

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

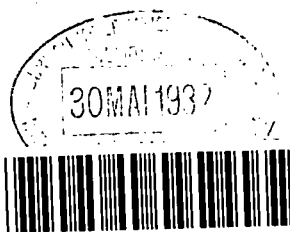
Laying
of the
Foundation Stone

SPEECHES
MADE AT THE CEREMONY
ON 21 OCTOBER 1923



GENEVA

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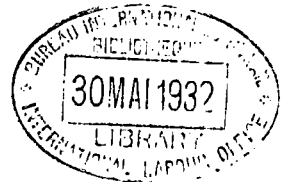
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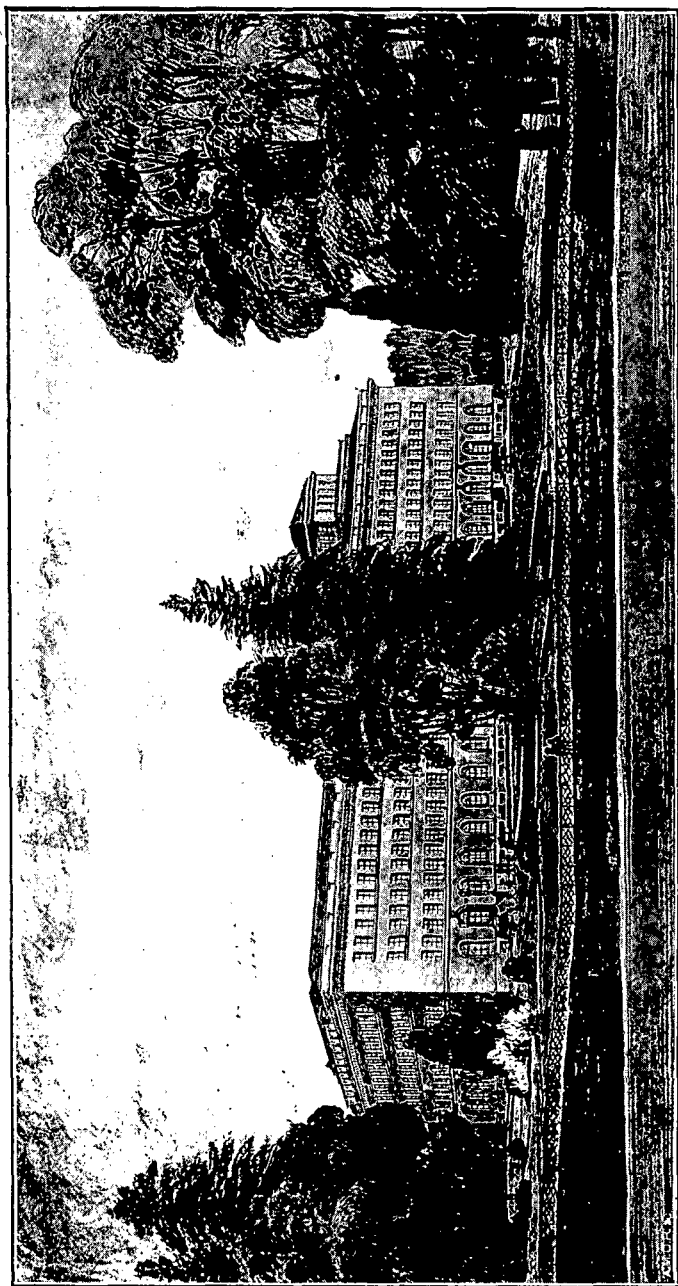
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GENEVA



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Sketch of the new building of the International Labour Office.

PREFACE.

The International Labour Office was set up, in virtue of the Treaty of Versailles, at the seat of the League of Nations. After a short period in London, where it was organised, and at Genoa, where the second session of the International Conference, devoted to questions of the employment of seamen, was held, the Office came to Geneva (July 1920), where it rented a building situated out of the town, and hastily adapted it to its requirements.

The accomplishment of the manifold duties assigned to the Office by Part XIII of the Treaty of Peace and the execution of the decisions of the Conference of the Permanent Labour Organisation soon led to a rapid development of the various services required to meet the demands made on the Office; the temporary accommodation which the Office had acquired with some hesitation became inadequate.

On learning of these difficulties, the Governing Body in September 1922 submitted several proposals to the Second Assembly of the League of Nations, and a committee was appointed to consider the question. Shortly afterwards, however, the affair entered a new phase. The Swiss Delegation to the Assembly informed the Secretariat of the League of Nations that the Federal Council, the Council of State of the Republic and Canton of Geneva, and the Administrative Council of Geneva were presenting a site on which to erect a building suited to the requirements of the Office. The Assembly authorised the Council to accept this gift and expressed its gratitude to the donors. It was decided that the erection of a building to accommodate the Office staff should be undertaken as soon possible. A competition among Swiss architects was immediately organised in view of the necessity of proceeding with the work quickly. The plans were laid before an international jury in May 1922, and those of Mr. E. Epitaur of Lausanne were placed first. The plans were approved by the Governing Body of the Office, the work was begun last September, and on 21 October 1923 the three foundation stones of the new Office were laid—representing the co-operation of governments, employers, and workers in the International Labour Organisation.

