

*The Address—Mr. MacEachen*

work this winter. So this also has made a contribution to reducing the amount of seasonal unemployment in Canada.

I should now like to bring to the attention of members of the house a federal-provincial labour conference which has been called for March 9 and 10 at Ottawa. This conference, which follows a number of other federal-provincial conferences over recent months, will be the first conference of labour ministers held since 1946. I am pleased to report that all provincial ministers of labour have accepted this invitation. The agenda calls for informal discussion of a number of subjects as varied as apprenticeship training, labour standards, labour-management co-operation, ratification of international labour organization conventions, and programs to deal with the manpower problems of technological change.

Consultation with the provinces on labour matters is continuous, and the Canadian association of administrators of labour legislation, which meets annually, has long provided a useful body for the exchange of experience between departments of labour. The conference will give me and the officials of my department a new opportunity to consult with the provinces on matters of mutual interest. Many labour problems do not recognize provincial boundaries, and a joint federal-provincial approach is required. Out of this conference, I expect, should come suggestions and ideas that should help us in solving problems of mutual interest.

I mentioned a few moments ago that we would be discussing I.L.O. conventions at the forthcoming federal-provincial labour conference. I am happy now to be able to announce that the government intends to proceed with the ratification of an important I.L.O. convention in the field of human rights. This is a convention adopted by the international labour conference in 1958 on discrimination in employment and occupation. The convention seeks to promote efforts throughout the world to remove discrimination in employment and occupation based on grounds of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, and to promote equality of opportunity.

The government has inquired of the provinces, and each of them has indicated that it is following a policy fully consistent with the objectives of this convention. They have all, moreover, expressed their full support and approval of the proposed action to ratify this basic international instrument. Some members of the house have inquired in the past whether the government could not ratify more I.L.O. conventions. The fact is that where conventions fall partly within provincial jurisdiction it is essential that full

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agreement be reached in advance with provincial authorities. The ratification of the discrimination convention with which we shall be proceeding is a gratifying example of federal-provincial co-operation. It constitutes a landmark in arrangements for dealing with I.L.O. matters, and I hope it will lead to similar co-operative action in the future.

Another item we shall be discussing at the federal-provincial labour conference is labour-management co-operation. The most important task in developing good labour-management relations is the dissemination of the philosophy of joint consultation and co-operation. It is a never ending search to find the most effective ways to reach this objective.

We can look back with a good deal of satisfaction at the progress made in recent years in arriving at settlements in industrial disputes without work stoppages. While the non-agricultural paid worker part of the total labour force has grown considerably, the time loss due to strikes and lockouts, as a proportion of estimated total working time, has decreased. With few exceptions each month of 1963 had a lower time loss than corresponding months of the previous year, and over the last five years the reduction has been close to 50 per cent.

Increased emphasis is being placed on labour-management co-operation as a positive aspect of the work of the industrial relations branch of the department. Labour-management conferences on an area basis are continuing, with the next series being planned for Alberta in April and May.

The government has indicated its intention, Mr. Speaker, of moving forward with additional legislation in the labour standards field. This proposal is a logical step begun with the enactment of the Canada Fair Employment Practices Act in 1953, the Female Employees Equal Pay Act in 1956, the Annual Vacations Act in 1958. The absence of other federal labour standards legislation leaves a grey area where there are no minimum standards. This area today represents about 11 per cent of the non-agricultural labour force, of whom a significant number are not now and may not ever be protected by collective bargaining.

Reference has been made in the house to the board of trustees for the maritime transportation unions. I should like to remind members that on October 11 last the maritime transportation unions trustees bill was adopted with almost unanimous approval. About 12 days later, on October 23, the members of the board of trustees provided for in the act were appointed and immediately assumed their responsibilities under the legislation. At that time, members of the house will recall that a work stoppage had occurred in shipping