

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

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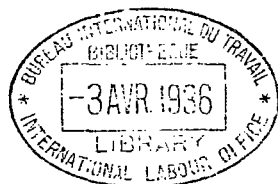
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FOREWORD

Three years' experience have led to some slight modifications in the general scheme of the periodical publications of the International Labour Office (the Official Bulletin, Industrial and Labour Information, and the International Labour Review), which aim at defining more clearly the contents and purpose of each of them.

The original plan of these publications did not sufficiently exclude the possibility of some small amount of overlapping. Thus the Official Bulletin used occasionally to publish information of the 'news' type which would more suitably have appeared, and in some cases did appear, in a different form in Industrial and Labour Information. Further, the distinction was not always sufficiently clear between Industr. and Labour Information, which in its weekly form was tending to print an increasing proportion of the news received during the week in the form of general summaries, and the Review, in which certain of the monthly surveys (under the headings "Industrial Relations", "Migration", etc.) sometimes contained summaries of news which had already appeared in Industrial and Labour Information.

The ground to be covered by each publication will in future be more clearly marked off from that of the others. The Official Bulletin will publish such documents and information as may be deemed essential to the compilation of a complete official record of the history of the Organisation and its work; it will not appear at regular intervals but only as occasion may demand. Industrial and Labour Information will continue to publish week by week news on the principal current events in the field of economics, industry and labour. The Review will take for its sphere scientific research and documentation, in contrast to the more topical contents of Industrial and Labour Information. It will publish a larger number than before of studies

and articles in the proper sense of the word. More attention, too, will be given to the scientific work of the Office, and to the results of its investigations, whether of items on the Agenda of the Conference, or of questions raised by Draft Conventions and Recommendations or by requests for enquiries. The surveys formerly published under the titles "Trade Union Movement", "Employers' Associations", "Notes on Migration", etc., will be eliminated, and the ground covered by them will be dealt with in Industrial and Labour Information. Certain regular features will, however, be retained which are better adapted to a monthly than to a weekly publication, either from their content or from the form in which they are necessarily published. These include the statistical tables of prices, cost of living, unemployment, wages, etc.; the summaries of labour inspection reports; and, finally, the bibliography, if possible improved and extended in scope.

The International Conference of Labour Statisticians

THE International Labour Organisation is charged under the Treaty of Peace with the "collection and distribution of information on all subjects relating to the international adjustment of conditions of industrial life and labour" and in accordance with this task it is often called upon to collect and compare statistics relating to labour conditions in different countries. Its work, however, has been hampered by the fact that it was impossible in the present state of official statistics to compare with any degree of adequacy the level of unemployment, wages, or prices in two or more countries; and it soon became evident that before any international comparisons could be made, the countries must endeavour to agree on standard methods of compiling and publishing statistics of labour. Moreover, the Treaty of Peace created several new countries, which immediately set about establishing statistical departments to deal with labour questions. Frequently they applied to the International Labour Office for advice as to the methods to be adopted and as to what was being done in other countries. The suggestion was therefore made that a conference of official statisticians engaged in the compilation of statistics relating to labour should be called by the International Labour Office for the purpose of considering the problems involved in the compilation of such statistics and of agreeing, if possible, upon certain methods and standards with a view to rendering labour statistics more comparable as between different countries and industries. As this suggestion was welcomed and even pressed by certain governments, the Governing Body approved the summoning of such a conference. It was decided that all States Members of the Organisation should be invited to send delegates; and that the Conference of Labour Statisticians should immediately follow the International Labour Conference convoked for 22 October 1923, so that many of the delegates and advisers who attended the general Conference would be able to remain for the Statistical Conference.

PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE

In the letter of convocation which was despatched in August 1923 to all Members of the Organisation, the purpose of such a conference was clearly stated. It was pointed out that the conference could not attempt to lay down a uniform system for the drawing up of labour statistics in the different countries, since in many cases statistics are the by-product of the application of legislative or administrative measures ; but that its objects should be primarily to discover whether certain methods might be adopted which would enable existing statistics to be presented in such a way that international comparisons would be facilitated. It was not intended that the conference should recommend that the various countries should be called upon to discard their systems in favour of an international ideal. It would recognise that national statistics are primarily and fundamentally for the purpose of throwing light on national conditions and that international uniformity must always be subordinate to national clarity. All that was expected of the conference would be the laying down of general principles, in the hope that the various official statistical authorities in making changes or developments in their national systems would endeavour as far as practicable to move in the direction of some agreed international standard.

THE AGENDA

In fixing the agenda of the conference it was necessary to keep in mind two points of view. On the one hand, it was felt that in view of the interdependence of different branches of labour statistics, it would be desirable to cover as large a field as possible ; on the other hand, it was thought that a first conference of this kind would be most likely to lead to useful results if its programme were not too ambitious and were limited to a few carefully chosen subjects. The Governing Body finally decided, after full discussion, to limit the agenda to the following three items : classification of industries and occupations for the purpose of labour statistics ; statistics of wages and hours of labour ; and statistics of industrial accidents. These were selected out of a list of six items which included in addition to the three mentioned above : statistics of

cost of living ; statistics of employment and unemployment ; and statistics of strikes and lock-outs.

In deciding on the inclusion of these items the importance of the subject, the possibility of achieving some satisfactory result, and practical convenience were taken into consideration. The first item is obviously of prime importance. Statistics of unemployment, of wages, of accidents, of trade disputes, are of little use unless they are classified by industries and occupations. All countries adopt classifications of some kind, and for purposes of international comparison it is of the highest importance that some progress should be made towards international co-ordination in this matter. Statistics of wages and hours of labour form one of the chief branches of labour statistics, and international comparisons of wages in different countries are being more and more sought after. Wage statistics are available for a very large number of countries, but the different methods of publishing them make comparisons at the present time very difficult, and it was thought probable that a conference could agree upon some general principles which would render the statistics of different countries more uniform and more comparable than at present. Statistics of industrial accidents are a subject rather apart from the other branches of labour statistics. They generally arise out of the legislation in force in different countries, which varies greatly from one country to another, and, on account of their special nature, industrial accidents are usually dealt with by a different department from that which deals with other labour statistics. It was to be feared, therefore, that any meeting of official statisticians interested in labour statistics would not include many experts in the subject of industrial accidents. As, however, the International Labour Conference, meeting during the previous week, was to discuss the question of general principles for the organisation of factory inspection and would therefore bring to Geneva among the delegations a large number of factory inspectors and other experts who deal from day to day with industrial accidents, it was thought that, on grounds of practical convenience, this would be the most suitable item to fill the third place on the agenda¹.