The ceremony was honoured by the presence of Mr. Chuard, Vice-President of the Swiss Federal Council, Mr. Schulthess, Chief of the Federal Department of Economy, and other representatives of the legislative, administrative, and judicial authorities of the Swiss Confederation and of the Canton and City of Geneva, members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Swiss Government and of the Consular Corps, the Social Attachés accredited to the International Labour Office, representatives of the citizens and corporations of Geneva, the members of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, the Delegates and Advisers to the Fifth Session of the International Labour Conference, and the Delegates to the Conference on Customs Formalities convened by the League of Nations.

Special invitations were sent to the Members of the International Labour Legislation Commission of the Preliminary Peace Conference, which drafted Part XIII, and two of these members, Sir Malcolm Delevingne (Great Britain) and Professor Ernest Mahaim (Belgium), were happily able to be present. Unfortunately many of the members of the Commission, together with a number of other distinguished men who have been closely associated with the foundation or the subsequent development of the International Labour Organisation, were unable to attend.

The speeches made and messages read on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone are given below.



The building at present occupied by the International Labour Office.

SPEECHES

MADE AT THE

CEREMONY ON 21 OCTOBER 1923

Mr. Albert Thomas

Director of the International Labour Office.

(Translation.)

Mr. Vice-President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish in the first place, in the name of the International Labour Office, to express our glad and sincere thanks to all those present today.

Representatives of the Executive and Legislative Authorities of Switzerland and Geneva, Ambassadors, Ministers or Consuls of the States Members of the Organisation, Social Attachés accredited to the Office, friends and colleagues of the Secretariat of the League of Nations, citizens and workers of Geneva, members of the Governing Body, Delegates and Advisers of the International Labour Conference, we thank you, one and all, for associating yourselves by your presence here with our hopes and efforts.

We feel particularly fortified and sustained by the thought that beyond the bounds of this friendly gathering, throughout the wide world, an ardent faith unites all those who share our belief that definite "peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice." Proof of their goodwill is reaching us from hour to hour. The forerunners of international protection for the workers, the members of the Commission instituted by the Treaty of Peace, Barnes, the great and practical pioneer, Gompers the Chairman, Vandervelde, Loucheur, Colliard, Otchiai, have all expressed their faith in the work begun in Paris; the members of the Council and of the Assembly of the League of Nations, Hanotaux, Ishii, Branting, Benes, van Eysinga, and a hundred others, all are mindful of the important place which our work takes amongst the many activities of the League of Nations.

Why should we seek to conceal our joy ? Why should not I and my friend Butler, trusty fellow-worker in hours of trial, endeavour to describe the prolonged and persistent efforts which have led up to today's simple ceremony ?

We can never forget the early wanderings of the new-born International Labour Office.

After being officially constituted by the first meeting of its Governing Body in the Pan-American Building at Washington,



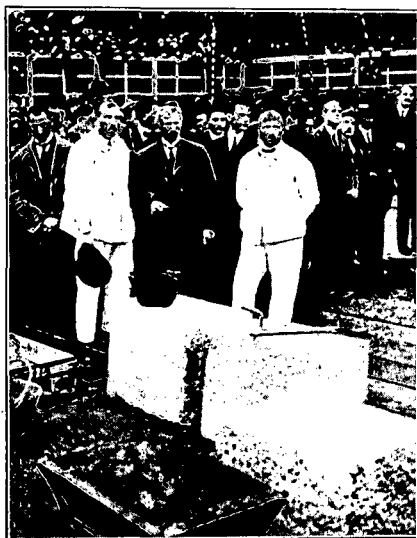
the Office was installed for a few days in January 1920 in two small rooms in the Hotel Astoria at Paris adjoining the offices of the Reparations Commission. From there it was moved to London, to a house in Seymour Place which the British Government had rented from a wealthy shipowner, whose views on social legislation were of a somewhat sceptical nature. It was there, overlooking Hyde Park, that the Office passed its first spring-time. Then came the delightful hospitality of the *Palazzo Reale* in Genoa, and for a time the silence of majestic halls was broken by the rattle of our typewriters. At length, on a bright 14th of July, day made memorable by the high daring of the French people, day symbolic of liberty to many nations, the Office was installed in the College on the Pregny hill.

Owing however to the wide scope of the duties assigned to the Office by the Treaty of Peace, and to the enthusiasm with which they were undertaken, the time soon came when the limits within which it was confined began to prove too

narrow. Before a year had passed the members of the Second Assembly of the League of Nations, after a visit to our temporary quarters, decided that the International Labour Office should be definitely housed in a more suitable building, better adapted to its needs, and nearer to the Secretariat and to the industrious city which shelters us.

In the course of the year 1922 the Federal Council generously offered to the League of Nations for the use of the Office the magnificent site upon which we are assembled today.

In September of the same year the Third Assembly of the League accepted that generous offer and made the necessary



financial arrangements to enable the erection of the new building to be undertaken. The ratification of the Federal Chambers was subsequently obtained ; the transfer deed was signed ; and a competition of architects was opened. The special Committee of the Governing Body approved the plan which obtained the highest award, and authorised the Office to enter into negotiations with Mr. Epitaux, the eminent, conscientious, and enthusiastic architect whose assistance we have already had occasion highly to appreciate.

The first examinations of the ground have now been made and building can safely be carried on. The digging of the foundations has been commenced, and we are met here at last to lay the foundation stone of the future building in the hospitable soil of Switzerland, that soil on which liberty has been so bravely defended, and in this city of Geneva, the seat of the League of Nations, which has, during past centuries, shown what great moral authority a small group

of men, strong in faith and purpose, can wield throughout the world.

