INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

A Report

to the

Governments, Employers and Workers

of Member States of the

International Labour Organisation

by

John G. WINANT

MONTREAL, 1941
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I

When I accepted the Directorship of the International Labour Office, I stated that I had once expected to serve peoples nearer home. I undertook the responsibilities of Directorship because I believed that peace was the paramount issue before the peoples of the world and that no peace could endure unless it had its roots in social justice. To-day, with the Office established on the American Continent, I find myself obliged to relinquish this charge and to cross the ocean once again, this time in order to serve as ambassador, at the request of the President of the United States, in a country where the age-old struggle for democracy has reached a climax.

I offer my resignation with regret. I still believe that social and economic policy must be shaped by the friendly co-operation of the peoples of all free nations. I believe that any peace must be based upon social justice. I believe that the International Labour Organisation remains a powerful weapon in the present juncture of world history and an indispensable weapon in preparing for the future.

Before I leave the Organisation, I should like to give to you—to the Governments, employers and workers of the countries which make up its membership—an account of my Directorship. The I.L.O. is your Organisation. Its record during the war period is of direct interest to you; its welfare is your concern. This statement is in no way complete. Its purpose is to place before you briefly some of the more important aspects of emergency planning in the International Labour Organisation.
The outbreak of war found the International Labour Organisation prepared to continue its work and to carry out its constitutional obligations. The Governing Body of the International Labour Office had carefully planned ahead to assure the continuance of the Organisation in the event of war. Decisions which had to be made, however, far exceeded in gravity eventualities which had been foreseen. Many decisions had to be made quickly without all the formal consultations which would have been customary in more normal times, and they have had to be based primarily upon the practical necessities of a rapidly changing European situation. For these reasons a short account of what has been done is both necessary and useful.

Before the outbreak of war in September 1939, considerable discussion had taken place as to the future of the International Labour Organisation in case of actual hostilities and plans had been made which became effective after war was declared. In October 1938, the Governing Body, meeting under the threat of a war postponed by Munich, discussed the policies and functions of the International Labour Organisation in a period of prolonged crisis or war. An Emergency Committee of the Governing Body, appointed in February 1939, made plans for emergency operation. Finally, an official statement regarding the policy of the Organisation in the event of war, prepared by the Emergency Committee, was adopted unanimously by the Governing Body in June 1939, and was distributed to delegates at the 1939 session of the International Labour Conference; many of the speakers accepted this policy in the course of the Conference debates. The statement was also communicated to Member States and approved in replies received from 37 Governments. The statement in question set forth two principles of far-reaching significance: first, that the International Labour Organisation must continue to function as effectively and as completely as possible in case of war; and second, that the continued existence of the Organisation as an instrument of co-operation between Governments, employers and workers would be of unusual importance in such circumstances. As a result, when war actually occurred, this major decision of policy had been taken, and in addition a number of the practical steps necessary for its execution had been considered in some detail.

The question of the exercise of the powers of the Governing Body in time of emergency was referred (in October 1938) to the Officers of
the Governing Body. On the basis of a report by them, the Governing Body decided unanimously, in February 1939, to appoint an Emergency Committee from its membership, which, while maintaining the tripartite and representative character of the Governing Body, could meet more rapidly and more easily in time of crisis than the larger group with a more scattered membership. If even this Committee could not meet, it was decided that the Officers of the Governing Body could take any immediately necessary decisions.

Three meetings of the Emergency Committee were held before the outbreak of war to discuss practical arrangements for the functioning of the International Labour Office in case of war. On the recommendation of the Committee, the Governing Body decided in June 1939 that the Office must remain in Geneva until operation there proved impossible, although this “would not, of course, exclude the possibility of such a distribution of its activities as would assure the maintenance of the work of the Office and facilitate collaboration between the Office and the Members of the Organisation”. The Emergency Committee also gave consideration to what should be done if it proved impossible for the Office to continue to operate effectively from Geneva. Various hypotheses were put forward on which it would be advisable to establish a working centre of the Office outside Geneva. After discussion, it was decided unanimously to authorise the Director to accept, in case of an emergency forcing evacuation from Geneva at short notice, an invitation of the French Government to move into French territory, where the Government would provide necessary facilities. The Committee decided, however, not to make any public announcement of this decision at that time.

