The Reform of the Supreme Council of Labour
(Consiglio Superiore del Lavoro) in Italy
Towards a Technical Parliament of Labour

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The proposed reform of the Supreme Council of Labour in Italy assumes an importance which goes far beyond the frontiers of the country, not only on account of the numerous aspirations which take shape in it, but above all because this reform will constitute the first step towards the creation of a real technical parliament of labour, which can be called upon to discuss economic and social questions, and to legislate in this sphere.

The Supreme Council of Labour, as constituted by the law of 1902, had only consultative powers, and did not contain direct representatives of the classes concerned; it could not therefore meet the new needs and the more and more urgent aspirations of the organizations of employers and workmen. The first demands for reform date from immediately after the creation of the Council; and their number and importance had caused the Council itself to issue in 1910 a first draft of reform, which, however, had no immediate result. Later on, and for the whole of its duration, the war prevented the resumption
of the movement for reform; but immediately after the armistice the General Confederation of Labour took the initiative in demanding a radical revision of the existing constitution of the Council. This revision was intended to go far beyond the pre-war discussions on direct and equal representation of trade union organizations; it was even to include the transformation of the powers of the Council.

The Government recognized the impossibility of delaying reform any longer, and a questionnaire was sent in 1919 by Mr. Nitti, the Premier, to all the associations of employers and workmen. Its purpose was to provide the Government with the information necessary for carrying out this reform. In May, 1920, Mr. Abbiate, having been invited to join the third Nitti cabinet as Minister of Labour, immediately drafted a Bill instituting a National Council of Labour, because, according to him, the Ministry of Labour, which had just been created, could not act with the necessary authority unless it was supported by this new organism, which should have deliberative powers independent of the political Parliament. This Bill, the text of which is given later, was approved by the Council of Ministers, but could not be laid before the Chamber on account of the rapid fall of the Nitti Ministry.

The new Minister of Labour, Mr. Labriola, took up again in his programme the reform which had been planned by his predecessor and drafted a second Bill on the institution of a National Council of Labour. The Labriola scheme, while it does not confer on the Council such wide powers as the Abbiate scheme, does, however, constitute an important step towards the realization of the technical parliament of labour as desired by the trade union organizations. It is on this scheme, the text of which is also given later, that the Italian Chamber will shortly have to express a definite opinion.

**THE PRESENT COMPOSITION OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL**

The Zanardelli Act of June 29, 1902, which was the fulfilment of a desire expressed in 1897 by the Council of Social Welfare, constituted in Italy, in addition to the Labour Office, the Supreme Council of Labour. Articles 2, 4, and 5 fixed its composition, powers, and functions.

**ARTICLE 2.**

There shall also be established in the said Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce a Supreme Council of Labour under the presidency of the Minister or, in his absence, of the Under-Secretary of State.

The Council shall consist of 43 members in addition to the President, namely:—three senators elected by the Senate and three deputies elected by the Chamber of Deputies for the duration of Parliament; four members elected by the Chambers of Commerce; four members elected by the Agrarian Associations (Comizi Agrari); three members elected by the Italian Federation of Friendly Societies (Federazione Italiana delle Società
The following shall also be members of the Council: The Director-General of Agriculture; the Director-General of Statistics; the Director-General of the Mercantile Marine; the Director of Industry and Commerce; the Director of the Directorate of Credit and Social Welfare; the Director of the Labour Office; the Commissioner-General for Emigration.

The remaining 14 members shall be nominated by Royal Decree on the proposal of the Minister of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce, and shall be selected as follows: two from experts in economic and statistical science; five from producers who are heads of agricultural, industrial, and commercial undertakings; two from workers and foremen in the mines of Sicily and Sardinia; one from workers in ports and on the sea; four from workers on the land and in industry.

With the exception of the three senators and three deputies, all the elected or nominated members shall continue in office for three years. They shall be re-eligible, and one-third of their number shall retire every year. During the first two years the members to retire shall be determined by lot.

**ARTICLE 4.**

It shall be the duty of the Supreme Council of Labour to examine all questions regarding the relations between employers and workers; to suggest the adoption of provisions for the improvement of the conditions of the workers; to propose the studies and inquiries to be carried out by the Labour Office; to express its opinion on all bills relating to labour legislation and on all other matters submitted for its consideration by the Minister.

**ARTICLE 5.**

A Permanent Committee of the Council of Labour shall be constituted for the purpose of collecting and arranging the material necessary for the inquiries and work of the Council and of discharging such other consultative functions as shall be determined by the regulations referred to in Article 13.

The Permanent Committee shall consist of nine members, who shall be appointed by the Council from its members, but so that three of such members shall be elected by the Council from the Councillors chosen from the workers.

Later, the Director of the National Provident Fund for Workers' Incapacity and Old Age (Cassa Nazionale di Previdenza per la Invalidità e Vecchiaia degli Operai) was added to the Council.

To resume, the Council of Labour as at present constituted consists of 44 members, divided into three groups:

1. The representatives of the Senate (three); of the Chamber of Deputies (three); of the Chambers of Commerce (four); of the Agrarian Associations (four); of the Italian Federation of Mutual Aid Societies (three); of the League of Co-operative Societies (three); of the Popular Banks (two). All these 22 are nominated by the bodies specifically indicated by the Act.

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1 See Royal Decree of January 29, 1903, No. 48, approving the regulations for the execution of the Act of June 29, 1902, No. 246, Articles 15 et seq.

3. The representatives of the economic sciences (two); of agricultural, industrial and commercial undertakings (five); of the workers and foremen in the mines of Sicily and Sardinia (two); of the workers in ports and on the sea (one); of the workers on the land and in industry (four). All these 14 are nominated by Royal Decree on the proposal of the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce.

At present, therefore, in the Council of Labour the representatives of industry, commerce, agriculture, and labour are in a minority as compared with the representatives of Parliament, public administration, and the social welfare institutions; they are 20 to 24. Thirteen seats are at present assigned to manufacturers, merchants, and proprietors or tenants of land, and only seven to industrial and agricultural workers. Two workers have to interpret the requirements of all classes of industrial workers (apart from the representatives of two specific classes—the seamen and the miners—who have been added for no known reason), just as three or four industrial representatives are expected to know the requirements of every industry, even in those technical and economic questions which more and more constitute the task of a Council of Labour, in proportion as it leaves behind the first phase of its activity, which is entirely occupied with the sketching of reforms, and enters upon a more technical collaboration with the executive authority of the State.

THE FIRST CRITICISMS AND DEMANDS FOR REFORM

Zanardelli, then Prime Minister and Interim Minister of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce, had presented the future Labour Office and Council of Labour to the Chamber of Deputies on June 8, 1901, as an institution “urgently necessary, whose object would be by daily study and thorough and impartial investigation of the conditions and needs of the working classes to ascertain what must be accomplished by Parliament and by the Government for the relief and support of the workers and for increasing their well-being, and thus to contribute to the attainment of the highest ends of social solidarity.” Nevertheless, in spite of the strong support given to the Bill by the Chamber of Deputies and by the Senate, the innovation represented much more an act of wise social policy offered by the Government to the country than a real conquest of those living forces on which the new
institution would have to depend for its successful working in the future. Later, the steady and continuous assistance given by the Council to the Government in the application of social laws, the frequent occasions on which the Council itself took the initiative in new developments of Italian legislation for the protection of the workers, and the equanimity of its attitude in face of the bitter and serious conflicts between capital and labour which agitated the country, drew public attention to the institution. With the increase of this attention the criticism of the constitution of the Council, as established by the Act of June 29, 1902, became more and more pronounced, and the demands for its reform by the classes interested and by students of social affairs become more and more imperative. In fact, all the criticisms published in the scientific, vocational, and political press, and all the resolutions passed at the most important industrial, agricultural, and labour congresses, or sent by chambers of commerce and labour and other organizations to the Ministry, “converged on the attempt to convince the legislature of the urgent necessity of reforming the Act of June 29, 1902, in the direction of securing for the interests affected by social legislation direct representation on the Supreme Council of Labour, a representation which should be equal as regards the places assigned to capital and labour, and be based on a grouping of rationally distinguished and defined economic activities.”

For example, the Third National Congress of Workers on the Land, assembled at Reggio Emilia on March 9, 1908, declared “that the federated organizations were pledged to interest themselves in the development of social legislation and in the proposals of the Supreme Council of Labour for hastening the reform of the said Council in the direction of

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2 Ibid.
3 To the technical criticisms were added the first political criticisms. Besides the a priori anti-collaborationism of intransigent socialism and revolutionary syndicalism, the Council of Labour aroused from the beginning some protests from the Catholic organizations, which asked for special direct representation, which, in their opinion, could not be refused “in consideration of the importance of the said organizations.”

The Council of Labour examined and discussed the question during its first session in September 1903, and came to the conclusion that it could not admit any organization to representation “on the ground of its political or religious character, but only in accordance with its economic nature and importance.” Since the law clearly determined the organizations to which representation in the Council was assigned, and the Catholic organizations “might, according to their nature, find a place in one or other of these groups,” it invited them to join such groups and thus acquire the right of participating in the nomination of the persons representing their economic interests.

The Catholic organizations were not satisfied, and repeatedly renewed their protests against their exclusion from the Council, always adhering to their request for the recognition of their right to enter it by virtue of
a direct and wider representation of the working classes and of 
the absolute predominance of the vocational representatives over 
those of the bureaucracy, of Parliament, and of scientific bodies.