But our legitimate joy at the thought of difficulties overcome must not prevent us from thinking of those still to be confronted and of the arduous task which lies before us.

The Bible tells how, when Nehemiah, governor of Jerusalem, was re-building the walls of the city, "Tobiah, the Ammonite, was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall. And Nehemiah prayed to the Lord, Hear, O our God; for we are despised; turn this reproach on their own head... and cover not their iniquity... For they have provoked thee to anger before the builders."

Can we, in our turn, fail to be moved by the force of that appeal?

In the chaos and disorganisation of the post-war world, can there be any crime more heinous than that of obstructing those who are engaged in building, who are attempting, in the face of countless obstacles, to carry on the work of reconstruction?

But those who build must realise that they will be attacked. They must be ready to withstand assault; and, like the citizens of Jerusalem, they must toil on the ramparts with their swords girded on their loins.

From all quarters, however, we are receiving support and encouragement. There are already many who by word or deed are showing their determination to participate in the building of this edifice.

The Third Assembly, when the construction of the new building was decided upon, expressed the hope that every Member of the League would contribute to the structure of this building by a gift of building materials, of ornaments or works of art, representing the most characteristic forms of national production. That appeal has already met with eager response; and Japan, Latvia, Italy, Denmark, the Netherlands, have already sent us, or have decided to send, works representative of their national art.

Doubtless in the age of the cathedrals and municipal bell-fries the corporations of all trades, the united organisations of employers and workers, would have piously desired to take a personal share in the great common task and would have assembled choice examples of their work on this spot.

The rigorous conditions of modern industry, however, and the immensity of our Organisation, offer obstacles both to assistance of this kind and to direct participation in the erection of this edifice.

But the strength of the International Labour Organisation is founded not only on stone, wood, and steel; it is founded above all in the hearts of men.

We are proud to think that it was not during the first period of enthusiastic confidence which the new-born Organisation inspired that the nations decided to erect this building, but after four years of experiment, toil, and struggle, in the course of which the vitality of the ideal of its creators has been amply demonstrated.

In spite of the apprehensions and fears that the bitter competitive struggle arouses in all nations — nay, even because of those fears — they now realise that henceforth they must bind themselves by conventions for the protection of the workers. Never again, in the admirable words of Jaurès, “les nations qui marchent vers l’avenir ne pourront s’isoler de l’humanité” (“can those nations who are in the van of progress remain isolated from humanity”). However great may be the burdens which they have to bear, never again can those who are responsible for controlling and organising production afford to remain indifferent to the health and the strength of the worker, or to his joy in his task. Never again will the great workers’ organisations have to resort to bitter conflicts without having first attempted to obtain the necessary reforms by the systematic and lasting acceptance of all the principles of justice.

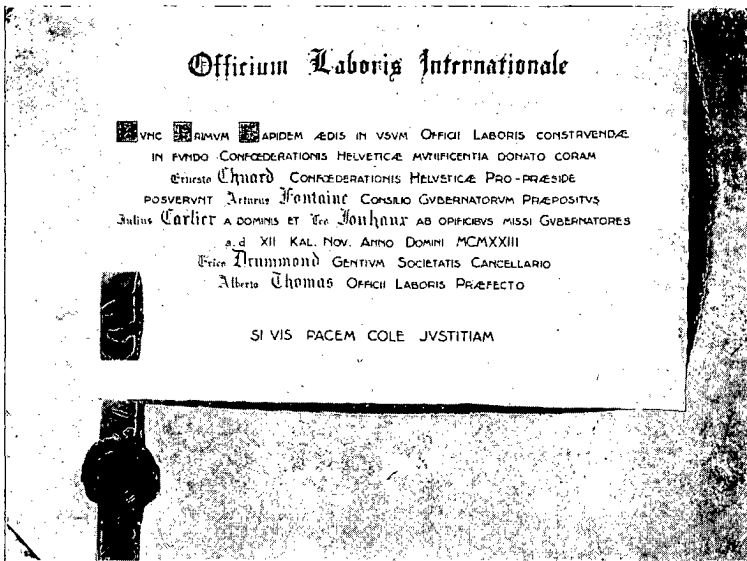
Representatives of the governments, of employers, and of workers, even before your trowels shall have united the three symbolic stones, you have already laid the foundations of the ideal Office by your common adherence to and by your loyal observance of the conditions of the Labour Charter. There will be a living soul in the house we are here building.

On the parchment which I am about to deposit in this foundation stone, and on which, according to custom, today’s ceremony is commemorated in ancient Latin, the following words have been inscribed: *Si vis pacem, cole justitiam*: If you desire peace, practise justice.

It is with resolute purpose and with hearts aflame for the cause of justice that we shall enter this noble and spacious building, the foundations of which are being laid today.

* * *

The Director of the International Labour Office then placed on the bed of cement underneath the foundation stone a casket containing, in accordance with ancient usage, pieces of money and a parchment sealed with the seal of the Office and inscribed as follows:



(Translation.)

