

## Commentary on the Constitution

THE Federation's name was chosen to emphasize its global character and ease translation into other languages without distraction of meaning.

In the *objects* of the Federation, the most important clause is the second. First comes the fundamental aim, namely, to work for the fullest utilisation of science to promote peace and the welfare of mankind. Emphasis is laid on the need for a more scientific approach to urgent problems, including reconstruction, the world food shortage, the control of atomic energy, and the improvements of standards of living in undeveloped and colonial countries. Underlying this aim is the realization that one of the fundamental causes of war is the great poverty of the greater part of the world's inhabitants, which is so easily exploited by those bent on world domination. It is realized that the continuance of low standards of living in some parts of the world is a menace to the higher standards that have been attained in other parts. The next clause specifies that the Federation shall collaborate with the scientific division of UNESCO. The international exchange of scientific workers and scientific knowledge should be encouraged, and the dangerous policy of secrecy in science resisted. The freedom of speech and of publication for scientists should be extended, and co-operation with other international bodies having similar objects to those of the Federation should be pursued. In the sphere of disseminating scientific information, the Federation is to work to improve the teaching of science, to spread a knowledge of science among all the peoples, and to explain the impact of science and technology on the problems of human ills and needs.

Also, the Federation is to endeavour to increase the understanding among scientific workers and the general public of the relations of science and technology to political and public affairs. Turning to matters of more direct interest to the scientific worker, the next clause empowers the Federation to work for the improvement of the economic, social, and professional status of scientists. As the Federation is not a trade union organization it will not pursue these aims by the methods which are particular to trade unions. This clause is intended to cover not only questions of economic reward and working conditions but also an elevation of the esteem in which scientists are held by the general public. A further clause expresses a desire to encourage scientists themselves to take some initiative in this, by becoming more active in public affairs. A final clause sets as an aim the achievement of closer integration between the natural and social sciences, which can lead to a much more rapid solution of all problems in which the human element is involved.

The *powers* of the Federation include taking action on any matter consistent with its constitution. In relation to the policies of the member organizations, the Federation is limited to offering advice.

There was considerable discussion as to what organizations could be admitted to *membership*. It was generally agreed that these bodies must be those which support the principles of the Federation and agree to abide by its constitution. It was also felt necessary that in this article a fairly close definition of what constitutes a scientific worker should be inserted, and that organizations applying for membership should be judged on how far their membership satisfies the definition. A scientific worker is considered to be any suitably qualified person,

engaged on professional work in the natural or social sciences, pure or applied, including the teaching of science in schools and universities. The qualification is to be a university degree or its equivalent. The question of whether workers in history, linguistics, and law and other border-line fields which are reckoned as sciences in some countries should be so regarded for the purposes of the clause is to be decided in individual cases in relation to what is current practice in the country of origin of the organization.

Organizations which have a scientific section, can be admitted on the basis of their scientific membership only, to which as far as possible the above mentioned conditions should apply.

One clause envisages that in a country where there are several organizations which would qualify for membership, a grouping of these might be formed for the purpose of affiliating. Such a grouping could be accepted as a member of the Federation.

Finally, it was unanimously agreed that organizations from any nation of the world could be admitted, at the discretion of the Executive Council. Further articles are included dealing with resignations, expulsions, and the method of applying for membership. The Executive Council is permitted to nominate individual scientists to be members of the Federation in those countries where there are as yet no organizations capable of membership of the Federation. These individual members are entitled to receive the publications of the Federation and to attend the General Assembly (*see below*), but not to vote. Foundation members of the Federation are defined as those who ratify the constitution by the time the first General Assembly, and any others who apply for membership and are accepted by the same date.

On the subject of *subscriptions* there was a great deal of debate, since the income per head of members of the various organizations represented at the meeting varied so widely. The most satisfactory arrangement was eventually agreed to be that the subscription should be based on  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the total annual income of the organization. As the initial expenses of the organization in setting up offices, etc., might be high, and also the finances might improve later on as more organizations joined, the organizations at the conference were asked, if and when they ratify the constitution, to initiate a collection of donations from their members. It was also decided not to require any membership fee from the individual members of the Federation. An article is included to deal with failure to pay subscriptions.

The supreme governing body of the Federation is to be the *General Assembly*, to be convened at least once every two years, with provision for the calling of emergency meetings. There was much discussion on the method of voting. The basis of representation, that is, the way in which the number of delegates of an organization shall be related to its membership, is not defined in the constitution, being left to a future meeting of the Assembly to decide, and incorporate as a rule. The Executive Council felt that a suitable basis might be one delegate for the first 1,000 members, two for 1,000-5,000 members, three for 5,000-15,000, and four for any organization having more than 15,000 qualified members. This basis would prevent voting on any matter being swamped by any one large organization.