The Council of the Italian Commercial and Industrial 
Federation (Federazione Commerciale e Industriale Italiana), 
assembled at Rome on March 23, 1908, passed a resolution 
demanding "that the Supreme Council and the Permanent 
Committee of Labour should be composed for the greater part 
of direct representatives of the principal industrial, commercial, 
and workers' organizations", and decided to promote a 
vigorous agitation among all the commercial organizations 
for obtaining such a reform.

In September of the same year the congress of merchants 
and manufacturers convened in Piacenza by the Italian 
Commercial Federation (Federazione Commerciale Italiana) 
passed a resolution expressing regret that the system followed 
by the legislature had not been that of creating "a Council 
in which the direct representatives of commerce, industry, 
and agriculture should be called together to discuss social 
questions, together with the direct representatives of their 
dependants, the industrial and agricultural workers.... The 
Supreme Council of Labour should therefore consist for the 
greater part of delegates of the workers' and employers' 
organizations in equal numbers."

The Inter-provincial Federation of Agrarian Associations 
(Federazione Interprovinciale fra le Associazioni Agrarie), 
meeting at Bologna, asked "that the agricultural represen­
tatives (employers and workers) should be increased in number, 
account being taken of the various agricultural classes 
their special character. In fact, these protests were reinforced, on the 
occasion of the proposal to establish itinerant Chairs of Social Welfare, 
by the exclusion of Catholic representatives from the Commission for 
supervising these Chairs, an exclusion which "reveals the persistence of a 
hostile attitude on the part of the Council towards a large number of 
workers' organizations attached to the Catholic organization."

On that occasion the Permanent Committee of the Supreme Council 
of Labour defined its own views on the question in the following terms: 
"Considering, firstly, that an extension of the right of representation on the 
Council of Labour to undenominational economic organizations of industry, 
commerce, labour, and social welfare cannot but be of advantage to the 
institution, by giving it a broader basis in the country; secondly, that the 
National League of Co-operative Societies, the Federation of Mutual Aid 
Societies, and the General Confederation of Labour are open to citizens 
of all creeds and of all opinions without exception, and that, consequently, 
the ideas of all Italians, whether Catholics or not, are presumably represented 
on the Council with the same proportion of Catholics as that appearing 
in the census of the population of the kingdom; thirdly, that, the Council 
of Labour being composed of economic, scientific, and Parliamentary 
representatives without distinction of party or denomination, the admission 
of representatives of Catholic institutions as such would, in fact, represent 
the very privilege against which the protest is directed,—the Committee 
takes note of the claim, the Supreme Council of Labour at its meeting on 
September 15, 1903, having clearly declared its views in regard thereto".
(proprietors, tenant farmers, proprietor-cultivators, small, medium, and large proprietors, etc., casual workers, participating workers, métayers, small tenant farmers, agricultural co-operative societies, permanent workers, etc.), so as to bring them more into proportion with the representatives of industry," and "that the nomination of the workers' representatives, at least as regards central and northern Italy, should be directly entrusted to the Federation," "that in the appointment of representatives of the workers an equal place should be given to the organizations of every party," and "that, with the exception of the Minister, the deputies, the senators and the representatives of the vocational organizations, the members of the Council should have the right to speak but not to vote".

These examples are sufficient to show the extent to which the necessity for reform was felt in the country. It had, moreover, been called for by the Council of Labour itself, which, in a resolution passed in March 1904, demanded the revision of the law in such a manner that "the technical elements should be represented on the Council by equal numbers from the employers' and workers' sides", and declared its opinion "that it was indispensable for an effective representation of the organizations that such organizations should select their own representatives."

THE REFORM SCHEME OF 1910.

About 1910, the Permanent Committee of the Supreme Council of Labour, having examined the resolutions, proposals, and protests of manufacturers, merchants, landowners, employers, workers, and peasants, and considered the extensive experience of other countries, elaborated a scheme of

(1) Among foreign regulations, the French decree of March 14, 1903, (relating to the reorganization of the Supreme Council of Labour) particularly attracted the attention of the Permanent Committee, as most closely corresponding to the ideas on which the Italian reform should be based. "It is only in France," said the report of the Committee, "that the Council of Labour can be said to be a clear and direct outcome of trade unions of employers and workmen organized separately and by vocations, and it seems to us that our Council should approximate to the French type, if we wish to enable it to carry out its task and to arouse sympathy and co-operation."

The present composition of the Supreme Council of Labour in France is as follows:—

31 members nominated by the employers;
31 members nominated by the workmen and employees;
3 senators elected by the Senate;
5 deputies elected by the Chamber of Deputies;
1 representative of the Paris Chamber of Commerce;
1 representative of the Labour Exchanges;
1 representative of producers' co-operative societies;
3 scientific experts chosen by the Minister from the members of the Institute and the professors of the University of Paris.

At the period of the Abbiate, Cabrini, and Saldini Report (1910), the French Council of Labour had in all 72 members instead of the present 76 (two members less in each of the first two groups — employers and workers).
reform. This scheme was presented to the Council, with a report by Messrs. Abbiate, Cabrini, and Saldini, during the session of February 1910.

An ample discussion followed which brought out very clearly the unanimity of opinion on the principal points of the report, namely, the securing of equal representation for workers and employers; the rational rearrangement of the branches of industrial and agricultural activity, taking account, as regards agriculture, of the various forms of holding and of the different regions; the recognition of vocational and industrial unions as the only forms of organization for the selection of representatives; the substitution of the system of direct election for that of nomination, and the co-ordination of the various consultative bodies dealing with labour problems.

Opinion was still divided on the following questions: the retention on the Council of members not representing organizations or industries; the election of representatives by the organizations or by the industries as a whole; and the absorption of the consultative bodies dealing with social welfare, co-operation, and emigration. Even the proposal to admit representatives of the Catholic workers' organizations found some support.

The discussions led to the following decisions:-

**Representation in the Council of Labour**

The number of Councillors to be increased from 44 to 77, distributed as follows: three from the Senate; three from the Chamber; three from the National League of Co-operative Societies; three from the Chambers of Commerce; one from the Fishermen's Co-operative Societies; one from the Federation of Agrarian Associations; two from the Italian Federation of Mutual Aid Societies; two from the Conseils des Prud'hommes (Collegi dei Probitivi); one from the Directorate of the Labour Office; one from the Popular Banks; two from the experts in economic and social sciences; one from the Directorate of Credit and Social Welfare; eighteen from the trade unions, and eighteen from employers' organizations, grouped as follows:— Metal working, engineering and allied industries, building trade, printing and allied industries, clothing industries, food industries, miscellaneous industries, commerce: nine from the land owners and cultivators and nine from the workers on the land, the selection of the agricultural representatives being conducted on a regional basis (Northern Italy, Central Italy, Southern Italy, and the Islands), and wage-earning agricultural labour being distinguished from participating agricultural labour.

**The Electorate**

In industry and commerce the nominations to be made by the national industrial or vocational federations in consultation with any non-federated local organizations, or by the General Confederation of Labour and the Union of Chambers of Commerce in consultation with any local organizations not federated with these associations. In agriculture the nominations to be made by the Agrarian Associations, the Inter-Regional Federation of Associations of Tenant Farmers (Federazione Interregionale delle Associazioni tra i Conduttori di Fondi) and by the National Federation of Workers on the Land (Federazione Nazionale dei Lavoratori della Terra).
Other Consultative Bodies

The Supreme Council of Labour, in proposing the reform of its constitution, considering the frequent identity and constant correlation and interdependence of the subjects submitted for examination and advice to the Council of Labour and the Council of Social Welfare, and with a view to co-ordinating and mutually completing the investigations and decisions of the two consultative bodies, and avoiding the possibility of differences and discussions in the exercise of their respective functions, considers it very desirable that the two Supreme Councils should be combined in one single Council, with distinct sections for dealing with the subjects now respectively dealt with by the separate Councils, and meeting in plenary sittings for the adoption of definitive decisions on the questions submitted to them.

The Catholic Organizations

(Resolution proposed by Mr. Maffi). The Supreme Council of Labour, confirming its resolutions of September 1903 and of the year 1908 which determine the character of the Council as a consultative body for economic matters, and considering that the exclusion of all religious or political elements is a necessary guarantee for the impartial treatment of the economic interests of employers and workers, passes to the discussion of the proposals of the Permanent Committee.

The discussion on this last point was taken into the Chamber in May 1911 by Mr. Longinotti, who championed the admission of representatives of the Catholic-social vocational organizations to the Council, maintaining that it was morally impossible for Catholic workers to join federations which were under socialist influence. This proposal was contested by the Deputies Cabrini (Socialist), Murri (Christian Democrat), Abbiate (Constitutional) and by the Minister of Industry and Commerce, Nitti, who defined the attitude of the Government as follows:

There are organizations, such as the Confederation of Labour and others, which admit persons of all creeds and opinions. Anyone who is a worker and a member of a union may join them. Then there are the political and religious associations, which admit only those who belong to a particular religious denomination or profess a certain political opinion. Ought we to give a vote to these denominational or political organizations? I think not, because in that case, in order to be consistent, we should have to give it to all denominational or political organizations, even to those furthest removed from us, which do not recognize the modern State, but which could not be logically or legitimately excluded. We cannot, in fact, place in a position to vote for the organs of the State and for the existence of the functional life of the State organizations which do not recognize the State. I do not think, therefore, that on this question agreement is easy or even possible.

