

Sir Hormusji Mody, employer, India, said that the proposed forty-hour week in the textile industry would be disastrous not only to the undertakings but to the workers. If such a remedy were adopted as a permanent solution, when normal prosperity was re-established a permanent crisis of under-production would set in. If the forty-hour week were going to be introduced in the East the immediate consequence would be profound disturbance of economic life, necessitating tariff barriers.

Mr. Naidu, workers' representative, India, said there were three principal reasons why the forty-hour week was necessary in India :—

- (a) It would reduce unemployment, which was very extensive.
- (b) The forty-hour week was further necessary because of climatic conditions in India. Sickness and death were common among workers in textile mills during hot seasons.
- (c) Reduction of hours would give educational facilities to workers, which are very limited in that country, only about 6 per cent. having an opportunity of obtaining education of any kind. If Indian workers were inefficient to-day, it was because of the long hours they work and the low wages paid.

Mr. West, United States employers' representative, said that the United States had been operating the forty-hour week for four years. During the first two years this was required by legal sanction. When the textile codes became invalid in May, 1935, it was feared that industry would resume longer hours, but all the trade associations of textile employers decided that the forty-hour week should be continued. The textile employers of America did not operate their mills as charitable institutions, but there was widespread acceptance in the United States that the forty-hour week was justified.

A Belgian employers' representative said that if social reform raised prices too high the buyers would simply cease clothing themselves in anything but rags.

After the discussion ended, Sir Hormusji Mody on behalf of the employers, moved, that the preamble be discussed before taking up any of the Articles.

The Chairman (Hon. Mr. Armstrong) stated that in accordance with the procedure of the International Labour Conference the preamble would have to be considered after the Committee had dealt with the Articles of the Draft Convention. He would have to rule to that effect.

At this stage a British employers' representative, speaking on behalf of employers except those of United States and France, stated that the employers saw no useful purpose in discussing a single Article of the proposed Draft Convention, and they would refrain from discussing, from taking part in the drafting of, or from voting on any single Article as it came up for examination. Further reference to this is made at page 26.

There were nineteen Articles of the Convention. Each was discussed at length, and scores of amendments were moved, but it is unnecessary to go into detail.

After ten sittings of the Committee, commencing 7th June and ending 17th June, the final vote on the Draft Convention as a whole was taken and carried by 73 votes to 40. Those voting for the adoption included 11 Government, 1 employers', and 16 workers' representatives. Those voting to reject the Draft Convention included 2 Government and 12 employers' representatives. One employers' representative abstained from voting.

The Committee reported to the Conference and a lengthy and keen debate followed.

The committee gave serious consideration also to a suggestion that a special Convention be drafted to meet the case of more backward countries, who have not yet reduced working-hours to even forty-eight per week, the countries mentioned being Afghanistan, China, Japan, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Siam, and Turkey.

It was thought that as some of these countries were working from fifty-four to over sixty hours per week, a reduction to forty-eight hours for a period not exceeding five years would be a decided move forward, the forty-hour week to operate from the end of that period, or earlier if considered practicable to do so.

However, as the representatives of the countries mentioned had not sufficient time in which to obtain instructions from their Governments, and as the proposal was introduced too late for the Committee to give it the consideration necessary, it was decided not to ask Conference to pass a special Convention, but to submit to Conference a resolution in the following terms :—

The Conference,—

Having regard to the obligation imposed upon it by Article 19 (3) of the Constitution of the Organization—namely, that "in framing any recommendation or Draft Convention of general application the Conference shall have due regard to those countries in which climatic conditions, the imperfect development of industrial organization, or other special circumstances make the industrial conditions substantially different, and shall suggest the modifications, if any, which it considers may be required to meet the case of such countries" :

Recognizing that circumstances have made it difficult for the Conference to give adequate consideration to the question of introducing into the Draft Convention on the reduction of hours of work in the textile industry special provisions in pursuance of this Article of the Constitution ;

Considering nevertheless that it is of the highest importance that hours of work in the textile industry should be regulated in accordance with an international Convention in all countries including those in which it may not be practicable to apply without modification the provisions of the Draft Convention adopted by this session of the Conference ;

Requests the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to give immediate consideration to the question of the adoption of a special Draft Convention determining the modifications of the provisions of the Draft Convention on the reduction of hours of work in the textile industry for such countries, with a view to the placing of this question on the agenda of the Conference.

This resolution was later adopted by the whole Conference.