¹ Reports on each subject were prepared by the Statistical Section of the International Labour Office in English, French, and German. These reports, which were submitted in proof to the delegates at the Conference, will shortly be issued by the Office in its series of *Studies and Reports*, together with a summary of the proceedings and the official text of the resolutions adopted by the Conference.

OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

The Conference was opened on 29 October by the Director of the International Labour Office. Thirty-three countries were represented, including almost every European state and countries as far distant as Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Japan, and India. The countries unrepresented were confined almost entirely to certain states of South America and, of course, to certain states which are not Members of the International Labour Organisation (for instance, the United States of America and Russia). Many countries sent several representatives who were severally interested in the different items under discussion. In all, 52 representatives attended the Conference, of whom one represented the Economic and Financial Section of the League of Nations.

Mr. Armand Julin, General Secretary of the Belgian Ministry of Industry and Labour, was unanimously elected president of the Conference. The choice was a happy one, for Mr. Julin not only had a large experience of international conferences but was both a distinguished statistician and an experienced administrator. Three vice-presidents were elected, namely, Mr. Coats, Dominion Statistician, Canada; Mr. Solinas, Director-General of Labour at the Ministry of National Economy, Italy; and Dr. Platzer, Director at the Federal Statistical Office, Germany.

It was decided that the Conference should do its work through three committees, each of which would deal with one of the items on the agenda. Mr. John Hilton, Director of Statistics, Ministry of Labour, Great Britain, was appointed chairman and rapporteur of the Committee on Classification of Industries and Occupations; Mr. Huber, Director of the *Statistique Générale de la France*, was appointed chairman and rapporteur of the Committee on Statistics of Wages and Hours of Labour; and Dr. Bohren, Deputy Director of the National Accident Insurance Fund, Switzerland, was appointed chairman of the Committee on Statistics of Industrial Accidents, with Mr. Sokal, Polish Government representative on the Governing Body, formerly Director of the Office of Labour, Poland, as vice-chairman and rapporteur.

CLASSIFICATION OF INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS

The problem before the Committee on the Classification of

Industries and Occupations was a difficult one. It was to consider whether any uniform principles could be laid down for the classification of workers according to their industry or occupation. Most states have not one but many different classifications, and within the same country it is often difficult to compare different facts about the same industry or occupation owing to the bases of classification being different. The difficulty therefore from the international point of view is much greater.

By far the most important classification in all countries is that obtained, usually at ten-year intervals, on the occasion of the general census of the population, and it was to the classifications possible in this case that the attention of the Committee was primarily directed. On these occasions the whole population engaged in industrial life is analysed on the basis of 'individuals', and grouped according to some *a priori* system. It was on these lines that Dr. Bertillon proceeded thirty years ago, in his scheme of classification presented to the International Statistical Institute. The individual engaged in industrial life formed the basis of the classification, and individuals were grouped according to their occupation. The disadvantages of such a grouping are obvious. Individuals do not exist in actual life as isolated parts of a community, but as links in a chain, as members of an organism. Hence more recent censuses have attempted to restore the connection of the individual with the economic life of the community by finding out the exact position of the worker in the industrial life. The fundamental parts of economic life from the point of view of production are not the individuals but the undertakings, establishments, or services with which he or she is connected, and for this purpose the classification is based not on the individual but on a higher unit, namely, the establishment or plant considered as a technical unit for the purpose of production and distribution of goods and services. Hence arises the fundamental distinction between a classification of occupations and a classification of industries, and it is impossible on any logical basis to combine the two. To take an example, one carpenter is employed in making or repairing motor-car bodies, and another in house building. Obviously the former is a worker in the automobile industry and the latter a worker in the building industry, and, although the majority of carpenters are employed in the building industry, any classification which groups all carpenters together under the heading 'building industry' is inaccurate and illogical. It is of course true that certain occupations exist

in only one industry — for instance, coal miners in the mining industry — but as a general rule most occupations are found within several industries and certain occupations are found in nearly every industry. This fundamental principle was recognised by the Committee and formed the basis of the first resolution adopted.

Classification of Industries and Services

Having accepted the principle of two distinct classifications the Committee proceeded to discuss in further detail the primary classification, namely, that of industries and services. The main object of such a classification is to furnish an appropriate division of the population into the different branches of industrial life. Though the classification might differ from country to country according to natural resources and industrial development, yet as regards the main groups there is general agreement. In former times, and in non-industrialised communities at the present time, specialisation of function is practised to a small extent and the basis of social life is agricultural. With the development of industrial life a broad distinction can be drawn between dwellers in the country who are chiefly engaged in obtaining raw materials by cultivating the soil or extracting various products, and town dwellers who are generally engaged in producing finished goods or in rendering commercial or public services. The function of transport first developed largely to provide a link between the two, and workers specialising in personal, domestic, and professional services enable others to develop their special tasks. On the lines thus indicated, therefore, a distinction is made between those engaged in the production of goods and those rendering services; the former group is again divisible into those engaged in obtaining raw materials and food products from natural sources, and secondary producers, i.e. those engaged in the transformation or modification of materials and the production or repair of finished goods. These three principal divisions, namely, primary production, secondary production, and services, were accepted by the Committee, the former group being divided into agriculture, forestry, etc., and mining and quarrying, and the group 'services' into transport, commerce, public administration, professions, and domestic and personal service. These are fairly well-defined groups which exist in the classifications of nearly every country and could therefore be accepted without much discussion. Certain

borderline cases, however, exist, particularly 'hotels and boarding houses', which are sometimes classed under 'commerce' and sometimes under 'domestic and personal service'. In the scheme as adopted they were included under 'domestic and personal service'.

The remaining one of these three principal divisions is secondary production, or as it might be shortly, though not strictly accurately, termed, 'manufacturing industries'. It is here that the most difficult and the most important part of the classification problem really begins, most difficult because of the great differences between country and country and the numerous principles or methods which may be adopted, and most important not only because of the great development of manufacturing industries in modern states, but because labour statistics are most frequently concerned with this part of economic life.

