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IN THIS ISSUE

Page

News and Views from the ITF

<i>Railwaymen's Section Conference</i>	94
<i>Latin America Cabin Staff Conference</i>	95

Transport

<i>Australian pilots' warning on boarding equipment</i>	96
<i>British busmen's union seeks government support</i>	96
<i>Icelandic 200-mile fishing limit</i>	96
<i>Norwegian union seeks protection for oil rigs</i>	97

Trade Unions

<i>British unions get oil rig agreement</i>	97
<i>Mexican cabin attendants reinstated</i>	97

Social and Industrial News

<i>New pay rates for Australian dockers</i>	98
<i>France approves retirement at age 60</i>	98
<i>British airline ground staff pay claim</i>	98
<i>New rates for Norwegian officers</i>	98
<i>Peruvian railwaymen obtain improvements</i>	99
<i>Portuguese seamen's strike ends</i>	99
<i>US transport workers ratify Pan Am contract</i>	100
<i>New pension and welfare benefits for Lakes Seamen</i>	100

<u>News in Brief</u>	100
----------------------	-----

<u>Personalia</u>	101
-------------------	-----

<u>Forthcoming Meetings</u>	101
-----------------------------	-----

<u>Late Item</u> : <i>Death of Pieter de Vries, former ITF General Secretary.</i>	102
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<u>Supplement</u> : <i>ITF and ILO Discuss International Maritime Social and Safety Standards.</i>	
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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

INTERNATIONAL

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ITF Railwaymen's Section Conference

A Conference of the ITF Railwaymen's Section was held in Harrogate, Yorkshire, from 19 to 22 August 1975. It was attended by 98 delegates from 23 countries and by 9 observers. The main agenda item was a report by the Section Secretary on the work done within the Section since its last conference at the 1974 ITF Congress in Stockholm. This report, which covered the following subjects, was approved by the Section:

- Harmonization of Working Conditions of Travelling Staff;
- Technological Change on the Railways;
- Regional Rail Transport;
- Problems of Rail Transit to and from Italy;
- Railways and Economic Self-sufficiency.

There was an extensive discussion of a Research Proposal by the Secretariat for a study on "The Human Effect of Technological Change on the Railways". The Secretariat was asked to arrange for such a study to be carried out.

The Conference adopted resolutions on:

- the Channel Tunnel (calling upon the Section to support the construction of such a tunnel);
- the present economic situation (with particular reference to manpower policy);
- the mass media (accusing them of a prejudicial attitude vis-à-vis the railway trade unions);
- India (sharply condemning recent events and calling upon Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to free imprisoned trade union officials and to restore democracy in India);
- ILO (calling upon the ILO to provide for a meeting of the Inland Transport Committee in its conference schedule for 1976/77);
- Japan (calling upon the conference to give every support to the Japanese Railwaymen's campaign for full restoration of their trade union rights).

LATIN AMERICA

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First Regional Cabin Staff Conference held in Mexico

At the invitation of the ITF-affiliated Aviation Cabin Staff Association, in collaboration with the ITF Regional Office, delegates from Argentina, Colombia, Panama, El Salvador, Peru and Venezuela met in Mexico City from 11 to 14 August to attend the first Regional Cabin Staff Conference held in Latin America. Observers from other countries were also in attendance and the agenda covered: Problems of Pay and Conditions; Medical and Psychological Problems; Social Security Problems; and Problems of Trade Union Organization, Contributions and Participation.

The meeting heard contributions from experts in aviation medicine and trade union legislation. Among the most important conclusions drawn by the conference were:

- 1) that cabin staff in Latin America have working conditions which are greatly inferior to those enjoyed by other groups of workers within the industry - low pay and instability of employment being the major problems in most countries;
- 2) that there is a distorted and stereotyped view of their work which does not correspond to their actual duties and conditions;
- 3) that cabin staff in all countries have medical and psychological problems induced by their working pattern which are not sufficiently considered either by the civil aviation authorities or by the employers;
- 4) that many of the problems affecting this group of workers arise from the fact that they do not have trade union organizations strong enough to defend their rights - indeed, in many cases they have no kind of labour organisation whatever.

