

Convention will be expected to make effective the right of workers and employers to form and join organizations of their own choosing.

Consideration of this subject, and of industrial relations in general, arose out of the newly established relationship between the ILO and the United Nations

Although freedom of association has been a basic ILO principle since the first Constitution of 1919, its full study, with a view to the adoption of a series of international agreements, is new. The subject was referred to the ILO by the Economic and Social Council as a result of memoranda which had been submitted by the World Federation of Trade Unions and the American Federation of Labour. It was first considered at the 1947 Conference held in Geneva, where, following a discussion of general principles, a programme was worked out aiming at a series of international regulations at successive Conferences.

The adoption of a Convention covering the general principles of Freedom of Association and the Protection of the Right to Organize completes the first stage of the ILO's work in this field.

RIGHT TO ORGANIZE

The Convention provides, in substance, that workers and employers shall have the right to establish and to join organizations of their own choosing, including federations and international organizations of workers and employers. Governments which ratify the Convention undertake to "take all necessary and appropriate measures" to protect the right to organize. Limitations to the guarantees provided in the Convention provide for the armed forces and the police, and also for non-metropolitan territories for whose international relations the ratifying Government is responsible. The Conference succeeded in working out the provisions of this Convention so as to achieve

virtual unanimity; the text was adopted by a vote of 127 to 0, with, however, 11 abstentions.

An unusual feature of the Conference's treatment of this subject was the decision to consult further with the United Nations, in particular with the Commission on Human Rights, on the enforcement through international machinery of the right of freedom of association. This decision was taken in spite of the existence in the ILO Constitution of procedures for the supervision of Conventions since the right of freedom of association by employers and workers might be rendered ineffective by interference with other fundamental rights. The safeguarding of these rights lies within the competence of the United Nations.

The Conference also gave first discussion to a proposed Convention or Recommendation dealing with the more detailed application of the principle of freedom of association and of the right to organize. This gave rise to disagreement: the employers' group advanced the claim that the text should protect the workers' right not only to join trade unions but also *not* to join trade unions.

OPPOSITION BY WORKERS

The workers strongly opposed this suggestion taking the view that if protection were given by law to an individual's right not to join an organization, it might follow that collective agreements providing for the closed shop or union shop might become illegal. This basic disagreement was not resolved; it will be raised again when the text comes up for second discussion at the 1949 Conference.

Most of the other items on the agenda were less contentious. Dealing with wages, the Conference gave first discussion to proposed Conventions concerning Labour Clauses in Public Contracts, and concerning the Protection of Wages. A resolution endorsing the principle of the Guaranteed Wage

and calling for its detailed consideration at a future Conference, was adopted over the opposition of the Employers' Group. Another resolution reaffirmed the principle of Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value for male and female workers, and contemplated the adoption of international regulations on this subject at a future Conference.

The Conference unanimously adopted a Convention on Employment Service Organization, the terms of which conform with the practices and policies of Canada's National Employment Service. The Conference also adopted a Recommendation on this subject.

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

First discussion was given to a proposed recommendation on standards and general principles of vocational guidance, as a guide to member countries in their development of vocational guidance services. Since the present techniques and methods used in vocational guidance are still largely experimental, it was not considered appropriate at this stage to adopt a Convention. The principles accented by the Conference are in accord with those now being developed in Canada.

The Conference undertook the revision of two Conventions, adopted in 1919, concerning the Night Work of Women and of Children. The purpose of the revision was to make the terms of the Conventions more flexible, to facilitate the working of the double day-shift system which has been increasingly important in the post-war economy of many countries

DIRECTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

An important feature of the Conference was the debate which took place on the Report of the Director-General of the International Labour Office. This was the last Report to be submitted by Mr. Edward Phelan as Director-General before retirement. Mr. Phelan has been succeeded by Mr. David