

upon to consider the question "of guarantees for the exercise and development of trade-union rights." At that session the Conference decided to place the question of freedom of association and protection of the right to organize on the Agenda of the Thirty-first Session with a view to the adoption of one or more Conventions at that session. In accordance with the usual procedure, a questionnaire based on a list of points approved at the Geneva Conference had been distributed to Governments, and on the basis of the replies received the International Labour Office had prepared a report and draft Convention which were placed before the Conference for final discussion and decision.

The Committee set up by the Conference to deal with these subjects consisted of eighty members (forty Government, twenty employers, and twenty workers). In accordance with the Standing Orders, each Government member had one vote, and each employers' and workers' member had two votes. Mr. J. Thorn, senior Government delegate for New Zealand, was unanimously elected Chairman of this Committee.

This Committee was responsible for considering the following items :—

- (1) The proposed Convention concerning freedom of association and protection of the right to organize.
- (2) A report by the Governing Body on the effect to be given to a resolution concerning international machinery for safeguarding freedom of association adopted by the Geneva Conference.
- (3) First discussion of certain proposals contained in a report prepared by the Office regarding industrial relations.

The Committee, in dealing with the first item, took as a basis for its discussion the text submitted by the Office, which it considered article by article.

On the basis of the conclusions reached at the Geneva Conference, the proposed Convention had been drafted to give effect to the following important principles :—

- (1) That employers and workers should have the right to establish and join organizations of their own choosing, without prior authorization.
- (2) That employers' and workers' organizations should have the right to draw up their constitution and rules, to organize their administration and activities, and to formulate their programmes.
- (3) That public authorities should refrain from any interference which would restrict this right or impede the organizations in the lawful exercise of this right.
- (4) That employers' and workers' organizations may not be dissolved or suspended by administrative authority.
- (5) Recognition of the right of employers' and workers' organizations to establish federations and confederations of such organizations and to affiliate with international organizations of employers and workers.
- (6) That the acquisition of legal personality by employers' and workers' organizations should not be made subject to conditions of such a character as to restrict freedom of association.
- (7) That the acquisition and exercise of the rights as outlined should not exempt employers' and workers' organizations from their full share of responsibilities and obligations.

It was evident from the outset that members of all delegations, Government, employers', and workers', were keenly interested in this important subject. Several of the clauses in the preamble were the object of a number of amendments, and as these had an important bearing on the substance of the Convention a prolonged discussion ensued before the text of the preamble to the Convention was finally settled.