From that moment the question of the reform of the Council became at once a political and a technical question. The Catholic political forces are not yet strong enough to impose on the Government and on the Chamber the acceptance of their point of view, but they are no longer weak enough to be ignored. The reform of the Council was accordingly put
on one side by the Government, and was not again discussed during the long period of the war.

**THE ACTION OF THE TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS AND OF PARLIAMENT SINCE THE WAR**

As soon as the war was over, it was the General Confederation of Labour which took the initiative in advocating a radical revision of the Act of June 29, 1902, a revision however, which was to go far beyond the pre-war discussions on direct representation, joint representation, and amalgamation with the Council of other consultative bodies, and to face the constitutional problem of the transformation of the *powers* of the Council of Labour.

As early as December 1918 the governing body of the Confederation of Labour called for a transformation in the very substance of the consultative bodies dealing with labour, "by the transfer by Parliament to the consultative and supervising bodies duly transformed, of its deliberative powers in relation to the technical part of social laws and regulations relating thereto." In explanation of this resolution the Secretary-General of the Confederation of Labour, Mr. d'Aragona, wrote as follows: "What is advocated is a movement towards the transformation of the present representative system in the direction of securing the representation of vocational interests in the legislature. We ask, in a word, that those deliberative powers which experience has everywhere shown to be compromised by the technical incompetence of existing Parliaments, should be transferred to the bodies at present established with purely consultative functions for the study of labour problems."

At the beginning of January 1919, the review *I Problemi del Lavoro*, edited by Rinaldo Rigola, formerly Secretary-General of the General Confederation of Labour, opened the discussion of the transformation of the Council with an article by the Deputy Cabrini. After recalling the resolution of the governing body of the Confederation and the words of Mr. d'Aragona, Mr. Cabrini lays down the following principles for the solution of the question:

1. The Supreme Council of Labour shall consist exclusively of vocational representatives, chosen in equal numbers from both classes and arranged in two groups, one for industry and commerce, and one for agriculture.
2. District Councils of Labour shall be constituted on the same principles, the members of which shall be elected respectively by the workers and employers of each vocational district.
3. The Members of the Supreme Council of Labour shall be elected by the members of the District Councils of the respective vocational categories.

4. The Supreme Council of Labour shall have in addition a Co-operative Section, a Social Welfare Section and an Emigration Section. Such Sections shall consist of representatives of the co-operative, social welfare, and emigration institutions respectively, of experts, and of officials of the respective sections of the Government departments.

Very little time passed before the formula thrown out by the General Confederation of Labour began to bear fruit in suggestions even outside the workers' camp. The trade union institutions which now flourish even in the employers' camp have certainly no reason to be enthusiastic supporters of parliamentarism and bureaucracy. The various vocational classes, whose backbone is the trade union, feel themselves in a position to exercise a function which should have its place in the organism of the State. The economic interests which feel themselves either badly protected or sabotaged by the incompetence and the base intrigues of parliamentarism, reinforce the tendency which aims at supplementing the political parliament, representing the population, by the vocational parliament, representing the forces directly engaged in production.

The Battaglie Sindacali, the organ of the General Confederation of Labour, discussing in May 1919 the reform of the political electoral law, pointed out that "the extension of the right to vote to all citizens, including women, and the reform of the electoral system would result in a very modest improvement in the condition of the proletariat so long as the reform of institutions did not secure to the trade unions and to the vocational classes: (1) the exercise of those functions which are at present exercised by Parliament in the sphere of the economic life of the country and its international relations, a goal to be reached either by the creation of a vocational parliament side by side with the political parliament, by the transformation of the Supreme Council of Labour, or by assigning a certain number of seats in Parliament to the representatives of vocations; (2) participation in the executive power of the State, which should emanate partly from the political representatives and partly from the vocational representatives."

The governing body of the General Confederation of Labour and the delegates of the national federations and the Chambers of Labour met on May 19 and 20, 1919, affirmed the urgency of transforming the Supreme Council of Labour from a consultative body into a deliberative body, and formulated concrete demands to this end, which we shall set out later.

A few months afterwards (July 24, 1919) the Deputy Cabrini in the Chamber of Deputies, expressing the ideas of the General Confederation of Labour in a memorable speech, maintained the necessity of establishing vocational representation,— a necessity which afterwards found increasing support in both Houses of Parliament *, and replied in the

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* As regards the inevitable necessity of vocational representation, the extension of the powers of the new Council and the consequences which the reform would have for the Senate, a declaration was made in the Senate itself, with all the authority attaching to Francesco Ruffini, the ex-Minister.
following terms to the criticisms and fears expressed by its adversaries:

Some fear the possibility of collusion between restricted interests to the prejudice of the mass of citizens; collusion, for example, between bodies of workmen and employers in the same trade; but such fears will be without foundation when it is understood that the mass of citizens is the totality of productive forces, directive and operative, of the nation, and when the interests of agriculture are represented proportionately to those of industry and commerce.

Between the two groups of class representatives must extend a zone formed by the representatives of municipalized, provincialized, and nationalized undertakings, together with representatives of co-operative undertakings. In this central zone the collective interest will find its sure defenders; besides which one might consider the proposal put forward by the German Democratic Party in the recent discussions on the constitution of the new Germany, that is, to have recourse to the referendum in case of dissensions between the political Parliament and the economic Parliament.

At the following sitting (July 25) the Catholic deputy, Tovini, supported from the Christian-Social point of view the ideas maintained by Cabrini, declaring, in the words of the resolution which he proposed to the Chamber, that "electoral reform with proportional representation based on the working of parties should be supplemented by direct representation of the proletarian, employing, and intellectual classes, with a view to securing to legislative institutions and governments a fuller confidence, the assistance of more competent collaborators, and the greatest possible executive efficiency."

The Domani Sociale, the organ of the Italian Confederation of Workers (Confederazione Italiana dei Lavatori) supported the extension of the powers of the Council. Thus all the vocational press declared for the urgency of the reform.

In a speech delivered on December 8, 1919, after referring to the question of electoral reform, Ruffini stated that the extreme parties did not mean to stop at this first victory. They were bringing forward "another vehement demand, the demand for so-called vocational or trade union representation. "What this demand means we may indicate in a general way by saying that it is desired to substitute for representation based on the sovereignty of the people and on universal suffrage, representation based on labour and its trade union federations, and for constituencies based on population, constituencies based on vocations; and by this means, by parliamentarizing the trade unions and the vocations, to give to the empty suffrage an organic content. Well, this is a serious demand, and would be calculated to set us seriously thinking if it were put forward in a full and exclusive form, that is, in the form of a radical substitution of vocational representation for political representation. It is less serious, however, and less disquieting when put forward in the conciliatory form of a system collateral with and, as it were, complementary to proportional political representation. It is in this form that the representatives of the Socialist Party, of the Popular Party (Catholics), and even the Nationalists have propounded and supported it in their legislative proposals. This system, which we might call eclectic and conciliatory, has been brought into great prominence by the fact of its adoption by the noblest of the German Socialists, Kurt Eisner, in his Draft Constitution for the Bavarian Republic. In his Government programme
THE GOVERNMENT QUESTIONNAIRE AND THE REPLY OF THE ORGANIZATIONS

The Nitti Ministry, having decided to give effect in a bill to these aspirations, sent out, on May 1, 1919, to all the employers’ and workers’ organizations a questionnaire containing the following four principal groups of questions:

1. What additions and modifications should be made to the powers and attributes of the Supreme Council and the Permanent Committee of Labour?

2. What should be the composition of the Council? What groups should be represented in it, and should it be divided into sections?

3. Is it desirable to establish joint commissions and local joint commissions, and in what form and with what powers?

4. What should be the system of nomination of the representatives of the workers and employers in the Supreme Council and the local councils?

The replies, which were very numerous, may be grouped round those of the great national confederations. We will now proceed to summarize them.

The General Confederation of Labour. The governing body of the Confederation, after stating that, pending the reform of the system of representation of the vocational and general interests of the nation, it was urgently desirable to transform the Supreme Council of Labour from a consultative into a deliberative body, expressed the opinion that in any such transformation the following requirements

he wrote that, side by side with the Central Parliament and the Executive Council represented by the Government, all the trade corporations and unions of the people should publicly deliberate. ‘We desire,’ he said, ‘to parliamentarize the workers’ organization. The new formula for political constitutions reduces itself to this: not government by Parliament, which is regarded as an antiquated and obsolete Western method, but the parliamentarization of government, which is the new German method, the Northern method.’ And Ruffini exhorts Liberals to accept with wise caution the inevitable development of representation of class interests, which will in time end in a bi-cameral system, consisting of a Chamber of Deputies and a Chamber of social interests. The Supreme Council of Labour will have not only a consultative but a deliberative vote, that is to say, real legislative power.

‘This new bi-cameral system,’ continues Ruffini, ‘will be founded on a more solid basis than has ever existed in the past, when the bi-cameral system was justified only by considerations of pure expediency or by purely empirical conceptions. But if this happens the Senate will be irremediably cut out. A tri-cameral system is indeed inconceivable. If these Councils with deliberative powers are constituted and multiplied, what, I ask, will remain for the Senate to do? Hence the absolute necessity that the Senate should carry out an internal reform in the direction of opening its doors to this new form of representation, vocational or trade unionist—call it what you will—but which I will call representation of interests, for it cannot be thought that the supreme moral and intellectual interests, the interests of art, science, and the like, will be excluded.'
should be specially regarded: (1) that the Supreme Council of Labour should possess full powers to convene its own meetings and to prepare its own agenda; (2) that the results of its deliberations should be laid before Parliament for ratification within a period to be fixed by law; (3) that in the event of Parliament not having declared its decision at the expiration of such period, the decision of the Supreme Council of Labour should take effect automatically; (4) that whenever Parliament should decide to reject or modify the decisions of the Supreme Council of Labour, such decisions should be reconsidered by the Council, and the second decision of the Council thereon should become effective; (5) that it should be within the competence of the Council of Labour to make regulations for the application of such decisions; (6) that the Minister of Labour should be freely appointed by the Supreme Council of Labour.

