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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

Committee of ITF Unions in the EEC discusses the EEC common transport policy

See Supplement.

TRANSPORT

INTERNATIONAL

ICAO Conference passes recommendations on speed and safety

Almost 100 recommendations for submission to the ICAO Air Navigation Commission and the ICAO Council were passed by the Fifth ICAO Air Navigation Conference, held in Montreal from 14 November to 15 December. Representatives of 61 governments and five international organizations attended. Among the main recommendations passed were proposals that: the ICAO be asked to develop a world-wide system of aircraft noise certification, defining acceptable levels and issuing certificates to those that meet the standards; manufacturers should build substantially quieter aircraft; runway lighting systems and colour schemes should be standardized to avoid confusing pilots; more efficient mechanical clearance equipment or internal heat systems should be developed to clear runways of snow, slush and ice; under some conditions airport capacity should be increased by permitting more than one aircraft at a time to occupy a runway; changes should be made in airport design to speed up passenger loading and unloading by relieving traffic congestion on servicing aprons.

Hovercraft are not aircraft

The ICAO has ruled that hovercraft are not aircraft. They are therefore not subject to ICAO regulations. The decision follows a long controversy on the classification of hovercraft.

EUROPE

EEC ministers agree on steps to harmonize transport policy

At a meeting in Brussels in mid-December, transport ministers of the six Common Market countries reached agreement on a first series of measures to prepare the way for a common transport policy. The ministers agreed that in each of the six countries there should be a similar system of taxing road users to pay towards road upkeep. They recognized the need for harmonization

of the conditions of competition both between member states, and between different forms of transport. It was therefore decided that road haulage companies should pay infrastructure charges calculated in the same way in each country. The proposals to be submitted by the European Commission to governments are of two types: the introduction of a running tax graduated according to weight and size of vehicle; and the harmonization of national fuel taxes.

Since the new system is to be introduced gradually, it was agreed that in the meantime vehicles crossing national frontiers would be subject to the taxes of the country being crossed, and not of the country of origin. (See also the Supplement to this Newsletter - Committee of ITF Unions in the EEC discusses common transport policy.)

Eurocontrol sets up training school for air traffic control staff

A training school for air traffic control staff is to be set up in Luxemburg by the European Organization for the Safety of Air Navigation (Eurocontrol). The school, which is to be opened in 1969, will have facilities for 100 air control trainees from European and other interested countries.

Eurocontrol has announced that the Austrian government is signing a cooperation agreement with Eurocontrol.

CANADA

Manning safety rules for Canadian vessels

The Canadian Minister of Transport has announced that the Department of Transport is issuing a formal paper on manning standards, from a safety point of view, for Great Lakes vessels of over 3,000 tons. Standards for other classes of vessels are also being prepared. The new document sets down the standards which must be met before an annual certificate of inspection is issued. The standards deal with such matters as crew efficiency, establishment of deck and engine-room watches, number of hours and required periods of rest, lifesaving and firefighting duties, and other duty assignments.

GREAT BRITAIN

Vehicles on British roads double in ten years

The last decade has seen an increase in the number of vehicles on British roads from 7 million to over 13 million, including 9,500,000 cars, according to Ministry of Transport statistics for 1966.

UNITED STATES

US airline employment totals 244,000

According to a US Labor Department study, total employment on US scheduled air carriers was about 244,000 at the end of 1966 - nearly 78,000 more than in 1960. The total includes over 21,000 pilots and co-pilots, and 45,300 mechanics and other maintenance workers. There is a tight labour market for all types of airline workers, and a particular shortage of fully-qualified licensed mechanics, electricians and other technical workers.

TRADE UNIONS

INTERNATIONAL

Trade union meeting discusses labour situation in Hong Kong

The ITF was among the International Trade Secretariats taking part in an international trade union meeting in Brussels on 22 November. The meeting deprecated the restrictive labour legislation and labour administration in Hong Kong and agreed to approach the British Government with a view to prevailing upon it to take steps to liberalize the law and improve the existing labour practices. The meeting agreed to step up assistance to free trade unions in Hong Kong in the organizational and educational fields.