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

The first stone of the building to be erected for the use of the International Labour Office on the site generously provided by the Swiss Confederation was laid here, in the presence of Mr. Ernest Chuard, Vice-President of the Swiss Confederation, by Mr. Arthur Fontaine, Chairman of the Governing Body, by Mr. Jules Carlier, and Mr. Léon Jouhaux, members of the Governing Body representing the Employers and Workers respectively, on the twenty-first day of October, in the year of Our Lord One thousand nine hundred and twenty-three, Sir Eric Drummond being then Secretary-General of the League of Nations and Mr. Albert Thomas Director of the International Labour Office.

If you desire peace, practise justice.

Mr. Chuard

*Vice-President of the Federal Council
of the Swiss Confederation*

(Translation.)

Gentlemen,

The country in whose territory the seat of the League of Nations and of its Permanent Organisations has been established cannot dissociate itself from the ceremony for which we are gathered here today. Geneva and Switzerland, deeply sensible of the honour which has been shown them, desire, in so far as their resources, modest as these are, permit, to assume their share of the material obligations imposed on these new institutions in which, with many other nations, we have placed our hopes for a better future.

Among these obligations, the most pressing is that of making a home for the Organisations created by the Covenant of the League of Nations and by the Treaty of Versailles, a building which shall afford them suitable working conditions. Since it was impossible to offer the League of Nations the spacious buildings which might have been found without difficulty in other richer and more powerful cities and countries, Switzerland and Geneva alike felt that the least they could do was to place at the disposal of the League a patch of Swiss soil, the soil of this classic land of liberty, as the Director of the International Labour Office has just reminded us, suitable for the building where that great work is to be carried on, the achievement of which the nations await with still unshaken confidence.

Of these buildings, that of which we are laying the foundation stone today is destined for the International Labour Office. May I be permitted, in the name of the Federal Government and of the Swiss people, to offer that institution the homage which it merits for the great task it is performing, together with our most sincere and fervent wishes for the immense work which still lies before it, work of a difficult and delicate nature on which the future peace, security, and well-being of humanity largely depend. The International Labour Office was established at Geneva during the month of July

1920, a few months prior to the arrival of the Secretariat of the League of Nations. We all know how strikingly it has justified its name under the powerful and far-seeing direction of Mr. Albert Thomas, with whom the Swiss Government has always entertained the most cordial and friendly relations.

In order to grasp the wide extent of the work of the International Labour Office, it is sufficient to examine the results of the enquiry into industrial production in the various countries of the world, considered from the point of view of labour conditions and the cost of living, which it has recently published. This important work, undertaken on the instructions of the Governing Body as the result of a proposal made by Mr. Pirelli, Italian Employers' Representative, will contribute to throw a light, which cannot be other than beneficial, on a mass of economic facts and phenomena, the laws governing which still remain so obscure and so little known.

The Office, under the direction of Mr. Albert Thomas, has legitimately extended the plan of the work outlined by the Governing Body to include agricultural production as well as industrial production. Agricultural production is one of the most important factors of industrial production itself, both as the source of raw material and from its effects on labour conditions through the preponderant influence it exercises on the cost of living.

Much as we experience a certain apprehension with regard to the desire to provide for international intervention in the regulation of agricultural labour, so completely different from industrial labour questions, we also desire, in the interests of all, that studies such as those undertaken by the International Labour Office, which may be expected to exert a decisive influence on the economic future of all nations, should be internationalised.

It was, moreover, the duty of Switzerland to welcome with alacrity and sympathy the International Labour Office, for which the way had already been prepared in this country. I may perhaps be allowed to remind you that we lay claim to a certain priority in this sphere, of which we are proud. About 50 years ago, the question of the international regulation of labour in factories was raised in the Federal Legislature, in a speech by Mr. Emil Frey, Ex-President of the Confederation, and at that time President of the National Council; and some years later a resolution was adopted, requesting the Federal Council to enter into negotiations with the principal industrial States with a view to the preparation of international factory legislation. The steps taken at that time produced no result. They were renewed, however, in 1889, in the shape of an invitation to the Governments of the principal European States to send delegates to a Conference to be held at Berne the following year, in order to formulate, by means of international Conventions, certain measures for the protection of the workers.

It will be remembered how, in February 1890, this invitation (which doubtless would have led to results of a limited but positive character) was thwarted by the decision of the German Emperor to summon an International Congress for the Protection of Workers at Berlin : but the only fruits of that Conference were platonic resolutions leading to no tangible result.

A third time, and yet again without success, the Swiss Government endeavoured to found an *International Office for Labour Legislation*. This institution was subsequently established, but only thanks to private enterprise, as the result of the foundation (during the Paris Exhibition of 1900) of the *International Association for Labour Legislation*. The *International Labour Office*, founded at Basle by the efforts of the Association, and inaugurated on 1 May 1901, though of a private character, received subsidies from several States, and was in a sense the germ or precursor of the International Labour Office, the first Permanent Organisation of the League of Nations, for which a building will be erected upon this spot.

I must crave your pardon for recalling these memories ; the work of which I have just spoken may seem a small thing in comparison with that which now, with a far greater organisation and immeasurably more powerful means of action, wields so great an influence throughout the civilised world. May I be allowed to emphasise once again our faith in its future, of which its past, short though this may be, affords the best guarantee.

Born, like the League of Nations, as a result of the formidable convulsions of the Great War, the International Labour Office shares with the League the prestige due to its tragic origin and the authority it derives from a Covenant signed by fifty-four Nations. Created for the future happiness of mankind, these two Organisations are developing on parallel lines, are gaining strength and preparing themselves to attain their common aims, the achievement of peace with justice : peace between peoples through the League of Nations, peace between classes through the International Labour Organisation. May they both receive in all parts of the world the sympathy and interest which are due to them !

