

# ITF NEWSLETTER

## INFORMATIONS

## INFORMATIONEN

## INFORMATIONSBLAD

No. 5

3 March 1966

IN THIS NUMBER: ITF Representative aids Liberian flag crew (p. 39); End to strike ban on Dutch railwaymen? (p. 41); London busmen win 40-hour week (p. 43); Dutch bus wages lag behind (p. 44); Swiss drivers' hours of work (p. 44); New York transit settlement honoured (p.45); Finnish dockers' strike threat (p. 45); Mediation for Basle dockers (p.46); IMCO load line conference (p.47); Negotiations on Danish ship manning (p.47); Improvements for UK merchant officers (p.48); US maritime unions to boycott North Vietnam trade ships (p.49); Norwegian trawler agreements (p.49); Finnish aviation workers set strike (p.50).

### ABOUT THE ITF

HONG KONG  
\*\*\*\*\*

#### ITF Representative aids crew of Liberian-flag ship

During the night of 10 February, the Liberian-flag "Thomas P" under an ITF Custodian Agreement based on Greek conditions, ran aground on Lamma Island in the Colony of Hong Kong. Initial efforts to refloat her were unsuccessful and, as a result, a number of the crew were brought ashore and accommodated in the Hong Kong Sailors' Home. Further efforts were afterwards made to refloat the ship, but it was not until mid-day on 15 February that she began to move. As the extent of the damage to her was not known, the remaining crew members were also landed and lodged in the Sailors' Home. Later the same day, the ship was refloated and taken to a safe anchorage.

When the ITF Representative in Hong Kong, Charles Blyth, visited the Home on the following day, he was told that the Master intended to sign off the crew and have them repatriated to Greece by air. He was also informed that a dispute had arisen over payment of wages and a claim by the crew that they were entitled to additional payments under the terms of the Greek collective agreement. The Master, however, was refusing this on the grounds that the vessel was not a wreck. Blyth told him that unless the

crew agreed to take their wages in Greece (where not all of them were domiciled) he would insist on payment before they left Hong Kong. As regards the additional payment, Blyth said that he would discuss it again once he had made further inquiries.

Reference to the text of the Greek agreement showed that the men were in fact entitled to the additional payment (45 extra days per man) and this was agreed by the Marine Superintendent of the company, whom Blyth subsequently visited. However, the Marine Superintendent said that all wages would be paid in Greece. Blyth replied that this was acceptable in the case of the Greek crew members, but that those who did not live in Greece (eight in number) would have to be paid before leaving Hong Kong. This too was agreed, and Blyth reported back on the result of his discussions to the crew.

On 18 February, the Master arrived at the Sailors' Home with the crew's accounts of wages, but Blyth pointed out that these were unacceptable because they contained no reference to the additional 45 days' pay due. He accompanied the Master to the Marine Superintendent's office, reminded the latter of his earlier promise and insisted on the extra payment being shown in the accounts of wages. As a result, agreement was reached that this should be done and a note added to the effect that the payment was subject to the approval of the ITF-affiliated Pan-Hellenic Seamen's Federation. The Marine Superintendent also again promised that men not living in Greece should be paid before leaving Hong Kong and the signing-off of the crew was arranged for 4 p.m. on the same day.

The Master arrived to sign off the crew at 5.15 p.m. but Blyth again had to point out that the accounts were unsatisfactory, since their wording appeared to be an acknowledgement that they had actually received the additional payment. In addition, Blyth learned that there was no money to pay the non-Greek seamen. He therefore told the Master that the signing-off could not take place. Since the men were due to leave for the airport at 10.30 a.m. on the following day, a further approach was made to the company's agents by telephone. This resulted in a promise that the money would be available at 10 a.m. the next morning and that the crew would be signed off then.

This promise was kept and the crew signed off and left for Athens by air, after informing Blyth that they were completely satisfied with the result of his intervention. Our representative also cabled the Pan-Hellenic Seamen's Federation, with the request that an official should meet the crew's aircraft to ensure that everything was in order.