Classifications of manufacturing industries naturally differ according to the industrial development of the country. In the early stages of this development the materials worked in were fundamental in determining the industrial structure of a community. Usually one material was taken and transformed into a finished product, but gradually products of mixed materials became more common. Metals — in particular iron and steel — extended their sphere and were substituted for wood and stone, and the same material came to be used in a large number of different industries. Wood, for example, is now used in most principal industries, from forestry and lumbering down to ship, automobile, and aeroplane building, although articles made wholly or principally of wood have given place to articles made of other materials, principally iron.

Industrial development, however, is shown not only in the fuller and more diverse use of materials but also in the elaboration of processes of manufacture. From splitting or analysing composite raw materials into their components, synthetic processes develop of combining materials in different ways, and manual processes evolve into mechanical, physical, and chemical processes. The construction of ships might be considered as a mechanical combination of different materials, and would from this point of view be similar to the construction of railways or buildings.

Manufactured goods may further be considered from the point of view of the human needs which they satisfy or the objects they serve; such, for instance, as the desires for food, clothing, warmth, shelter, transport, and recreation, which have led to the

creation of products with the primary purpose of satisfying such needs.

There are thus three principal points of view from which the classification of the manufacturing interests might be regarded : the materials worked in or handled ; the process carried on ; or the purpose of the product. Other points of view are possible ; but these are the three principal ones which have usually been taken into consideration in framing a classification of industries. If the systems actually in force in the different countries are examined it will almost invariably be found that more than one of the above principles has been taken into consideration ; and the two which have had the greatest effect appear to be the materials used and the purpose of the product. It has been shown that the use of materials has become more and more complex and a classification based on this principle would necessarily at the present time have a large group based on mixed materials which could not be classified on this basis or even according to the principal component material. Similarly a classification based on product would contain a large group of miscellaneous products which serve numerous purposes. Two alternatives therefore present themselves : either to give separate classifications based on different principles, or to adopt a mixed classification. On the former alternative, the manufacture of boots and shoes, to give a concrete example, would be grouped with ' leather ' if the material was used as basis, and with ' clothing ' if the product were used as basis ; while on the latter alternative one principle would be taken as basis and other principles used wherever special circumstances so required.

In view of all these admitted difficulties, a resolution was submitted to the Committee proposing that a combination of two or all of the three principles should be used, an appropriate combination being that of taking as a foundation groups based on the materials used, but forming a separate group wherever industrial organisation permits or demands that an important group should be given separately on the basis of the process or the product. The discussion of the problem in Committee emphasised the difficulty and complexity of the problem and the impossibility of arriving at any agreed basis. It was suggested that perhaps the question of primary importance at the present time was to secure information regarding the more important manufacturing industries common to all countries, rather than to obtain a uniform arrangement of industries, which presented endless

difficulties. A provisional alphabetical list of the chief manufacturing industries should be drawn up by the International Labour Office, in consultation with other bodies also interested in the problem of classification, for instance, from the point of view of trade or production, in order that the problem of classification as a whole might be kept in mind. The groupings of industries used in the different countries should be so subdivided that it would always be possible to secure separate information concerning an adequately complete number of industries included in such a list. This proposal, which would still leave the question of classification open for future discussion, secured the unanimous agreement of the Committee.

Classification of Occupations

The classification of workers according to their occupation was recognised by the Committee at the outset as totally distinct from a classification by industries. An occupation is a personal characteristic appropriate to a particular individual, and is therefore independent of the industrial organisation or economic structure of the community. All occupations are exercised *within* an industry by individuals working either on their own account or on account of others, and the duties performed by a worker in a certain 'occupation' may be quite different in one industry from those in another. A 'carpenter' in an automobile factory may be very different from a 'carpenter' in a house-building establishment an 'embroidery worker' making hand-made embroidery is totally different from an 'embroidery worker' making it by machinery. This necessity of considering the personal occupation in relation to the industry in which it is carried on was fully realised by the Committee and was in fact embodied in the first resolution adopted.

It is of course realised that the classification of occupations within each industry need not be carried out to the lowest detail. Considerations of expense alone would prevent it. In most branches of labour statistics it might even be possible to manage with some broad classes. In wage statistics occupations grouped into skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled manual workers, technical staff, clerical staff, and supervising staff, might be sufficient for some purposes. In unemployment statistics, however, a detailed classification is necessary in order that the right man may be placed in the right job, and in this case the character of the material

available, i. e. the data supplied by the trade unions, by labour exchanges, or by unemployment insurance institutions, will determine the groupings adopted.

The real difficulty at the present time, however, in comparing such statistics internationally, is that the terms used to denote particular occupations in one country do not always have the same significance as the corresponding terms in another. It is therefore most desirable to have some source of reference for information as to the exact meaning of the occupational terms used in statistics in different languages. An attempt had already been made in the United Kingdom, France, and the United States in this direction, and on the initiative of the International Statistical Institute, a *Répertoire technologique* of the names of industries and occupations had been published in English, French, and German in 1909. The Committee unanimously agreed that it would be desirable that each country should publish definitions of the occupational, industrial, and other terms most commonly used in connection with its labour statistics.

This completed the programme of work of the Committee. It surveyed the field of classification from the point of view of the labour statistician. It laid down as a fundamental principle of all such classifications that a classification of industries and services should be totally distinct from a classification of occupations. It approved a general scheme for the grouping of the main industries and services. For manufacturing industries it adopted the principle, which is also of general application, that the establishment should be taken as the basis ; but while leaving the question of the grouping of such establishments for further consideration it proposed the preparation of a list of the chief manufacturing industries, for which information should be given by each country. Finally, it expressed the desire that each country should publish definitions of its occupational and other terms in order to facilitate international comparison.

STATISTICS OF WAGES AND HOURS OF LABOUR

The Committee on Statistics of Wages and Hours of Labour had a somewhat different task from that of the Committee on Classification. In the latter subject the Committee was, to some extent, breaking new ground and questions of principle were involved. In the subject of wages, theoretical considerations were almost absent and the problems involved were chiefly concerned

with matters of presentation and definition. Wage statistics exist in all countries ; but the material available in the different countries varies widely in its completeness, regularity, and representativeness, and the difficulties encountered are rather of an administrative character connected with the collection and compilation of data on generally accepted principles. The meagreness of existing wage statistics is evident when attempts are made, as is more and more required at the present time, to effect international comparisons.