Sir Eric Drummond

Secretary-General of the League of Nations

Mr. Vice-President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The original offer of a site for the new building of the International Labour Office, the first stone of which will be laid in a few minutes, was made in September 1922, and the third Assembly of the League of Nations in accepting this offer conveyed to the Federal Government its high appreciation for the large sense of generosity which inspired the gift.

I feel that I may, however, be allowed on this occasion once again to express on behalf of the League our profound gratitude for this splendid donation. It is welcome not only because of its intrinsic value, which is very great, but also because it expresses the confidence and belief in the future of the International Labour Office and the League of the Federal Government and of the Swiss people.

I trust that before long it will be possible to take full advantage of the similar munificent act of the authorities of the Canton and Town of Geneva, and that when the time is ripe the first stone of a Hall worthy of the Assembly of the League of Nations will also be well and truly laid.

The International Labour Office has now more than completed three years' life in Geneva, while the Secretariat of the League is approaching that period. The experience of both bodies has most clearly shown that the original choice of the famous Treaty of Versailles was wise and that no better atmosphere for fruitful collaboration and peaceful conciliation, whether between nations or between classes, could be found than in this historic city.

It is good at the present time to have these material signs of encouragement, since both the International Labour Office and the League of Nations itself are being subjected to considerable criticism. When attacks are based on genuine and well considered grounds, they may even be welcomed, either because the criticisms they contain show the way to reform and improve-

ment, or because they can be dispelled by reasoned argument. But the case is different when, as is too often nowadays the case, such attacks are based on invincible ignorance or ill-will. Here no explanations or reasoning are of any avail, since the attackers do not wish to know the truth. We have, however, one consolation when the League and the International Labour Office are attacked, namely that such attacks afford definite proof of our vitality. No one would attack moribund institutions, and therefore perhaps the growing strength of the League and the International Labour Office may be gauged from the increasing violence of certain critics. The beginning of the building on this site of the permanent home of the International Labour Office affords, if it were needed, the material proof of the belief which the Governments of 54 nations have in the enduring existence of the International Labour Office. I feel therefore that all Members of the League will particularly welcome this occasion and be specially grateful for the opportunity of associating themselves with the Federal Government in a public expression of faith in the future both of the League and of the International Labour Office.

Mr. Carlier

*Vice-Chairman of the Governing Body
of the International Labour Office,*

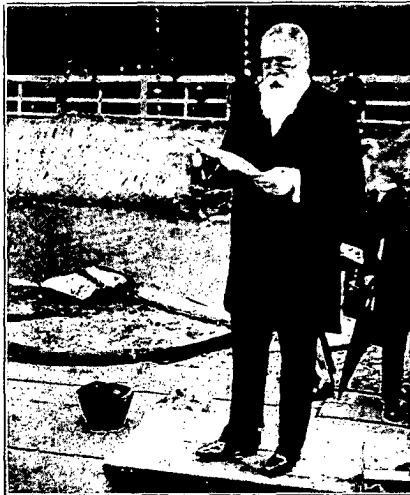
REPRESENTING THE EMPLOYERS' GROUP.

(Translation.)

Mr. Vice-President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Employers' Group of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office desires to associate itself with the sentiments which are aroused on all sides by the ceremony for which we are gathered together here today.

This ceremony, in its democratic simplicity, is in keeping with the character of the free and hospitable country to which



we are so largely indebted for the building in which our services will soon be housed. It is a proof of a sincere desire to see the three great factors in production, the very fountain-head of

prosperity and of peace for modern nations — labour, capital, and intelligence, reconciled in a spirit of fraternal solidarity.

But no human undertaking, whether material or moral, and this is surely the moment to repeat this truth, can prove either stable or lasting, unless it be founded on the lessons of the past, on those of experience and of science.

However original may be the style which he has planned for any building, what architect would have the temerity to neglect technical principles in laying the foundations on which his building must rest ?

The same principle applies in all things ; we are guided by this idea when, fully conscious of our duties and our responsibilities, we endeavour to provide our fellow-workers with work which shall ensure them, not only their daily bread, but security for the future, the good life worth while and the healthy and heartening joys of family life and of the mind.

This is the part we are called upon to perform in the social life of the community ; we shall put into it our heart and soul and the best of our intelligence.

Mr. Jouhaux

*Vice-Chairman of the Governing Body
of the International Labour Office,*

REPRESENTING THE WORKERS' GROUP

(Translation.)

Mr. Vice-President, Ladies, Gentlemen, and Comrades,

We are here today to lay the foundation stone of the House of Endeavour — endeavour to achieve Justice, Liberty, Right, and all the best of which Humanity is capable.

Dedicated to Labour and to the Rights of Labour, the International Labour Office has a two-fold character : practical and symbolic.

Practical in that it aims at establishing economic democracy ; symbolic, in that it stands for the fraternal organisation of Labour.

Looking beyond the strife of daily life, the working-class, in its long struggle for emancipation, has always demanded that social problems be judged and solved in the light of Right.

It therefore hailed the advent of the Labour Charter, formally inscribed in the Treaties of Peace, and the creation of the International Labour Office which we honour today, as the fruit of its efforts and as the materialisation of new conceptions of justice. The Office is a new institution, but already powerful because it exists for the defence and the ennobling of Labour, without which nothing can exist.

