

Numéro 16

Paris, April 12, 1919

1. This memorandum covers the period from Monday evening, 7th April, to Saturday evening, 12th April.

2. During the present week there has been much discussion in the British Empire Delegations with regard to the proposed Labour Convention. Its provisions were canvassed very fully at these discussions and there was not complete unanimity with respect thereto. Eventually, however, such amendments were made or agreed upon as induced its acceptance, although the Ministers for the Dominions were not disposed to accept the view that this Convention should be linked up so closely with the Covenant of the League of Nations. There was a distinct agreement that Article 35 should be modified so that the provisions of the Convention would conform to those of the Covenant in respect to the character of the membership and the method of adherence.¹ Through some mistake this understanding was not carried out in the copy circulated at the Plenary Conference held on Friday [April 11]. As a result, Sir Robert Borden moved and carried an amendment to Mr. Barnes' motion. That motion was as follows:

That the Conference approves the draft Convention creating a permanent organisation for the promotion of the international regulation of labour conditions which has been submitted by the Labour Commission, with the amendments proposed by the British Delegation; instructs the Secretariat to request the governments concerned to nominate forthwith their representatives on the Organising Committee for the October Conference, and authorizes that Committee to proceed at once with its work.

Sir Robert Borden's amendment added the following clause thereto:

The Conference authorized the Drafting Committee to make such amendments as may be necessary to have the Convention conform to the Covenant of the League of Nations in the character of its membership and in the method of adherence.

3. The report of the Labour Commission included the submission of certain clauses proposed for inclusion in the Treaty of Peace, copy of which is annexed. At the meeting of the British Delegations on Wednesday, 9th April, it was distinctly agreed that these clauses were not to be discussed or approved at the Plenary Conference on Friday. The 8th Clause was particularly objectionable from the standpoint of several Dominions. For example, in Canada it would conflict with provincial legislation in Saskatchewan and British Columbia which imposes restrictions on Oriental labour in certain trades or occupations. Much to their surprise the delegates from the Dominions were told while present in the Plenary Conference that this arrangement could not be carried out, and that a resolution must be passed approving these clauses for insertion in the Treaty of Peace. The Prime Ministers from the Dominions took very firm ground against this in which they were strongly supported by Mr. Balfour, who had given the promise alluded to. Mr. Lloyd

¹ Voir les documents nos 97 à 99, 103 et 104.