VENEZUELA  
\*\*\*\*\*

Joint organizing campaign by ITF and Venezuelan affiliate

A large-scale trade union educational and organizational campaign is being undertaken among Venezuela's transport workers as the result of a joint programme worked out between the ITF Latin

American Regional Office and the ITF-affiliated Venezuelan Transport Workers' Federation. The campaign has two complementary aims: firstly, to train organizers and active rank-and-file union workers; secondly, to organize the un-organized and to strengthen existing unions affiliated with the Transport Workers' Federation.

Two regional seminars for the training of union organizers were held during the months of January and February. Jack Otero (Regional Director) and Medardo Gomero of the Lima Regional Office acted as instructors during the seminars, together with officials of both the Transport Workers' Federation and the Venezuelan national centre, CTV.

TRANSPORT WORKERS (GENERAL)

GREAT BRITAIN  
\*\*\*\*\*

National Freight Authority proposed by British Transport Minister

Among measures announced by the British Minister of Transport, Mrs Castle, as part of the Labour Government's plan to revitalize Britain's transport system is the establishment of a new National Freight Authority. This would be charged with the modernization of nationalized road and rail freight transport to make it more competitive with private haulage. Other steps announced by the Minister were a reversal of the Beeching plan for the railways and increased expenditure on roads and docks.

RAILWAYMEN

NETHERLANDS  
\*\*\*\*\*

Strike ban on railwaymen to be lifted?

Speaking at the 40th anniversary celebrations of the Netherlands State Railways Staff Council, the Minister of Transport and Waterways, Mr. J.G. Suurhoff, said that the existing ban on strike action by Dutch railwaymen "will shortly be lifted". A prohibition of this kind, he went on, was today no longer acceptable.

Negotiations on the railwaymen's current pay claim, however, are reported to have reached a position of deadlock. The railwaymen have based their demands on the findings of an independent committee of inquiry (the Van der Dussen Committee), which established that the earnings of railway workers had fallen behind in comparison with other groups.

The ITF-affiliated Netherlands Transport Workers' Federation (NBV) therefore submitted a claim for a seven per cent increase (the maximum permitted by the Government at the present time) plus a further rise of ten per cent to compensate for the wage disparity noted in the Van der Dussen Committee report.

SWITZERLAND  
\*\*\*\*\*

Federal employees maintain claim for 44-hour week by 1967

At an extraordinary delegate conference held in Berne on 17 February, the Association of Federal Employees' Unions (of which the ITF-affiliated Swiss Railwaymen's Union is a member), decided to maintain its demand for the introduction of the 44-hour week by 1967 at the latest. Members of Parliament connected with the Association were requested to take all necessary measures to achieve this aim.

Mass meetings of Federal employees in support of the demand will also be held. These will take place on either 13 or 20 March in Bellinzona, Berne, Lausanne, Olten and Zürich. The Association and its member-organizations will further ensure that the views of the unions on the question of reduced working hours for operating staff in Federal employment are brought to the attention of both the public and Members of Parliament. The Association's Executive has been empowered to organize any further action which may be necessary to underline its dissatisfaction with the Federal Council's proposals on working hours.

As reported in Newsletter No. 4, the Federal Council decided to apply a 45-hour week from 28 May 1967, with a further reduction to 44 hours two years later. In the case of operating staff employed by the Federal Railways and the Postal and Telegraph Administration, however, no date was set for the introduction of the 44-hour week; this being made dependent on the country's economic circumstances.

UNITED STATES  
\*\*\*\*\*

Mediation in US rail firemen dispute

The President of the ITF-affiliated Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen (BLF&E), H. E. Gilbert, has announced that mediation is expected on all seven railroads affected by the union's dispute with management over the employment of firemen. Mediators have already been appointed in the case of three of them -- the Chesapeake & Ohio; Louisville & Nashville, and Pacific Lines.

Our affiliate has notified all seven rail companies that it wants to negotiate new contract terms covering firemen, including those forced out of their jobs by a decision under a 1963 federal law compelling arbitration of locomotive crew sizes. This is due to expire on 31 March. The BLF&E has also asked a US District Court to rule that the decision officially expires on that date.

