

social security, women's work, juvenile employment, occupational safety and health, labour statistics, co-operation, etc.; every year groups of experts meet to study urgent problems in some of these areas. The most important conclusions of these bodies are eventually referred to the annual Conference for more thorough discussion, with a view to the adoption of conventions and recommendations.

The International Labour Conference had, by 1973, adopted 138 conventions. Many of the earlier conventions have been revised, and it is expected that the ILO will develop a basic modern international labour code, consisting only of those conventions that continue to have relevance for current social policy. By mid-1973, member countries of the ILO had registered close to 4,000 ratifications of conventions. Each ratification obliges the member country to maintain its legislation in the particular field at the standard laid down by the convention and to report every two years to the ILO on its implementation. A ratification is thus not only a commitment by a member country to meet a particular standard of social policy but also a commitment to international law.

Canadian participation

Canada's participation in international labour affairs dates from 1910, when Mackenzie King attended a labour conference at Lugano, Switzerland. The next year, as Minister of Labour, Mr. King acted on one of the conference recommendations by introducing a bill in the House of Commons to prohibit the use of white phosphorous in making matches. As already mentioned, Canada took an active part in the establishment of the International Labour Organization in 1919, and has supported it fully ever since. Canada has been represented by government, employer and worker delegates at each session of the International Labour Conference and has participated in many other ILO activities.

As early as 1926, Canada ratified four ILO maritime conventions and, by 1973, had ratified a total of 26 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, freedom of association, equal pay for equal work, 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. In recent years, however, there has been increasing co-operation with the provinces on all ILO matters, and procedures have been developed for co-ordinated implementation and ratification of the more important ILO conventions.