

jeopardized the freedom and status of workers, in contravention of the obligations and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

The report was issued too late for consideration by the sixteenth session of ECOSOC in July 1953, but at the request of the United States Government an item entitled "Evidence of the Existence of Forced Labour" was included in the agenda of the eighth session of the General Assembly. In the course of the debate, a number of delegations, including those of the United States and several Latin American countries, strongly condemned the countries of the Soviet bloc on the basis of the Committee's findings that systems of forced labour existed in those countries. In reply, the Soviet Representative described the Committee's Report as a concoction of lies and slanders. He declared that his country regarded the right to work as an essential right of all citizens and he made the counter-charge that the capitalist economic system of the United States in fact condemned its workers to forced labour. A resolution was passed inviting ECOSOC and the ILO to give early consideration to the Report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee and requesting the Secretary-General to ask governments which have not yet provided information to the *Ad Hoc* Committee to submit such information before the seventeenth session of ECOSOC.

In supporting this resolution the Canadian Representative said that certain facts regarding forced labour had emerged clearly from the legislation and policies of the governments concerned and did not depend on the conclusions or findings of the *Ad Hoc* Committee, the report of which was not officially before the Assembly. Action on the report of the Committee was, however, a matter of urgency, for in the six years since the problem of forced labour had first been brought to the attention of ECOSOC, no fewer than six nations had passed legislation establishing or extending systems of forced labour. The Canadian Representative appealed to all members of the United Nations to co-operate in solving this problem and expressed the hope that those who voted for the resolution would be taking the decision expected by all who believed in human dignity and who stood against punishment on the grounds of political, cultural and religious ideologies.

The Council discussed the Report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee at its seventeenth session in April 1954 and passed a resolution which commended the Committee for its work; invited the ILO to continue consideration of this question; condemned systems of forced labour; appealed to all governments to re-examine their laws and practices; requested the Secretary-General and the Director-General of the ILO to prepare a report setting out whatever further replies may be received from governments and any new information on forced labour submitted by governments, Specialized Agencies and non-governmental organizations; and transmitted this resolution to the ninth session of the General Assembly.

The Governing Body of the ILO, on which Canada is represented, discussed the Report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee at two of its meetings in 1953 and decided to appeal to governments which have not yet ratified the four ILO Conventions dealing with forced labour to give