

freedom of association is one of its corner-stones. Without freedom of association, and the freedom of expression which goes with it, it is impossible for the workers to make their voices effectively heard, nor could the systems of collective bargaining, upon the social value of which Mr. Ernest Brown and Miss Perkins so strongly insisted, have been built up. The Constitution makes no discrimination in favour of organizations of any particular doctrinal complexion or political colour, but it does imply that they should be freely organized and administered by their own members without constraint from outside. That is an essential feature of any effective representation either of employers or workers.

"When I alluded to possible changes in the Constitution, I was thinking, among other things, of the important question of the composition of the Governing Body, to which Mr. Schulthess and Mr. Thorn have called attention. Every country ought to feel that it has a chance of securing a seat from time to time. At present there is a fairly widespread impression that under the existing electoral arrangements there is not as much equality of opportunity as there should be. I believe it is very much in the interests of the Organization that this cause of dissatisfaction should be removed before new elections take place in 1940. My own suggestion would be that the Governing Body, which is now considering the matter, should make a report upon it to the Conference next year, so that everybody who is interested may have an opportunity of putting forward their views.

"In conclusion, after twenty years devoted to the conception, the construction, and the guidance of this Organization, I may perhaps be allowed to conclude with a few reflections on its achievement. Its gradual development has been a slow and at times a disheartening process. The initial task of overcoming the scepticism, the indifference, and the hostility with which we had to struggle in the early years could probably not have been successfully performed at all without the dynamic qualities and the power of popular appeal which Albert Thomas possessed in such an eminent degree.

"The Opposition which had to be met and conquered came mainly from three sources. First of all, there was the dead weight of conservatism which blocks the path of any progressive institution. From the beginning of social history every attempt to improve the general lot of mankind, and particularly of that vast majority in every country who live by the work of their hands, has encountered the scepticism of those who believe either that no change can be for the better, or that nothing can be done without disturbing fundamental economic laws. Every such attempt has likewise encountered the indifference of those who are satisfied with their own state of life and who care nothing about what happens to the rest of the world. Every such attempt has encountered the hostility of those who conceived their own position or interests to be threatened even by the slightest modification of the existing state of affairs.

"All those types of opposition the International Labour Organization has had to meet since the very beginning. Its present position and prestige, to which so many tributes have been paid in the course of this debate, are the best proof of its success in confronting them. But perhaps its most important achievement, and the root cause of this success, lies in the gradual spread of the conviction that social progress is the real goal of all economic organization and activity. Twenty years ago that belief was not generally held. On the contrary, it was still commonly supposed that the improvement of living standards and of working-conditions was a secondary matter which might be a by-product of favourable economic circumstances, but which could not be regarded as an end in itself. As a whole series of speeches during this debate have testified, that belief has now been widely abandoned. It has been replaced by the view which was so well described by Mr. Colbjornsen as 'a synthesis of social and economic efforts.' Social and economic policy are now seen not as two contradictory and conflicting endeavours, as they were by so many of the nineteenth century economists and sociologists, but as different aspects of the same thing—of the unending struggle of man to reach a higher rung in the ladder of civilization. That broader outlook on the whole social and economic problem has become more prevalent every year. It marks, after all, a great revolution in human thinking. It removes yet another of those shadow antinomies between 'realism' and 'idealism,' and I am glad to think that this Organization has exerted a world-wide influence in propagating this new and saner approach towards the questions which it was founded to tackle.

"Then, the Organization had also to meet another kind of opposition, based on another kind of conservatism. The mere fact that it is an international organization has made it an object of suspicion and dislike to all those who cannot look beyond their national boundaries and who see in the nation the final and complete form of human society. Whether in economics or politics, the exaltation of the tribe or the nation or the race has become increasingly fashionable in recent years, in spite of the overwhelming evidence of fact and