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INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

3480 UNIVERSITY STREET, MONTREAL, CANADA

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For release in afternoon papers,
Tuesday, 26 Sept. 1944.

Received	8 DEC 1944
For Attention
Recorded
Acknowledged
Answered

ILO SEES NEW PRINCIPLE

AS GUIDING COLONIAL RULE

MONTREAL, Sept. 26 - A new principle - the welfare of the people - has begun to strengthen the principle of "trusteeship" in the government of dependent territories, the International Labor Office declared in a report published here today.

Indications point to a wide measure of current agreement, the report said, that "the main purpose of colonial government is the advancement of the welfare of the peoples of dependent territories." Evidence suggests, it said, that a principle is emerging which is in advance of old applications of the "principle of trusteeship based on the dual mandate of indigenous and world interests."

"To be sure," the study added, "dependent territories are not administered for reasons of philanthropy. But the practical lessons of 1930 to the present day show that, as in an independent country, so in a dependent territory, primary consideration to the welfare and development of the peoples is good business to all but certain sectional interests."

The assumption that it is both desirable and possible to direct economic policy towards the improvement of mankind's standard of living has the endorsement of the leaders of the United Nations, the report pointed out. However, it said, the practical application of this assumption may be made slow by the poverty of many colonies and "the vestige of the tradition that inexhaustible wealth may be drawn from the tropics."

"Nevertheless," the study declared, "in the gropings for a new dynamism the growing conviction can be found that the development of colonial wealth must be dictated by, instead of dictating, the development of popular welfare."

The report listed six characteristic features of the development of the dependent territories during the war, and said that "a constructive optimism may hope that they will govern the post-war situation." These features are:

1. An expansion of the general principle of responsibility.
2. Increased regional and international collaboration, both potential and actual.
3. The promise of a more rapid progress of several important territories toward self-government.
4. The increased importance of the factor of social welfare in public policy.
5. The construction or planning of economic machinery by which standards of living may become a first objective of future policy.
6. Changes in production and trade in the territories modifying old conditions of economic dependence.

The underestimation in the between-war period of the labor problem in the colonies is now yielding to general agreement on its importance, the study said.

Labor policy today, it continued, tends to consider the worker and his family "within the whole web of relationships created by the development of an employment economy, his need for cash remuneration, his physical and educational fitness, his social relations with his fellow workers and his employers."

It is important, the report pointed out, not to lose sight of special factors in the colonial labor situation in territories which have otherwise benefited from foreign capital and direction.

In many territories, it explained, "nearly all the rich came to be foreigners, or at the best local individuals out of touch with local traditions. The result was that the masses ceased to be poor in a poor country and became the poor of a not so poor or even of a rich country."

The present need for more and better colonial laws is symptomatic rather than fundamental, the report declared.

"The real need is for more education and better education, for better health, housing and nutrition, for higher wages, for higher and steadier remuneration to producers, for a desire for social progress, and in short for more wealth and a better distribution of wealth. The present position is not that laws and principles are lacking, but that the gulf between enunciation and execution is still wide."

Subject to many local exceptions, the study said, "it would seem that the general economic foundations of social progress will be the development of the existing primary industries, supplemented by secondary industries largely concerned with the processing of primary products and with the provision of simple necessities." However, it declared, unless this supplementary degree of industrialization is fostered, poverty will remain.

The volume concludes that the foundations of colonial progress must be sought within the territories themselves.

"This study," it said, "has tried to show a strengthening social purpose in the economic direction of dependent territories, a new realization of the material benefits countries of high living standards may expect from improvements in colonial living standards, a recognition that the exhaustion of colonial resources is bad business for all but the few.

"It has suggested that the progressive policies of colonial powers are awakening a will to progress among the peoples which it will be increasingly dangerous to frustrate. It is based on the faith that the present war will be won by the United Nations over forces and false doctrines of race supremacy, and that social and economic policy, no less than political policy, must respect the ideology of victory."

Entitled "Social Policy in Dependent Territories," the study was prepared by Wilfrid Bensen, chief of the Dependent Territories Service of the ILO.

It is designed, a foreword pointed out, "to explain the background, the nature and the potentialities" of the Recommendation concerning minimum standards of social policy in dependent territories adopted by the Philadelphia Conference of the ILO

Collection Number: AD1715

SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (SAIRR), 1892-1974

PUBLISHER:

Collection Funder:- Atlantic Philanthropies Foundation

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

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