ROAD AND PASSENGER TRANSPORT WORKERS

CANADA  
\*\*\*\*\*

Ottawa busmen win fifteen per cent increase

The ITF-affiliated Amalgamated Transit Union reports the conclusion of a new two-year agreement covering bus operators and mechanics employed by the Ottawa Transportation Commission. The agreement runs from 1 January last until 31 December 1967.

All staff covered by it will receive a fifteen per cent pay increase. In the case of operators, this is in three successive stages, giving a top rate of \$2.59 per hour as from 7 January 1967. Top rate for a mechanic from the same date will be \$2.82. Annual vacations will now be four weeks on completion of 20 years' service (previously 23 years). Weekly sick pay is increased from \$50 to \$56. The overtime rate will be adjusted to conform with the Canada Labour Standard Code. The Company is also to pay maintenance employees an allowance of \$5 per year for safety boots or shoes.

GREAT BRITAIN  
\*\*\*\*\*

Agreement on 40-hour week for London busmen; pay claim held up

A five-week ban on overtime and rest day working by London Transport busmen has ended following an agreement reached between London Transport and the ITF-affiliated Transport & General Workers' Union on the introduction of a five-day, 40-hour week.

The working hour agreement means that busmen will have an extra rest day per four weeks, working 20 days in every 28 instead of 21. The basic working day will remain the same -- 7 hours 38 minutes -- but busmen will be asked to work more spread-over duties, with a long break in the middle of the day.

Talks on a 6.6 per cent wage claim submitted by the union began almost immediately after the agreement, but were halted by the intervention of the Government's Department of Economic Affairs which asked London Transport not to grant any increase until it had been considered by the Government and the Trades Union Congress under the "early warning" procedure which forms part of the national prices and incomes policy.

The pay claim was based on the findings of a committee of inquiry into busmen's pay and conditions which proposed an annual review of wages to establish comparability with industrial earnings in London and South-East England. London Transport had already indicated its willingness to accept the claim when the Government stepped in. The Transport & General Workers' Union, which is strongly opposed to the Government's prices and incomes policy, has this week put its case before the TUC's wage-vetting committee. The committee approved the claim, together with a further claim for a substantial increase on behalf of 77,000 municipal busmen.

The Department of Economic Affairs is now reported to be considering whether to refer the London busmen's claim to the Prices and Incomes Board. However, Harry Nicholas, Acting General Secretary of our affiliate, said after a meeting with the Minister for Economic Affairs on 2 March: "We have not agreed with a reference to the Board and if it is so referred it will be the Minister's responsibility and not ours. We object to the reference because it interferes with our negotiating procedures".

More pay and shorter hours proposed for British lorry drivers

The Road Haulage Wages council is to submit proposals for a reduction in the working week to which the minimum rates of lorry drivers are related from 42 to 41 hours. Its proposals also include: an increase of 3 per cent in rates paid outside London together with a similar cash increase for workers in the London area in order to maintain existing differentials; and an increase in the minimum overtime rate to time and a half (at present, it is time and a quarter for the first two hours' overtime worked between Monday and Friday).

NETHERLANDS  
\*\*\*\*\*

Bus drivers' wages lag behind those in industry

A report issued last month by a committee composed of both workers and employers indicates that the gross weekly earnings of drivers employed by Netherlands private bus companies are on average nine per cent lower than those paid to skilled industrial workers.

The survey covered 54 privately-operated bus companies and in 48 of these the difference in real earnings for the month of April 1965 amounted to an average of 14.48 guilders\*) per week. In the remaining six companies, the differential averaged 8.47 guilders. The bus drivers' rates are compared with those of skilled industrial workers because it is considered that under the work classification system which is generally used in Holland their jobs would be placed on more or less the same level.

The commission's report did not deal with bus drivers in the larger towns and cities, since these are not employed by private companies. However, a list of wages earned by such drivers is appended to the report, and these range from 163.54 guilders per week in Utrecht up to 190.86 guilders in Amsterdam.

-----  
\*) One guilder is approx. 2s. or 28 US cents.