Finally, the Emergency Committee summarised the purposes for which the International Labour Organisation was to maintain its activities so far as it might prove practicable in wartime. In the first place, “the contin-

1 The Assembly of the League of Nations had passed a resolution in September 1938 providing that “until the next ordinary session of the Assembly, the Secretary General and, as regards the International Labour Organisation, the Director of the International Labour Office, acting with the approval of the Supervisory Commission, which may take all decisions by a majority vote, shall have power in their discretion to take any exceptional administrative or financial measures or decisions which appear necessary (including the amendment of administrative or financial regulations), and such measures and decisions shall have the same force and effect as if they had been taken by the Assembly”. This resolution, which was limited to administrative and financial measures, did not affect the constitutional position of the Director vis-à-vis the Governing Body. It simply meant that without his consent any financial or administrative measures taken by the League under these emergency powers could not affect the International Labour Organisation.

2 Consisting of 4 Government representatives, 2 members chosen from the workers' group, and 2 from the employers' group.
ued participation of as many States as possible in an active International Labour Organisation would serve to preserve and perhaps to develop the technique and habit of international collaboration which might otherwise be lost and which would appear to furnish the only possible basis on which to build up a solid and enduring peace”. War would bring new and acute problems: it would lead to an intensification of social and labour problems in some areas, and in some countries it would speed the formulation and application of social legislation. The Organisation must be in a position to work concretely in specific fields and to offer its experience as a guide in such a critical period of social history. Moreover, “its continued existence as an instrument of co-operation between Governments, employers and workers would . . . be of the highest value . . . . No-one who is conscious of the acuteness of the social problems which another war, whatever its result, would inevitably bring in its train, can contemplate without the gravest disquiet any diminution in the influence of the Organisation as an instrument of co-operation between Governments, employers and employed during the difficult period that is likely to follow immediately upon the termination of hostilities.” These purposes, as stated by the Emergency Committee in its second report, were approved by the Governing Body. They are the purposes which I, as Director of the Office, have kept constantly in mind.

War broke out on 1 September 1939. The powers delegated to the Emergency Committee and to the Officers of the Governing Body came into operation by declaration of the Chairman of that Body. A meeting of the Emergency Committee in Geneva on 20 September marked the beginning of the second phase of the Committee’s work—namely, the general supervision of the activities of the International Labour Organisation under war conditions.

Adaptation of the programme of work of the Office to war requirements was a gradual and continuous process; it was impossible to lay down a long-term and detailed programme in advance of the actual appearance of the new and rapidly changing social problems of wartime. In September, and more fully in October, the Emergency Committee discussed reports of the Office outlining some of the major questions which the Office proposed to study with particular attention during the first months of war.¹ These discussions were a convincing proof of the living qualities of the International Labour Organisation. Since the Organisation, by bringing together workers’, employers’ and Government representatives was, according

¹ The report proposed, inter alia, analysis of war problems of employment market organisation, wages and hours of work in wartime, living costs and nutritional standards, and the adaptation of social insurance to changed social need.
to Mr. Jouhaux, "the expression of a particular civilisation whose life and continuance were dependent on the result of the present struggle", the Committee considered that it was the duty of the Organisation to help to find new social formulas for the establishment of a lasting peace based on universal well-being. The Emergency Committee recommended that the Office, for its part, should continue to serve as a world centre both for the comparison and analysis of wartime experience with social problems and in necessary preparations for eventual readjustment to peace economy.