Zeal for progress, faith in the future, these must be and continue to be its watchwords.

Its mission is to render social reforms universal in their application, to obtain their incorporation in the conditions of life of the working-class in all countries and to see that they are strictly enforced in the letter and spirit of the law. This is a lofty and humane mission which can only be achieved by never-ceasing effort towards education, organisation, and progress, an effort containing within itself all the sources of life because it is animated by a sublime faith in human brotherhood.

Founded on Right, sustained by the conscious will of Labour, the new Organisation will overcome all the difficulties and obstacles which human undertakings invariably encounter.

The Home of Labour is indestructible. Humanity itself is concerned to ensure the continued development of labour along the lines of peace and progress.

Continuity of productive effort is necessary, even indispensable, to ensure the existence of all forms of art and unfettered



thought by which the life of human communities is ennobled and idealised.

Can man indeed rise to the sublimest heights of philosophy, can he realise his visions either in harmony of form or in symphony of colour, without the fertile aid of Labour ?

Man's effort and that of Nature, Labour, is alone capable of ensuring the continuity of human life. Labour is all.

It is the foundation stone of the Temple of Labour, over the portal of which the new Law will be written, that we are laying here today.

Let all those rally round it who, throughout the world, found their hopes on the new order and wish to hasten its coming by the continual extension of the action of the International Labour Organisation, which is a power for progress, for social justice, which nothing should resist, and no danger dismay.

Mr. Arthur Fontaine

*Chairman of the Governing Body
of the International Labour Office,*

REPRESENTING THE GOVERNMENT GROUP

(Translation.)

Mr. Vice-President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The foundation stone of the building which is to be the home of the International Labour Office, the constitution of which was submitted to the Peace Conference in 1919 by the Right Hon. G. N. Barnes, Representative of Great Britain, has now been laid. In that building, by means of systematic collection of documents, by impartial and careful investigation into the conditions of labour, workers inspired by a love of justice and order will prepare proposals for international labour legislation in accordance with the principles laid down in Part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles.

On the basis of this work of the Office, the annual Conferences submit proposals to the Governments and Parliaments and the subsequent adoption of considered and carefully prepared measures will result in the progressive improvement of the position of the workers, in the development of social justice, and thereby in securing the peace of the world. These are the hopes, the aims, and the methods of Part XIII of the Treaty of Peace.

It is of happy omen that these foundation stones have been laid, with equal confidence in the harmonious evolution of the common weal, by a representative of the workers' organisations, a representative of the employers' organisations, and by a representative of the Governments, Members of the Permanent Labour Organisation.

It is of happy omen also that the stones should have been laid on Genevese soil, on a site generously presented by the Swiss Confederation, just as twenty years ago the foundations of International Labour Conventions were laid in Switzerland, at Berne. This exemplifies that continuity of opinion, of aims,

and of methods which ensures the success of human undertakings.

Finally, it is of happy omen that the League of Nations, after prolonged and careful consideration, should have voted the necessary funds for the construction of this building, and that it was the General Assembly of the associated Nations which took this decision and accepted the liability in their name.

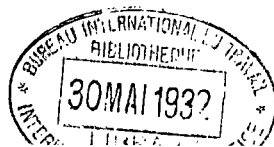
The members of our Governing Body, who have all at heart the noble and beneficent aims embodied in the Preamble of



Part XIII, have received the valuable resources placed by the Swiss Confederation and by the League of Nations at the disposal of the Permanent Labour Organisation with a deep sense of responsibility.

In order to achieve these aims, the Governing Body have entrusted those resources to Mr. Epitoux, who has planned on simple and harmonious lines a great edifice dedicated to Labour, to be erected amid these peaceful and beautiful surroundings, and to our Director Albert Thomas and his fellow-workers, who will convert this edifice into a living and beneficent institution.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Governing Body of the International Labour Office wish to express their cordial thanks to the members of the Federal Council, and particularly to the Vice-President, Mr. Chuard, to the distinguished representatives of the States, to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, to the authorities of the City and Canton of Geneva, to the members of the International Labour Conference, and to all those who have, by their presence here today, shown their



sympathy. We cherish this proof of their goodwill, which will strengthen our faith in the future, our devotion to the International Labour Office, to the League of Nations, and to the cause of social justice and peace. both within each country and throughout the world. Mr. Albert Thomas has proposed as our motto : *Si vis pacem, cole justitiam*. With all my heart, I thank all the friends of justice and peace.

TELEGRAMS AND MESSAGES.

Several prominent persons who were unable to accept the invitation to be present at the ceremony sent messages to the Office: extracts are given below.

The *Right Hon. G. N. Barnes*, who represented Great Britain on the Commission on International Labour Legislation of the Peace Conference, and in 1919 submitted to the latter body the Convention (afterwards incorporated in the Treaty of Peace as Part XIII) under which the International Labour Organisation was founded, wrote regretting his inability to be present, and added :

“Needless to say, I am glad to know that the Office has found so much favour with the Swiss authorities and I hope it may go on with increasing strength to realise the ideals of its sponsors at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.”

Mr. Branting, the former Swedish Prime Minister, Representative of Sweden on the Council of the League of Nations, telegraphed as follows :

“Your today’s ceremony is a proud reply to the reaction now almost everywhere prevailing, and points the way to a better future for labouring Humanity.”

