

Parsons and Moore on Labour Office

Within a few yards of each other, in different rooms of a Toronto hotel the other day, S. R. Parsons and Tom Moore simultaneously gave addresses on the Labour Conference of the League of Nations.

Mr. Parsons, who represented the employers at Geneva, was speaking to the Empire Club. Mr. Moore, who was at Geneva representing the employees, was addressing the Lion's Club.

One of the draft conventions adopted by the International Labour Conference was—"to secure to workers engaged in agriculture the same rights of association and combination as are possessed by other industrial workers, and to repeal any laws restricting such rights in the case of agricultural workers".

Mr. Parsons said that combination of the workers in Britain meant no coal. Combination of the workers in the United States two years ago would have meant no coal if the Government had not interfered. If in the future the agricultural workers got together there was the possibility of no bread.

Mr. Parsons said that some of the workers who had spoken at the Conference had expressed much disappointment, having thought at first that the Labour Clauses of the League of Nations treaty would mean a new heaven and a new earth.

That view seemed to Mr. Parsons a great mistake. He felt, for one thing, that the workers of the world to-day had their minds too fixed on the hours of work. A reasonable amount of work, he thought, was the panacea for physical, mental and moral health.

Mr. Parsons personally did not think that a solution of the industrial problem was likely to come from international conferences.

Mr. Moore, President of the Trades and Labour Congress, in his address mentioned the fact that Mr. Parsons did not seem satisfied with the International Labour Office at Geneva or with the Conference.

The International Labour Office, said Mr. Moore, was not satisfactory to the organized workers either. It was not satisfactory to the governments. If it were satisfactory the millenium would have been reached. But the International Labour Office was an experiment in co-operation. It was bringing together representatives of labour, capital and governments from thirty-nine nations. Mr. Moore declared that if it did nothing else than break down the prejudices that lead to war the International Labour Office was worth the large sum of money required for its maintenance.