This recommendation received fairly general approval, but from 1930 the adoption of a Convention on the subject was urged. Arising out of this a Preparatory Technical Conference was convened, and it was proposed that its conclusions form the basis of discussions at the 1940 session of the Conference. War conditions precluded this Conference being held. Hence this subject has remained in abeyance until the thirtieth session.

There was fairly general acceptance of the proposals contained in the text submitted for discussion. Governments had largely endorsed the proposals when the outline agenda was submitted to them before the Conference, and it was left to the thirtieth session largely to vary the form, the substance being generally acceptable also to workers' and employers' groups.

As a result of Conference deliberations a Convention (Appendix 6) was drawn up for submission to States members of the Organization. This applies to (factory) industry and commerce, but it is open to States to exclude that portion relating to inspection of commercial undertakings. It is supplemented by two recommendations (Appendices 7 and 8), one stating the aims as to methods and statistics, the other urging States to apply inspection systems to mining and transport undertakings, these being the subject-matter of a permissive exclusion article in view of the fact that administrative arrangements in some countries vary considerably from the method proposed in the Convention. In addition, a resolution (Appendix 9) was adopted urging those countries with protective legislation having limited application to extend its scope to all workers in industry and commerce.

These documents are included in the Appendix to this report. As far as New Zealand is concerned little difficulty in ratification is presented, subject, however, to some revision of the law as it is written into the Shops and Offices Act, 1921-22, and its amendments.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICE ORGANIZATION

The governing body of the International Labour Office at its ninety-eighth session (Montreal, May, 1946) decided to place the question of Employment Service Organization on the agenda of the thirtieth session of the International Labour Conference, and also decided that the question should be considered under the double-discussion method. In accordance with the usual procedure, the International Labour Office prepared and despatched to Governments a preliminary report on the law and practice relating to Employment Service Organization, together with a questionnaire on the subject.

In presenting its conclusions to the Conference, the Committee emphasized the economic and social importance which it attaches to Employment Service Organization. It considered the creation and development of such a Service on a voluntary basis to be of special significance in attaining the purposes stated by the International Labour Conference in the Declaration of Philadelphia, and particularly in the achievement and maintenance of full employment.