

THIRTY-FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE ILO

The recent Conference of the International Labour Organization held in San Francisco between June 17 and July 10, was the 31st meeting in a tradition that dates back for almost thirty years. Now established as one of the specialized agencies of the United Nations, the ILO is a product of the Treaty of Versailles, and was for years associated with the League of Nations.

Within the framework of the United Nations the ILO continues its task of seeking to improve world labour conditions through the advocacy of international standards, in the belief that "poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere", and that "universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice".

In the pursuit of its objectives, the ILO is distinguished among international organizations by its tripartite structure which brings together on each national delegation representatives of employers and workers as well as of governments, accompanied by their advisers. The non-governmental delegates have full voting rights and play an active role in all the proceedings of the Conference.

TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY

The major decisions of the Conference are embodied in the form of Conventions, the adoption of which requires a two-thirds majority of the delegates present and voting. Governments are required under the ILO Constitution to consider each Convention to enact legislation, if necessary, and, if the Convention is ratified, to comply with its provisions and report annually to the ILO on its application. Less important decisions of the Conference take the form of recommendations or resolutions.

Preparatory work for the Conference is done by the In-

ternational Labour Office, which compiles information on the law and practice of the various countries regarding the subjects to be discussed, and also seeks the views of governments by distributing questionnaires dealing with the various technical points. For each item on the agenda, the Office prepares a comprehensive report setting forth the result of its findings, concluding with draft texts for Conventions or Recommendations. It has been found that these reports greatly facilitate the work of the Conference and substantially cut down the time necessary for the consideration of its agenda.

The recent San Francisco Conference brought together 443 delegates and advisers from fifty-one of the fifty-nine member states of the ILO.

CANADIAN DELEGATION

The Canadian Delegation named to attend the Conference was headed by the Hon. Humphrey Mitchell, Minister of Labour; the other members were:

Government Delegates: Dr. Arthur MacNamara, Deputy Minister of Labour; Mr. Paul Goulet, Assistant to the Deputy Minister and Director of the ILO Branch of the Department.

Alternate Government Delegate: Major A.E. Wood, Head of Vocational Guidance and Vocational Training, National Employment Service, Ottawa.

Technical Advisers to Government Delegates: Mr. James Thomson, Deputy Minister of Labour for British Columbia, Victoria; Mr. John K. Starnes, Adviser to the Canadian Permanent Delegate to the United Nations, New York; Mr. G.R. Currie, Industrial Relations Officer of the Department of Labour, Vancouver.

Employers' Delegate: Mr.

Harry Taylor, Canadian National Carbon Company, Limited, Toronto.

Technical Advisers to Employers' Delegate: Mr. H.W. Macdonnell, Canadian Manufacturers' Association, Toronto; Mr. J.C. Adams, K.C., Central Ontario Labour Relations Institute, Toronto; Mr. Albert Deschamps, General Contractor and Engineer, Montreal.

Workers' Delegate: Mr. Percy Bengough, President, Trades and Labour Congress of Canada, Ottawa.

Technical Advisers to Workers' Delegate: Mr. Norman Dowd, Canadian Congress of Labour, Ottawa; Mr. J.B. Ward, Railway Transportation Brotherhoods, Ottawa; Mr. Romeo Ethier, Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour, Montreal.

Joint Secretaries to the Delegation: Mr. John Mainwaring, Assistant Editor of the Labour Gazette, and Miss Edith H. Hardy, Executive Assistant, ILO Branch, Department of Labour, Ottawa.

Mr. Mitchell and Mr. MacNamara were unable to attend the Conference and the Delegation was therefore headed by Mr. Goulet.

The Conference elected as its President Mr. Justin Godart, Government Delegate of France. Canada was honoured in the election of Mr. Percy R. Bengough, as Workers' Vice-President. The other Vice-Presidents were Mr. N.E. Sumer, Government Delegate, Turkey, and Mr. H.C. Oersted, Employers' Delegate, Denmark.

On the important committee on Freedom of Association and Industrial Relations, Mr. Harry Taylor was elected by the Employers' Group to the position of Employers' Vice-Chairman.

Probably the most important achievement of the Conference was adoption of a Convention on Freedom of association; the governments ratifying this