Now, the chief object of statistics of wages is either to provide information concerning the ' price of labour ' as part of the cost of production, or to throw light on the standard of living of the workers ; the kind of statistics required largely depends on the object in view. For the first purpose the statistics most suitable are *wage rates*, which show the amount payable for a given unit of work, while for the second purpose *earnings*, which show the total amount actually paid to a given worker, are required. The principal types of wage rates are, as is well known, time rates, which indicate the payment for a given period, and piece rates, which indicate the payment for a given output ; and though these are quite distinct in principle yet in practice they are closely connected. These two methods of payment are to some extent fixed by taking into consideration both a standard of adequate work for the wages paid and a standard of earnings for a normal worker. Earnings have the same significance whatever the method of payment and the only distinction required is between nominal or money earnings and real earnings, the latter showing the goods and services purchasable by the money earnings.

The Committee recognised the necessity of distinguishing these three categories of wage statistics, and the original resolutions submitted to the Committee were confined to stating briefly the necessity for statistics of each kind. Though these resolutions were accepted by the Committee it was felt at the outset that it was undesirable to limit its work to this irreducible minimum. The wage statistics programmes of the different countries are so diverse that the Committee decided that its most useful task would be to prepare an ideal or maximum programme to be aimed at universally, and to indicate in more detail the sources, the scope, and the frequency of the different classes of wage statistics. This programme could not of course be realised in every country but would point the direction towards which the efforts of all countries should tend.

In an ideal programme of labour statistics, consideration should be given not only to the accuracy of wage statistics but also to their continuity or frequency. Accurate statistics lose a good deal of their value if they do not show at regular intervals the development of the wage movement. On the other hand the conditions which make for accuracy, for example, expense and organisation of collection, militate against continuity. These two factors both depend on the sources of the material available, which differ according to the type of data. Rates of wages may be obtained from a very large number of sources. Where they are fixed by negotiation between workers' organisations and employers, then collective agreements provide the requisite material. The information as to the terms of a collective agreement can be obtained from a large number of sources, including, in addition to the workers' and employers' organisations, the press, local correspondents, and local officials, such as factory inspectors and labour exchange managers. The most copious source is, of course, the collective agreements themselves, which should be obtained, as far as possible, from both parties to the contract. In many cases, however, the legislation of the country provides for the fixing of rates of wages (usually minimum rates) in certain industries or occupations. These rates may apply to unorganised industries where collective bargaining does not exist (for instance, the Trade Boards legislation in Great Britain), or sometimes to home work industries, as in France. In some cases it is provided that government contractors must pay a certain rate of wages. In addition to collective agreements and to statutory minimum rates, a third source exists, namely, rates which, though not embodied in collective agreements or in legislation, yet are accepted by workers and employers as being in operation in their particular district or industry. These ruling rates are a very common feature of the statistics in certain countries, and taken in conjunction with rates fixed by collective agreements are known as 'standard rates'. The publication by the different countries for typical categories of workers of the rates of wages given in the above sources should in the opinion of the Committee be made once a year at least, but in order to have information for intermediate periods information should be published at more frequent intervals as to the nature and amount of *changes* in rates of wages.

As regards earnings the only two sources of information are the worker who receives the money and the employer or the establishment which pays it. In practice the latter is the only

practical source. Not only do workers not keep a record of their earnings but the difficulty of addressing individually a large number of workmen and the small prospect of receiving satisfactory replies rule out this source. Trade unions as such are unable as a general rule to supply information as to the earnings — though in some countries it is stated to be possible — and the only adequate source is the pay roll of the establishment. At regular intervals, at least once a year, average actual earnings and hours of labour should be published, based on data supplied by representative establishments in the principal industries. These should be given for a typical week or other period in the year, preferably chosen to avoid any seasonal influences. In some countries the furnishing of this information by employers is prescribed by statute, with penalties for non-compliance or inaccurate returns, but in the majority of cases it must depend on their willing co-operation. It might be urged — and the question was, in fact, discussed in the Committee — that statistics based solely on employers' evidence might be biassed or partial, and that they should be checked or supervised in some way by workers' organisations or by joint bodies. In some countries (for instance, the United States of America) this difficulty is avoided by adopting the practice of sending official agents to the establishments, where facilities are given for the extraction of the information from the employers' books. It is very doubtful, however, whether employers would continue to supply information voluntarily which was liable to be audited in any way. It appeared to the Committee that if the returns could not be made statutory the employers should not be asked to supply information unless confidence were felt in their returns¹.

Regular statistics of wage rates and earnings are in themselves of little value for comparative purposes unless indications are given of the movements of prices, so as to enable *real wages*, or the purchasing power of rates and earnings in terms of goods and services, to be calculated. Such statistics are of less importance during a period of stable prices, but during the sharp movements of prices in recent times nominal wages cease to be of value

¹ It is of interest to recall in this connection that in the United Kingdom the National Agreement of July 1921 under which wages in coal mining are regulated provides that wages shall be periodically adjusted in accordance with the proceeds of the industry in a previous period. For the purpose of calculating these 'proceeds' the various items of expenditure, including wages, are published, based "on returns made by the owners, checked by joint test audit of the owners' books carried out by independent accountants *appointed by each side*".

for comparisons from one period to another. The calculation of real wages involves the establishment of index numbers of the cost of living — a subject not within the scope of the present Conference — and index numbers of money wages. The usual method adopted is to calculate an index number of money wages for different dates with reference to a base period and also an index number of the cost of living for the same dates and base period. By expressing the former as a percentage of the latter, an index number of real wages is obtained. This method, however, involves two assumptions : first, that the general cost-of-living index number (which is all that is usually available) is applicable to all classes of workers, and secondly, that the wages when received are immediately spent. It is a well-known fact that the expenditure of different categories of workers varies widely and that they are very diversely affected by changes in the purchasing power of money. Rural workers, for example, usually have a different standard of living from urban workers. The second assumption is not perhaps of great importance in times when prices are fluctuating slowly, but where, as in certain countries, prices fluctuate considerably from week to week, and even from day to day, the cost-of-living index number to be compared with the wages index number should be not that for the period at which the wage is received but that for the period during which it is expended. These points, while fully appreciated by the Committee, were not embodied in resolutions, but it was agreed that in comparing movements of money wages and movements in the cost of living the necessary precautions should be taken to ensure that the two series of data are comparable. It has been pointed out above that earnings give a better foundation than wage rates for estimating the condition of the workers, since wage rates make no allowance for short time or overtime. In many cases, however, wage rates only are available and these are necessarily used in some countries for the calculation of real wages. It is possible, however, to make real wages calculated from wage rates more in accordance with actual conditions by allowing for unemployment. Where good estimates are available of unemployment in industry the index number of wage rates can be corrected by taking into consideration the unemployment percentage. This is done, for example, in the statistics of real wages published by the Australian Government.

