April 19, 1944

To the Members of the International Labor Conferences:

I send you greetings and a warm welcome. We are glad to have you in the United States. It is a privilege to welcome you on our soil for the third time a general Conference of your great Organization.

The conference that opens today is most significant in the annals of international gatherings.

The mere fact that, in the tradition of the founders of the International Labor Organization, the Conference still maintains its distinctive democratic tripartite character, is in itself of significance.

As part of the regular constitutional machinery of the ILO, it also testifies to the vitality of one of the few international organizations which have continued to function throughout the war. The determination of the part of the member states that the ILO should continue its activities during the war years is evidence of the indestructible tenacity of the democratic way of life. As representatives of the practical affairs of these nations — not only of their governments, but also of their workers and employers — you have come together to make plans and recommendations for the continuing improvement of labor standards and for raising the standard of living of the world's people. The tasks you are undertaking, even at the moment when the tide of war is mounting, bear testimony to the fact that the welfare of the world's population and their liberty are a first and an ultimate concern of those dedicated to root out from this earth every trace of Nazi ideas and Nazi methods.

We know that the conditions of a lasting peace can be assured only through soundly-organized economic institutions, fortified by humane labor standards, regular employment and adequate income for all the people.

Within the field of your activity the United Nations have no need to entertain a new organization. The ways and means for obtaining this underwriting of a permanent peace are among the items on the agenda of your Conference. In your recommendations will lie the foundation of these agreements in the field of labor and social standards which must be part of any permanent international arrangement for a decent world.

The Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, has already publicly announced that the Government of the United States is now working on plans for an international organization to maintain peace. He has also
referred to the "economic and other cooperative arrangements" which must be made in order that the peoples of the world may "have the opportunity through their own efforts to improve their material condition".

As part of these plans and international arrangements, I see in the ILO a permanent instrument of representative character for the formulation of international policy on matters directly affecting the welfare of labor and for international collaboration in this field. I see it as a body with the requisite authority to formulate and secure the adoption of those basic minimum standards that shall apply throughout the world to the conditions of employment. As part of these arrangements, also, I see in the ILO an organization which shall serve the world for investigation and research, for discussion and debate. But more than that it must be the agency for decision and for action on those economic and social matters related to the welfare of working people which are practical for industry, and designed to enhance the opportunities for a good life for peoples the world over.

It is to the ILO that we shall look as the official international organization where ideas, experience and movements in the field of labor and social development may find practical and effective expression.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 17, 1944

TO: The President
FROM: Mr. Lubin

Attached herewith is the draft of the letter which you asked Miss Perkins to have prepared for the opening of the ILO Conference in Philadelphia on Thursday morning.

Miss Perkins has gone over this and has approved it.

The Secretary of Labor is anxious to have this returned by Wednesday.
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
April 18, 1944.

Judge Latta:

The attached is the only item of those forwarded in the Saturday and Monday pouches that I have been able to get signed as yet.

I hope to clear the slate with the next pouch to you.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

W. M. Higdon.