

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 ILO 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 held at Montreal, Que., 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 65 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. The Organization's structure and field of activity has been extended considerably 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, one representing the employers, and one representing the workers; these are accompanied by technical advisers. 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 ILO 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 of 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. 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 ILO maintains a Canadian branch office at 95 Rideau Street, Ottawa.

The Governing Body of the ILO consists of 32 members—16 government representatives, eight employer representatives and eight worker representatives. Of the government seats, the eight States of chief industrial importance (of which Canada is one) each holds a permanent place, while the other eight government representatives are elected triennially by the Conference; the worker and employer members also are elected every three years at the Conference by their groups. In addition, there are eight government, eight worker, and eight employer deputy-members elected for three-year terms. The Governing Body meets three or four times a year, and has general supervision of the work of the Office and the various