The recommendation regarding the publication at regular intervals (at least yearly) of the three principal groups of wage

statistics — wage rates, earnings, and real wages — still leaves the wage field incomplete. It is impossible for regular wage statistics to cover all the workers in a country. The statistics are limited, not only because the sources are limited but also on the ground of expense. Hence the resolutions adopted by the Committee referred to “typical categories of workers”, to “the principal industries”, to “representative employers or establishments”, and so on, leaving each country free to select those workers, industries, or establishments which would give an adequate and representative picture of the wage movement. This involves many industries or groups of workers not being covered at all. To remedy this, several countries have adopted the practice of conducting a general wage census covering the whole of the industrial field and providing what may be termed an ‘instantaneous photograph’ of the industrial condition of the workers from the point of view of earnings. Such censuses result in the collection of a large body of data which can be analysed by industries and occupations, and can throw light on the differences of wages between males and females and between adults and juveniles. They are also of special value in showing the existence of low-paid industries¹. Germany, the United Kingdom, Belgium, the United States, and Norway have carried out such censuses successfully. Censuses of this kind must by their very nature take place at long intervals; probably every ten years would be the most convenient, as the results could be brought into relation with the decennial population census. The Committee, realising the value of such wage censuses, adopted a resolution advocating that they should be held at intervals.

The conclusions arrived at by the Committee thus covered the desirable or ideal programme which all countries should endeavour to reach in wage statistics. The Committee realised, however, that the principles enunciated could not be immediately applied in the different countries, and it therefore embodied in three short resolutions a statement of what, in its opinion, statistics of wages and hours should give until the full programme is applied. It confined itself almost entirely to the nature of wage statistics, their scope and frequency, and did not deal with methods of wage statistics in the scientific sense, nor with the difficult question of the comparison of wages between countries of different curren-

¹ The results of the British Wage Census of 1906-1907 probably had considerable effect in causing the enactment of the Trade Boards Act of 1909.

cies and different standards of living. The question of methods would deal with systems of weighting, with the advantages and disadvantages of the different kinds of average (arithmetic average, median, and mode), with the best means of sampling, and with questionnaires. These points, together with the principles for measuring changes in the cost of living, must be left to some later conference. As regards the methods of comparing wages in different countries, the Committee had perforce to leave this question aside for lack of time. During the discussion of the report of the Committee in the full Conference, however, the British delegate called attention to the enquiry into wages in different capital cities which had been inaugurated by the British Ministry of Labour in the spring of 1922. He proposed that, as this enquiry was of an international character, the Conference should express a wish that the enquiry should be continued by the International Labour Office. This proposal was adopted and the matter will be referred to the Governing Body of the International Labour Office.

STATISTICS OF INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS

Statistics of industrial accidents differ in two important respects from the other two subjects discussed by the Conference. In the first place, they are somewhat apart from the general group of labour statistics and are in many cases collected, analysed, and published by a department separate from that which is responsible for statistics of labour. In the second place, they arise almost entirely out of the application of legislative or administrative measures for dealing with the prevention of accidents and compensation for the results of accidents. The work of the Conference was in no way affected by the first consideration. It simply meant that factory inspectors and insurance officials rather than labour statisticians were interested in the subject. The second consideration does, however, prevent the elaboration of an 'ideal programme' such as was drawn up in the case of wage statistics, for even the definition of such terms as 'industrial accident' differs from country to country. An industrial accident may be one causing disability for only one day in one country, for one week in another country, for three months in a third. In some countries all establishments are covered by the law; in others, only establishments employing at least a certain number of persons. The

clerical and technical staff may be included in one country, manual workers only in another. Large groups of workers like those in agriculture and domestic service are frequently excluded from the statistics. In some countries only permanent disabilities are covered by the compensation law and in others slight accidents are treated as cases of sickness and dealt with as such.

In spite of these difficulties, industrial accident statistics are the one class of statistics in which many previous attempts have been made at international uniformity. This is probably due to the large amount of interest taken in questions of prevention, and to the realisation of the fact that the administrative authorities could profit by comparing their own legislative measures and their results with those of other countries. As early as 1889 a congress was held in Paris on this subject, and subsequent congresses were held every few years to deal with questions of social insurance, of which accident insurance was one of the most important parts. It was not until 1909, however, that the Joint Committee of the Industrial Accident and Insurance Congress and the International Statistical Institute presented a report on standardisation schemes, followed in 1913 by an international survey of accident statistics. Further developments were interrupted by the war, but in the meantime the question was taken up independently on the other side of the Atlantic. The motives were probably very similar to those which led to the European movement. From 1911 onwards, the various States of the American Union introduced compensation legislation, and the desire to profit by each other's experience by standardising their statistics led to the formation, in 1915, of the International Association of Industrial Accident Boards and Commissions, covering about 50 American States and Canadian Provinces. In 1920 this body published a résumé of its work together with a complete scheme for the standardisation of industrial accident statistics.

The fact remains, however, that there exists hardly any more comparability and uniformity today than thirty years ago when the question was first discussed, mainly on account of the fact indicated above that industrial accident statistics are determined by the legislation in force. Any real attempt at standardisation or uniformisation of accident statistics means the standardisation or uniformisation of industrial accident legislation — a subject which a conference of statisticians is neither willing nor competent to discuss.

Within the field of existing accident statistics a large amount

of divergency exists in classification and presentation and in the statistical methods employed for estimating the accident risk in different industries. For example, the methods of classification of the causes of accidents, the nature of the injury, or the duration of the disability may form suitable subjects for international agreement. Agreement on such points is in fact essential if accident statistics are to fulfil the objects they are intended to serve, namely : (a) to provide information as to the nature and causes of industrial accidents so that steps may be taken to prevent their recurrence ; (b) to provide a measure of accident risk so that insurance and compensation schemes may be drafted on sound lines.