Dr. Brauns, the German Minister of Labour, in a letter to the Director, said :

“It is a pleasure to me to express my sincerest good wishes for the further development of the International Labour Organisation and of the Office which you direct.”

The *Right Hon. Viscount Burnham*, who presided over the Third and Fourth Sessions of the International Labour Conference, wrote :

“ You will, I am sure, appreciate that I understand to the full the meaning and significance of this great embodiment of international goodwill and aspiration, and that nothing would give me greater pleasure than to renew my personal association with the International Labour Organisation. I shall always remember with gratitude the high honour conferred upon me of being twice elected in two successive years to preside over the Conference at a time when issues of such importance were submitted for the judgment of the nations speaking through their representatives as a world-wide body of public opinion.

With these feelings of sincere and heartfelt goodwill towards the International Labour Organisation and the fullest confidence in its usefulness to the highest interests of civilisation, I am, etc. ”

Mr. Colliard, former Minister of Labour and of Social Welfare of the French Republic, who represented France on the International Labour Legislation Commission in Paris, said :

“ I have been very touched by your invitation to be present at the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the Palace of International Labour Legislation.

This legislation will endure as a great social work accomplished by the Treaty of Peace of Versailles. ”

Mr. Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor, who was Chairman of the International Labour Legislation Commission, regretted that owing to the meeting of the Annual Convention of the Federation of Labor it would be impossible for him to reach Geneva in time for the ceremony and continued :

“ Of course, I cannot tell you in words the deep interest I feel in the work and the future possibilities of the International Labour Office. The erection of a building for service in furtherance of the purposes outlined in the Preamble of the International Labour Charter is pregnant with momentous importance. You were right when you say that as President of the International Commission which formulated the Labour Charter in Paris, and created the International Labour Office, it would be appropriate for me to be with you at the laying of the cornerstone for the building, and it therefore causes me additional regret that I cannot be with you on that auspicious occasion.

Permit me to express the earnest hope for the perpetuation and success of the International Labour Organisation. Rest

assured that anything that I can contribute to attain that end will be gladly and promptly performed.

Please accept and kindly convey my fraternal regards to all who may participate in the ceremonies at the cornerstone laying."

Mr. Hanotaux, member of the French Academy, former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Representative of France on the Council of the League of Nations, telegraphed :

"Much regret unable to come to Geneva for ceremony. Am requesting Mr. Dupuy to represent me. Best wishes and congratulations success of your great effort."

Mr. Paul Hymans, the Belgian statesman and member of the Council of the League of Nations, replied as follows :

"I should have been very happy to show by my presence my warm sympathy for the growth of the International Labour Organisation. But I am detained in Brussels by urgent duties and absorbing activities and it will be impossible for me to come to Geneva during the next few days.

Please excuse me and accept this expression of my feelings of keen personal sympathy and of my devotion to the high aims which are you pursuing."

Mr. Loucheur, the former French Minister, who was a member of the International Labour Legislation Commission in Paris, wrote :

"As you so aptly recall, your work in the common interest and the very attacks which have been directed against it from certain quarters go to prove that it was wanted.

I do not forget that I was one of the members of the International Labour Legislation Commission which drew up the constitution of this Organisation and it is for this reason that I should have been happy to be with you on 21 October next."

Mr. K. Otchiai, Japanese Ambassador in Rome, who was also a member of the International Labour Legislation Commission, said :

"Since the time when I took part in the work of the International Labour Legislation Commission of the Peace Conference for the constitution of the International Labour Organisation I have always followed with great interest the development of this Organisation and I desire to express to you my warmest congratulations on the occasion of the important ceremony of 21 October."

Finally, it may be mentioned that among the numerous letters and telegrams conveying good wishes and congratulations were messages from *Sir James Allen*, High Commissioner for New Zealand in London and Delegate of New Zealand to the Fourth Assembly of the League of Nations; *Dr. Benes*, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Delegate of Czechoslovakia to the Fourth Assembly; *Mr. Bustamante*, Judge of the Permanent Court of International Justice; *Mr. van Eysinga*, Delegate of the Netherlands to the Fourth Assembly; *Sir Neville Howse*, Delegate of Australia to the Fourth Assembly; *Viscount Ishii*, Japanese Ambassador to the French Republic, Representative of Japan on the Council of the League of Nations; *Baron Lehmann*, Minister of Liberia in France, Delegate of Liberia to the Fourth Assembly; *Mr. Motta*, Head of the Swiss Federal Political Department, Delegate of Switzerland to the Fourth Assembly; *Dr. Ninchitch*, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Delegate of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes to the Fourth Assembly; *Mr. Schmidt*, Federal Minister for Social Administration of the Republic of Austria; *Sir Henry Strakosch*, Delegate of South Africa to the Fourth Assembly; *Mr. Vandervelde*, Representative of Belgium on the International Labour Legislation Commission of the Preliminary Peace Conference in Paris, 1919; *Mr. Herluf Zahle*, Danish Minister in Sweden, Delegate of Denmark to the Fourth Assembly.

THE PLANTING OF AN OAK

PRESENTED BY LATVIA.

