

holiday provision for farm labourers. Pensions had been increased, and it was intended to adopt a social-insurance scheme which would make generous provision against sickness, old-age, and incapacity of every kind. His Government desired, in fact, to remove the fear of want entirely from New Zealand. New Zealand had not yet ratified any Conventions adopted by the International Conference, but this could not be blamed on the present Government, which had been in office only long enough to hold one session of Parliament. He could say, however, on behalf of his Government, that they intended to take the Conventions seriously and to comply with the rules laid down in the Constitution of the organization. It was his intention to submit proposals to his colleagues to ratify the Conventions already adopted where they could be reasonably applied to New Zealand. New Zealand hoped to make some tangible contribution to the effectiveness of the International Labour Organization. He made reference to the composition of the Governing Body (see page 24). He expressed the desire to see wider distribution in New Zealand of the publications of the International Labour Office for the reason that because of its remoteness New Zealand had to rely very largely on such publications for most of its assistance from the Office. He desired to suggest that the Director of the International Labour Office or his representative pay a visit to New Zealand, both in order that the Government might have his expert advice on some aspects of their problems, and in order that the Office might learn at first hand of the work being done in New Zealand.

The speaker referred to the question of currency, and expressed the view that control of currency and credit by the State was necessary if real and permanent prosperity was to be obtained. With that object in view his Government had, by legislation, assumed full and absolute control of currency and credit in the Dominion. He referred to the outline given in the Director's report of progress made in certain European countries towards providing leisure services for workers in order that they might obtain full benefit of their holiday, and considered that although a large percentage of New Zealand workers enjoyed paid holidays, his country was still lagging in this respect compared with some other countries. He predicted, however, that New Zealand would not be long in following the lead given by the countries concerned. He concluded by saying that New Zealand once held the proud position of leading the world in social reform, and that it would not be satisfied until it regained that position.

#### DIRECTOR'S REPLY.

The Director, in his reply to the debate on his report, traversed, in a very interesting speech, the principal points made by the various delegates. As it gives a very good idea of the general trend of the debate, it has been thought worth while to reproduce it below:—

The Director (Mr. Harold Butler): "My first duty is the agreeable one of thanking the Conference for the very great indulgence which it has shown to the report. I am quite aware that the measure of that indulgence has been extreme, not only on the part of those who have paid compliments to the report, but also on the part of those who have criticized it, and I should like, if I may, to mention a few names—Dr. Oersted, Mr. Wistrand, and Dr. Zaalberg—and to thank them for the kindness and forbearance which they showed in voicing their criticisms. Perhaps I may take this opportunity of saying how sure I am that many members of the Conference will regret with me that this is Mr. Zaalberg's last appearance; I, among others, shall miss the blunt incisiveness with which he is accustomed to express his opinions.

"This has been a long and in many ways a remarkable debate; and, when one realizes the difficulties which many delegates necessarily experience in expressing themselves, owing to the necessity of doing so in a language which is not their own, one cannot but marvel at the high level which was sustained throughout. I cannot help thinking that it is a good thing that from time to time there should be an opportunity of ventilating opinion on the burning questions of our time. There is, perhaps, no platform so good as this for that purpose.

"And although I should be the last person to wish to see this Conference become a kind of debating society, I also think that it would be failing to some extent in its object if it confined its attention to adopting Conventions and recommendations. I believe that a general discussion of this kind is one of the most valuable features of our proceedings. This year the general discussion has been particularly extensive. No less than seventy-three speakers have come to this rostrum. Among them were no less than five Ministers of Labour—those of Finland, France, Great Britain, New Zealand, and Yugoslavia—and it is perhaps not without some significance that more than one-half of the speakers came from extra-European countries.

"The outstanding impression on my mind which the debate has left is the testimony which it furnishes to the value and the standing of the International Labour Organization. Listening to speaker after speaker in the debate, I have been impressed as never before by the strength and vitality of the movement of which we are servants. The cause of social progress is no longer an affair of a few philanthropists: it has become the vital concern of Governments not merely in one or two leading countries but in every country represented here.

"The note struck by Mr. Armstrong (Minister of Labour, New Zealand) seemed to me to sum up the spirit of the movement. He said: 'New Zealand once held the proud position of leading the world in social reform, and we shall not be satisfied till we regain that position.'

"That is the true international rivalry of the civilized world, a new rivalry in constructive policy to replace the older rivalry for power, as Mr. Ferguson expressed it. It is that spirit which must animate this organization if it is to play its part worthily in the difficult days that lie before us, and that note, which has been struck more than once during the debate, I think has some political significance. On the one hand, as Mr. García Oldini said, it is now more or less generally accepted that the improvement of living standards is not inconsistent with sound economy, and that suggests that it is possible to advance civilized living without relying on force as the means of national progress.