As the burden of compensation rests on the industry in different forms according to the legislation), it is necessary, in order to insure against this liability, to know how accidents vary in different industries. Hence a classification by industries is essential. The Committee did not discuss this subject, as it was considered to be within the terms of reference of the Committee on the Classification of Industries and Occupations. It was thought, however, that as there are certain branches of industry where the risk of accident is very high, special sub-groupings should be adopted which would give special consideration to these branches of industry.

For preventive work it is desirable above all to know why accidents happen, and considerable controversy has taken place as to what is the 'cause' of an accident. All accidents are the outcome of a large train of events and can be traced back to some remote cause which in many cases is the failure in some way of some human agency. Each 'cause' is the effect of some pre-existing cause. A classification of accidents by causes should, however, be such as would best enable the recurrence of such accidents to be prevented ; for this purpose it is desirable that out of the many causes the accident should be attributed to the most immediate cause which is a mechanical or material event. The most common cause of accidents is machinery, and this group, subdivided into different classes of machinery, is given in all countries. As regards 'non-machinery' accidents considerable differences exist between the groupings existing in different countries. A special sub-committee was appointed to draw up a classification, and a list of a dozen important causes, based chiefly on the scheme proposed by the International Association of Industrial Accident Boards and Commissions of the United States, was adopted.

For purposes of compensation it is essential that accident

statistics should show the degree in which the capacity of the worker has been impaired. If an accident has fatal consequences, there is, it might be thought, no doubt on this question ; but difficulty arises even in distinguishing between fatal and non-fatal cases, as, for example, when a workman dies as the result of an accident, some time after its occurrence. In some countries these cases are included as far as possible among fatal accidents, but it is obvious that as time elapses it is more and more difficult to say whether the death of a worker is directly due to the accident or not. As, however, this question is often dependent on the legislation of the different countries, the Committee thought it was not possible to lay down a definite period within which deaths should be counted as fatal accidents. In the case of non-fatal accidents it is desirable to know not only whether the resulting disability is permanent or only temporary, but also whether the permanent disability is slight or severe and whether the temporary disability is of long or short duration. The difficulty in these cases, however, is that in many cases it is impossible to state at the time of the accident whether the results are likely to be permanent or temporary, slight or severe. What may appear, at first sight, to be a slight temporary disability may result in death. Again the matter is governed by the legislative provisions of different countries, which usually provide for a 'revision' at a certain date after the occurrence of the accident, the definite compensation not being fixed until after this revision. It has been suggested that a period of three years should be adopted by the different countries as the period at the end of which a definite decision should be made ; but the Committee decided not to make any recommendation on this point. A classification, or rather a grouping, of temporary disabilities according to duration (up to 2 weeks, 4 weeks, 13 weeks, etc.) and of permanent disabilities according to degree of disability (up to 20, 40, 60, 80, or 100 per cent.) was all that seemed immediately practicable in this field.

For medical purposes accident statistics should show the nature of the injury (whether burn, fracture, dislocation, cut, poisoning, etc.) and the location of the injury (the part of the body affected). These two are distinct conceptions, though hitherto in many countries they have been combined into a mixed classification, while in others only one of the two is given. As the problems connected with this branch of the subject are primarily medical rather than statistical, the Committee, while emphasising the necessity of not mixing these two distinct classifications,

confined itself to suggesting brief headings to be adopted in each.

In one field discussion of the statistics relating to industrial accidents is not hampered by the necessity of considering the legislation out of which they arise, namely, in the statistical methods to be applied to the existing statistics of the number of industrial accidents so as to render them more comparable from country to country or from industry to industry. Just as the number of deaths or the number of births in two communities cannot be compared without knowing the populations in which the deaths and births occur, so the number of accidents cannot be compared without knowing the number of workers liable to accidents. The 'birth-rates' and 'death-rates' of vital statistics correspond to the 'accident rates' of accident statistics. They differ, however, in several respects, two of which are of fundamental importance, namely, the exposure to the risk and the consequences of the event.

As regards the first difference, an individual is exposed to the risk of death during the whole period of his life, while a workman is only exposed to the risk of an industrial accident during the time he is at work. The frequency of accidents — or the 'accident rate' as generally described — should therefore be expressed in terms of 'accident exposure', i.e. the total number of hours during which the workers are exposed to the risk of accident. This point has generally been recognised in different countries, though in different ways. The practice hitherto has been to express the frequency not in terms of total hours worked but in terms of a unit known as a 'full-time worker'. This is defined as a worker who works 300 days of 10 hours each, or 3,000 hours per annum, though in view of the general introduction of the 8-hour day the unit of 2,400 hours is being adopted. It is, however, a matter of great difficulty to obtain records of the time worked during a year by all the workers concerned and approximate estimates have therefore been used. Frequently, regard has been had simply to the number of days worked throughout the year, and the total number of workers employed has been expressed as the number of full-time workers each working 300 days per annum; ten workers each working 240 days per annum would thus be expressed as eight full-time workers. In some cases merely the average numbers employed at different dates have been taken as an approximate measure of the accident exposure, but it is obvious that no real international comparisons can be made on this basis.

As regards the second difference, a death is a definite event which has always the same consequences, whereas an accident may range from a slight temporary injury to an instantaneous death. This distinction can hardly be said to have been taken into account as yet in calculating accident rates. So far as is known only one European country and a few American States publish rates in which the degree of severity of each accident is taken into account. In these rates, to which the term 'severity rate' has been given, the total time lost in respect of industrial accidents is expressed in terms of the total number of hours during which all the workers have been exposed. Thus the same difficulties arise as in 'frequency rates' in determining the total number of working hours, but in addition there is the difficulty of estimating the total time lost on account of accidents. For temporary disabilities the time during which the workman is absent from work is known, but for permanent disabilities a more or less arbitrary scale must be adopted. In the case of workmen killed or totally disabled for life an estimate can be made based on the 'expectation of life'¹ of such workers; in other cases estimates can be made on the basis of the degree of disability at which the injury has been rated. Thus, if a workman's disability is estimated at 30 per cent. or if he has been awarded a disability pension amounting to 30 per cent. of his earnings, then 30 per cent. of the standard taken for fatal accidents is taken as a measure of the loss of working life. Elaborate scales on this basis have been worked out in the United States. The adoption of uniform scales by the accident authorities of different countries would throw a good deal of light on the accident hazard in different industries and give a higher degree of comparability. Calculations of this kind show that the frequency rate is often lowest where the severity rate is highest; in other words, one industry may have a large number of slight accidents and another industry a small number of severe accidents; and as it is as important to prevent one grave accident as ten minor ones, accident prevention work can be rendered more effective. The Committee emphasised the importance of both frequency rates and severity rates for industrial and international comparisons, and indicated the ideal method of calculating these rates, namely, in terms of actual working hours.