The Emergency Committee had pointed out, before the war, that in countries relatively distant from the actual scene of conflict, industrial life, although affected by the war, would be carried on more or less as usual, at least in the early stages of the war; and that these countries would be entitled to expect that the International Labour Organisation would continue its normal services to them. Consequently, the second regional Conference of American countries met, as had been planned, in Havana (Cuba) at the end of November 1939. This provided the opportunity for continuing the tripartite collaboration on social problems common to the Americas which had been begun so well at Santiago in 1936. Constructive work was accomplished in the field of social insurance, regarding principles for the employment of women and young people, and in connection with migration problems in the new international situation. Moreover, a meeting of the American members of the Permanent Agricultural Committee of the Office was held at the same time to discuss the effect of the war on American agricultural problems and the extension of social security to agricultural workers of the American countries. The Conference kept regional problems within the framework of international action. The Declaration of Havana emphasised the wish of the delegates that the International Labour Organisation should serve as a social liaison agency between American countries and democratic European nations, and their conviction that the Organisation had "an essential part to play in building up a stable international peace based upon co-operation in pursuit of social justice for all peoples everywhere". To this end delegates pledged "the unwavering support of the Governments and peoples of the American Continent for the continuance with unimpaired vigour of the efforts of the International Labour Organisation . . ." One of the resolutions of the Conference urged that, if the annual Conference could not be held in Geneva, it should be held somewhere in the American hemisphere; this resolution forms an important link in the chain of decisions which may result in the calling of a session of the International Labour Conference in an American country, as soon as this is practicable.
In February 1940, a meeting of the Governing Body was held in Geneva — the first since war had occurred and the last which it has been possible to hold there up to the present. The significance of the meeting was threefold: the Governing Body reaffirmed the will of the membership that the Organisation should continue to function effectively in the war situation; it approved a programme of work for the Office; and the meeting made possible a substantial interchange of opinion among a tripartite group made up of nationals of both non-aggressor belligerent and neutral countries, and led to the development of a large measure of agreement on social policy and of mutual understanding. The Governing Body decided to replace the previous agenda of the June session of the International Labour Conference by a discussion of "Methods of Collaboration between Public Authorities and Employers’ and Workers’ Organisations", in addition to the customary debate on the Director’s Report to the Conference; and the Office was instructed to prepare the necessary reports as a basis for discussion. It was realised when these decisions were taken that their execution would depend on the future course of the war. A clear reservation to that effect was made by the Governing Body. The Office continued to carry out this mandate, however, as long as it was possible.

Spring brought new tensions in Europe, culminating in the invasion of the Scandinavian countries and, a little later, of the Low Countries and of France. I postponed a visit to various South American countries in order to remain in close touch with European developments. As the crisis became more serious, the Officers of the Governing Body met with me frequently, discussing the many problems presented to the Organisation as a result of the turn of the war.

On the night of 9 May, they decided to send to members of the Emergency Committee a telegram asking their approval by the next day, of the postponement of the Conference until later in the year. On the morning of 10 May, the invasion of the Low Countries began and it was clearly impossible to hold a Conference in Geneva in June. Consequently, and since no unfavourable replies had been received to the communication of the preceding day, a telegram was sent to all Governments announcing the decision of the Emergency Committee to postpone the Conference.

The general position became more precarious within the next weeks. The June Governing Body meeting had to be postponed. A meeting of the Migration Committee was cancelled. Plans were made for the immediate evacuation of the Geneva Office in case of necessity. The official policy, however, was that the Office would continue to function from Geneva in accordance with previous decisions of the Governing Body unless and until this became impossible. Even during a period in which it
was essential to perfect plans for possible evacuation from Geneva, attention continued to be paid to analysis of ways in which the machinery of the Organisation might be of practical use in the spreading war. Might it not, for example, be able to give technical help in the organisation of refugee re-employment? Might it not be of use to special committees dealing with war social problems? Might it not eventually be an instrument through which the social objectives of the democratic countries at war could be discussed and clarified?

