

worth ; but I think there is a further objection. I think it is idle to deny that this country has been passing through a serious depression. We are now beginning to emerge from it, but we are suffering very heavy taxation, which is due to the sacrifices we had to make during the war period. In my opinion, there is no reserve of taxation on which we can call in the event of any crisis occurring. For instance, an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease among our dairy herds would impose a strain upon us which in our present position it would be very hard to bear. In addition to that, the unemployment trouble has cost us half a million, and it will cost as much during the present financial year. Then we have the position of our farmers on the deteriorated lands—all those soldiers who have been settled on lands at too high prices. We have roading policies still to be carried out which will mean heavy calls upon the finances of this country. And I think that to send four delegates to the International Convention would involve an expense which this country is not warranted in incurring under present conditions. I do not think that they would make a contribution to the discussion there—you know it is a large meeting of men speaking different languages—that would justify the expense in view of the present finances of this country. There are, of course, such things as luxuries, and it is well to indulge in them when you have the means, but seeing that we are so hard up I do think that our money can be better spent than in sending four men on a long trip to a distant portion of the globe, where they might have a thoroughly good time and might possibly do some little good. I would much prefer, if any money is to be spent in view of our connection with the League of Nations, that the Government should vote a sum, which would be quite a small amount compared with the expenses incurred in sending delegates, in disseminating those publications among those in New Zealand who are willing to read them. We have done our best in New Zealand to contribute towards the maintenance of the office and secretariat of the League of Nations at Geneva. If we are to benefit by the good work being done by the trained secretariat there, it will be rather by making known to everybody here who is interested the results of their inquiries. I venture to hope that the mover of this resolution will agree to delete all that portion containing the recommendation that the Government should take steps for New Zealand to be represented at future Conferences of the International Labour Organization. If he would do that, and retain only the first part of his motion—"That this Conference desires to place on record its appreciation of the assistance it has received in its deliberations from publications issued by the International Labour Office, Geneva"—I would have very much pleasure in supporting it.

*Mr. Roberts :* I second the full resolution. I could quite understand the objection that has just been raised if it were raised by the employers of San Paola or Nicaragua, where their standard of living is not much higher than that of a sheep-dog in New Zealand ; but I cannot understand the New Zealand employers, whose workers have a higher standard of living than those of most other countries, objecting to it. Then there is another point of view : We are competitors in the world market to-day in Great Britain. The farmers and others in this country complain that the primary products produced in Denmark and other countries are competing unfairly with them because of the fact that the price of labour in those countries, and the cost of living, is lower than it is in New Zealand. What is your obvious duty, then ? Surely it is to assist the labour section of the League of Nations to raise the standard of these people and so give you a chance of competing fairly with them. May I say that the English manufacturers have found that it is to their interests to raise the standards of the Hindus, the Chinese, and the Japanese, in order that they may compete fairly with these countries in the world's markets. We cannot possibly lose, we have every prospect of gaining, by being represented on the labour section of the League of Nations at its annual conference. There is also this very important consideration : that we owe a duty to the League of Nations. Mr. Weston, in the course of his remarks, said it was very doubtful whether we could contribute anything of value to the discussions at the Labour Conference of the League of Nations. Does he mean to infer that the discussion at this Conference, and the matter and data obtained here, if put clearly and lucidly before the labour section of the League would be of no value ? Gentlemen, we have an experience of over thirty-four years which no other country in the world has had on these matters, and surely that experience would be of value to the League, notwithstanding what anybody may say here. Mr. Weston made the remarkable statement that we should keep away from the Labour Conference of the League—that we could do no good there. But suppose every country in the world kept away from the League, how long would it continue to exist ? It is a good job that there are many people who are more internationally-minded than those on the other side. With regard to the books received, I know that the Conference will pass a resolution thanking those who give us something for nothing ; but we should recognize the services of that section of the League of Nations better by sending representatives there than by any other method. Constantly I receive requests from gentlemen in charge of different secretariats there, asking us to be represented, or to press the Government to send representatives to Geneva.

*Mr. Henderson :* Mr. Chairman, may I suggest that there is no necessity to discuss at any length a matter on which we could reach unanimity with very little trouble. Might we not modify the motion to express the hope that the Government will send a representative when opportunity offers ?

*Mr. Bloodworth :* How would it do if I amended the motion to read as follows : "That this Conference desires to place on record its appreciation of the assistance it has received in its deliberations from publications issued by the International Labour Office, Geneva, and suggests to the Government that it should take into consideration the desirability of New Zealand being represented at future conferences of the International Labour Organization, as New Zealand is entitled to be represented as a member of the League of Nations" ?

*Hon. Mr. Weston :* I do not mind the amended motion individually, but I have very grave doubts as to whether it is within the scope of this Conference.

*The Chairman :* I have doubts, too.