

As a means of ensuring that further consideration would be given by the Conference to other aspects of wages raised in the general report, members of the Committee agreed that the following question: Wages—General Report, should be proposed to the Conference for inclusion on the Agenda of its next session. To be carried forward with the general report were two resolutions proposed by members of the Committee. The first dealt with the concept of a minimum wage, and the second with the dismissal wage. The Conference adopted the proposed resolution (Appendix No. 8).

FAIR WAGES CLAUSE IN PUBLIC CONTRACTS

In the conclusions presented to and approved by the Conference for final discussion at the next session, it was proposed that international regulations concerning labour clauses in public contracts be adopted in the form of a Convention to be supplemented by a Recommendation on the subject. It was also proposed that the Convention should apply to certain specified public contracts which were defined, except where the expenditure of public funds involved was below a fixed limit.

Consideration is to be given to a provision covering the exclusion of persons occupying positions of management or of a technical, professional, or scientific character who do not ordinarily perform manual work and who are not covered by awards or the like. A provision for similar exclusion in the case of persons employed in an establishment undertaking a contract to which the Convention would apply but who were not directly engaged in the execution of such contract was deleted.

Employers' representatives were of the opinion that not only public contracts, but also public works, should be covered by the proposed Convention, and attention was drawn in the report to their reservation regarding its scope.

The proposals with regard to the provisions of labour clauses in public contracts provide that workers concerned shall enjoy wages, hours, and other conditions not less favourable than those established by collective agreements, national law, and the like for work of the same character in the district where the work is carried on. Alternative provision is made to cover cases where conditions are not so established.

There was considerable discussion on the proposed inclusion of a health, safety, and welfare provision, it being pointed out that these were questions ordinarily dealt with by general statutory provisions. Finally adopted (although the employers' members opposed it on the ground that questions of health, safety, and welfare were out of place, and the proposed Convention should be confined to wages, though they were prepared to accept appropriate provisions concerning those questions in the form of a Recommendation) was a paragraph providing that adequate measures be taken by the competent authorities to ensure that conditions of health, safety, and welfare of the workers engaged in carrying out the contract were fair and reasonable in cases where such matters were not provided for in collective agreements or national law. Enforcement measures include the posting of notices, maintenance of adequate records, and a system of inspection, except where other arrangements operate for that purpose, and also authority for the withholding of contracts and of payments under a contract.

The proposed conclusions relating to a Recommendation on labour clauses in public contracts provide that such clauses shall prescribe, either directly, or by reference, the normal and overtime rates of wages, the manner in which the hours are to be regulated, and holiday- and sick-leave payments. There was considerable discussion on the addition proposed by the United States Government member of a new paragraph envisaging, among other things, the possibility of defining the regular work week as forty hours, after which overtime rate of time and one-half would be applicable. Much opposition was expressed to this amendment, which was rejected, it being pointed out that the proposal could not be accepted by countries facing severe problems of post-war reconstruction or those in which industrial development was at an early stage, and that it raised important questions which went beyond the competence of the Committee.