FRANCE

French unions propose commission to study air industry

The Concorde will not be just a prestige aircraft, but a technical and commercial success. This is the view of the ITF-affiliated Force Ouvrière Transport Workers' Federation and of the F.O. Metal Workers Federation. However, the two Federations have expressed their anxiety at delays in the reorganization of the French aerospace industry, and demanded that no measures be taken unless full employment is assured, and unless workers' conditions continue to improve. Force Ouvrière recommends the setting up of a national technical and social commission, composed of representatives from the trade unions, employers' organizations and aircraft operators, to study developments in the aerospace industry.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

CHILE

Chilean cabinet approves compulsory savings plan

The Chilean Cabinet has approved an amended version of the President's compulsory savings law, under which all workers must place about a quarter of their annual wage increases in government stock, for investment in business, industry and communications. The wage increases are set each year by the Government, and amounted to 20% in 1967.

DENMARK

Further developments in the Danish Deck and Radio Officers
dispute

Once again, negotiations between the ITF-affiliated Danish Deck Officers' and Radio Officers' Union and the Danish Ship-owners' Federation have broken down. (For reports on the dispute, see Newsletter No. 7, page 65, and Newsletter No. 11, page 99.)

Talks were resumed after an ad-hoc arbitration tribunal had ruled that the unions had no right to call a strike on behalf of their members, and both unions immediately wrote to each member, asking for a mandate to go ahead. The unions have now received favourable replies from 75 per cent of their members, but no date has yet been set for the strike.

The Seafarers' Section Conference (London, 3-5 April 1967) passed a resolution pledging the fullest support of ITF seafarers' unions, and the ITF has been following these negotiations with interest.

GERMANY

Pay rise averts strike in German public services

The ITF-affiliated Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV) has negotiated substantial improvements for members including a 3.5% increase in basic pay rates, and reduction of the work week by one hour from January 1969, and by a further hour from January 1971. These improvements follow protracted negotiations, and agreement was reached just in time to avert a strike. 94.6% of OeTV members had voted in favour of strike action.

GREAT BRITAIN

British trawlermen agree to productivity talks

The ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union has agreed to defer claims for a substantial pay increase for 8,000 trawlermen while both sides of the industry consider proposals for improving productivity, which should provide considerable increases in pay. A sub-committee of the National Joint Industrial Council has been set up, and the two sides are to seek a joint meeting with the Board of Trade about any safety factors which might arise from an employers' proposal to reduce the size of crews. Productivity discussions will also cover a review of guaranteed minimum earnings.

8% rise for municipal busmen - subject to government approval

The ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union and Municipal and General Workers' Union have instructed municipal busmen in about 50 British towns to return to normal working after strikes and bans on overtime which lasted eight weeks. The agreement, reached on 14 December, included an increase of approximately 8% on basic rates. The increase has been condemned by the Prices and Incomes Board and is still subject to Government approval. The National Secretary of the TGWU Passenger Transport Group has stressed the danger of a national strike of municipal busman, should the Government veto the rise. Pay claims for employees of private bus companies and London Transport workers are due to be negotiated shortly.

Work-to-rule over train manning called off

The ITF-affiliated Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) has called off its work-to-rule and other industrial action following discussions with the Prime Minister and Minister of Labour. The dispute arose over an agreement whereby guards on certain trains were to ride on the locomotive after the guard's van was abolished (see also Newsletter No. 10, p. 90). ASLEF agreed to call off industrial action on assurances that talks between ASLEF, the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) and British Rail would be held on the question of train manning and recruitment and promotion to the footplate, that the decision to place the guard in any particular part of the train did not prejudice the manning of the train, and that the seniority of existing footplate staff would not be affected.

GREECE

16.6% rise for Greek seamen to offset devaluation loss

The ITF-affiliated Panhellenic Seamen's Federation has reached an agreement with the Union of Greek Shipowners, giving a 16.6% rise for all crews on foreign-going ships, and extending the collective agreement until 1970 at this new wage level.

The increase ensures that seamen's wages will not be reduced as a result of the devaluation of the pound. Since Greek seamen are paid wages calculated in pounds and then handed over in drachmas at the current rate of exchange, devaluation would otherwise have meant a 14.3% cut in wages.

NORWAY

Shorter working hours for Norwegian seamen

A general reduction in working hours on board Norwegian ships from 48 to 42.5 hours a week has been recommended in the preliminary report of an official committee set up to study the question of working hours.