A programme of claims was adopted covering pay, working conditions, social security, medical advice and trade union organization, including the formation of an ITF Latin America Cabin Crew Federation.

TRANSPORT

AUSTRALIA

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Pilots give warning about boarding equipment

Pilots in New South Wales ports will refuse from 1 December to board ships which do not have approved boarding equipment. The ITF-affiliated Merchant Service Guild of Australia has informed the Maritime Services Board that pilots will not board ships on which the height from sea level to point of access exceeds nine metres, unless written assurance is given by the owner or agent that arrangements had been or would be made to alter the ship's construction or equipment satisfactorily at the earliest opportunity.

The only acceptable means of boarding ships with freeboard in excess of nine metres, said the Guild, was by a pilot ladder secured at an opening in the vessel's side or by an approved combined system of pilot and accommodation ladder. The Guild had pointed to inadequacies in this respect on several occasions in the past, approaching both the Maritime Services Board and shipping companies. Although some had responded well, there were still many ships on which pilot ladder facilities were far from satisfactory. The nine-metre rule was important for safety and had been incorporated in the international Safety of Life at Sea Convention and in Australian regulations for many years.

GREAT BRITAIN

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Busmen's union seeks government support for bus companies

The ITF-affiliated Transport & General Workers' Union has asked the government to consider further subsidies for bus transport undertakings to preserve the present level of service and manning. The plea is particularly relevant to rural areas where bus companies have been forced to consider service cuts for purely economic reasons rather than because of a drop in passenger demand. Prospective redundancies among bus employees may number 10,000 and the cuts would also mean a loss of about 40 million passenger miles a year. The union has the support of the bus companies in its campaign.

ICELAND

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New fishing limit in force

ON 15 October Iceland's new 200-mile fishing limit came into effect. Negotiations are proceeding with British and German officials on arrangements for limited fishing by foreign fleets

in Icelandic waters. Under a bilateral agreement reached two years ago, British trawlers may fish within the former's 50-mile area until 13 November 1975

NORWAY
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Seamen's union seeks protection for oil rigs

The ITF-affiliated Norwegian Seamen's Union is asking the government to extend the provisions of the Workers' Protection Act to oil rig workers in the Ekofisk oil field, especially those relating to protection against dismissals. The union is also discussing trade union representation for the rig workers.

TRADE UNIONS

GREAT BRITAIN
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First oil rig agreement negotiated

The ITF-affiliated British shipping unions have negotiated the first comprehensive union agreement for oil rig workers employed by Houlder Brothers aboard the oil rig Dundee Kings North. The agreement gives trade union recognition and a closed shop and covers pay, hours (on a day-on, day-off system), medical and safety protection and special clothing.

MEXICO
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Union wins reinstatement case

The ITF-affiliated Mexican Cabin Staff Association, with support from the ITF Regional Cabin Staff Conference in August, has won its case for the reinstatement of four of its members who were wrongfully dismissed in July. The dismissals took place after they had been ordered to make an immediate return journey to Mexico from Miami after their flight there, whereas they were in fact entitled to overnight in Miami. When they insisted on their right to stop over, they were dismissed, and their licences were revoked by the Civil Aviation authorities. The union took up their case with the labour tribunal, which ordered the reinstatement of the crew members.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

AUSTRALIA

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New pay rates follow cost-of-living increase

Pay increases of 3.5% have recently been awarded as a result of movements in the consumer price index. Rates for dockworkers in Australia's permanent ports have been increased by \$5 per week to \$147.70 for ordinary waterside workers; by \$5.20 to \$155.00 for mobile crane and forklift truck drivers; and by \$5.40 to \$160.60 for the top terminal rate.