¹ In the United States, the International Association of Industrial Accident Boards has estimated the loss due to a fatal accident or a total disablement for life at 6000 days (20 years of 300 days each), while in Sweden the estimate made on a sounder basis is 7,500 days.

It realised, however, that practical difficulties may prevent the adoption of this method, and recommended that in this case it should be replaced for the present by the number of working days or the average number of workers employed, although this, as mentioned above in connection with frequency rates, is not a suitable basis for international comparisons.

The work of the Committee thus covered two phases, first, the analysis of the nature and causes of accidents with a view to prevention, and secondly, a measure of the accident risk with a view to compensation and insurance problems. While constantly bearing in mind the difficulty of drawing up recommendations which might involve amendments to workmen's compensation and accident legislation, it considered that by agreement on statistical method and on certain essential classifications, uniformity could be to some extent obtained without the introduction of any immediate changes in existing legislation. Its proposals were limited to the existing statistics of industrial accidents as published by each country, without attempting to define an 'industrial accident' for international purposes; and in its approval of the 'severity rate' as a necessary complement to the generally accepted 'frequency rate' it led the way to a greater comparability of industrial accident statistics.

CLOSING SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE

The second plenary meeting of the Conference was held on 2 November to consider the reports and resolutions of the three Committees. These were read and briefly discussed, and with one or two minor modifications were unanimously adopted. The final texts are given below as an appendix. In addition to the technical resolutions of the Committees, two further matters were discussed, both arising out of the report of the Committee on Wages and Hours of Labour. The first related to the collection by the International Labour Office of international statistics of wages and prices, and has already been referred to above in the section on wage statistics; the second related to the question of cost of living. The report of the Committee on Wages contained a paragraph expressing regret that it had not time to deal with the question of cost-of-living index numbers, which are necessary for calculating the real wages of the workers; it therefore expressed

a hope that a further conference would be called at a later date to discuss this problem. These matters will be referred to the Governing Body for decision.

RESULTS OF THE CONFERENCE

The results of the Conference may be summed up in a few words. The fifty experts of thirty different nationalities, meeting for the first time as a Conference of Labour Statisticians to discuss the problems with which they have to deal in the course of their duties, passed unanimously a series of resolutions which it is hoped will mark a definite advance in the realm of international co-operation. The desire of the members — who voted individually and not by countries — was to reach conclusions entirely from the scientific and international point of view, with due regard to practical administrative considerations, and in this they undoubtedly succeeded. In the question of the classification of industries and occupations some valuable principles were laid down; and though the problem of industrial classification was by no means solved, yet a foundation was laid for future work on this subject. In the question of statistics of wages and hours of labour, 'programmes' were adopted which set forth the desirable ideal to be aimed at in all official wages and hours statistics. In the question of industrial accidents, the best methods of presentation and of grouping the various circumstances connected with industrial accidents were agreed upon without touching the thorny question of industrial accident legislation.

As was inevitable at a first conference, the resolutions dealt only with general principles, and statistical methods properly so called were not touched on except in the question of the best methods of calculating accident frequency and severity rates. Purely statistical questions, such as the definition of an average wage or of full-time earnings and the best methods of collecting accurate statistics, were not dealt with. It must also be remembered that the resolutions do not bind anybody — neither the members nor the governments they represented — and it is for the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to take any decisions as to the action to be taken thereon. Their real value will be seen in the future by the actions to which they give rise and the achievements which ultimately

result from them. Already, however, there is reason to hope that the Conference has not only stimulated the interest of governments in labour statistics but that it will encourage government departments to develop and improve their statistics and to realise the importance in all social and economic questions of accurate figures.

APPENDIX

Resolutions adopted by the Conference

A. CLASSIFICATION OF INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS

(1) Occupied persons should be classified in the first instance according to the industry in which they are employed, and within each industry they may be further classified according to their individual occupations. When it is not possible to give this double classification in sufficient detail to show the total number of workers in each individual typical occupation, it is necessary to make a second classification of all occupied persons according to their individual occupations, so that for comparative purposes two separate classifications will be available, (a) by industry and (b) by individual occupation.

(2) Industries should be classified into the following main divisions :

(a) *Primary Production.*

Agriculture, pasturing, forestry, hunting, fishing, etc.; mining, quarrying, etc.; i.e. extraction of minerals.

(b) *Secondary Production.*

Manufacturing industries, etc.; i.e. the transformation or modification of materials, together with the construction of buildings, roads, etc., and the repair of finished products.

(c) *Services.*

Transport and communication;
Commerce, finance, and trade;
Public administration and defence;
Professional services;
Domestic service and personal services for which remuneration is paid, supply of board and lodging'.

(3) In classifying manufacturing industries the establishment considered as a technical unit should be taken as basis.

(4) In the absence of an agreed classification of industries and as a preparation for such a classification, and in order to facilitate international comparison, the groupings of industries used in the different countries should be so subdivided that it would always be possible to secure separate information concerning an adequately complete number of industries included in a provisional list drawn up in alphabetical order, which might be prepared by the International Labour Office after consultation with any statistical services or organisations which might usefully assist in this work.

(5) It is desirable for purposes of international comparison that each country should publish definitions of the occupational, industrial and other terms most commonly used in that country in connection with its labour statistics.

B. STATISTICS OF WAGES AND HOURS OF LABOUR

Detailed statistics of rates of wages, of actual earnings, and of normal and actual hours of labour should be collected and published in each country as frequently as possible, account being taken of the special circumstances and conditions obtaining in each case. With a view to facilitating international comparisons, the responsible authorities in each country should, as far as practicable, observe the following principles :

(1) At regular intervals, and at least once a year, there should be published :

- (a) Statutory minimum rates ;
- (b) Rates fixed in collective agreements ;
- (c) Rates accepted by organisations of employers and workpeople for typical categories of workers.