These and similar questions could be answered only after consultation with various members of the Governing Body and with the Governments of France and Great Britain — the two countries most directly concerned. Communication by letter was slow, by telegram unsatisfactory, and by telephone difficult and uncertain. I decided, therefore, to make an official visit to Paris and London. After useful conversations in both capitals, I obtained renewed assurances of support from the two Governments, and from employers and workers of those countries, for the general emergency policies of the International Labour Organisation, and their concrete suggestions for the future activities of the Organisation.

Very soon after my return to Geneva, Swiss territory was almost completely surrounded by German occupation forces, and it became increasingly difficult to envisage the continuance in Geneva of a democratic international organisation which depended for its effectiveness upon regular communications with its Member countries. It was vital that the Organisation should retain complete freedom of speech and action, but it would have been a poor return for the hospitality afforded by the Swiss Government and people during so many years to have added to the difficulties of their position by attempting to exercise these freedoms on Swiss soil. It was obvious that contacts of all kinds with many of the Member States of the Organisation were cut off entirely, while others were so irregular as to be ineffective. It was my clear duty to avoid all danger that the International Labour Organisation, the repository of the traditions of a world-wide effort at tripartite international co-operation to promote social justice, should become the tool of political forces which would have attempted to use it as a mask for policies of domination rather than as a spearhead of social and economic freedom.

It was necessary, therefore, to establish a working centre outside

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1 As early as the beginning of May, the Swiss Government wrote to the Director as follows: "Having considered the situation created in Switzerland by the convocation of the Labour Conference at the present time, the Federal Council wishes to let you know that in its opinion the discussions should be strictly limited to the questions on the agenda and that any political discussion should be avoided." (Letter of the Swiss Federal Council, 3 May 1940.)
Geneva and to transfer to it the staff required in order to carry out obligations to Member countries and to render useful service.

Consultations were undertaken, in so far as consultations were possible at this time. Some of these were necessarily informal because, even in discussions with the Officers of the Governing Body, all three members could not meet together at the same time. Preliminary negotiations were entered into with a view to finding a suitable location for such a working centre. Primarily in order to hasten these negotiations to a successful conclusion, and also in order to consult various Governments in more detail, I left Switzerland early in July. In August, the Canadian Government officially indicated its willingness that the Office should transfer temporarily to the Dominion the personnel necessary to carry on its services. Montreal was chosen as the most suitable and convenient location for the new quarters, and McGill University very generously agreed to provide the necessary office accommodation and library facilities.

The next problem—and one which assumed increasing urgency as the days passed—was the actual transfer of Office staff from Geneva to Montreal. The solution of this question was greatly complicated by general conditions of transport in western Europe and by difficulties in obtaining the necessary visas. But gradually some 40 members of the staff of 18 different nationalities were brought over to America to continue their work; another group remained in Geneva to complete arrangements there; and other members returned to their own countries as national correspondents or were attached to Branch Offices to supply from there material on social questions of interest to the Office. The international civil service thus retains a valuable nucleus; and I cannot pay too high a tribute to the loyalty of the staff to the principles of the Organisation in the face of many complex difficulties.¹

Governments of Member States were immediately notified that the Director, in accordance with emergency powers vested in him, had issued instructions for the temporary transfer of Office personnel to Canada; and replies from the Governments indicated their consent to the decision, although France and Switzerland made some reservations (the former as to the transfer to belligerent territory of French nationals working on the staff, and the latter as to the future position of services of the Office remaining in Geneva) and one or two Governments, approving the move, requested further details, particularly as regards plans for the future. These details were furnished to all Governments and to members of the Governing Body by cable of a later date.

