

Section 11.—Canada and the International Labour Organization

The Department of Labour is the officially designated liaison agency between the Canadian Government and the International Labour Organization. The I.L.O. was established in 1919 in association with the League of Nations under the Treaties of Peace with the object of improving labour and social conditions throughout the world by international agreement and legislative action. Under an agreement approved by the General Conference of the International Labour Organization at its 29th Session at Montreal, Que., on Oct. 2, 1946, and by the United Nations General Assembly on Dec. 14, 1946, the Organization became a specialized agency of the United Nations, although retaining its autonomy.

An association of 60 nations, financed by their governments and controlled by representatives of those governments and of their organized employers and workers, the Organization comprises: (1) the General Conference of representatives of the Member States; (2) the International Labour Office; and (3) the Governing Body of the Office. The Organization's structure and field of activity have been considerably extended since 1945 by the establishment of eight tripartite committees to deal with problems of major world industries.

The Conference in normal times meets at least once a year, and is composed of four delegates from each Member State, two representing the government and two representing employers and workers, respectively. Decisions of the Conference are in the form of Conventions or Recommendations. The former, when given legislative effect and ratified by Member States, are legally binding on them. The enforcement of Conventions within such countries is a matter for annual consideration by the Conference. The I.L.O. Constitution requires, however, that every Convention must be brought before the competent authority or authorities for legislative or other action. In Canada, the competent authorities in respect to the subject matter of most of the Conventions and Recommendations are the Provincial Legislatures. Amendments to the Constitution adopted by the Conference in 1946 included new provisions concerning the obligations imposed on federal countries with respect to the manner of dealing with Conventions and Recommendations when ratified by two-thirds of the Member States. These changes in procedure are expected to facilitate the adoption of Conventions and Recommendations by the constituent States or provinces of federal countries.

The International Labour Office acts as the permanent secretariat of the Organization and as an information centre and publishing house with respect to all questions on industry and labour.

The Governing Body consists of 32 persons, 16 government representatives, eight employers' and eight workers' representatives, of whom all but the representatives of the eight States of chief industrial importance, while holding permanent seats, are elected triennially by the Conference. The Governing Body, which usually meets quarterly, has general supervision of the International Labour Office, frames its budget and fixes the agenda of the Conference when the Conference