(2) In order to provide an indication of the general course of wage movements, information should be published at more frequent intervals as to the nature and amount of any changes resulting from alterations in the statutory minimum rates or arranged between organisations of employers and workpeople. Particulars should be given of changes in the normal hours of labour and of alterations in the level of piece work rates.

(3) At regular intervals, not less than once a year, average actual earnings and actual hours of labour during a year or a typical period in a year should be given for each of the principal industries, and based on data supplied by representative employers or establishments.

(4) From the data indicated above, index numbers should be computed to show the general course of changes in nominal wage rates and in actual earnings. Index numbers of the purchasing power of the wages should also be calculated by relating changes in actual earnings to changes in the cost of living, the necessary precautions being taken to ensure that the two series of data are comparable.

The nominal wages employed in computing the index numbers should be given in every case.

(5) At less frequent intervals general wage censuses should be taken, information being obtained from the pay sheets of establishments to show rates of wages and the actual earnings in a typical week.

The information should be given by industries, districts, occupations, and sex, and a distinction should be made between adults and young persons.

Until the principles enunciated above have been applied in the different countries, statistics of wages and hours of labour should at least give:

(a) Current rates of wages (hourly or weekly) and normal hours of work of typical categories of time workers ; and at regular intervals averages weighted according to the number of workers to whom the data apply both for such categories and for all categories combined ;

(b) Actual and full-time earnings and hours of labour for typical categories of workers, especially those paid on piece work. Such statistics should be available for sample periods, at least once a year;

(c) Real wage index numbers based on nominal wage and cost of living index numbers.

C. STATISTICS OF INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS

(1) *Classification of Industrial Accidents.*

Industrial accidents should be classified according to the industry of the injured worker, the cause of accidents, the extent and degree of disability, the location of the injury, and the nature thereof.

(a) The classification of industrial accidents according to the *industry of the injured worker* should conform to the list indicated in paragraph 4 of the Resolution concerning the Classification of Industries, with such subdivisions as will allow special consideration to be given to industries with a relatively high accident rate.

(b) The classification of accidents according to the *cause of accident* should as far as possible be in accordance with the table given below, with such subdivisions as may be considered necessary.

(i) Machinery :

- (a) Prime-movers ;
- (b) Transmission machinery ;
- (c) Lifting machinery ;
- (d) Working machinery ;

(ii) Transport :

- (a) Railways ;
- (b) Ships ;
- (c) Vehicles ;

- (iii) Explosions ; fire ;
- (iv) Poisonous, hot, or corrosive substances ;
- (v) Electricity ;
- (vi) Falls of persons ;
- (vii) Stepping on or striking against objects ;
- (viii) Falling objects ;
- (ix) Falls of grounds ;
- (x) Handling without machinery ;
- (xi) Hand tools ;
- (xii) Animals ;
- (xiii) Miscellaneous.

(c) In the classification of accidents according to the *extent and degree of disability* a distinction should be made between fatal and non-fatal accidents and between temporary and permanent disabilities.

Temporary disabilities should be classified according to duration and uniformity should be obtained by using the following groups : (i) 2 weeks or less ; (ii) over 2 and up to 4 weeks ; (iii) over 4 and up to 13 weeks ; (iv) over 13 weeks and up to 6 months ; (v) over 6 months and up to 1 year ; (vi) over 1 year and up to 2 years ; (vii) over 2 years and up to 3 years.

Permanent disabilities should be classified by degree and uniformity should be obtained by using the following groups : (i) under 20 per cent. disability ; (ii) 20 and under 40 per cent. ; (iii) 40 and under 60 per cent. ; (iv) 60 and under 80 per cent. ; (v) 80 and under 100 per cent. ; (vi) 100 per cent.

Permanent disabilities should be classified at the time they are recognised as such.

(d) The *location of injury* should be clearly distinguished from the nature of the injury. The most suitable classification is that of the common anatomical divisions of the body, namely : (i) the head ; (ii) trunk ; (iii) upper extremities ; (iv) lower extremities ; (v) general.

Each of these groups should be subdivided if necessary.

(e) The *nature of the injury* should be classified as follows : (i) contusions and abrasions ; (ii) burns and scalds ; (iii) concussions ; (iv) cuts and lacerations ; (v) punctured wounds ; (vi) amputations ; (vii) dislocations ; (viii) fractures ; (ix) sprains and strains ; (x) asphyxiation ; (xi) drowning ; (xii) other injuries.

Note. In publishing the above statistics a note should be added on the following points :

- (a) The scope of the legislation ;
- (b) The system of insurance (compulsory or optional) ;
- (c) The nature of the accidents included ;
- (d) The methods of reporting the accidents and of compiling the statistics ;

(e) A summary of the benefits given to the injured or to their dependents.

In countries in which industrial diseases are compensated as accidents they should, wherever possible, be distinguished separately in the tables.

(2) *Accident Rates.*

For industrial and international comparison it is essential to calculate frequency rates and severity rates.

(a) The *frequency rate* should if possible be calculated by dividing the number of accidents (multiplied by 100,000) by the number of hours of working time.

(b) The *severity rate* should similarly be calculated by dividing the number of working hours lost (multiplied by 100,000) by the number of hours of working time.

Where practical difficulties prevent the calculation of the number of hours of working time, this number should be replaced by the number

of full-time workers (i.e. the number of working days divided by 300) or the average number of workers, as may be best suited to the economic and social needs of the country or industry concerned.

Recommendations adopted by the Conference.

I

In order that the International Labour Office may make tentative comparisons of the level of real wages in the different countries, the competent statistical authorities of each country, should, as from 1 January 1924, furnish the International Labour Office at regular intervals (if possible monthly) with statements, in a form to be agreed upon, showing for the capital cities of their respective countries :

(a) The time-rates of wages and normal weekly hours of labour current in a limited number of typical occupations, and

(b) Information as to the prices of a limited number of those items upon which the income of working-class families in most industrially developed countries is largely spent.

II

It is hoped that countries in which compensation is invariably paid in the form of pensions will forward for compilation by the International Labour Office the necessary details for the determination of the mortality rates among persons injured in industrial accidents, so as to establish the degree in which this mortality is influenced by the age of the pensioner, by the time elapsing since the conclusion of medical treatment and by the extent of industrial capacity.