After these stipulations, the governing body of the Federation and the delegates of the commissions of labour subjected to revision another pre-war demand, viz. equal representation. Such equal representation, it was observed, must not be converted into an inequality at the expense of the workers; the classes must be represented in accordance with their social value. Ten employers must not be given the same weight as 100,000 workers, by allotting to each three representatives.

The following elements were therefore suggested of a scheme for the new Council of Labour:

a) Distinct electoral lists should be established for each class and for each group or sub-group; each voter on the employers' side to have as many votes as the number of workers employed by him, or in proportion to the productive power of each.

b) The workers' side of each group or sub-group to have the right to at least one representative, and an additional representative for every 100,000 or fraction thereof beyond the first 100,000.

c) The employers' side of each group or sub-group to have the right to at least one representative, and an additional representative for every 5,000 or fraction thereof beyond the first 5,000.

d) The following should also form part of the Council:
   1. a certain number of experts in social and technical sciences, chosen by the workers' representatives on the Council;
   2. an equal number of such experts chosen by the employers' representatives on the Council;
   3. one or more representatives of Parliament;
   4. one or more representatives of the producing and labour co-operative societies;
5. one or more representatives of collective holdings;
6. one or more representatives of communes;
7. one or more representatives of associations of small proprietors;
8. one or more representatives of mutual aid and social welfare societies. The total number of such representatives must not in any case exceed one fourth of the other members of the Council.

e) In the elections of trade union groups, on both the employers' and the workers' sides, the principle of proportional representation shall be admitted where more than one representative has to be elected.

f) In the nomination of representatives of vocational groups, the electors shall vote by indicating the organizations of the respective class by which such nominations shall be made.

Proceeding to an examination of the powers of the Council of Labour, the Confederation asks: "Why should the persons most interested in the approbation of certain laws which most nearly affect them only possess the power of initiative in the form of 'proposals,' leaving the final decision to others who, being above all things politicians, may be led to decide from motives by no means inspired by that 'competence' which they very likely do not possess, and which, in the case of labour legislation, is absolutely necessary? Why not create, without waiting for such creation to be imposed by the rise of a real extra-legal legislation in the form of new and continually bolder agreements between the parties, a new organ in which the struggle between the classes may develop freely precisely in that department of affairs which is concerned with the rights of labour in relation to capital? Why should there not be, side by side with the arena of exclusively political struggles which is constituted by the Chamber of Deputies, a national representative body which will at one and the same time exercise a stimulating and moderating influence by bringing the Chamber into contact with the greatest operative force in every country, viz., with the struggle of class interests (and by interests we mean not only economic interests but also those moral interests strictly connected with the vocation) between employers of labour and wage-earners?"

The question being stated in this way, the reform proposed by the General Confederation of Labour resolves itself into this: To substitute for the Senate a Class Representation. The Supreme Council of Labour would become the National Chamber of Labour, existing side by side with the Chamber of Deputies.

9 See above, Note 8.
The Italian Union of Labour (Unione Italiana del Lavoro), an organization directed by Republican and Reformist elements, also considers that the Council "should be transformed into a National Council, possessing legislative and executive powers in all questions affecting labour as a principal and necessary factor in production."

The Italian Confederation of Workers (Confederazione Italiana del Lavoratori), the central organization of the Catholic trade unions, proposes that powers should be given to the new Council for issuing regulations for the application of all laws relating to labour, and even legislative powers in technical matters under directions to be issued by Parliament and subject to the control of the latter.

The National Agricultural Secretariat (Segretariato Agricolo Nazionale), which has since become the General Confederation of Agriculture (Confederazione dell'Agricoltura), the principal organ of the agricultural employers' unions, declares itself in favour of giving to the Supreme Council of Labour the function of preparing Bills and reports accompanying the same for presentation to Parliament, and the power, without parliamentary control, of issuing regulations.

The General Confederation of Industry (Confederazione Generale dell' Industria), the central organization of the employers' unions, considers it desirable "to extend the powers and attributes of the Supreme Council of Labour in such manner that it should be competent to settle, under delegation from Parliament, the provisions of laws and regulations in those questions affecting the relations between industry and labour and affecting social legislation, which Parliament, whether on the proposal of the said Council of Labour or otherwise, shall consider it desirable to regulate by the intervention of the State. The Permanent Committee of Labour, under the presidency of the Minister, should have power to deliberate and decide on the questions which arise in the execution of laws and regulations within the competence of the Supreme Council of Labour. Finally, the Labour Office should be the executive organ of the decisions of the Council and the Committee, under the supervision and control of the latter.

The Abbiate Scheme.

Having been called upon by Nitti in May 1920, on the formation of his third cabinet, to take charge of the Ministry of Labour, which had just been established, Mr. Abbiate prepared a Bill for the reform of the Supreme Council of Labour. This Bill was approved by the Cabinet, but, owing to the sudden fall of the Ministry, was not introduced in the
Chamber. It was published a short time afterwards in the Critica Sociale, under the editorship of Turati, who accompanied the publication with a favourable comment.

The following is the text of the Bill:

**ARTICLE 1**

There shall be established in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare a National Council of Labour.

The said Council shall have the following functions:

a) To exercise, by delegation from Parliament and within the limits fixed by the latter by special statutory enactments, powers attributed to Parliament for the enactment of laws relating to the regulation of labour and the conditions of the workers.

b) To propose to the Government and to Parliament the adoption of provisions for the regulation of labour and for the improvement of the conditions of the workers.

c) To prepare and issue general regulations for the application of laws relating to labour and the workers.

d) To give advice in regard to all bills relating to labour and the workers which may be introduced in the legislative Chambers and in regard to all matters submitted for its consideration by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare.

e) To consider all questions affecting the relations between employers and workers which may be submitted to it by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare.

**Article 2**

The National Council of Labour shall consist of two sections, one for industrial and commercial labour and the other for agricultural labour.

The section for industrial and commercial labour shall consist of:

3 representatives of employers and 3 representatives of workers for each of the vocational groups indicated in Table A annexed to this Act;

2 senators elected by the Senate;

2 deputies elected by the Chamber of Deputies;

2 delegates (one of whom shall be a representative of the workers' mutual aid organizations) elected by the Supreme Council of Social Welfare and Insurance (Consiglio Superiore della Previdenza e delle Assicurazioni) from the members of such Council;

3 representatives of productive and labour co-operative societies;

3 representatives of credit and saving co-operative associations;

2 experts in economic sciences;

2 experts in juridical sciences;

6 representatives of persons engaged in commerce and persons carrying on private undertakings;

6 representatives of employees in private undertakings.

The Section for Agricultural Labour shall consist of:

18 representatives of large and medium proprietors and tenant farmers;

9 representatives of wage-earners (permanent and casual);

9 representatives of métayers and small tenant cultivators;

3 representatives of co-operative societies of agricultural labour;

3 representatives of agrarian associations and co-operative institutions for the transformation of agricultural products;

3 representatives of small cultivating proprietors;

3 representatives of agricultural mutual societies and agricultural credit institutions, whether carried on by co-operative societies or by private firms;
2 senators elected by the Senate;
2 deputies elected by the Chamber of Deputies;
2 experts in economic sciences;
2 experts in juridical sciences.

The Director-General of Agriculture shall be an *ex officio* member of the Section for Agricultural Labour with power to speak, but not to vote. The following shall be *ex officio* members of both sections, with power to speak but not to vote: the Director-General of Labour; the Commissioner-General of Emigration; the Director-General of the National Social Insurance Fund; the Director of the National Labour Exchange and Unemployment Office.

All the elective members must be Italian citizens in the full exercise of their civil and political rights, and not less than 25 years of age. They shall hold office for four years, and all the elective seats shall be renewed at the end of every four years. The representatives of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies shall be nominated at the beginning of every Parliament for the duration of the said Parliament. The experts in economic sciences and juridical sciences shall be selected and nominated by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare from the persons respectively chosen (under the system of representation of minorities) by the representatives of employers and workers in the manner indicated by Article 6 hereof.

**ARTICLE 3**

The National Council of Labour shall deliberate in plenary sitting of both sections on all matters delegated to it by Parliament, on legislative proposals to be presented to the Government or to Parliament, and on all matters equally concerning industrial and commercial and agricultural labour.

**ARTICLE 4**

Subject to the provisions of Article 19 hereof as regards the initial constitution of the Council, representatives of employers and workers in the section for industrial and commercial labour shall be elected under the system of proportional representation by the respective organizations registered in accordance with rules to be established by the regulations for the application of this Act. The representatives of employers and workers in the section for agricultural labour shall be elected directly by the employers and workers of each of the categories represented on the Council under the system of proportional representation in accordance with rules to be established by the above-mentioned Regulations.

**ARTICLE 5.**

The Minister of Labour and Social Welfare shall have the right to be present at the meetings of the Council or to be represented at such meetings by the Under-Secretary of State.