A two-thirds majority of the votes cast, these votes representing a majority of the organizations represented, is required for the passage of motions to the Assembly. The quorum is fixed at one half of the member organizations. Long times are specified for giving notice of the holding of an Assembly, receiving motions, sending our preliminary agenda, etc. Provision is made for the sending-in of emergency resolutions.

The principal committee of the Federation, to carry on its business in between meetings of the Assembly and to give effect to the policy decided there, is to be an *Executive Council*. This is to be composed of two types of members in equal numbers; those chosen in an individual

capacity (including the officers), and regional representatives. The individual members of the council will be elected by ballot at the Assembly, but provision is made for the regional representatives to be elected by the organizations in the regions of the world that they represent. A regional division of the world suggested at the conference was :—U.S.A. and South America, British Commonwealth, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Middle East and India, Scandinavia, U.S.S.R., Far East, giving 8 regional representatives. No actual specification of regions has been incorporated in the constitution.

The individual members are to contain all the *Officers* which shall include the President, two Vice-Presidents, two Hon. Secretaries, and a Treasurer. The remaining two will be classed as "ordinary members." A provisional Executive Council was elected at the meeting, consisting of 8 individual members and six regional representatives, of whom biographical notes will be found on pages 28-31. The Executive Council elects its own chairman, who need not necessarily be the President of the Federation. It is hoped that the election of half the Executive Council on a regional basis will have two effects; that the interests of different parts of the world will be adequately represented, and that the formation of regional associations of organizations within the framework of the Federation may be stimulated, so that these associations can undertake to co-ordinate the work of the Federation in their own areas. The Executive Council is permitted to appoint substitutes for any of its members that vacate office between elections, pending new elections at the next meeting of the Assembly.

The constitution may be *changed* only if three-quarters of the votes cast, and a majority of the member organizations present, are in favour.

A clause provides for the enactment of *rules* and another forbids public utterances on behalf of the Federation unless sanctioned by the Executive Council.

Finally, it is laid down that the working languages of the Federation shall be French and English. As a result all important documents will be produced in both languages and both texts issued since each will have equal publicity. This pamphlet, for instance, is being produced in both languages.

In *conclusion*, we believe that the conference which was held on July 20th and 21st, 1946, is an important stage on the way to a better world. We look forward to a time when humanity will receive the fruits of science with the least possible delay, and when the urgent needs of mankind will receive high priority among the problems from which scientists select their working material. We look forward to a world in which scientific effort is no longer wasted on war, and in which decisions affecting the fate of large masses of people are decided in the interests of mankind as a whole and not in the interests of minute sections. We look forward to the permeation of the fabric of our civilization by the scientific outlook.

The delegates to the conference showed each other and the world at large how widespread is the desire among scientists for a much greater social orientation, and in creating the Federation they did their utmost to breathe life into it by providing it with a democratic constitution, and suggesting a large number of urgent problems at which it should work. The scientists of the world are invited, as members of their associations, and as individuals, to support the Federation in every way open to them.

The first public functions in which the World Federation has joined were the meetings in memory of Paul Langevin. Representatives were sent to the meeting held in the Sorbonne on February 25th, 1947. The World Federation took the initiative in organizing a reception and public meeting in collaboration with the British Association of Scientific Workers, and the British Society for Visiting Scientists, in London on May 23rd and 25th, 1947.

The President of the Society for Visiting Scientists, the Astronomer Royal, Sir Harold Spencer-Jones, F.R.S., received the guests at the reception. Professor Joliot-Curie and the Right Hon. A. V. Alexander, C.H., M.P., Minister of Defence, delivered addresses in the presence of the French Ambassador, the President of the Royal Society, and other eminent persons.

Sir Henry Tizard, K.C.B., F.R.S., Chairman of the British Advisory Council on Scientific Research, took the Chair at the public meeting. Speeches were delivered by M. Pierre Biquard, Sir Harold Spencer-Jones, Sir George Thomson, F.R.S., and Professor J. D. Bernal, F.R.S.

The speeches on these occasions are being published as a pamphlet: *In Memory of Paul Langevin*.

Professor Joliot-Curie has announced that the World Federation will organize a meeting in Paris in memory of Lord Rutherford, on October 19th, 1947, on the tenth anniversary of his death.