

T.U.C. Plans to Recast Trade Unionism and Join National Economy Enquiry

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Nous en sommes venus maintenant à la ferme conclusion que, non seulement le Conseil National de la Productivité n'a pas réussi à répondre à ces besoins, mais que son existence même, dans sa forme actuelle, constitue un sérieux obstacle à l'établissement d'une collaboration efficace en vue de résoudre nos problèmes d'ordre économique.

Je vous signale que le préambule de la loi pourvoyant d'un Conseil National de la Productivité mentionne la nécessité d'« accroître les possibilités d'emploi, de promouvoir le commerce et d'élever le niveau de vie au Canada ». Ce sont là des objectifs que nous appuyons de tout coeur et nous serons très heureux d'aider à leur réalisation. Toutefois, nous croyons fermement que le fait d'accroître la productivité, si important soit-il, est loin d'être la seule solution. De fait, comme nous l'avons déclaré il y a près de deux ans, nous croyons que l'augmentation de la productivité sans l'adoption de politiques gouvernementales expansionnistes appropriées pourrait créer encore plus de chômage.

Il y a quelques semaines, le Conseil National de la Productivité a envoyé en Europe une mission chargée d'y étudier les relations patronales-syndicales. Quelques représentants de notre mouvement y ont participé et nous ont appris que là où existent des conseils de productivité, ces conseils suppléent la collaboration qui existe sur un plan plus vaste entre le mouvement ouvrier et le patronat. C'est ce que nous recherchons ici. Nous croyons qu'un sous-comité de la productivité pourrait aider fort utilement un conseil de consultation économique ayant un champ d'activité beaucoup plus vaste.

Nous reconnaissons que, dans l'intérêt de tous les Canadiens, la collaboration entre le mouvement syndical, le patronat et le gouvernement est essentielle. Nous serions prêts, désireux même, à participer à semblable initiative de coopération. Nous avons constaté que le Conseil National de la Productivité, à cause de la portée indûment restreinte de ses activités est un obstacle à la réalisation de cet objectif.

Je vous prie donc d'accepter, à compter de ce jour, ma démission du Conseil National de Productivité.

(signé *Claude Jodoin*)

T.U.C. PLANS TO RECAST TRADE UNIONISM AND JOIN NATIONAL ECONOMY INQUIRY

Britain's Trade Union Congress has been given more work to do and more money to do it with. Delegates to the recent annual Congress voted in favour of their unions paying one shilling and three pence per head of membership each year to the T.U.C. in future instead of the present ninepence. This increase, the biggest since the T.U.C. was formed 94 years ago, will give the T.U.C. an annual income of about £500,000 — \$1.5 million — from affiliation fees.

Half the extra money is to be spent on the education of trade unionists and half divided between grants for international work and activities at home. Delegates were told that administrative costs were rising and more staff was needed at headquarters. Plans for more spending to aid unions in other countries and for a comprehensive educational scheme at home had been prepared before Congress met.

During Congress there emerged a strong desire for a fresh initiative on three fronts.

First delegates instructed the General Council to report on the possibility of recasting the structure of the British trade union movement to make it better fitted to meet modern industrial conditions; then they called for research into method by which « fringe benefits » might be extended, and finally they sought a report from the General Council re-defining trade union objectives in economic planning and showed themselves ready to recognize that this might entail changes in trade union policy and negotiating machinery.

PROMOTING PROSPERITY

An attempt to withdraw T.U.C. representatives from the newly set-up National Economic Development Council was overwhelmingly defeated. This Council has the Chancellor of the Exchequer as its chairman, and, as members, two other Ministers, six trade unionists, five employers from private industry, two from publicly-owned undertaking and two independent members. It has its own director-general and full-time staff, independent powers to obtain information, and power to declare its views and recommend them to the Government. It held its first meeting last March. Its tasks are to examine the economic performance of the nation and particularly the plans for the future of industries in both the publicly-owned and private sector. It will try to identify the obstacles to quicker economic growth and to point to what can be done to improve efficiency and make better use of the nation's resources. It will also seek agreement on ways of speeding the rate of sound economic progress. A first report by the director-general is due by the end of this year.

At the Congress, General Secretary George Woodcock said it was much too early to praise or to condemn the N.E.D.C. It was an instrument that offered possibilities. « For us », he said, « it is a serious undertaking, something we have been asking for, at least in form, for a long time. We have a planning office which has shown every sign so far of becoming what we wanted it to be — an instrument which will be part of N.E.D.C., not an arm of the Treasury ».

He added that if the N.E.D.C. was to be allowed to discuss the question of investment, imports and exports, financial policy, control of industrial development, profits and dividends, the T.U.C. representatives would not be afraid to discuss the position of wages in the general plan.

A NEW PATTERN FOR UNIONS

George Woodcock was also the T.U.C. General Council's spokesman in reply to a motion from the Union of Post Office Workers which called for a report on the modernization of the structural pattern of British trade unionism. The last such report came at the end of World War II, analysed trade union functions and proposed a range of amalgamations and other forms of closer working between unions with overlapping interests. Some of its proposals were adopted.

This time, George Woodcock said, the first question must be : « What are we here for ? » Stressing that the report could not be produced quickly — a year

would be spent in making inquiries and another in discussions on detail with the affiliated unions — the T.U.C. General Secretary said that the inquiry would be a tremendous undertaking that would reveal the effect that changes in circumstances had upon union purposes and functions — and what adaptations were required in trade union structure.

Meanwhile, preparations are being made for the first stage of the T.U.C.'s new educational programme. The T.U.C. from the beginning of next year, will accept financial responsibility for the correspondence courses and other spare-time educational activities sponsored in the past by two voluntary organizations; those facilities will thus become available to members of all T.U.C. unions instead of just to those whose unions have subscribed to the voluntary bodies. Eventually these bodies will be disbanded and the T.U.C. will carry on their work as a supplement to the courses of full-time study provided at the T.U.C. Training College.

The T.U.C. will soon be offering to contribute a substantial sum (over and above affiliation fees) to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. The T.U.C. gave £500,000 — more than the trade union movement of any other country — to the first International Solidarity Fund of the I.C.F.T.U. It did not contribute to the second, but its representatives have made known that, in satisfactory circumstances, the T.U.C. would subscribe £50,000 a year for an indefinite period for the purposes that this fund serves.

Other early post-Congress moves by the T.U.C. General Council will be to join with the British Employers' Confederation and the Ministry of Labour in a public conference on industrial safety, to be followed by talks with the employers' organization on sick pay, dismissal procedures and paid leave for shop stewards to be trained in their duties.

Jean-Réal Cardin

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