SWITZERLAND

Higher pay for Swissair ground staff

The ITF-affiliated Swiss Public Service Union (VPOD) has negotiated substantial pay increases for Swissair ground staff, effective from January 1968. Wages are regularly adjusted to keep up with the cost of living, but this time they have been increased ahead of the cost of living. The pay structure has also been revised, bringing better pay for most of the 5000 employees involved. There will also be a monthly bonus for staff who have to work irregular hours, but who do not benefit from the present bonus for shift work. All workers, not just the higher-paid ones as in the past, will now get four weeks' holiday if they are over forty and have completed more than five years' service.

UNITED STATES

US Administration urges higher benefits for injured port workers

US Administration is urging the US Congress to improve workmen's compensation protection for the one million workers covered by the Longshoremen's and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act. The AFL-CIO are pressing for even bigger improvements. The Administration agree that the present benefit ceiling of \$70 a week, established in 1961, is far too low, and are proposing legislation to provide benefits at 75% of lost wages, up to a ceiling of \$105 for injured workers with one or more dependents. The present rate of two thirds of lost pay would remain for workers without dependents. The AFL-CIO legislative representative has pressed for a higher ceiling of at least \$105 a week.

US government body investigates airlines' mutual aid pact

At the request of five ITF-affiliated US airline unions (see Newsletter No. 8, p.77), the Civil Aeronautics Board has ordered an investigation of the mutual aid pact under which seven airlines provide financial assistance to any pact member whose operations are shut down by a strike. The Unions have frequently

Committee of ITF Unions in the EEC Discusses the EEC Common Transport Policy (Rotterdam, 30 November 1967)

The third meeting of the Committee of ITF Unions in the EEC was held in Rotterdam on 30 November 1967. It was attended by 350 trade unionists, politicians, scientists and administrative officials, as well as representatives of both the public and private sectors of transport. The EFTA countries, too, were represented by a strong delegation.

The EEC Customs Union and Common Agricultural Market are due to come into effect in six months' time, on 1 July 1968. At the same time, only very modest progress has been made towards a common transport policy. The unsolved problems in the transport sector may easily lead to a crisis of the kind we can only too vividly remember from the rounds of agricultural negotiations, but with the difference that the Treaty of Rome lays down no universal obligation or time limit for transport.

The EEC Commissioner for Transport, Mr. Bodson, in a recent account of the present stage of negotiations stated that, because of the structural peculiarities of transport, each state was compelled to work out an appropriate framework for competition, and within that framework, to exercise continuous supervision of competition. Different states also had widely varying methods of regulation, in which state intervention sometimes played an important part.

The EEC is faced with the need for replacing these varying methods of regulation by a common structure, which will mean radical re-organization in certain Member States. At the same time there will have to be a gradual adaptation to the new economic and social conditions created by integration. There are wide discrepancies to be ironed out during the negotiations, which are conducted primarily by politicians, since interests in each country depend on its geographical and economic situation. The Netherlands, for instance, naturally advocates a fairly liberal system; the transport sector is as important to Dutch foreign trade as the watch-making industry is to Switzerland - as Mr. M.J. Keyzer, Secretary of State for Transport, put it in his opening address.

German Federal Minister of Transport, Georg Leber, the present Chairman of the EEC Ministers of Transport's group, underlined the importance of aiming at a well balanced, overall solution, which must incorporate factors relevant to each transport sector. Partial solutions, which tend to separate inseparable factors, are not good enough. However, if it is to work, the overall solution must be introduced gradually and with preparatory measures.

This view was also expressed by the Chairman of the Committee of ITF Unions in the EEC, Philipp Seibert, in his speech to the Rotterdam meeting, when he said that the transport policy must first concentrate on specific transport features, and that new priorities must be decided upon. He felt that in view of the actual situation - the financial and economic position of the transport industry in the six EEC countries having deteriorated sharply year by year - it was a basic mistake to rely mainly on competition to solve these problems.

Competition can only lead to the desired effect, i.e. economic viability, if normal competitive conditions prevail. In the transport sector, such conditions would first have to be created.

It is essential to correct artificially distorted conditions of competition, i.e. conditions which have arisen because of public intervention - voluntary or compulsory - and which affect different form of transport in different ways, with undesirable results. These include the moralizing of accounts, the solution of the problem of infrastructure cost, and the levelling off of taxation.

Closely related to the political and economic measures, is the need for a speedy harmonization of social conditions in transport. Since transport in general requires more manpower than productive industries, the elimination of unjustifiable cost differentials arising from different social conditions, is especially important. Transport safety, too, plays an important part.

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