¹ Those whom I was not able to retain in the service of the Office were given the choice of suspension or resignation with indemnities.
Work in the Montreal centre is now well begun. The *International Labour Review* (incorporating *Industrial and Labour Information*) is appearing regularly. Other Office publications are in preparation and some have been issued. Research work has been resumed. The Office has already received many requests from the Governments of Member countries for technical assistance in the development of social legislation or in the formulation and application of social policy under present conditions. Regional co-operation among American countries was continued with a meeting in Peru in December 1940 (attended by the heads of social security agencies and specially accredited diplomatic representatives of ten American countries) at which the Inter-American Committee to Forward Social Security was set up under the aegis of the International Labour Office to promote systems of social security for the American peoples. Gradually the various elements of the programme of the Office have been adjusted to new circumstances; but I do not minimise the difficulties of readjustment or the problems involved in attempting to continue our work with a staff which is but one-fifth the size of the former Geneva staff. The budget is planned and reserves, though dangerously small, are adequate to carry the Office through this next year, provided Member States of the Organisation carry out their promises of support.¹

This record is but a brief indication of the extent to which the Organisation has been affected by the cataclysmic year through which we have just passed. It is enough to show the direct dependence of the International Labour Organisation on the world in which it exists and works. This, to me, is the most convincing proof of its vitality. We are not and could not be a cloistered organisation concerned with unworldly and abstract problems. We are and must remain an integral part of the world of to-day. We take a certain pride in our difficulties of the past year, for we have shared them with the democratic peoples. We take an even greater pride in being able, once again, to serve the democratic peoples who will rebuild the social order of to-morrow.

Although, as Director, I was called upon to take decisions which could not have been foreseen, I feel that I have acted in the spirit in which the Organisation was founded; and I hope that the decisions which have been taken meet with the approval of the Governments and of the workers' and employers' associations of Member countries. For I believe, as all of you believe, that the future lies with the cause of democracy, that the cause of democracy is the cause of social justice, and that the International Labour Organisation has an essential part to play in building the foundations for a peace based on social and economic freedom.

¹ Owing to foresight and to the co-operation of Member Governments, no money has been lost or frozen.
The history of the world has been a chronicle of rapid change since the outbreak of war. Some of this change I have seen; much of it I have followed closely. I have seen the sudden scourge of war fall upon the peoples of many democratic lands, unafraid but unprepared. I have seen war strike the humblest homes of democracy. I know the social cost and sacrifice of these last years. Yet I leave my service in the International Labour Office with unshaken conviction that, in the years to come, social justice must exist for all peoples everywhere.

Despite the tragedies which have occurred, interest in social problems and in social objectives has not appreciably slackened. The problems have lost none of their urgency and the objectives none of their ultimate importance. This is true throughout the free countries of the world, and not least in nations now fighting for their independent existence. The war is a war of and for social principles. It is significant for the future that this continued and expanding interest in social advance is the keynote of the social world of to-day.

Against a rapidly changing background, economic activity throughout the world has become increasingly dominated by actual war and by anticipation of its spread. On the one hand, National-Socialist plans for the “new order” in Europe have taken concrete form, shaping the economies of countries occupied or directly influenced by Germany. Under this order, Germany would be in a privileged position, with the production and trade of the rest of Europe subordinate to those of the Reich in such manner as to maximise Germany’s national income. Japan has co-ordinated its policy with that of Germany, proclaiming the inauguration of a generally similar “new order” in the Far East. On the other hand, the war period has witnessed far-reaching efforts by belligerent democracies to mobilise their economic strength for war without sacrificing the essentials of democratic organisation. Problems of plant use and capacity, of labour supply, of production for export, of army and civilian needs, of exchange control, of Government supervision and direct intervention in the interests both of efficiency and of national welfare — these and many other questions had to be faced and solved in the building of an effective war economy. Finally, the adaptation of the economics of neutral countries to the repercussions of war has been a gradual and complicated process, varying greatly from country to country. The United States has steadily been organising its production machinery and its labour supply for war and national
defence purposes and is becoming the "arsenal of democracy". In many of the countries of Latin America, the war has caused sharp interruptions in trade and has stimulated national and regional efforts towards industrialisation and increased diversification of the economic structure. The U.S.S.R., though endeavouring to isolate itself from the conflict of fascism and democracy, adapted its economy to war conditions, diverting productive resources to military preparations essential for national defence, with a policy dictated primarily by self-interest. Little by little, the tentacles of war extended into the economic life of every country, no matter how far distant from areas of active conflict.

