

4. OPENING PROCEEDINGS AND ELECTION OF PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT

The Conference was opened by M. Troclet, Chairman of the Governing Body. There followed an address of welcome by Lord Soulbury, Governor-General of Ceylon. In the course of his address the Governor-General said :—

Every one is aware that Asia contains some of the poorest regions in the World. Asia is primarily a land of the peasant and small farmer living in small villages. The extreme poverty of the village folk, their enforced idleness during a part of the year, their ill health, and their economic slavery are only too well known. I use the expression “economic slavery” because where a man is so tied down by debt that his freedom of action in the economic sphere is limited and circumscribed he is in many ways as much a slave as those whose freedom was proclaimed in the nineteenth century. Let us hope that historians of the future will be able to record that, following on the abolition of slavery in that century, economic slavery was abolished in this. And I trust that it will also be possible to record that a large measure of that achievement was due to the unceasing efforts of the International Labour Organization.

The Conference was also addressed by Mr. Philip Noel-Baker, Secretary for State for Commonwealth Relations of the United Kingdom, and New Zealand's Minister of External Affairs, the Hon. Mr. Doidge. The text of the Hon. Mr. Doidge's speech is attached as Appendix No. 1 to this report.

On the motion of Mr. Reddy (Government delegate, India,) supported by Mr. Yap (Employers' delegate, Singapore) and Mr. Hartley (Workers' delegate, Australia), the Hon. Mr. T. B. Jayah, Minister of Labour of Ceylon, was unanimously elected President of the Conference.

The following were unanimously elected Vice-Presidents of the Conference : Mr. A. C. Roldan (Government delegate, Philippines), Mr. M. A. Master (employers' delegate, India), and Mr. V. N. M. Menon (workers' delegate, Federation of Malaya).

5. COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEES

In accordance with normal I.L.O. practice, Conference Committees were set up to consider each item on the Agenda as well as a Selection Committee and a Credentials Committee.

The composition of the Committees was as follows (numbers of Government, employers', and workers representatives being shown in parentheses in the order mentioned) :—

- (1) *Selection Committee* (6,6,6). Chairman : Mr. H. S. Reddy (Government, India).
Three members of the Governing Body also participated in the work of this Committee.
- (2) *Credentials Committee* (1,1,1). Chairman : Mr. M. Aslam (Government, Pakistan).
- (3) *Committee of Agricultural Wages* (8,4,4). Chairman : Mr. R. Soemarno (Government, Indonesia).
- (4) *Committee on the Co-operative Movements* (8,4,4). Chairman : Mr. N. N. Unwar (Government, Pakistan).
- (5) *Committee on the Organization of Man-power* (8,4,4). Chairman : Mr. M. D. Banda (Government, Ceylon).
- (6) *Committee on Labour Inspection* (6,6,6). Chairman : Mr. A. Shalizi (Government, Afghanistan).
- (7) *Committee on Workers' Welfare* (6,6,6). Chairman : Dr. N. Phleng (Government, Cambodia).

Also in accordance with I.L.O. practice, employers' and workers' members in Committees (3), (4), and (5) were given two votes each so as to give each group equal voting strength.