

"Then, the Organization had also to meet another kind of opposition, based on another kind of conservatism. The mere fact that it is an international organization has made it an object of suspicion and dislike to all those who cannot look beyond their national boundaries and who see in the nation the final and complete form of human society. Whether in economics or politics, the exaltation of the tribe or the nation or the race has become increasingly fashionable in recent years, in spite of the overwhelming evidence of fact and figure which shows that in the modern world the national well-being is more and more conditioned by the state of the outside world. It is clear that no nation, however great, can ever achieve economic independence. Economic isolation is nowadays as chimerical a dream as political isolation, and no amount of wishful thinking or artificial barricading will make it a reality. National self-sufficiency means national sacrifices, and the greater the degree of its accomplishment, the greater the sacrifice of living standards involved. In Mr. Campbell's apt and arresting phrase, it is 'economic atavism.'

"This is not the place to seek the explanation of this strange and disturbing paradox, but it is not the least of the International Labour Organization's achievements that it has somehow managed to survive and to flourish amid all the fierce passions and rivalries which unbridled and unreasoning nationalism has inevitably provoked. Of course, international thinking is difficult and uncomfortable. It compels revision of many ideas which seemed self-evident truths, but which were really only convenient assumptions. It is much easier and simpler and more satisfactory to accept without question the strictly national standpoint, to judge other countries and their behaviour in the light of national interests alone, to protest against the tariffs built by others to protect their wage standards, and to clamour for national tariffs to protect one's own wage standards against the competition of others. If the International Labour Organization has rendered one outstanding service, it has been to bring people together and to help them to understand each other. Every session of the Conference contributes to breaking down prejudice and ignorance, upon which so much nationalistic thinking is unfortunately based. Every report of the Office presents the facts about the subject with which it deals, the facts fairly and impartially set forth, stripped of nationalistic glosses or deformation.

"For the first time in history an international staff has been trained to look upon social and economic phenomena without any national bias or predilection. That in itself is an important fact. In any case, as the result of our meetings, Conference, Governing Body, Technical Committees and Conferences, the beginnings of a real international spirit are becoming discernible which can impress a newcomer like Mr. Lowe immediately. Though many speeches in this debate were national hymns, they were none the less composed in praise of a social ideal which is more than national. Through them all is running semi-consciously or unconsciously the recognition of an international standard of social ethics, an international conscience of which this Organization is now the acknowledged embodiment. To me it is impressive to find speaker after speaker suggesting that this Organization now represents something essential in our civilization and that its decline would mean a step backwards towards narrower, more barbaric conceptions of society, from which it is helping the world to emerge. That is the best proof that the Organization is becoming truly international, that it is striking its roots down into men's minds, that it is beginning to command their loyalty.

"Some people have chafed at the slowness with which progress has been made. They would like to change the whole of mankind at one bound from national loyalty to world loyalty, and are often inclined to look upon international institutions as useless. I should rather believe that world-loyalty can only be created by and through international institutions. One has seen so many instances of beautiful abstract notions of universality which collapsed on contact with reality because their authors had no experience of international life and were still unwittingly governed by national concepts. Loyalty to any world-ideal can only be bred out of real experience. Until it can be given a concrete setting, the notion of a society of nations or of a world society will never be anything but a vague and pious aspiration. This Organization is translating the international idea into positive terms, and by so doing is making an international allegiance possible, not as a substitute for national loyalties, but as a goal to which national effort should be directed. There will, of course, always be some who regard international institutions simply as useful pawns in the game of their national politics. There will always be others who pay lip-service to the idea of international co-operation at Geneva, but who do little or nothing to bring it home to their countrymen at home. In this respect the International Labour Organization has been fortunate. It owes a good deal of its present status to the energy and persistence with which delegates of all groups have