In the casual ports the hourly rate for ordinary waterside workers is increased to \$4.5433. The guaranteed minimum wage goes up from a maximum of \$514 per four-week period to \$532.

FRANCE

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Retirement at age 60 approved

The principle of retirement at age 60 on full pension has been adopted by the French government. The first workers to benefit from the new provisions will do so in 1976. To begin with benefit of the new law will be extended only to workers in particularly arduous categories of manual labour.

GREAT BRITAIN

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Airline ground crews claim £6 per week increase

The ITF-affiliated Transport & General Workers' Union has submitted a claim for a pay increase of £6 per week - the government's current limit agreed with the unions - on behalf of its members employed on ground services by British Airways. The claim is expected to set the standard for claims by other groups of British Airways employees.

NORWAY

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New rates for foreign-going ships' officers

The ITF-affiliated Norwegian Navigating Officers' Union has negotiated new pay rates for its members in the foreign-going trades, which came into effect on 1 November 1975. Monthly rates range as follows:

	Dry Cargo Vessels	Tankers	Passenger Vessels
Chief Officer			
min ^x	kr. 4,685	4,869	4,685
Max ^x	6,395	6,679	6,137
1st Officer			
min.	4,357	4,525	4,357
max.	5,437	5,665	5,246
2nd Officer			
min.	4,127	4,286	4,127
max.	4,941	5,140	4,752
3rd Officer			
min.	4,322	4,487	4,127
max.	4,581	4,762	4,390

^xRange depends on size and horse power of vessel.

PERU

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Railwaymen obtain pay increases and other improvements

The ITF-affiliated National Railwaymen's Federation of Peru has obtained a general increase of 1,200 soles per month - in addition to the 400 soles per month recently awarded by the government to compensate for cost-of-living increases - on behalf of its members employed by the Ferrocarril del Centro del Peru (Peruvian Central Railway). A further improvement is that various allowances have now been consolidated into basic pay and special payments are now to be made to men with dependent families, together with schooling and death benefits. Furthermore, the company will henceforward bear the full cost of training courses, the night work bonus is increased, and paid leave for trade union business is to be awarded.

The agreement was reached only after tough negotiations and a 72-hour warning strike which if no solution had been found would have been followed by an indefinite stoppage..

PORTUGAL

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Strike of seamen ends

The strike of seamen employed by the Companhia Nacional de Navegacao ended on 10 October after forty days. The men have not obtained all their demands - which included improved pay and conditions, and a special danger bonus for working in Angola - but have decided to pursue their claims by other means.



UNITED STATES

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Transport Workers ratify Pan Am contract

Members of the ITF-affiliated Transport Workers' Union have overwhelmingly ratified new contracts giving improved pay and benefits to nearly 20,000 employees of Pan American World Airways. The two-year contracts cover maintenance, ground service, commissary, port stewards, flight dispatchers and flight service employees. They give a four-stage 15% pay increase, improved pensions, health and welfare benefits and improved working conditions. The contracts came into effect on 1 November 1975.

New pension and welfare benefits for Lakes seamen

The ITF-affiliated National Union of Seamen has won substantial pension and welfare improvements for its members employed on the Great Lakes. These include new wage-related pensions giving increases in monthly benefits to \$300 from 1 August 1975 and \$350 from 1 August 1976. From 1 January 1978 all Lakes seamen will be covered by dental treatment insurance. Other benefits include increases in medical, maternity, surgical and hospital benefits.

NEWS IN BRIEF

French civil aviation ground staff have been protesting in a series of stoppages at Paris airports against austerity measures which they claim are reducing their standard of living to an unacceptable degree.

British airline pilots have deferred a threatened 24-hour strike, originally due to take place on 1 November, in protest against the increased cost of air crew licences. Negotiations are continuing with the authorities on the matter.

