

An International Conference of Weights and Measures is held, nominally, every six years. Between meetings, the general supervision of the operation of the Bureau is in the hands of an International Committee. The Convention itself specifies the details of membership of the Committee and the Conference, and, of course, prescribes for the maintenance of the Bureau by the signatory nations. Canada has been represented three times on the Committee (MacLennan—1929-36; Field—1951-55; and Howlett—1955-). This year, Dr. Howlett was elected vice-president of the Committee. The president, vice-president and secretary are responsible for the direction of the Bureau between meetings of the Committee.

An Unchanged Convention

Most of the 36 nations that have signed the Convention were represented at this year's Conference. Early in 1960 the International Bureau prepared a number of draft revisions to the Convention for examination by member countries. The Convention was last modified in 1921, and in order to bring its terms of reference up to date, to extend the scope of its operations, and to re-allocate and increase budget contributions accordingly, it seemed advisable to re-examine the present Convention and alter it as appropriate. A considerable number of objections were raised by member countries to the Bureau's proposals and to subsequent amendments suggested. In the end, after prolonged debate by the General Conference, it was not found possible to revise the Convention, and a commission of the International Committee was set up to continue the examination of the problem. Nevertheless, the impasse did not prevent headway from being made on a number of crucial matters involved. Within the terms of the present Convention, it was possible to reach agreement on an increased budget. The budget ceiling was tripled, so that it now stands at 900,000 *francs-or* (approximately \$300,000), and contributions, formerly based on population, were re-allocated, using a United Nations scale with a maximum contribution of 10 per cent and a minimum contribution of 0.5 per cent of the budget. The new budget ceiling will become effective in 1962.

Ionizing Radiation Laboratory

It was also found possible to establish, by Conference resolution, a section of the International Bureau to deal with standards of ionizing radiation. The establishment of a laboratory with qualified personnel working towards the simplification of standards of measurement of ionizing radiation, was particularly timely in view of the world-wide progress in nuclear research and atomic energy. Provision was made for due co-operation with other international agencies and national laboratories dealing with similar matters, and a special and extraordinary budget, effective in 1962, was established to enlarge the present laboratory facilities and provide more equipment for the purpose of undertaking experiments related to this field. On some occasions in the past the general budget has been supplemented