**ARTICLE 6.**

The National Council of Labour shall be convened for the first time after its constitution and after every renewal of its membership by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, who shall preside over such first meeting. At such meeting the officers shall be appointed, who shall consist of a President and four vice-presidents.

The President shall be elected by the representatives of employers and the representatives of workers acting in agreement, and may be selected from persons not members of the Council. In the absence of such agreement he shall be nominated by Royal Decree on the proposal of the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare after consultation with the Council of Ministers.

The vice-presidents shall be elected as follows: two by the representatives of employers and workers (one for each class) of the section for industrial and commercial labour, and two by the representatives of employers and workers (one for each class) of the section for agricultural labour.
The President shall represent the National Council of Labour in its external relationships, shall preside over the meetings of the sections, and may be substituted in the presidency of such sections by the respective vice-presidents.

The meetings of the Council and of the sections shall be convened by the President, who shall have the conduct of such meetings. On the taking of any vote, in case of equality of votes the President shall have a casting vote.

At the first meeting of the National Council of Labour the representatives of employers and the representatives of workers shall each submit the names of four experts in economic sciences and four experts in juridical sciences to the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, who shall select and nominate from their number those who are to be members of the Council in accordance with Article 3 hereof.

**ARTICLE 7.**

The ordinary meetings of the National Council of Labour and of its sections shall be held twice in every year in the months of March and October.

The National Council and its respective sections shall meet in extraordinary meeting either on the initiative of the permanent Committee referred to in Article 12 hereof, or on the invitation of the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, or whenever 25 members, in the case of the Council, or 10 members, in the case of a section, shall call upon the President to convene such extraordinary meeting.

The agenda of such respective meetings shall be established by the Council or by the section as the case may be, or by the permanent Committee above referred to.

The Minister of Labour and Social Welfare shall have the power to cause to be inserted in the agenda of the Council or of either of its sections such questions as he shall think fit, and shall fix the agenda in all cases in which the meeting is convened by him or at his request.

**ARTICLE 8.**

The decisions of the National Council of Labour and of its sections shall not be valid unless approved by the majority of the members of the Council or of the section, and unless at least one half of the councillors representing the employers and workers shall be present.

At any adjourned meeting they shall be valid if approved by the majority of the councillors present, provided the letter represent the majority of the members of the Councils or the section respectively.

**ARTICLE 9.**

Whenever the National Council of Labour, in exercise of the powers delegated to it by Parliament under the provisions of Article 1 hereof, shall have formulated the provisions which it was instructed to prepare, the Council shall transmit the same to the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, who shall submit them to the Council of Ministers.

The Council of Ministers, if it is satisfied that the decisions of the Council of Labour are within the limits fixed by Parliament, shall give executory effect to the same by Royal Decree, within the period of one month from the date on which the same were transmitted to the Minister of Labour. If, on the other hand, the Council of Ministers shall consider that the National Council of Labour, in the exercise of the powers delegated to it, has exceeded the limits fixed by Parliament, the Council of Ministers shall, within the said period of one month, transmit the decision of the National Council of Labour to Parliament for its decision.

**ARTICLE 10.**

Whenever the National Council of Labour shall decide to exercise its right of proposing to Parliament provisions for the protection of labour and for the improvement of the conditions of the workers, it shall embody
such proposals in a Bill. Such Bill shall be transmitted by the President of the National Council of Labour to the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare.

The Minister may, if the Council of Ministers shall agree to the said Bill, adopt it and present it to Parliament as a government proposal. If, on the other hand, he does not consider it possible to adopt such Bill, he shall transmit it immediately to the President of the Chamber of Deputies, or to the President of the Senate.

The said Bill of the National Council of Labour shall follow in the Chamber and in the Senate the procedure fixed by regulation for private Bills, but no authorization shall be required for the reading and consideration of this said Bill.

The President of the National Council of Labour and two delegates elected respectively by the workers' and employers' representatives on the Council, shall be authorized to support the said bill in Parliament as Royal Commissioners.

ARTICLE 11.

The general regulations contemplated by Article 1, paragraph c, shall be decided upon by the Council in the presence of a representative of the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, who shall have the right to take part in the discussions, to make proposals, and to suggest amendments.

Such regulations shall, after the decision of the Council, be rendered effective by Royal Decree issued on the proposal of the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, after consultation with the Council of Ministers.

ARTICLE 12.

A Permanent Committee of the National Council of Labour shall be established, which shall consist of 20 members, chosen from the members of the National Council of Labour, of whom seven shall be elected by the said Council from the representatives of the workers (three for industry, three for agriculture, and one for employees of private undertakings) and seven from the representatives of employers (three for industry, three for agriculture and one for commerce); two shall be experts in juridical sciences, of whom one shall be chosen from the employers' side and one from the workers' side.

The Director-General of Labour and the Commissioner-General of Emigration shall be ex-officio members of the Permanent Committee.

The Committee shall be under the presidency of the President of the National Council of Labour, and shall elect from its own number two vice-presidents, one from the workers' side and the other from the employers' side.

At all sittings of the Committee in which matters are discussed which particularly concern the sections of agriculture, industry, commerce, and employment exchanges, the Directors of such respective sections shall be invited to be present, and shall have the power to speak but not to vote.

The Committee may be divided into two sections, one for industrial and commercial labour and the other for agricultural labour.

The rules for the election of the Permanent Committee (under the system of representation of minorities), for its procedure and for its division into sections, shall be fixed by the Regulations for the application of this Act.

ARTICLE 13

It shall be the duty of the Permanent Committee:

a) to issue orders for the carrying out of studies and inquiries by the Labour Office, and to investigate, with the assistance of the said Office, the questions to be submitted to the National Council of Labour;

b) to see to the execution of the decisions of the Council;

c) to formulate special regulations for the application of laws relating to labour;
d) to advise on all matters submitted for its consideration by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, or by the National Council of Labour;  
e) to discharge all other functions which may be assigned to it by statute or by regulations.

All regulations formulated by the Committee under the provisions of paragraph e shall be made effective by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, after consulting, where necessary, the Council of State.

Whenever the Minister shall not consider it advisable to give effect to the decisions of the Committee, he shall issue a decree giving his reasons for the course adopted, after consultation with the Council of Ministers.

ARTICLE 14

The Committee shall meet ordinarily once in every month, and shall hold an extraordinary meeting whenever the President or the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare shall deem advisable.

Meetings of the Committee shall be convened by the President, who shall settle the agenda.

Decisions of the Committee shall be valid if approved by a majority of the members present; and a majority of the members composing the Committee shall form a quorum.

ARTICLE 15

The National Council of Labour shall have its own secretarial office attached to the presidency.

The secretarial office shall be under the direction of a Secretary-General nominated by the Council. The staff of the secretarial office shall be selected by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, in agreement with the Permanent Committee, from the officers of the Labour Office.

The secretarial office of the Council shall also act as secretarial office for the Permanent Committee of Labour.

The remuneration to be paid to the members of the National Council and of the Permanent Committee and to the persons composing the secretarial office, and the duties of the last-mentioned, shall be determined by the regulations to be issued for the application of this Act.

ARTICLE 16

In the Estimates for the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, commencing with the financial year 1920/21, the sum of 700,000 lire shall be assigned for the expenses of and in connection with the National Council of Labour and the Permanent Committee, and the studies, researches, and inquiries to be carried out by the Labour Office on the order of the Permanent Committee.

ARTICLE 17

The National Council of Labour, constituted in accordance with Article 19 hereof, shall at its first session consider and decide upon the question of the establishment of local Councils of Labour, the districts to be assigned to them, and the rules for co-ordinating their action with that of the National Council.

ARTICLE 18

The National Council of Labour, as constituted under the provisions of Article 19 hereof, shall consider and decide upon the regulations for the application of the provisions contained in the preceding articles of this Act.

PROVISIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

ARTICLE 19

For the purposes of the initial constitution of the National Council of Labour, representatives of employers and workers shall be elected by vocational groups in accordance with Table A annexed to this Act.
The representatives of agriculture shall be distributed in equal proportions between the zones indicated in Table B annexed to this Act. The said representatives shall be elected under the system of proportional representation by the organizations which have been carrying on operations for at least six months at the date of the coming into force of this Act.

The representatives of various industries (Group 12) shall be elected by the national federations. Every employers’ organization shall have one vote for every 100 workers employed; and every workers’ organization shall have one vote for every 50 members.

The rules for the preparation of the lists of the organizations and for electoral procedure shall be fixed by a Decree of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare issued after consultation with a Commission, composed of the members of the Permanent Committee of Labour instituted under the provision of the Act of January 29, 1902, No. 246, and of the employers’ and workers’ representatives of the technical Committee of Agriculture instituted under the Vice-regal Decrees of December 31, 1915, No. 1968, and of February 20, 1916, No. 196.

The constitution of the National Council shall take place within three months of the publication of this Act, and shall be published in the Official Gazette (Gazzetta Ufficiale) of the Realm.

Appendix A. (see Articles 2 and 19)

Table of Vocational Groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>No. of Representatives</th>
<th>Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Metal, engineering and allied industries</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Building, constructional and allied industries</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Paper, printing and allied industries</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Textile (a) Silk (b) Cotton, wool, hemp and other textile fibres</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Transport and communications (a) land, (b) sea</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Chemical, glass, pottery, and brick works</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Mines, quarries, and salt works</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Electricity and gas works</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Wood</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Clothing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Food</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Various</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Commerce.