United States airline pilots have agreed with Eastern Airlines on a pay freeze for 1976 plus increased monthly working hours, in order to help the company in its financial difficulties.

Venezuela has joined the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization, becoming the ninety-second member.

PERSONALIA

Arne Andreasson, editor of the Swedish State Employees' Association magazine "Statsanställd" since 1956, died suddenly in October. He was 58 years old.

Frank Cousins, former ITF President and General Secretary of the British Transport and General Workers' Union, has been appointed as the first Chairman of the joint port trade development committee for the Port of London. The committee is to seek ways of increasing trade coming into London and examine ways of further improving the competitiveness of the port.

Raimund Gryc, former leader of the Austrian dockworkers and Vice-President of the Commercial and Transport Workers' Union, died in October. He was 64 years old.

Werner Meier, President of the Swiss Railwaymen's Union, has been elected a member of the Swiss National Assembly.

Peet Mol celebrated 40 years' service with the transport workers' trade union movement on 1 November 1975. Currently Chairman of the Inland Navigation Section of the Netherlands Transport Workers' Federation, and also Chairman of the corresponding Section in the ITF, he started forty years ago in the office of the Central Tramworkers' Union.

Tom Murray, one of the founders of the Trade Union Council of South Africa and several times its President, died early in September.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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| ITF Executive Board | - London, 13-14 November 1975 |
| ITF Conference on Women
Workers' Problems | - London, 18,19,20 Nov. 1975 |

AFFILIATED UNIONS REQUIRING
FURTHER INFORMATION ON ANY ITEM
IN THIS NEWSLETTER MAY OBTAIN IT
ON REQUEST FROM THE SECRETARIAT
OF THE ITF;

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LATE ITEM

Death of Pieter de Vries, former ITF General Secretary

As this issue of the ITF Newsletter was being despatched, we received the sad news that Bro. Pieter de Vries, General Secretary of the ITF from 1960 until 1965, had died at his home in Breda (The Netherlands) aged 78.

Bro. de Vries, who first went to sea in 1915, was active in the seafarers' and fishermen's trade union movement from 1932 until his retirement from the ITF General Secretaryship in 1965. After having served the Dutch Seafarers' and Fishermen's Union as its President, he joined the ITF (in which he had been active for many years on behalf of seafarers and fishermen) as Director of Regional Affairs in 1959. In the following year, he was elected as General Secretary to succeed Omer Becu who had just become General Secretary of the ICFTU. In 1965, when he retired, he was presented with the ITF Gold Badge as a token of appreciation for the many services which he rendered to the Federation during his long association with the Federation. He will be much missed by his many friends and former colleagues of the ITF.

Pieter is survived by his wife Riet who is also very well-known in the ITF. We express our very deep sympathy to her in her great loss. Messages of condolence should be addressed to:

Mrs. Riet de Vries,
Grote Houw 307,
B R E D A,
Netherlands.

The cremation of the late Bro. de Vries will take place at:

Maeterlinckweg 101,
ROTTERDAM.

ITF SEAFARERS' SECTION CONFERENCE

The Seafarers' Section of the ITF met in Geneva from 8 to 11 October to review its activities generally and to consider joint approaches to the items listed on the Agenda of the Preparatory Technical Maritime Conference of the International Labour Organization (see report below). Some sixty delegates from ITF affiliates in fourteen major maritime nations attended the Section Conference together with observers from Portugal, the ICFTU and the EEC. K. Mols Sørensen, General Secretary of the Danish Navigating Officers' Association and Chairman of the ITF Seafarers' Section, served as Conference Chairman. The ITF was represented by its General Secretary, C.H. Blyth, and Seafarers' Section Secretary, A.G. Selander.

During the debate on the Report on Activities the ITF's involvement at various IMCO fora was praised and its continuation strongly recommended. Furthermore, the employment of Asian and other non-national seafarers in European-flag vessels was discussed in general and future measures to improve the situation outlined. Also, the Conference stressed the importance of co-ordinated action and exchange of information concerning war risk areas, bonuses and insurance; and noted with approval a proposal by the ITF Secretariat to convene an international conference on seamen's welfare with a view to avoiding wasteful duplication by the various organizations which are active in this area.

