

As early as 1926, Canada ratified four ILO maritime conventions and, by 1968, has ratified a total of 24 conventions dealing with conditions of employment of seafarers and dockers, hours of work and weekly rest in industry, minimum wage-fixing machinery, employment service organization, discrimination, employment policy, and so forth. Canada reports regularly to the ILO on the measures that have been taken to implement these and other conventions. One obstacle that has discouraged Canadian ratification is that the large majority of ILO conventions are in areas that are, in Canada, mainly within provincial legislative jurisdiction. Since 1960, however, there has been increasing co-operation with the provinces on all ILO matters, and procedures are being developed for co-ordinated implementation and ratification of the most important ILO conventions.

In the past, Canada obtained helpful advice from the International Labor Office when such matters as conciliation in labor disputes, unemployment insurance, and establishment of employment services were being considered. More recently, Canada has been able to repay this assistance by contributing to the development of the less-industrialized nations. The ILO has used Canadian experts in its technical-assistance program in underdeveloped countries, and has sent trainees from such countries to Canada for study and on-the-job training.

While the Department of External Affairs has the general responsibility for handling Canada's international relations, including its United Nations commitments, the Department of Labor is the official liaison agency between the Canadian Government and the ILO. With the expansion in ILO activities after the Second World War, a special branch of the Department of Labor was established to work in close co-operation with the Department of External Affairs, with other federal departments, with the provincial departments of labor and with employers' and workers' organizations, all of which have an interest in the ILO. In this way, the ILO is kept informed on the progress of industrial and economic conditions in Canada, and the Canadian governments and organizations concerned are kept in touch with developments in the international field. Each year some progress is made toward uniform and higher labor standards in Canada, in line with the International Labor Code, and Canada thus plays its part in furthering the purposes of the ILO.

ILO Fiftieth Anniversary

The year 1969 is the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the ILO. Canada, like all other members, is arranging celebrations with the twofold purpose of making the ILO better known throughout Canada and improving Canada's participation in ILO programs for the future.

In addition to informative exhibits and a commemorative stamp, a wide range of articles is being prepared for publication, along with special radio and television programs and discussion guides for schools. A tripartite federal-provincial conference is planned in the autumn to review the important ILO conventions and the improvement of procedures for implementation, and academic seminars and studies will probe certain aspects in depth.