The ceremony was appropriately terminated by the planting of a young oak which the Delegation of Latvia to the International Labour Conference, Mr. Robert Dukurs and Mr. Vilis Cipste (Government Delegates), Mr. Rudolfs Veidemans (Government Adviser), Mr. Eduards Kurau (Employers' Delegate), Mr. Janis Wishna (Workers' Delegate), and Mr. Karlis Serzans (Secretary to the Delegation), had brought from their country as a gift to the International Labour Organisation.

The letter in which the Minister of Labour of the Republic of Latvia announced the presentation of the tree is as follows :

Letter

*from the Minister of Labour of the Republic of Latvia
to the Director of the International Labour Office.*

(Translation.)

12 October 1923.

Sir,

In reply to your letter of 5 October in which you informed us of the date of the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the building which is to become the permanent premises of the International Labour Office, I am very happy to be able to announce that the Latvian Delegation to the International Labour Conference will attend the ceremony.

I can truly say that the day of 21 October will have a very special meaning for the Latvian people, because re-born Latvia

will see in the laying of the foundation stone a further manifestation of the reality of the League of Nations and of the stabilisation of an institution recognised as indispensable to international relations.

On this occasion our Delegation intend to bring with them a tree — the Latvian oak — to be planted, under your high protection, on the day of the ceremony in the garden of the new building.

May I draw your attention to the meaning of this national tree of Latvia ? The oak symbolises the strength of the Latvian people throughout its history. For this reason Latvia eagerly desires to see this symbol of those principles, which time and space cannot change, flourishing before the portals of that Temple of Labour the doors of which remain open to all nations.

I should therefore be very grateful to you if you would take our wishes into account in your arrangements for this solemn ceremony.

I have the honour to be, etc.,

(Signed) G. HAUSTING,

Minister of Labour.

The presentation was made by the President of the Latvian Delegation, Mr. Roberts Dukurs, Member of Parliament and Ex-Minister, who spoke as follows :

M. Roberts Dukurs

President of the Latvian Delegation.

(Translation.)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Latvian Delegation present at this solemn ceremony desires to leave here a modest memorial of the Latvian people on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of the new building of the International Labour Office, the temple of international solidarity. We have brought from our martyred country an oak, symbol of the hope and the resistance of our people, in order to plant it in this soil and thereby to confirm anew the fact that Latvia considers international solidarity to be

one of the great conquests of civilisation. We leave this oak here as a sign of the fidelity of the Latvian people to the great ideas of social justice. The realisation of these ideas is entrusted



to the International Labour Organisation and we are convinced that it will accomplish this arduous task.

* * *

Mr. Arthur Fontaine, Chairman of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, in accepting the gift of the Republic of Latvia, spoke as follows :

Mr. Arthur Fontaine

*Chairman of the Governing Body
of the International Labour Office.*

(Translation.)

Mr. Dukurs,

That the people of Latvia, mindful of their age-long sufferings, should have wished on this day to affirm the persistence throughout the ages of the immaterial principle of social justice, has moved me profoundly.

This principle, like all principles which constitute the force of nations and which are eternal, will in the future assure to the workers of all nations justice, well-being, and happiness in work, that happiness which is so necessary to social order. This symbol which we plant today, this Latvian symbol of the principle of justice, will animate the International Labour Office and ensure the well-being of the nations.

THE LABOUR CHARTER

Part XIII of the Treaty of Peace, which set up the Permanent Labour Organisation, contains an Article on the principles for regulating conditions of labour, which the States signatory of the Treaty recognised to be "of particular and urgent importance". This Article, the text of which is given below, outlines the programme of the Permanent Labour Organisation and defines its work.

The HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES, recognising that the well-being, physical, moral and intellectual, of industrial wage-earners is of supreme international importance, have framed, in order to further this great end, the permanent machinery provided for in Section I, and associated with that of the League of Nations.

They recognise that differences of climate, habits and customs, of economic opportunity and industrial tradition, make strict uniformity in the conditions of labour difficult of immediate attainment. But, holding as they do that labour should not be regarded merely as an article of commerce, they think that there are methods and principles for regulating labour conditions which all industrial communities should endeavour to apply, so far as their special circumstances will permit.

Among these methods and principles, the following seem to the HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES to be of special and urgent importance :—

First.—The guiding principle above enunciated that labour should not be regarded merely as a commodity or article of commerce.

Second.—The right of association for all lawful purposes by the employed as well as by the employers.

Third.—The payment to the employed of a wage adequate to maintain a reasonable standard of life as this is understood in their time and country.

Fourth.—The adoption of an eight hours day or a forty-eight hours week as the standard to be aimed at where it has not already been attained.

Fifth.—The adoption of a weekly rest of at least twenty-four hours, which should include Sunday wherever practicable.

Sixth.—The abolition of child labour and the imposition of such limitations on the labour of young persons as shall permit the continuation of their education and assure their proper physical development.

Seventh.—The principle that men and women should receive equal remuneration for work of equal value.

Eighth.—The standard set by law in each country with respect to the conditions of labour should have due regard to the equitable economic treatment of all workers lawfully resident therein.

Ninth.—Each State should make provision for a system of inspection in which women should take part, in order to ensure the enforcement of the laws and regulations for the protection of the employed.

Without claiming that these methods and principles are either complete or final, the HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES are of opinion that they are well fitted to guide the policy of the League of Nations; and that, if adopted by the industrial communities who are members of the League, and safeguarded in practice by an adequate system of such inspection, they will confer lasting benefits upon the wage-earners of the world.

(Article 427.)