The subject of training and qualifications of seafarers attracted the considerable interest of the delegates, who decided to recommend that the seafarer membership of the Joint IMCO/ILO Committee on Training be expanded from five to seven representatives in order to ensure improved representation, both geographical and by category of work. The Conference noted the Resolution adopted by a meeting on oil rigs and offshore supply vessels held under the auspices of the ITF on 26 August 1975 and, in a statement, invited the ILO to discuss, within the framework of its maritime activities, problems relating to working conditions and safety arrangements in mobile offshore units. In view of the massive impact of new technology on and the close relationship between standards of competency and manning, the Conference, following a full-scale debate on the subject, decided to establish a seven-man committee on manning, the functions of which would be fact-finding as well as recommendatory. Following a clarification as to the uses of various types of electronic equipment on board ships, the Conference unanimously endorsed, as amended, the ITF Radiocommunications Policy Positions adopted by the December 1974 ITF Radio Officer Meeting. Under any other business, the Conference agreed to make an approach to the UN Conference on the Law of the Sea in order to ensure that seafarers were not summarily convicted and penalized under coastal state legislation for offences committed by the vessel; adopted a statement to the

effect that the 1976 Maritime Session of the ILO should adopt an international maritime labour standard on medical care aboard ship; undertook a review of action by seafarer unions against Spain; and advised against the recognition at inter-governmental level of organisations of employees who were neither representative at national, nor at international level.

The second half of the Conference was devoted to preparatory work in connection with the forthcoming ILO Conference. During these preparations the Conference decided that, as far as possible, the same benefits should be extended to ratings as to officers in any future ILO instruments affecting seafarers.

ILO Preparatory Technical Maritime Conference

The above Conference was held in Geneva from 13 to 24 October 1975 under the presidency of M. Hareide, the Government Representative from Norway. Seafarer affiliates of the ITF constituted the majority of the seafarer representatives forming part of national tripartite delegations. The Chairman of the ITF Seafarers' Section, K. Mols Sørensen (Denmark), and E. Shepard (United States) were elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively of the Seafarers' Group at the Conference whilst ITF Seafarers' Section Secretary, A.G. Selander, acted as Secretary to the Group. W.Ch. van Zuylen (Netherlands) served as Seafarers' Vice-President of the Preparatory Conference.

The adoption at an early stage of hard-line tactics by the shipowners on nearly all of the draft conclusions presented to the Conference lingered away the deliberations and it was only when stress had been laid repeatedly on the preparatory nature of the Conference that the procrastination petered out sufficiently to save the day. Thus, it became possible to reach some sort of an understanding on several issues, leaving the remainder to be decided by the Maritime Session of the International Labour Conference scheduled for 1976. The issues on which the shipowners and the seafarers were most at variance were those of sub-standard vessels, particularly those under flags-of convenience, and holidays with pay. On the former subject the shipowners voiced strong opposition to all references to flags of convenience and were generally not forthcoming as regards port state control and on the latter subject they appeared unable to arrive at a reasonable compromise over the amount of annual leave. On almost every subject the definition of the term

"seafarer" appeared to be a major stumbling-block (e.g. whether or not the term included "fishermen") and consequently the matter was left in abeyance until next year's maritime conference. The main decisions of the Preparatory Conference are summarized below:

Industrial Relations in the Shipping Industry

The Conference adopted a Resolution (addressed to governments and shipowners' and seafarers' organizations) in which stress is laid on close consultation and co-operation between shipowners' and seafarers and their organizations, especially as regards accident prevention, welfare and training. The prompt settlement of disputes, preferably on a voluntary basis, through conciliation, mediation or arbitration and opportunities for the education and training of seafarer representatives aboard ship and ashore in industrial relations and other subjects is also recommended. Under the umbrella of maintaining good industrial relations on board ship alternative methods of ensuring discipline are given priority as is the prompt settlement of grievances and the appointment or election of shipboard representatives.

