

THE I. L. O. STORY

Created in 1919, under the Treaty of Versailles which put an end to the first world war, the International Labour Organization (I.L.O.) is devoted to the principle of improving living and working conditions throughout the world since the poverty of certain peoples is a threat and an impediment to the common prosperity. Originally an associated body of the League of Nations, the I.L.O. became a United Nations agency after the end of the second world war; it is, indeed, the only world organization created in the aftermath of the first world war that survived the second conflict and its objectives are still based on social progress.

The sphere of action assigned the I.L.O. under its Statute (Part XIII of the Versailles Treaty) includes control of working periods, the 8-hour day and 48-hour week, recruiting of labour, reduction of unemployment, adequate wages, protection of workers against organic and occupa-

tional diseases, safeguarding of workers against accidents, abolition of child labour and special protection of young persons and women, old age and disability pensions, equitable treatment of foreign workers, equal pay for equal work, free trade union association, organization of vocational training and technical instruction for workers. These objectives were reaffirmed in the 'Philadelphia Declaration' of 1944 and included in the Statute. Upon this, the I.L.O. devoted itself to carrying out a vast programme that covered full employment and a better standard of living for workers, employment of a worker in that type of job which enables him to produce the best results, possibilities for everyone to receive wages that ensure the minimum necessary, the widespread use of safety measures, adequate protection against risk, medical assistance, special measures for expectant and nursing mothers in industry, adequate and comfortable homes

and possibilities of improving and furthering technical skill.

To reach such objectives, the I.L.O. follows a threefold path: drafting of international laws on labour and assistance and consultation on social questions, documentation and publication of regulations concerning the principal labour problems. Under the organization, workers, employers and government exponents contribute towards deciding a common policy to be adopted and, at the same time, they supervise activities. It is the participation of employers and workers that distinguishes this organization from any other intergovernmental body.

The organs of the I.L.O. are as follows: the «International Labour Conference», chief authority of the organization, whose main task is to establish international labour laws. Each member of the I.L.O. (1) is represented at the annual meetings of the conference by two Government delegates, a representative of the workers and a representative of employers; the «Executive», composed of twenty Government representatives, ten representatives of the workers and ten representatives of employers; the «International Labour Office» (better known as the

B.I.T. (*Bureau International du Travail*), the permanent secretariat. The B.I.T., with its head offices in Geneva, consists of 800 officials recruited from more than sixty nations. Since 1948, it has been headed by David A. Morse, former U.S. Undersecretary for Labour. The B.I.T. prepares the annual report to the conference and other meetings arranged by the I.L.O. In this way, it guides and coordinates the work of experts from the various member states, provides information on the results achieved and gives particulars of the decisions approved, often using its many publications as a medium.

In order to study and possibly solve many specific problems, the I.L.O. has created a certain number of «commissions» and «committees», some permanent, others of a temporary character. Since 1945, ten industrial committees have been appointed to examine questions relative to mining, internal transport, iron and steel, mechanical industry, textiles, building, civil engineering and public works, oil and chemical industries, etc. Meetings of these committees are attended by two representatives of the workers, two representatives of employers and

two representatives of the governments of those countries in which the industry under discussion is considered to be at an advanced stage. Labour questions peculiar to one country are examined during regional conferences held by the I.L.O. while various other commissions and committees have been created to examine special aspects of the field of labour (Maritime Commission, the Consultative Committee on Africa, the Consultative Committee on Asia, the Permanent Agricultural Committee, the Committee of Experts for Social Security).

International laws adopted by the conference in relation to labour (conventions and recommendations) are included in an «International Labour Code». Up to the beginning of 1960, the International Labour conference had adopted 114 conventions and 112 recommendations. The regulations in some of these have been modified so that they meet the changed requirements of the labour world. These conventions may, in a certain sense, be compared to treaties, for the countries that ratify them are pledged to execute the norms they contain; recommendations, on the other hand, act as a useful guide to the social policy followed by the various

member countries. A great deal of time is required for their drafting and representatives of all the eighty member nations of the I.L.O. participate in this important operation, for it is essential that such regulations or suggestions express the general opinion.

Since its foundation, the I.L.O. has given a great deal of active assistance to the execution of policy. The organization's operations in this particular field have increased considerably since the introduction of the United Nations assistance programme, and they are held to be among the most important of the agency's undertakings at the present time. Since 1959, the I.L.O. has been a member of the United Nations' Special Fund for Economic Development; the organization has chiefly limited its intervention to those countries that are considered to be under-developed, so that these may reach a stage of being able to benefit from the technical and structural experience of highly industrial nations. During the last ten years, on the request of individual governments, the organization has sent more than 2,000 experts on various missions and awarded over 300 scholarships. In 1959, six-

ty two nations and territories received I.L.O. aid under the technical assistance programme (in the form of vocational training, rehabilitation of persons disabled through labour accidents, rational employment of manpower). On a regional scale, aid has been coordinated with special agencies in Bangalore (India) for Asia, at Istanbul for the Middle and Near East, at Lima for South America, Mexico City for Mexico, the Antilles and Central America and at Lagos for Africa.

Generally speaking, the real value of such programmes lies in their appeal to any country desiring to make use of the experience and knowledge of nations with different economic and social de-

velopment stages and of the assistance of civil and cultural associations.

The I.L.O. has recently undertaken an educational programme for workers (courses, conferences, furnishing of audiovisual apparatus) and vocational training schemes (training of technical personnel, management, etc.), principally addressed to those countries that are now undergoing strong economic and industrial expansion and, in 1960, decided upon the foundation of an «International Institute of Social Studies» in Geneva, for the purpose of furthering a better understanding of labour problems in all nations and finding the most suitable solutions.

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AN AMPHIBIAN CAR FOR EVERYBODY

The Industrierwerke Company of Karlsruhe is just starting an assembly line for an amphibian car in its Lubeck factory. This amphibian automobile for civilian, private use will be known as the amphicar. The first 25,000 amphicars are bound for the American market. The amphicar looks like an ordinary car with four wheels and four seats. It is powered by a 1200 ccm four-stroke engine with four cylinders. On the road it does 75 miles per hour. You can drive it straight into any river or lake, switching the engine over to a couple of plastic propellers in the rear. This converts the car into a boat, though in water it does only six to seven miles per hour. Still, here is a car which can be used as a motor-boat, and no longer depends on bridges.