

The raising of living standards is primarily an economic problem, and the Asian countries are fully aware of the necessity for economic development. Thus a draft resolution, submitted during the Conference by the Chinese Government delegation, contained the words "Whereas it is desirable that . . . Conference . . . formulate for consideration by the appropriate national and international authorities their views in regard to the *economic policies* necessary for the attainment, in the Asian countries, of the *social objectives* of the Organization . . . "*.

The Industrial Revolution in Europe was accomplished at the cost of untold human suffering, and the Governments of Asia are determined to avoid the misery which has heretofore been a concomitant of rapid industrialization.

The prevention of the ill effects of industrialization lies within the sphere of the International Labour Organization. In 1938 Sir Harold Butler, then President of the International Labour Office, was able to state that "the incipient labour codes of every Asiatic country bear plain traces of the inspiration derived from Geneva." The Organization, that is to say, has for many years played an important part in raising standards in Asia, and it is not surprising, therefore, that at this Conference the "strong wind of liberation" should be felt in the singularly unified outlook of the Asian delegations and their determination to use the resources of the Organization as fully as possible for the benefit of the Asian peoples. Not only were the aims of workers' delegates publicized, but also employers' and Government delegates showed themselves ready and willing to raise the standards of life of the newly independent peoples, and to do this as far as possible through and with the assistance of the Organization. The discussion on the report of the Director-General brought out emphatically the fact that the International Labour Organization is held in high esteem and that much is expected of its work in Asia.

New Zealand has a place at Asian Conferences, and this is fully appreciated not only by the Organization, but by the Asian countries themselves. The Honourable Shri Jagjivan Ram, Minister for Labour in the Government of India and President of the Conference, said, in his Presidential address :—

We are also happy to welcome representatives of Great Britain and other European countries who have had an historic association with Asia and representatives of the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. These countries are pioneers in developing techniques of economic and social democracy. Their collaboration should prove of great value, and we shall be grateful for their assistance.

In this connection it may be noted particularly that a New Zealand Government delegate (Mr. E. B. Taylor) was chosen to be the Chairman of one of the Committees of the Conference.

As a further illustration of opinion in the East towards the participation of this country in the proceedings of the Conference the delegates feel that the following extract from the *Eastern Economist* of the 14th November, 1947, may be of interest :—

Though Asia's efforts for international collaboration are generally welcomed in the rest of the world, they have been misrepresented by a certain party propagandists in the Western countries. Whenever the representatives of the Asian people meet together it becomes an eyecore to those who still think in terms of colonial domination. Perhaps their motives obstruct their vision when even in innocent Asian Conferences they see the beginning of a Pan-Asian movement led by India. Such a baseless charge was made against the Asian Relations Conference, which scrupulously precluded political issues from its deliberations. We hope that similar nightmares will not be conjured up with regard to the Preparatory Asian Regional Conference. For its work has testified that the Asian people are motivated by no other desire than to build up an international brotherhood working for world peace and prosperity. The way in which the delegates from Australia and New Zealand have behaved at the Conference is highly commendable, and the grateful feelings that it has evoked in the hearts of the Asian people fully justify the hope that the I.L.O. can play a significant role in blending the ideals of the East and the West.

It is necessary, however, that New Zealand be no disinterested spectator of the changing Asian scene. In the first place, the Dominion is bound by the principles of the "Philadelphia Declaration" of the International Labour Organization, which states,

* The italics are the writers,