SWITZERLAND  
\*\*\*\*\*

Hour of work and rest periods for Swiss drivers

We have now received fuller details of the revised Swiss Ordinance on the hours of work and rest periods of professional motor drivers,

on which we reported very briefly in Newsletter No. 3 of 3 February.

As mentioned previously, the Ordinance, which came into force on 1 February, establishes a weekly maximum of 50 hours (55 for taxi drivers), which can be extended by up to 5 hours per week and by up to 150 hours per annum in the form of over-time. These are, however, maximum working hours; maximum driving hours are set at nine hours per day and 45 per week. In addition, a rest period of at least 15 minutes must be given after each three hours at the wheel, while a rest period of at least nine consecutive hours must be given after nine hours at the wheel and, in any case, every 24 hours.

Working time is defined as time when the worker is at the disposal of the employer; this includes waiting time and breaks of less than 15 minutes, together with any time spent working for a third party. Where two drivers relieve each other at the wheel and can take horizontal rest, half of the time spent as a passenger counts as working time. However, the total time spent by both drivers at the wheel must not exceed fourteen hours. If there are no facilities for horizontal rest, all time as a passenger counts as working time. In such case, the weekly maximum working hours can be increased to 55.

Overtime is compensated for at the rate of time and a quarter or by equivalent time off, the latter to be given within three months (previously, only time off in lieu was given).

All vehicles covered by the Ordinance have to be fitted with a tachograph.

UNITED STATES  
\*\*\*\*\*

#### New York transit settlement will be honoured

The new contract which ended the recent New York transit strike is to be put into effect following the passing of a special Bill in the New York legislature which makes Condon-Wadlin Act penalties inapplicable to it. It will be remembered that a Supreme Court judge had earlier ruled that the penalty clauses of the Act made it illegal to pay the wage increases won during the strike for a period of three years.

PORT WORKERS

FINLAND  
\*\*\*\*\*

#### Finnish dockers set new date for threatened strike

Finnish dockers, organized in the ITF-affiliated Drivers' and Transport Workers' Union, who were due to go on strike on 28 February, have now postponed their action until 5 March pending the outcome of further negotiations.

The strike threat followed the breakdown of talks concerning new agreements on both wages and working conditions. Only dockers in Southern Finnish ports would be affected by it.

GREAT BRITAIN  
\*\*\*\*\*

New pay system for Tilbury dockers agreed in principle

Agreement has been reached in principle between the ITF-affiliated Transport & General Workers' Union and the Port of London Authority on a new agreement for dockers in Tilbury which will abolish piecework and substitute a guaranteed basic wage. The dockers, who will be working on special cargo in a modernized shed, are expected to receive a weekly basic of between £27 and £30, exclusive of overtime. Negotiations on the actual amount are still continuing, with the union pressing for a minimum of £30.

When the system gets under way -- probably in September -- there will also be a six-monthly bonus on top of the basic wage to compensate for the acceptance of new working methods.

SWITZERLAND  
\*\*\*\*\*

Union seeks mediation on Basle dockers' pay

The ITF-affiliated Swiss Transport Workers' Union (VHTL) is to ask for the assistance of the Mediation Office in settling claims which it has submitted on behalf of dockers employed in the Rhine port of Basle. The decision was taken at a mass meeting of dockers held last month and followed the refusal of the employers to make any concessions on the major points contained in the union's list of claims. Feelings at the meeting ran high and a number of speakers referred to the possibility of strike action before the decision to invoke the services of the Mediation Office was taken.

The current agreement is due to expire on 31 March and among the improvements being sought by the VHTL in a new contract are the following:

An increase of 15 Fr. \*) in daily unemployment rates (fall-back pay in cases of high or low water, ice, fog, etc.); an increase of 30 centimes in hourly rates; payment of a night shift allowance of 7.50 Fr. (at present 5 Fr.); and an increase of 40 centimes in the child allowance payable per shift to 1.50 Fr.

-----  
\*) One Franc is about 1s.8d or 23 US cents. It is divided into 100 centimes.



SEAFARERS

INTERNATIONAL  
\*\*\*\*\*

IMCO Conference will draft new load line Convention

An International Conference on Load Lines, convened by the Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO), opens in London today (3 March).