13. Commerce and private employment | 6 | 6 |

Agriculture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of representatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large and medium proprietors and tenant farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage earners (permanent and casual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Métayers and small tenant cultivators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural labour co-operative societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agrarian associations and co-operative institutions for the transformation of agricultural products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small cultivating proprietors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural mutual aid societies and agricultural credit institutions, whether carried on by co-operative societies or by private firms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


APPENDIX E. (see Article 19)

_Northern Italy._
Piedmont, Lombardy, Venetia, recovered territories, Emilia

_Central Italy._
Tuscany, Marches, Umbria, Latium, Abruzzi, Sardinia.

_Southern Italy._
Molise, Campania, Apulia, Basilicata, Calabria, Sicily.

The characteristic features of this reform may be summarized as follows:

_a)_ The creation of a real technical parliament in the interests of work itself and of the workers, with legislative functions, including both the right of initiative and the right to legislate by delegation; with autonomous presidency and secretariat.

_b)_ Special representation of the Council within the political parliament by means of Royal Commissioners.

_c)_ The autonomous powers conferred upon the permanent Committee in regard to special regulations.

_d)_ The accentuation of its character as a body representing the economic interests of the country and not merely antagonistic class interests.

_e)_ The fact that the majority of the members are elective, partly by general vote and partly by the organization.

_f)_ Equality of class representation.

_g)_ The system of proportional representation.

**THE LABRIOLA REPORT AND SCHEME.**

On November 10, 1920, the Minister of Labour, Mr. Labriola, — Mr. Abbiate's successor—introduced in the Chamber a Bill concerning the "institution of the National Council of Labour."

The Bill was preceded by a Report in which the Minister, after reviewing critically and historically the development of ideas and events which had led to the present reform and also the investigations and proposals previously made by the Committee itself and by Mr Ruini10 and Mr Abbiate, proceeded to explain the Bill itself.

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10 Mr. Ruini, in his capacity as Under-Secretary of State for Industry, Commerce, and Labour (before the institution of the Ministry of Labour), had begun the preliminary arrangements with a view to the reform of the Council of Labour, and had drafted the questionnaire which was submitted to employers' organizations in May 1919. It is interesting to note the ideals with which Mr. Ruini was inspired.

"In the bodies hitherto in existence the functions of the National Council of Labour are, strictly speaking, limited to examining the relations between employers and workers and considering provisions for the improvement of the conditions of the working classes. The tendency to-day is to exceed these limits. How can the wage question be separated from the question of production? Indeed, under modern conditions it is no longer possible for the labour movement to confine itself within the wage relationship,
The sphere of action of the National Council is summarized in Article 1 of the Bill; both in the extent of its functions and the amplitude of its powers its sphere of action goes far beyond that assigned to institutions of a similar kind in other countries.

The first and most important group of powers conferred upon the Council relates to conditions of labour, intensification and increase of production, relations between employers and workers, and rules for the development of trade union organizations.

The role assigned to the Council in this vast field, which includes practically the whole economic and social life of the country, is not purely theoretical but is eminently practical, since the Council is given the task of formulating actual provisions and the power of presenting proposals.

The fact that the proposals of the Council must be made in the form of laws through the agency of the Minister of Labour does not diminish in any way the importance of its duties; for by this method it is possible to leave the framework of the State intact and yet to attain all the objects which the systems devised in the past sought in vain to realize.

Both the right to present proposals directly to Parliament and the expedient of the parliamentary delegation are open to criticism, for the former does not guarantee that proposals of the Council which are not approved by the Government will reach the stage of discussion and ratification without undue delay, while the delegation does not amount to more than a kind of vicious circle, impeding the activities of both Parliament and Council.

Another very important function of the Council is to conduct investigations concerning the cost of production in economic undertakings, and to supervise the execution of social legislation and of labour agreements and contracts in such undertakings. The Council will thus be in a position to collect directly, through technical bodies dependent upon itself, information relating to the essential factors of the economic life of the nation, and to acquire the knowledge requisite to intervene in all disputes which disturb the regular march of that economic life; the indisputably authoritative character of its decisions will enable it to prevent conflicts involving serious losses for the community.

Should the force of circumstances cause conflicts of national importance to break out, the Council in its capacity as arbitrator will be able to assist materially in the settlement of the dispute.

Note 10 (contd.)

and the movement aims at emerging from that relationship, or at least modifying it radically, by acquiring a direct share in the management of industry. I am convinced that the National Council of Labour will tend to become a Council of Production, and will perhaps aim at becoming a centre of economic government, operating side by side with the political Government. If we allow a certain degree of latitude in the application of the idea and do not imitate slavishly, there may be and there is more than one advantage to be gained by separating economic and political functions from the point of view, to which reference has already been made, of relieving Parliament of special technical functions.

"But the National Council of Labour could not undertake this huge task alone, without assistance from other bodies. As we shall see shortly, a more specific definition of functions is required. Nor must we disregard in this case the practice of introducing reforms gradually and at a suitable moment. In principle we do not refuse to make the Council of Labour a real branch of Parliament, nor do we refuse to place the whole question of production within its sphere of jurisdiction. But the interests of the proletariat and the desire to see the experiment succeed make it seem desirable for the present to establish the Council on traditional lines and to entrust to it the problems of labour in the strictest sense of the term and, for the moment, the problems of distribution.

"Though ready to agree to greater innovations, we are of the opinion that in the meantime the following principles could be adopted:

"A National Council of Labour shall be established to examine questions
Finally the Council has a group of functions comprising all those hereto assigned to it. These concern its consultative duties in regard to Bills relating to labour legislation and in regard to regulations for the application of such legislation and its task of studying industrial and labour conditions and collecting information concerning these conditions.

In regard to the composition of the Council, it is obvious that in view of the extension of its functions, no section of economic life could remain outside its sphere of influence, and that its influence would gain in force and intensity if it were extended to include all branches of labour. Accordingly, to the two sections proposed by previous schemes, it was necessary to add a third comprising industries and services administered by the State (Article 2).

Within each section each vocational group is composed of three employers' and three workers' representatives, except in the case of the agricultural section, in which it seemed better to include the employers' representatives in one group, composed of 18 representatives of landowners and tenant farmers, and the workers' representatives in two groups: one composed of wage-earners (permanent and casual), and one composed of metayers and small tenant cultivators, each group having nine members. In this section a regional basis of representation (a point of great importance in agriculture), is combined with the vocational basis, the employers' and workers' representatives being classified in three zones, Northern Italy, Central Italy, and Southern Italy.

The Council is composed exclusively of class representatives.

In order that the Council might represent exclusively antagonistic classes and interests, it seemed advisable to exclude all other elements, whether those included in the existing Council or those proposed in many of the reform schemes which have been drafted. Even the officials who are to continue to give the Council the benefit of their experience are granted the power to speak only and not to vote.

This provision may give rise to criticism, but it must be admitted that the membership of those who are not direct and genuine representatives of employers and workers becomes less and less justifiable in proportion to the growth of the tendency to transform the Council into a technical Labour Parliament.

Note 10 (contd.)

concerning the relations between employers and workers, and to discuss the adoption of measures and general provisions for the improvement of the conditions of workers and private employees, for the regulation of contracts of labour and employment, and for conciliation and settlement of labour disputes and conflicts.

"The decisions of the National Council of Labour shall be given executory effect by Royal Decree on the proposal of the Minister of Labour after consultation with the Council of Ministers.

"When the Council of Ministers considers that a decision of the National Council of Labour concerns the finances of the State and the general policy of the country, the said decision shall be submitted to Parliament.

"If the Council of Ministers does not consider it advisable to put a decision of the National Council of Labour into effect, or if it introduces amendments, the said decision shall be submitted to Parliament.

"Parliament may at any time deal with matters within the competence of the National Council of Labour and may revoke the decisions of the Council.

"The Minister of Labour shall be President of the National Council of Labour, shall arrange the material for its discussions, and shall provide for the execution of its decisions.

"He shall be assisted in this duty by a Permanent Committee composed of eight members, of whom one half shall be nominated by the workers' representatives and one half by the employers' representatives on the National Council of Labour.
The report then examines briefly the provisions of Article 4 (competence of the sections), and goes on to speak of the election of the members (Article 5).

It has been considered advisable that the members should be elected by the employers' and workers' organizations and not by the vocations as a whole, as was proposed in some quarters. The organizations represent a higher degree of social evolution, and only a system based on them offers sufficient guarantee of maturity of development among the elected, and of conscientiousness among the electors. Further, with this method there are fewer practical difficulties in regard to electoral procedure and the formation of the body of electors.

The most serious objection to the election of representatives by vocational organizations arises from the fact that the organizations vary in strength in the different regions; it is therefore alleged that a considerable portion of Italy, having no organizations, will have no representatives on the Council.

This objection is certainly a serious one, but it loses much of its importance when we consider that since the end of the War organization has increased rapidly both among employers and among workers, and that the provision in question will furnish a strong incentive to a still greater increase, for it will be a tangible proof of the importance of organization, yet without introducing a compulsory element, which would be foreign to the character of the nation. Even if in some provinces the great trade union organizations, the Federation or Confederation, are feeble or non-existent, the local union, or Lega is to be found almost everywhere, and it may register itself and thus obtain the right to take part in the elections.

Finally, the lack of trade unions in some districts is to be attributed to the absence of manufacturing industries more than to the absence of the spirit of association; but in regions where agriculture is the prevailing industry the objection is met by the provision stipulating that the agricultural representatives shall be divided equally among the various regions.