This has necessarily affected social advance in all parts of the world; war has gradually become the dominant factor in social change. In countries far from the centre of disturbance, principles of social welfare which have become an established part of the charter of rights of workers in the overwhelming majority of nations were extended in new directions and on a wider scale despite the fact of war; but many of these same countries have been grappling with difficult unemployment problems resultant from trade dislocations. In countries nearer to the scene of conflict, the immediate effect of war was largely to reverse the trend of social advance and to suspend many measures intended to protect workers from exploitation and to guarantee them certain minimum standards. Yet there have been, in recent months, encouraging indications of a more widespread recognition of the necessity to preserve and to enforce tried social legislation in order to hold to a minimum the human wear and tear of war. A few countries have returned, after initial periods of adjustment, to standards effective in the near-war period preceding the actual outbreak of hostilities, with modifications only where necessary to meet specific war requirements; others, although unable to re-attain near-war standards because of urgent war pressure, have managed to avoid the extremes which characterised the early months of war. Efforts are being made, in belligerent and neutral countries alike, to extend health measures, safety precautions, and social security legislation, as an integral part of national defence programmes. In some instances, the course of social change has closely paralleled that during the last world war, while in others experience during that period has been used to avoid repetition of errors.

These economic and social developments will be analysed in a report prepared for discussion at the next session of the International Labour Conference. An exchange of views on this report by a tripartite group of delegates from many different countries will be of great value; for these developments provide the setting in which the International Labour Organisation has carried forward its work and in which achievement must be
weighed. Without entering into any detail, since that is not the purpose of the present report, I should like to record several conclusions, drawn from experience during the last years, which seem to me to be of importance for democracy as a whole and for labour.

In the first place, it is clear that the democracies cannot survive unless they can achieve effective co-operation between Governments and organisations of employers and workers. The positive value of such co-operation has been cogently demonstrated in Great Britain, where, with every deepening of national emergency, the principles and practices of responsible collaboration have been extended and intensified. In this fact lies much of the strength and unity of purpose of the British people to-day. In the acceptance and further development of such co-operation lies much of the force of democracy everywhere.

In the second place, it is equally clear that divisions within the ranks of the workers greatly aided the spread of fascism over Europe. A labour movement torn by internal strife is in no condition to meet effectively the carefully organised and unified attacks of fascism, whether from within or from without.

Finally, it may not seem amiss for me to urge caution upon the many who have already claimed the authority to attribute causes and responsibility for events which have swept us in untoward directions. Many people blame the social policy of recent years for the disasters which overtook France. These people have sometimes mixed cause and effect. They have not paused to measure the havoc and confusion wrought by the reversal of that policy before the outbreak of war. I wish to bear testimony from close observation to the fact that the Government and workers of France were as quick as any of us to see the necessity to sacrifice social progress in a nation of 40,000,000 while a neighbour nation of 80,000,000 aggressively armed itself for war. But more important still, I wish to sound a warning of the danger in this tendency to blame workers' organisations for inefficiencies of national economic organisation and for military failures. To do this is to read the past incorrectly and to discourage the very groups which must play an increasingly responsible part in stabilising a disturbed economy. To do this is to blind ourselves to the necessity of a sound social structure and a united and alert citizenry as essentials in the defence of democracy.

We know to-day very little of what the future holds; but the course of events so far during the war shows that we are living in a period not only of tragedy but also of opportunity. The door has closed on the pre-war world. When war is done, the peoples of all free nations, working together, will rebuild democracy more in their own likeness than it has been in
the past. This much we know, for arms shall not be laid down in vain. What, then, is to be the foundation of the stronger democracy of the future? How can we help to draft a charter of social rights in a radically changed and rapidly changing world?