Since the existing Load Line Convention was adopted in 1930 great changes have taken place in ship design and construction, ship operation, and the size of vessels. The present Conference is being held for the purpose of drafting a new convention which will take proper account of both these changes and other technical developments.

We will be giving further details of the Conference's work in a later issue.

DENMARK  
\*\*\*\*\*

Negotiations to begin on manning dispensations

The ITF-affiliated Danish Seamen's Union has been fined by the Labour Court as the result of a case brought by the Danish shipowners in connection with the union's boycott of ships (including the 92,000-ton tanker "A.P. Møller") which have secured dispensations from the Danish manning law. The boycott, which has since been called off, has however achieved its object. Negotiations on the whole question of manning and dispensations from the law are expected to begin shortly with the shipowners, following a recent meeting between the latter and the Minister of Commerce.

It will be recalled that the owners of the "A.P. Møller" increased their proposed deck crew of ten to twelve men as a result of the union's boycott decision (see Newsletters 2 and 3). The Labour Court last month declared the boycott action illegal and imposed a fine of Kr. 60,000 (about £3,000 or \$8,400) on the union. The Court's decision was strongly criticized by the union and a protest demonstration by some 3,000 seamen took place when the union's cheque in payment of the fine was taken to the Shipowners' Federation office on 21 February. Posters carried by the demonstrators drew attention to the discrepancy between the fine of kr. 60,000 imposed on the union for trying to uphold the manning law and one of kr. 1,000 which A.P. Møller had to pay because it did not apply the Danish seamen's agreement to Chinese seamen recruited in Hong Kong.

GREAT BRITAIN  
\*\*\*\*\*

Improved conditions for British merchant officers

The ITF-affiliated Merchant Navy & Airline Officers' Association (MNAOA) has reported on progress made in negotiations on a number of claims for improvements in merchant officers' conditions. The claims were submitted at a meeting of the National Maritime Board in December last.

One of the Association's aims was to remove anomalies which arise when Sundays and Bank holidays are days of arrival and sailing, and to ensure that all hours worked in port over the weekend be aggregated. These claims applied to Section "A" Officers and Senior Officers Section "B" serving on both home trade and foreign-going vessels.

Agreement has now been reached on both points. Actual hours of duty worked in port on Saturdays, Sundays and Public Bank Holidays -- including days of arrival and sailing on such days -- will now be aggregated, entitling to extra leave or payment in lieu on the basis of a day's leave for each eight hours worked. If any excess over a multiple of eight hours amounts to four or over it will qualify for a day's leave.

The owners have also agreed that the special allowance payable to officers serving in home trade two-watch ships will be increased from 5s to 10s per day. Annual basic leave for unestablished foreign-going officers goes up from eighteen to 23 days, and for unestablished home trade officers from eighteen to 20 days.

It was also agreed that a chief engineer sailing in a foreign-going ship outside defined limits would receive an additional £5 5s. a month if the vessel has a dispensation allowing for an uncertificated officer to be engaged as second engineer officer. The allowance is payable on all genuine foreign-going ships, but does not apply to the "Middle Trades".

All the above improvements take effect from 7 March 1966. A number of other issues are to be the subject of further negotiation.

GREECE  
\*\*\*\*\*

Better pensions for Greek seafarers

The long-awaited Seamen's Pension Fund Bill was finally approved by the Greek Parliament last month. The Bill is one of a series of measures proposed by the Greek Government to overcome the severe shortage of seamen by making service aboard Greek-flag vessels more attractive. The new law, details of which we hope to publish in a forthcoming issue of the Newsletter, will provide for improvements in existing pensions and considerably increased insurance coverage for both seafarers and their families.

UNITED STATES  
\*\*\*\*\*

US maritime unions to boycott ships trading with North Vietnam

The Presidents of three ITF-affiliated maritime unions have informed President Johnson that they will organize a boycott of ships trading with North Vietnam if the US government does not invoke stiffer penalties against countries permitting such trade. The union leaders are Thomas Gleason (ILA); Joseph Curran (NMU) and Paul Hall (SIU).