The electoral system adopted in the Bill is that of proportional representation, and the organizations registered under the provisions of the Bill on the subject which was introduced in the Chamber on July 22, 1920, are entitled to take part in the election.

The report then proceeds to deal with electoral procedure (Article 6), the nomination of the President and vice-presidents (Article 8), and the important function assigned to the Council by Article 9: the constitution, namely, within the Council of a Commission of Conciliation and Arbitration, composed of employers and workers of the three sections in equal numbers. The report continues:

Note 10 (contd.)

"A Ministry of Labour shall be established to which shall be attached the Departments of Labour and Social Insurance, Co-operative and Agrarian Mutual Benefit Societies, Labour Exchanges, and Unemployment and Emigration.

"The heads of the Departments shall be members of the Permanent Committee of Labour.

"The manner in which it is suggested that the new Council should be composed and the necessity of connecting it with the other organs of State make it advisable to create a Minister of Labour, who could enjoy the confidence both of Parliament and of the National Council of Labour. His dual office of President of the National Council of Labour and Member of the Council of Ministers would enable him to combine delicate functions and to solve problems which can only be settled by constitutional methods."

It is hoped that in this way it will be possible to settle many of the more serious labour disputes, so that the country will be spared the heavy losses, and the classes concerned the troubles and sufferings, involved.

After referring to the ordinary and extraordinary sessions of the Council (Articles 10 and 11), to the composition and functions of the Permanent Committee (Articles 12, 13 and 14), to the secretariat of the Council (Article 15), to the provision of the funds required for the working of the Council (Article 16), to the institution of local Labour Councils (Article 17), and to the time limit within which the Council must be constituted (Article 18), the report concludes by recommending the Bill to the Chamber as one which “not only aims at re-establishing on a more modern and more solid basis one of the most important institutions of the State,” but, “also aims at becoming the constitutional charter of a body which is destined to exercise an incalculable influence on the future adjustment of relations between the classes engaged in production, and therefore to have an important effect on the destinies of the nation.”

The report was followed by the text of the Bill.

ARTICLE 1

A National Council of Labour shall be established. The said Council shall have the following functions:

a) to examine provisions for the improvement of conditions of labour from an economic, moral, and hygienic point of view, and methods intended to intensify and increase production;

b) to examine relations between employers and workers with a fixed wage or salary, and to submit proposals concerning these relations in the form of laws, through the medium of the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare;

c) to conduct direct investigations with a view to ascertaining all the factors in the cost of production in individual industrial, commercial, and agricultural establishments, and, through the Labour Inspectorate, to supervise private economic undertakings for the purpose of assuring observance of social legislation, labour contracts, and agreements concluded as the result of labour disputes;

d) to act as arbitrator in economic disputes at the request of the parties and within the limits fixed by Article 9 of the present Act;

e) to give advice in regard to Bills submitted for its consideration concerning the economic and social activities of the working classes and the relations between workers and employers, and in regard to the regulations for the application of such Bills;

f) to collect, through the Labour Office, statistical information concerning industrial and labour conditions;

g) to propose rules for the development of the activities of the various trade union organizations of the labour movement.

ARTICLE 2

The National Council of Labour shall consist of three sections:

I. Industry, commerce, and private transport.
II. Agriculture.
III. Industries administered by the State.

The section for industry, commerce, and private transport shall consist of three employers' representatives and three workers' representatives for each of the groups indicated in Table A annexed to the present Act.
The section for agriculture shall consist of 18 representatives of landowners and tenant farmers; nine representatives of wage-earners (permanent and casual), and nine representatives of métayers and small tenant cultivators.

The section for industries administered by the State shall consist of three representatives of the employers nominated by the Ministers concerned, and three representatives of the workers for each of the groups indicated in Table A annexed to the present Act.

The following shall be ex officio members of all three sections, with the right to speak but not to vote: the Director-General of Labour; the Director-General of Social Welfare; the Director-General of the National Employment Exchange and Unemployment Office; the Commissioner-General of Emigration; the Director-General of Agriculture, and a representative of the Ministry of Industry.

All the elected members must be Italian citizens in full possession of their civil and political rights, and must not be less than 25 years of age. They shall hold office for four years, and all elective seats shall be renewed at the end of every four years.

ARTICLE 3

The National Council of Labour shall decide in plenary sitting of all three sections on all matters which concern labour in general.

ARTICLE 4

The competence of the National Council of Labour, in so far as regards industries administered by the State and its functionaries, shall be confined to questions submitted to the said Council by the various administrative bodies of the State.

The Council shall, however, have the power to supervise the application of social legislation in the case of State employees as well as of other workers. Industries carried on in penal establishments shall not come within the scope of the present Act.

ARTICLE 5

Subject to the provisions of Article 2 of the present Act concerning the nomination of representatives of employers in Section III, the members of the Council who represent employers and workers shall be elected under the system of proportional representation by the respective organizations registered in accordance with statutory regulations.

For this purpose two separate registers shall be kept at the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, one of organizations of employers and one of organizations of workers, for each of the vocational groups belonging to the three sections of the Council.

For the election of employers' and workers' representatives in the three sections of the Council, lists of candidates shall be presented comprising at most three names for each of the vocational groups indicated in Table A annexed to the present Act.

The representatives of agriculture shall be distributed in equal numbers among the regions indicated in Table B annexed to the present Act.

The regulations for the compilation of the registers of the organizations and for the compilation and presentation of the electoral lists shall be established by a Royal Decree issued by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, after consultation with the Permanent Committee of Labour set up under the provisions of the Act of June 29, 1902, No. 246.

The Permanent Committee shall determine the number of votes to be assigned to each organization in proportion to the number of its actual members.

ARTICLE 6

The actual members of the organizations of employers and workers which are enrolled on the register of each vocational group shall vote
respectively for one of the lists of candidates representing employers and workers indicated in the preceding Article.

In addition to voting for a list, every voter shall have the right to give a preferential vote to one of the candidates in the list chosen by him. Each organization shall collect the voting papers of its own members, count them, make the first scrutiny, and within seven days from the date of the voting, send the voting papers and the reports relating to them to the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, who shall collect all the documents relating to the election, and submit them to the Permanent Committee of Labour.

The Committee shall make the final scrutiny of the voting of the employers' and workers' organizations, assigning to each list the votes allocated to the organization in which the list has obtained a majority of votes, and to each candidate, in addition to the list votes, the preferential votes which he has obtained.

The seats of representatives, employers or workers as the case may be, of each vocational group, shall be assigned by the Committee to the various lists according to the amount of the electoral quota obtained, and those candidates in each list shall be proclaimed elected who have obtained the largest number of preferential votes.

An Electoral Board, nominated by the National Council of Labour from among its own members, shall examine all the electoral procedure, decide disputes that may arise, and make proposals to the Council in regard to the ratification or annulment of the individual elections.

The Royal Decree to which reference is made in the last paragraph but one of the preceding Article shall establish rules for electoral procedure and generally for the execution of the provisions of this Article, including penalties for offences in connection with the election.

**Article 7**

The Minister of Labour and Social Welfare shall have the right to be present at the meetings of the Council or to be represented at such meetings by the Under-Secretary of State.

**Article 8**

The National Council of Labour shall be convened for the first time after its constitution and after each renewal of its membership by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, who shall preside over such first meeting. At such meeting the officers shall be appointed, who shall consist of a President and six vice-presidents.

The President shall be elected by the representatives of employers and workers acting in agreement, and may be selected from persons not members of the Council. In the absence of such agreement, he shall be nominated by Royal Decree on the proposal of the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare after consultation with the Council of Ministers.

The vice-presidents shall be elected, one by the representatives of employers, and one by the representatives of workers of each section. The President shall represent the National Council of Labour in its external relationships, shall preside over the meetings of the sections, and may be substituted in the presidency of such sections by the respective vice-presidents.

The meetings of the Council and of the sections shall be convened by the President, who shall have the conduct of such meetings. On the taking of any vote, in the case of equality of votes the President shall have the casting vote.

At the first meeting of the National Council of Labour, the representatives of employers and the representatives of workers shall each elect two advisers chosen from among experts in economic and juridical sciences. The four advisers, who may be present at the meetings of the Council and of the sections, but without the right to vote, shall assist the Council in drafting bills, regulations, and other measures.

The said advisers shall be placed under the immediate and exclusive direction of the President of the National Council.
ARTICLE 9

At its first meeting the National Council of Labour shall establish a Commission of Conciliation and Arbitration composed of 12 members, of whom six shall be elected by representatives of employers, and six by the representatives of the workers.

Four of the members of the Commission (two for each class), must belong to Section I of the Council; four (two for each class) to Section II; and four (two for each class) to Section III.

The Commission of Conciliation and Arbitration shall be presided over by the President of the National Council, and shall elect from among its own members two vice-presidents, one chosen from the representatives of the employers and one from the representatives of the workers.

The Commission itself, or a committee elected by it from time to time as required, may be invited by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare or by the parties concerned acting in agreement, to intervene with a view to conciliation in disputes and conflicts between employers and workers which concern whole branches of industry, or extensive areas, or a considerable number of workers.

Should conciliation fail, the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, with the consent of the parties, may refer a dispute or conflict, as defined in the preceding paragraph, to arbitration tribunals chosen on each occasion by agreement, by the Minister, from the members of the Commission, and composed of an equal number of representatives of employers and workers.

The President of such an arbitration tribunal shall be nominated by the members of the tribunal, or should they fail to agree, by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare.

