

in reason be disputed. To the workers I would say that honest and sustained labour is inescapable, for only by the production of wealth and the provision of services can their right to a good life be maintained and expanded. In my country belief in such a partnership is growing, and we feel that this co-operation will develop under the voluntary sponsorship of employers, and workers, organizations. Accordingly the New Zealand Government strongly supports the action being taken to formulate international regulations on this important subject.

I wish to refer briefly to one or two matters in the introduction to the report. This is an admirable statement, and in principle there can be no disagreement with it. The Organization must continue to play a leading role in the field of labour and social legislation, and if it is to exercise a vital influence it must adapt itself to changing circumstances. My Government feels, however, that all new projects must be closely examined before they are embarked upon. There are dangers in a dispersal of I.L.O. resources over tasks involving broader and more direct executive and technical responsibilities, and safeguards must be devised to avoid any submergence of the Organization's primary objectives.

On the ratification of Conventions, the Director-General strikes a warning note, and rightly so, because there are powerful critics now ready to contend that indisposition to ratify is the evidence of the I.L.O.'s lack of authority and therefore of its futility. Governments represented here are thus under an obligation to expedite ratification wherever possible, and at least to legislate those sections of the Conventions which they find acceptable. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that one reason for the decline in the rate of ratifications in recent years is that many of the Conventions are drawn up in too precise detail. It is conceivable that a truly progressive Government—and I hope the present Government of New Zealand is a truly progressive Government—may have difficulty in endorsing a Convention in its entirety because it contains an article or two which are inappropriate or unrealistic in the circumstances in which it has to legislate. The New Zealand Government submits that the establishment of international economic and social standards might be better achieved if Conventions were confined to general statements of principles, and if details of administration, which frequently obstruct ratification, were embodied in Recommendations. I repeat, however, that conditions are such at present as to make it desirable for a greater number of States to proceed to ratify, and more than this—and I emphasize this—to legislate and administer effectively the Conventions they endorse. Possibly an examination of this problem will reveal that many organizations here have failed to create the public opinion which would reinforce Governments anxious to carry out their responsibilities.

The New Zealand Government desires to ratify a number of Conventions with which its national legislation conforms except on minor points of detail. It has recently decided to ratify the Employment Service Convention of 1948, and the Labour Inspection Convention and the Convention concerning freedom of association and protection of the right to organize are at present receiving its attention in the hope that ratification will be possible in the near future.

Other matters dealt with by the report have been the subject of action in New Zealand during the past few years. As an agricultural and pastoral country, New Zealand feels a sense of special obligation, and in the past year or so, particularly, efforts have been made to effect a substantial increase in the production of meat and dairy commodities. In our secondary and manufacturing industries, apprenticeship training has been further developed and reorganized and the training of apprentices in technical schools and colleges during the employers' time in a number of trades has recently been introduced. Industrial medical officers and nurses, who work in close collaboration with the labour inspectorate, have been appointed in the main industrial centres. The Employment Service and the collection and compilation of employment information have also been further developed, and several additional groups of workers have been brought within the scope of industrial