

delegate (supported by his colleague, the employers' delegate), was a suggestion that the International Labour Organization should make a special study of the position of young workers in dependent territories. As these two proposals were new, they were duly noted for future discussion.

ITEM No. 6: REPORT ON THE APPLICATION OF CONVENTIONS

The Committee in charge of this subject reaffirmed the view expressed on previous occasions that the ratification of a Convention implied definite legal obligations on States not only to implement any Convention which they had ratified, but also to report such ratification to the International Labour Office. Should any State not be able to ratify any given Convention, its duty is to submit reasons for such non-ratification.

During the discussion on the Committee's report, several delegates stressed the important difference between mere ratification of Conventions and implementation of such Conventions. As an indication of the line of thought on this subject, I shall quote briefly from the remarks of the South African Government delegate: "Simply to ratify a Convention," he said, "can be very easy, but to ratify and implement honestly and efficiently is not easy. We in South Africa have ratified only those Conventions we could efficiently implement, and the implementation of eight Conventions has been a task of quite considerable magnitude. "To me," he went on, "there is no value at all in a simple ratification. The value lies in the degree of implementation, and unless these two can be coupled it would be wiser to drop talk of ratification, for it appears that there is a danger of accepting ratification of a Convention as the final step in the chain of processes. Obviously, this is not so; the final step lies not in ratification, but in implementation."

The same delegate also made a plea for some elasticity in the framing of Conventions, quoting in support of his view the special conditions in his country—with a multiplicity of races, each enjoying a different state of civilization—and the consequent necessity for obtaining for such varied people, by gradual methods, the full benefit of a Convention, which was often based upon the immediate possibilities of a one-race nation or nations.

The Committee embodied in its report a lengthy Resolution containing a series of recommendations; these may be summarized as follows:—

- (a) Member States should present to the International Labour Office reports at regular intervals on the submission of Conventions and recommendations to the national legislative authorities and on the action taken by them, indicating, in case of non-ratification of Conventions, the reasons therefor;
- (b) Member States should be required to submit unratified Conventions to the legislative authorities at frequent intervals;
- (c) Where a Convention has not been ratified, members should report periodically to the International Labour Office on any measures taken to make effective the provisions of such Convention;
- (d) Members should report to the International Labour Office on the measures taken to give effect to any recommendation adopted by the Conference;
- (e) Annual reports on ratified Conventions should be submitted to representative organizations of employers and workers before they are submitted to the International Labour Office;
- (f) The Director of the International Labour Office should submit the reports received to the International Labour Conference.

The Resolution also suggested that members with Federal Constitutions should be consulted on the question of their obligations in the matter.

The Committee's report was adopted by the Conference.