Holidays with Pay for Seafarers

The Conference recommended that a new convention should be adopted, which would contain provisions concerning: annual leave with pay of a specified minimum length; proportional leave arrangements when the criterion for full entitlement in any year is not met; various qualifying absences from work; remuneration during leave periods and upon termination of employment; the division or accumulation of annual leave; the time at which the leave is to be taken; and application and enforcement procedures. The Conference failed to agree on a draft minimum standard for the amount of annual leave and this matter will therefore be reconsidered at next year's Maritime Conference as will the question of whether or not Public and Customary Holidays shall be counted as part of the minimum annual leave with pay.

The Protection of Young Seafarers

The Conference adopted a Proposed Recommendation designed to meet modern requirements governing the protection, general welfare and advancement opportunities for young seafarers. Its provisions cover inter alia the hours of permitted duty and rest periods (8 hours per day or 40 hours per week, a ban on night work and a 15 minute rest period following every two hours of work); safety at work and health education (specific measures to minimize occupational dangers to young seafarers,

including possible restrictions with regard to particular work such as lifting heavy loads, entry into tanks and exposure to potentially hazardous materials or physical agents); and opportunities for vocational guidance, education and vocational training.

Continuity of Employment of Seafarers

The Conference recommended that there should be an international Convention concerning the above subject which should apply to persons who are regularly available for work as seafarers and who depend on their work as such for their main annual income. It should be national policy to seek to provide permanent or regular employment for qualified seafarers who should wherever possible be assured minimum periods of employment or a minimum income/monetary allowance. Also, where registers of seafarers are kept, those on the register would have priority of engagement. Finally, the proposed conclusions refer to the possibility in certain circumstances of periodical reviews in order to adapt the level of employment to the needs of the industry with appropriate safeguards in case of any reductions in such registers. At the initiative of the seafarer representatives, the Conference decided that whilst the broad principles appertaining to the matter under review are contained in the draft conclusions there were some points which merited further examination at the next Maritime Session and that therefore the results of such an examination could, if necessary, be embodied in an appropriate recommendation.

Substandard Vessels, Particularly those Registered under Flags of Convenience

The Conference agreed that there should be an international instrument (the form of which to be decided by the next Maritime Conference) on the maintenance of minimum standards on ships engaged in maritime transport. Such an instrument should refer to certain specified ILO and IMCO instruments governing safety standards (including competency and manning), social security measures and conditions of employment and ship-board living arrangements. The maintenance of such or near-equivalent standards should be controlled, in the first instance, by the flag state which should also hold official enquiries into any serious marine casualty involving vessels under its flag, in particular when injury to personnel and/or loss of life was involved. The findings of any such enquiry should be made public. Action by port states under the proposed instrument itself is limited to ensuring that any complaint arising in connection with the engagement of seafarers of any nationality in its territory on vessels of other flags is duly and promptly reported to the flag state and to the ILO. In a separate

programme for the effective attainment of the standards referred to in the proposed instrument, the effective application of the obligations assumed under the proposed instrument or other instruments referred to therein will be controlled on the basis of the relevant ILO and IMCO procedures and, in addition, the port states are given further controlling functions in requiring evidence of equivalent standards, in respect of vessels registered in countries which have not ratified or accepted the instrument, in order not to implement the operative part of the ILO Seafarers' Engagement (Foreign Vessels) Recommendation, 1958. It is also envisaged under the programme that the ILO Joint Maritime Commission shall determine from time to time whether the ILO and IMCO instruments referred to in the proposed instrument continue to constitute an acceptable minimum or are in need of revision by a subsequent Maritime Conference.
