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## ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA

SPEECH OF THE OBSERVER REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

Mr. Chairman:

I have first of all the pleasant duty of greeting the friendly people of Chile and their Government in the name of the Director-General of the International Labour Organization, Dr. Edward J. Phelan.

In 1936 the International Labour Organization began the American phase of its activities in Santiago. It was thus twelve years ago that the first meeting of the Labour Conference of the American States Members of the International Labour Organization was held. In 1942 there was further set up in this same city the Inter-American Committee on Social Security, whose second meeting has just been held in Rio de Janeiro.

We have therefore gathered together in a city and a country which have warmly encouraged efforts for strengthening plans and hopes that have helped to alleviate poverty and extend the horizons of social justice.

The initiative has also fallen to Chile in establishing the Economic Commission for Latin America. It is consequently a promising sign that the Commission's first meeting is being held in Santiago.

As is well known, the International Labour Organization is an integral part of the United Nations. They are working together in their own ways for identical purposes.

When the agreements whereby the International Labour Organization became integrated with the United Nations were approved, the Director-General said very truly that full collaboration between the two organizations was thus solemnly confirmed and that such was of "the very essence of the world's efforts to achieve peace, production and prosperity".

The United Nations Economic and Social Council and the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization appointed special committees to negotiate these agreements, which were approved by both organizations towards the end of 1946. Because the aims and purposes of each were so intimately related, it was inevitable that inseparable bonds should grow up between the United Nations and the International Labour Organization. Although the

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International Labour Organization concentrates its attention especially on the all-embracing and far-reaching aspects of the social problem, it is also concerned with related economic, industrial and financial problems.

With the foregoing in view, the International Labour Organization, in the particular case of Latin America, has worked together closely with the American Member States to raise living standards, improve working conditions and increase factory safety through the approval of agreements, which may be regarded as Inter-American, at the three conferences held up to the present time. That work will be continued at the Fourth Conference, to be held at Montevideo at the end of this year or at the beginning of 1949. The tendency is thus to co-operate in making working conditions uniform, for reasons which are quite clear. Such are the ambitions governing the life and work of the International Labour Organization.

With regard to relations with the specialized international agencies, I take the liberty of quoting Dr. Phelan, Director-General of the International Labour Organization, in his reply to the representatives at the Third Labour Conference of America held in Mexico a little more than two years ago. Dr. Phelan said:

"If we are to make realities of the objectives set forth in the Declaration of Philadelphia and confirmed by the Charter of the United Nations and in the Constitutions of the Bank and of the Fund and of the Food and Agriculture Organization, if we are to end the menace of unemployment and to raise the standards of living everywhere, we cannot do it on existing production. It can only be done by an increase in the production of wealth or, as it is phrased, by an expansionist economy. Those countries which are already highly industrialized need not fear the competition of countries which undertake to bring a greater equilibrium and a greater diversity into their economic systems by appropriate measures of industrialization. There are enough potential consumers in the world to take care of all the production that can be undertaken if we organize the world's economy aright. Happily the world has now at its disposal the Economic and Social Council to give the central guidance and to evolve the international planning that will be required."

Furthermore, in the memorandum submitted to the International Labour Conference to be held in San Francisco on the 17th, the Director-General of the International Labour Organization restates those thoughts and indicates how close relations between the ILO, the United Nations and other international organizations are becoming. He observes that during 1947 they "have served to ensure to an ever-increasing degree the

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co-ordination of the activities of the ILO within the wider framework of international economic and social action", and likewise points out that visits were made by various members to give technical advice to Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela. In this document he also states that representatives of the ILO participated in 110 international meetings concerned with problems such as those being discussed here.

This quick review serves to show that the International Labour Organization will work together with the Economic Commission for Latin America just as it has been actively collaborating with the various international organs. This of course could not be otherwise, for anything tending to make economic conditions better and more prosperous in the countries of the American continent which have elementary economies or limited industrial development favours and supports direct effectively the work of the International Labour Organization in the social field.

By co-operating in the large measure which may be required by the Economic Commission for Latin America, it will be merely fulfilling an inescapable duty: continuous and devoted service to the cause of social progress to which it has been dedicating renewed efforts for almost thirty years. In short, it will be serving itself and strengthening its own work.

In conclusion, the discourses of the representatives from the various American countries - apart from the valuable information they give concerning their particular situations and their actual or potential economic resources - incite to optimism and inspire confidence. All of them, in fact, have expressed a firm desire for mutual co-operation. This is an encouraging sign. It is thus quite evident that the Economic Commission for Latin America is starting its work in a spirit of faith and mutual confidence. Under such conditions it is not idle optimism to anticipate that its work will be fruitful and will encourage the economic development of Latin America, with consequent benefit to the social activities of the International Labour Organization.

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