

At the Conference minimum standards are worked out in regard to hours of work, holidays with pay, protection of women and children in employment, prevention and compensation of industrial accidents and diseases, unemployment and social insurance, employment and vocational guidance services, and kindred subjects.

It is the object of the Organization that member nations, having agreed on desirable labour standards at the Conferences, will enact legislation to bring the agreement into effect. The principal decisions taken at the Conferences are embodied in the form of Conventions, the adoption of which requires a two-thirds majority of delegates present and voting. A Convention does not automatically become binding when it has been adopted by the Conference. A member nation is, however, obligated under the terms of the I.L.O. Constitution to give each Convention consideration with a view to the enactment of legislation, and if the Convention is ratified the nation is bound to comply with its provisions, and to report annually to the I.L.O. on the measures which it has taken in this respect.

Decisions of a less formal nature are embodied in the form of Recommendations, which impose a lesser obligation on member States. The Conference also adopts resolutions where this form of procedure is appropriate.

Until 1940 the headquarters of the I.L.O. were at Geneva, but when Germany invaded France and the Low Countries a decision was taken to move to Allied territory, and at the invitation of the Canadian Government the Office established itself at Montreal. Although on the cessation of hostilities the headquarters of the Office were re-established at Geneva, an office is still being maintained at Montreal.

Between the two world wars, twenty-five sessions of the International Labour Conference were held.

At a Special Conference held in New York in 1941 it was decided that the I.L.O. should play a part in the planning of the measures of post-war reconstruction. For a while there were no further Conferences, but the Office continued the work of collecting and disseminating information and providing technical assistance to Governments. Problems of post-war employment and social security formed the chief basis of discussion when regular annual meetings of the Conference were resumed with the Twenty-sixth Session, which met in Philadelphia in 1944, and also at the Twenty-seventh Session, which was held in Paris in 1945. Since then sessions have been held at Seattle in June, 1946 (this dealt entirely with maritime questions), at Montreal in October, 1946, and at Geneva in June, 1947. The San Francisco Conference, the subject of the present report, was thus the thirty-first since the inception of the I.L.O.

A question which arose as the I.L.O. resumed a full programme of activity was the position that it would occupy in the framework of post-war international organization. Following the emergence of the United Nations Organization as the successor to the League of Nations, it was determined that the I.L.O. should bear a relationship to the United Nations somewhat similar to that which it bore to the League. To this end, changes have been made in the Constitution of the I.L.O., and an agreement has been negotiated with the United Nations through the Economic and Social Council. This agreement, under which the I.L.O. acts as a specialized agency of the United Nations Organization, has been ratified by both organizations.

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