

great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperilled ; and an improvement of those conditions is urgently required : as, for example, by the regulation of the hours of work, including the establishment of a maximum working day and week, the regulation of the labour-supply, the prevention of unemployment, the provision of an adequate living-wage, the protection of the worker against sickness, disease, and injury arising out of his employment, the protection of children, young persons, and women, provision for old age and injury, protection of the interests of workers when employed in countries other than their own, recognition of the principle of freedom of association, the organization of vocational and technical education and other measures. Whereas also the failure of any nation to adopt humane conditions of labour is an obstacle in the way of other nations which desire to improve the conditions in their own country : The High Contracting Parties, moved by sentiments of justice and humanity as well as by the desire to secure the permanent peace of the world, agree to the following."

Then follows the provisions covering the organization of the International Labour Conference. One of the "high contracting parties" there referred to, one of the parties on whose behalf the Right Hon. Mr. Massey attached his signature to the treaty, was New Zealand, and it is our feeling that we should endeavour not merely to accept the privileges which attach to that important treaty, but also to accept the responsibilities which attach to us as a contracting party. During the discussion in the committee, at various stages the table was almost laden with publications from which quotations were being made—publications such as this which I hold in my hand—issued by the League of Nations International Labour Office. The representatives of each side on the committee have waded through these publications in support of our ideas, and we have received some considerable assistance from them. Almost all the items which have been discussed by the Conference are included in the preamble Peace Treaty, which I quoted. The reason why we have brought this matter up at this Conference is because it has been held by the Government that New Zealand was so far in advance of other countries in industrial matters that there was no advantage to be gained by representation at the Geneva Conference. But that is one side of the matter only. We have been in advance of countries for a number of years in the matter of industrial problems, and it seems to me that we should accept our responsibility by offering our assistance at the Geneva Conference, hoping to help other countries in regard to the improvement of industrial relations. One of my reasons for moving this motion is because by ignoring our responsibilities we are wrongfully casting a slur upon the honour of New Zealand. This paper which I hold in my hand is issued quarterly by the International Labour Office. It shows the acceptance or otherwise which has been received from the fifty-seven countries which are members of the League of the recommendations issued by the Conference. The Conference issues recommendations to the various nations, which accept them or otherwise, and signifies their acceptance or otherwise. This form shows how the various countries received these recommendations, and in the corner of this form there appears a statement which, I consider, puts New Zealand in a wrong position. This statement is as follows :—

"No official information which can be indicated in this table has been received by the International Labour Office from the following members of the organization: Albania, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Liberia, Lithuania, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Panama, Persia, Peru, Salvador, Siam, Venezuela."

For the most part, these countries, with which New Zealand is grouped, are coloured republics. I do not even know where some of them are situated, and of some of them I have not even seen the names except when I read that they are grouped with New Zealand as countries from which no information is received by the International Labour Office. The only country in the list which prior to the war had any standing is this country of New Zealand. This is the only responsibility which we have refused to accept as a signatory to the treaty. We are represented on the other Conferences associated with the League of Nations, but we are not represented at this one, and because of that we find ourselves grouped with the most backward nations in the world, whereas prior to the coming into being of the League of Nations we were regarded as one of the most advanced countries in the matter of industrial legislation. I think that this Conference here assembled owes a debt to the League of Nations Labour Office for the assistance which we have received from its publications, and we owe it to ourselves as a nation that we ought to accept our responsibility to that body, and recommend to our Government that in future it should make the necessary arrangements for New Zealand to be represented at the Labour Conference at Geneva by virtue of being a party to the Peace Treaty itself. Sir, I move the motion.

*Hon. Mr. Weston* : Before the motion is put, I would like to point out that this matter is really outside the scope of this Conference. It is a political matter, which is entirely one for the Government to decide, and I think it would be inadvisable for us to go outside the scope of the inquiry referred to us. That scope is a wide one, and there is nothing like a cobbler sticking to his last. I would be quite prepared to second the first part of the motion, which reads, "That this Conference desires to place on record its appreciation of the assistance it has received in its deliberations from publications issued by the International Labour Office, Geneva." I am quite satisfied that that Office is doing good work in collecting and disseminating information on industrial matters in various countries. It would be idle for any one to say that that Office is not doing very valuable work.

*A Delegate* : Then, why not help them ?

*Hon. Mr. Weston* : With regard to that remark, I might say that but for the financial contributions received from Great Britain and the members of the great commonwealth of British nations it is questionable whether the League of Nations would have been able to carry on in the way it has done. If you turn up the finances of the League you will find that this country, in common with other members of the British commonwealth of nations, has assisted in making a joint contribution which represents more than that of any other nation on the face of the globe, or any other collection of nations. I think there is that technical objection to our passing this motion moved by Mr. Blood-