The National Council of Labour shall fix rules for the working of the Commission and for the procedure of the arbitration tribunals.

ARTICLE 10.

The ordinary meetings of the National Council of Labour and of its sections shall be held twice in every year, in the months of March and October.

The National Council and its respective sections shall meet in extraordinary session either on the initiative of the Permanent Committee referred to in Article 12 hereof, or on the invitation of the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, or whenever 25 members of the Council or one fourth of the members assigned to each section shall call upon the President to convene such extraordinary meeting.

ARTICLE 11.

The decisions of the National Council of Labour and of its sections shall not be valid unless approved by the majority of the members of the Council or section, and unless at least one half of the Councillors representing the employers and workers are present.

ARTICLE 12.

A Permanent Committee of the National Council of Labour shall be established, which shall consist of 12 members chosen from the members of the National Council of Labour, of whom six shall be elected by the said Council from the representatives of the workers (two from the members of section I, two from the members of section II, and two from the members of section III).

The Director-General of Labour, the Director-General of Social Welfare, and the Commissioner-General of Emigration shall be ex-officio members of the Permanent Committee, with the right to speak, but not to vote.

The Committee shall be under the presidency of the President of the National Council of Labour, and shall elect from its own number two vice-presidents, one from the workers' side and one from the employers' side.
At sittings of the Committee in which matters are discussed which concern particularly the Departments of Agriculture and of Employment Exchanges, the Directors of such Departments shall be invited to be present, and shall have the power to speak, but not to vote.

The rules for the election of the Permanent Committee (under the system of representation of minorities), and for its procedure, shall be fixed by the regulations for the application of the present Act.

**Article 13.**

It shall be the duty of the Permanent Committee to discharge all functions which may be assigned to it by regulations drawn up by the National Council of Labour.

**Article 14.**

The Committee shall meet ordinarily once in every month and shall hold an extraordinary meeting whenever the President or the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare shall deem it advisable.

Meetings of the Committee shall be convened by the President, who shall fix the agenda.

The decisions of the Committee shall be valid if approved by a majority of the members composing the Committee.

**Article 15.**

The National Council of Labour shall have its own secretariat attached to the presidency. The secretarial office shall be under the direction of a Secretary-General nominated by the Council. The staff of the secretarial office shall be selected by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, in agreement with the Permanent Committee, from the officers of the Labour Office. The secretarial office of the Council shall also act as secretarial office for the Permanent Committee of Labour.

The remuneration to be paid to members of the National Council and of the Permanent Committee, and to the advisers referred to in Article 8 of the present Act, shall be determined by the regulations for the application of the present Act, to be approved by Royal Decree on the proposal of the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, in agreement with the Minister of the Treasury.

**Article 16.**

In the Estimates for the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, commencing with the financial year 1920/21, the sum of one million lire shall be assigned for the expenses of and in connection with the National Council of Labour and the Permanent Committee, and the studies, researches, and inquiries to be carried out by the Labour Office on the order of the Permanent Committee.

**Article 17.**

The National Council of Labour may propose the establishment of local Labour Councils; the districts to be assigned to them and the rules for co-ordinating their action with that of the National Council shall be determined by regulations to be issued for the purpose.

**Article 18.**

The National Council of Labour shall be constituted within three months of the publication of the present Act.
### APPENDIX A.

**Table of Vocational Groups.**

**Section I.**—(Industry, Commerce, and Private Transport).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Representatives</th>
<th>Employers</th>
<th>Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Extractive industries (mining and minerals)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Metal and engineering</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Textile and clothing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Building, construction, glass, pottery, and the like</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Industries relating to the working and utilization of the products of agriculture, fishing, and the chase (foods, wood and the like, hides, etc.)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Industries which utilize organic products in processes which are mainly chemical (chemical and pharmaceutical industries, dyes, soaps, sugar, etc.)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Industries engaged in supplying general and collective needs (printing, production and distribution of power and gas, health services, etc.)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Commerce, private employment, and private telephone companies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Railways and tramways managed by private companies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Navigation, including loading and unloading of ships</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section II.**—(Agriculture).

- Proprietors and tenant farmers | 18 |
- Wage earners (permanent and casual) | 9 |
- Métayers and small tenant cultivators | 9 |

**Section III.**—(Industries administered by the State).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Representatives</th>
<th>Employers</th>
<th>Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. State railways</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Postal, telegraph and telephone services</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Industries administered by the Ministries of War and Marine</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Industries administered by the Ministries of the Treasury and Finance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Industries and services administered through other Ministries</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### APPENDIX B.

**Northern Italy.**

Piedmont, Liguria, Lombardy, Venetia, recovered territories, Emilia.

**Central Italy.**

Tuscany, Marches, Umbria, Latium, Abruzzi, Sardinia.

**Southern Italy.**

Molise, Campania, Apulia, Basilicata, Calabria, Sicily.
The characteristic features of this second scheme are the following:

a) Preservation of the consultative character with autonomous presidency and secretariat, and with power to propose bills to the Government on its own initiative.

b) Power to conduct inquiries in regard to the cost of production in industrial establishments.

c) Power to act as arbitrator in serious economic disputes.

d) Creation of a section for industries administered by the State.

e) Elimination of all members other than class representatives.

f) Election by general vote of members of organizations.

g) Equality of class representation.

h) System of proportional representation.

Both schemes accept substantially the following conclusions which were adopted by the Council of Labour in its 1910 session: the division of the Council into an industrial and an agricultural section, the combination of the method of grouping agricultural workers as wage-earners and métayers with the regional method of classification; classification of industries on the basis of occupational groups. The classification differs in the two schemes, but in both is much more closely related to Italian industrial and trade union life than is the classification in the existing Act.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE ORGANIZATIONS AND PRINCIPAL CRITICISMS OF THE MINISTERIAL BILL.

THE DISCUSSION IN THE 9TH PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSION.

The general Confederation of Labour (Confederazione Generale del Lavoro) at once declared its opposition to the Labriola scheme, and formulated a number of criticisms, of which the following are the most important:

The Council would continue to be a purely consultative body without power of decision; equality of class representation is an out-of-date system which puts on the same level the governing class and the governed without regard to number and importance; in agriculture equality is further endangered by the fact that on many questions it will be very difficult to form a bloc of the nine wage-earners and nine métayers, whose interests are often antagonistic, in opposition to the bloc of the 18 proprietors and tenant farmers. Finally, the system of proportional representation applied to the classes works to the disadvantage of the workers, who are divided by the various currents of trade union policy, while the employers present a united front.

The first criticism, which is the essential one, is supported by Mr. Rinaldo Rigola, a former Secretary-General of the
Confederation of Labour. He regrets that the technical superiority of the Labriola scheme over the Abbiate scheme is counterbalanced by its inferiority from a political point of view, which is such as to “compel the workers’ organizations to oppose the Bill as a whole.”

“Mr. Abbiate,” writes Mr. Rigola, “tried to confer upon the Council real powers of legislation, and to make it a technical parliament, with right of initiative in regard to social legislation and right to legislate under delegation from Parliament. The new Bill does not allow of this extension of powers and this transformation of a purely consultative body into one with deliberative powers.”

The Italian Confederation of Workers (Catholic) (Confederazione Italiana dei Lavoratori) agrees with the General Confederation of Labour in regretting the desire to maintain the purely consultative character of the Council, but approves equality of class representation and the system of proportional representation.

The Domani Sociale, the organ of the Confederation of Workers, has published a detailed analysis of the Bill. One of the proposals put forward by this paper is worthy of note, namely, that independent workers (artisans, small working proprietors, home workers) should be represented on the Council.

The organizations belonging to the Italian Union of Workers (Unione Italiana del Lavoro — Republican-Reformist) also insist on deliberative powers, but this organization is very doubtful as to the possibility of arriving at a compromise or at a well-balanced resolution in a body definitely divided into two opposing wings without intermediate interests and without moderating elements.

Amongst employers, the General Confederation of Industry (Confederazione Generale dell’Industria) has not yet defined its attitude, but more than one federation has already protested either against the inadequacy of the representation assigned to it (textile manufacturers), or against the lack of special representation (the clothing industry). The criticisms of the employers are technical rather than political, though the Employers’ Confederation at one time did pronounce in favour of conferring on the Council the power of decision under delegation from Parliament.

At the end of December 1920, Mr. Labriola’s Bill was referred to the 9th Commission of the Chamber of Deputies, which deals with social legislation, labour problems, and emigration. This Commission has not considered the Bill very favourably.

In the first discussion, Socialists, Catholics, and the constitutional parties agreed in characterizing the proposed reform as quite inadequate to satisfy the imperative need for a radical reform of the old Zanardelli Act. The exponents of trade union views, in particular, directed their criticism
against the failure to give the Council any power of decision, and against the system of leaving in the Council only representatives of opposing interests, by excluding all representatives except those of employers and workers, whether in private industry or in industries administered by the State.

The Commission decided, however, to propose amendments and make counter-proposals in accordance with the various political and trade union points of view. The conclusions of the Commission will then be submitted to the Chamber of Deputies, which, according to the most recent expectations, will discuss the Bill in April.

(Concluded February 28, 1921).

Sources.

Atti del Consiglio superiore del Lavoro, XIVa sessione, febbraio 1910: Per la riforma, ecc. — Relazione Abbiate, Cabrini, Saldini.
Atti Parlamentari (Camera dei Deputati), Legislatura XXV. Disegni di leggi e relazioni N° 938 : Istituzione del Consiglio Nazionale del Lavoro.
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