

The Council devoted particular attention to measures designed to increase food production and decrease food wastage, the present loss of stored grains and legumes throughout the world being estimated at 30 million tons a year, or 10 per cent. of the total world crop, a quantity sufficient to feed 150 million people. These losses, caused by insects, rodents, and fungi, could be greatly reduced by known methods of controlling infestation and by the provision of more and better storage, especially in tropical and subtropical areas. The Council recommended that these and other problems associated with the distribution of foodstuffs should be given urgent attention by member Governments and that the FAO should intensify its efforts in this field, in consultation with other specialized agencies.

The Council also considered the effects of malaria on food production. It has been estimated that malaria affects 300 million persons a year, accounts for 3 million deaths, and is responsible for a work loss of 20 to 40 days per person per year. The highest incidence rate is in agricultural countries, especially in those producing and dependent on rice as the primary staple. Fertile areas have been neglected because increasing irrigation and other use of water invites increased numbers of malaria-carrying mosquitoes. By a unanimous vote the Council requested the Secretary-General to report to the next session on the production, distribution, and availability of insecticides such as DDT and BHC, which are valuable in the control of malaria.

At its eighth session the Council discussed a proposal put forward by the American Federation of Labour that the ILO should undertake a comprehensive survey of forced labour in all member States of the United Nations. The Federation submitted information on which were based charges that widespread forced labour existed in the U.S.S.R. These charges were supported by the United States representative, who declared that from information available it could be estimated that there were between 8 million and 14 million persons subjected to forced labour in the Soviet Union. The Soviet representative in his reply alleged that real freedom of labour was impossible in capitalist countries, especially in the United States, where workers were at the mercy of owners of mines and factories, where 3 million workers were unemployed and 14 million negroes were virtually deprived of the opportunity to engage in any but the most menial labour. After rejecting a Soviet proposal for a very large Commission composed entirely of trade-union representatives, the Council adopted a United States resolution requesting the ILO to make a comprehensive survey of the problem of forced labour, together with an Australian amendment requesting the Secretary-General to approach Governments to inquire whether they would be prepared to co-operate in an impartial inquiry.