

Beyond this active and continuing interest in the problems of the workers in each country, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has permanent observers at meetings of the United Nations and its many branches. At this vantage point the Confederation is able to bring attention to world problems. It was from the representation of the Free Trade Unions at the United Nations that there developed such a world knowledge and consciousness of the existence and condition of slave labour and prison camps in the Soviet Union and other Communist countries.

The International Federation of Christian Trade Unions is smaller than the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. The membership of the Christian International is estimated at some three million members. The main bases of its membership are in Europe, notably Belgium, France and Holland, while from Canada the Catholic Confederation of Labour contributes roughly one hundred thousand members. There is also a scattered membership of the Christian Federation in some Latin American countries and in the Far East.

The structure of the Christian Federation is basically similar to that of the Free Trade Unions, although the disparity in numbers, and limitation of membership to Christians, tends to limit the effectiveness of the body to areas having a common spiritual affinity. In countries like Belgium, France, Holland and Canada, the Christian unions have, however, an impact of some consequence. The Canadian and Catholic Confederation is widely represented in the work of the international Christian trade union body.

Useful Contribution

The long apprenticeship, which Canadian unionists have served in the international unions of North America, has enabled them to make a useful contribution to the work of the free world labour movement. Canadian labour shares the belief in the interdependence of peoples in the modern world that is the basis of the action of the Government of Canada in representing all Canadians in the United Nations, or of Canadian farmers who are active associates in the International Federation of Agriculture or Canadian businessmen who play their part in the International Chamber of Commerce. Canadian unionists readily accept the truth that in today's world "no man is an island" and they realize that they will prosper to the extent that they contribute to the well-being of the workers of all nations.