

where necessary, appropriate schemes within particular branches of industry in a country as decentralized as Canada. Governments cannot substitute for employers and unions, who know or should know first hand what the needs for training are. Government can serve those needs, they may help identify them and they may appropriately help underwrite specific costs of meeting them. Thus, my own Government announced earlier this week a number of important new training programs aimed particularly at women workers, native peoples and others for whom a broad approach is appropriate because of the general nature of the disadvantages such groups experience in our labour market. But governments cannot determine which individual enterprises need a specific number of people with identified skills, in the next months or years — only employers and unions can do so.

A number of Canadian companies are devoting a significant amount of their resources to a fusion of long-range corporate planning and human resource needs. I am pleased to note that Canadian employers as a group and the Canadian Labour Congress have also taken a joint initiative in this area.

Based on such reasoning, and while broadly in agreement with the analysis on which the medium-term plan is based, I wonder if it would not be better to have the plan reviewed initially by a working party which would reach agreement on priorities for the ILO and member countries in the field of training. Canada will be ready to give recognition to the fact that while the problem of training may be common to all of us, solutions need to be found which are appropriate to our individual circumstances.

Let me turn to what perhaps is, or should be, the other major aspect of the work of the ILO at this time. No one doubts the continuing need for new conventions and recommendations. But there is also reason to increase emphasis upon the need for broader implementation of the many important standards the conference has already enacted. If the ILO is to serve as the conscience of the labour world, there are important things the conference could do. Over the years, the ILO has adopted standards which cover the many basic problems confronting working men and women.

The conference, as the voice of authority of trade unionists, employer representatives and government ministers of labour, has declared itself on the need to establish and protect labour rights and freedoms — freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining, equality of opportunity for men and women workers and for workers of all races, the need to abolish child labour, the need to establish safe and healthy working conditions, the need for employment at decent rates of pay, and other like issues.

Is it enough for the ILO conference to devote most of its time to adopting more and more standards year after year? Or, should it do more to promote the implementation of standards adopted in the past, to make a living reality of these vitally important conference decisions? I note that only one committee of this conference is mandated to deal with this question, while four committees are at work drafting new legal texts. A ratio of one conference committee on implementation of ILO standards to four committees on new instruments made sense years ago, when the conference had not