It is wise, in thinking towards the future, to look briefly towards the past. In the interval between world wars, amid mounting economic and social unrest, a conviction became more widespread that the world belongs to the common people. Groups, national organisations and even Governments came into being to translate this conviction into practical action and to render service in the interests of the general welfare. The industrial worker, in his trade union, came nearer to the farmer, the farm tenant, and the farm labourer, to the white-collar worker, to the professional technician and manager, to the student, to the civil servant, with a steady interlocking of social interest and an ever-widening area of social concern.

These people have realised to how small an extent the plain men of the world have had a share in national and international responsibilities and in the practices of free collaboration which are essential to a democratic way of life. They have seen, particularly during the last decade, the unbelievable gap between the world’s capacity to produce and to consume and actual standards of production and consumption. They have seen that this wastage of much-needed resources was the inevitable result of inefficient economic and social organisation, international as well as national. Many have known hunger, want and insecurity in a land of plenty.

The cornerstone of the future, at least, is already apparent from the mistakes of the past. Political democracy must be broadened to include economic stability and social security. The waste of resources which has been effectively eliminated in time of war must not be allowed to return once peace has come. An unemployed or poorly employed citizenry is no basis for winning the peace. Even though, at a moment when the survival of democracy is in the balance, priority of production, energy and will must be granted to the waging of the war itself, we must not lose sight of this conclusion from the past. No opportunity to enlarge the social content of democracy must be lost. No opportunity to strengthen the fundamental social and civil rights of the great majority of citizens must be neglected. No opportunity to wipe out the want and the hopelessness of the pre-war period must be ignored. This is not only prudent national defence, it is the tradition of democratic freedom. Let us work together to make it the practice of freedom in all walks of life and in all fields of work.

Within the limits of its competence and because of its co-ordination of world experience in the social field, the International Labour Organisation can help to strengthen the fabric of democracy. To-day when the
very existence of democracy depends upon the attainment of national unity by consent of the governed, the tradition and experience of free collaboration which are essential to every principle and every practice of the work of the I.L.O. can make an outstanding contribution to the mobilisation of the full strength of democracy. The machinery of the Organisation can be useful in helping to adapt existing social standards to war needs and to appraise hastily improvised methods of meeting war strains on the economic and social structure. By bringing together representatives of industry, of labour, and of Governments, the Organisation may help to clarify social objectives during the difficult months to come. When the chance to remake peace arrives, we must be far more ready than we were at the end of the last war. Social and economic problems will necessarily be in the foreground of attention, and their solution demands careful technical preparation as well as co-operation among dominant economic and social groups and among Governments. In this all-important field, therefore, the International Labour Organisation can contribute its experience and its tripartite machinery and help to point the way towards the social justice which must underly enduring peace. The Organisation can help to plan for an orderly and socially desirable demobilisation of war and defence industry and of military forces. While it is not likely that many additions can be made in wartime to the International Labour Code of the past twenty years, we can now start to think ahead to the basic principles which must be included in a revised Code for the years to follow the war.

I have been with the International Labour Organisation for only a brief part of its useful existence. I am leaving the Office now, after having lived with it through difficult years; but I leave it in the capable and experienced hands of the Deputy Director, Mr. Edward J. Phelan, pending action by the Governing Body.

During my service as Director, short though it has been, I have known the strength of the I.L.O., the great strength of democracy, and its weakness, the human weakness of democracy. I move into my new field of service with undiminished confidence in the ability of the Organisation to continue to serve mankind in this critical period. I hope that I, personally, may have opportunity to assist in this task. I leave the International Labour Organisation in your hands—those of the Governments, the employers and the workers of the free democratic countries of the world. It is your instrument for orderly social change. As you use it, it will become strong. It lives in the movement of your opinion and in your faith. It is armed with your courage and your conviction. With God's will and a just cause, you will not fail.

Montreal, 14 February 1941.