In a cable to President Johnson, they described a decision to bar such ships from participating in US foreign aid programmes as "a slap on the wrist". They added that "very soon our members will begin to demonstrate their protest on all water-fronts in this country directed against any and all ships of those nations which permit trade with North Vietnam".

A meeting on this issue has been arranged for today (3 March) in Washington between the three union leaders and the US Under-Secretary of State. In the meantime, a sub-committee has been set up to work out plans for the proposed boycott.

NMU makes recommendations on quicker Viet-Nam ship turn-round

Two officials of the ITF-affiliated National Maritime Union who have been on a three-week inspection trip to Viet-Nam have made recommendations to reduce time lost by civilian ship crews due to congested conditions in the country's ports. The two officials were Mel Barisic, an NMU Vice-President, and T.J. Walker, the union's assistant contract officer.

At a meeting held with the US Navy Under-Secretary following his return, Barisic recommended the procurement of barges, tugboats and floating cranes to assist with the unloading of vessels in crowded harbours.

FISHERMEN

NORWAY  
\*\*\*\*\*

New agreements for trawler skippers and mates

Members of the ITF-affiliated Norwegian Mates' Union have now given their approval to agreements covering both skippers and mates employed in the trawler industry. The agreements came after a strike threat at the end of last year had followed a breakdown in negotiations (see Newsletter No. 1).

A skipper will now receive a fixed salary of kr.400\*<sup>)</sup> plus a catch share of 4 per cent. A mate receives the same fixed salary plus a 2½ per cent catch share. On stern trawlers, however, the share for mates is fixed at 2 per cent,

rising to 2½ per cent if a man has served on board as a mate with the same company for at least 18 months.

Where a trawler is laid up for repairs lasting more than 4 days, both skippers and mates receive their basic monthly pay plus kr. 1350 per month. After 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 years' consecutive service in their respective capacities, a skipper receives a seniority bonus of kr. 40 per month and a mate one of kr. 31.50. Service is considered as consecutive if there is no break of more than one year.

Compensation for loss of effects amounts to kr. 3,000 for a skipper and kr. 2,500 for a mate.

-----  
\*) One krone equals approx. 1s. or 14 US cents.

CIVIL AVIATION WORKERS

FINLAND  
\*\*\*\*\*

Finnish aviation workers issue strike notice

The ITF-affiliated Finnish Air Transport Workers' Union has informed us that, after taking a membership ballot, it has given notice of strike action as from 17 March if no acceptable settlement of its current claims is reached under National Mediation auspices by that date. The strike notice follows fruitless negotiations with Finnair which have been in progress since November last. Originally the strike was set for 3 March, but was later postponed pending the outcome of the mediation proceedings.

The following will be affected by the strike: servicing and maintenance of aircraft; loading and unloading; cleaning and towing operations; passenger, freight and baggage handling and certain communications services on Finnish airports.

PERSONALIA

H.J. Kanne, former ITF Vice-President and Executive Board member, celebrated his seventieth birthday on 21 February. Kanne served as President of the ITF-affiliated Netherlands Transport Workers' Federation until his retirement in 1961. We wish him many more happy years in retirement.

CORRECTION  
\*\*\*\*\*

The Amalgamated Transit Union has asked us to point out that there was a small error in the information sent to the ITF concerning their new contract with the Chicago Transit Authority (see Newsletter No. 3 p. 21). The hourly rate as from 1 December 1967 should be \$3.41 and not \$3.31 as stated.

FORTHCOMING MEETING  
\*\*\*\*\*

- Seafarers' Section Conference - Hamburg, 28 & 29 March 1966
- Dockers' Section Conference - Hamburg, 30 March 1966
- Joint Dockers' and Seafarers' Conference - Hamburg, 31 March 1966
- Railwaymen's Section Committee - London, 20 & 21 April 1966
- Management Committee - Utrecht, 23-24 May 1966
- Executive Board - Utrecht, 25-27 May 1966
- Railwaymen's Section Conference - Rome, 23-25 June 1966.

---ooOoo---