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Affiliated Unions :

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FINLAND
FRANCE
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HUNGARY
ICELAND
INDIA
INDO-CHINA
IRELAND
ITALY
KENYA
LUXEMBURG
MADAGASCAR
MOROCCO
NEW ZEALAND
NORWAY
PALESTINE
POLAND
RHODESIA
RUMANIA
SOUTH AFRICA
SWEDEN
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TRINIDAD
TUNISIA
UNITED STATES
YUGOSLAVIA

Relations with unions in:

CUBA
ECUADOR
LEBANON
MEXICO

Other relations in :

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BRAZIL
BULGARIA
CZECHOSLOVAKIA
GERMANY
JAPAN
PORTUGAL
SPAIN
and other countries

THE I.T.F. IN WAR-TIME

WHEN the first world war broke upon the world in August, 1914, the International Transport Workers' Federation, together with the rest of the international labour movement, both trade union and political, closed its doors and suspended activites for four years. And this in spite of the fact that it had been in existence for eighteen years, and was already beginning to be regarded as an established institution.

The reason is not far to seek. War is the supreme testing time of an international working class organization. Not only does it awaken passions that tend to weaken class solidarity and obscure the ideal of universal brotherhood, which is the basis of our movement, but by interrupting or delaying communications it makes international activities much more difficult. In addition the work of the I.T.F., practically confined as it was then to the interchange of information —relieved at intervals by the adoption, at international gatherings, of high-sounding resolutions that led to little or no practical result—was too far removed from realities to display much surviving power under the stress and turmoil of war.

Nevertheless, the spark remained, and when, in April, 1919, the leaders of the transport workers' unions met once more, in Amsterdam, to reconstitute the I.T.F., they resolved that as far as humanly possible it should be put on a basis that would be proof against future shocks. And true to their word, under the inspired guidance of the late lamented General Secretary, Edo Fimmen, an organization was built up that could boast of a prestige second to none in the international labour movement, and that as a result of solid practical trade union work, performed in spite of all the difficulties that war conditions impose, has come out of this second world struggle with that prestige, not only unimpaired, but even enhanced. For war is, for the labour movement, a time of opportunities as well as difficulties, and the opportunities have been seized with both hands.

The leaders of the I.T.F. early realized that the steady growth of Fascism, unless checked, was bound to lead to war, and while carrying on constant propaganda designed to awaken the working class to a consciousness of the danger, they laid plans to ensure that, come what might, the international work of their organization should continue. Mindful of what had happened during the first world war, when all I.T.F. files were in Berlin, and out of reach, they sent complete sets of all important papers and documents from the office in Amsterdam to Sweden, England and Canada, so that they should be available for use in any of the many possibilities that could be foreseen. And when war became imminent arrangements were made to divide the staff into four groups and send one each to London, Paris and Stockholm, while a fourth remained in Amsterdam to look after affairs there. In the event

circumstances made it necessary to abandon the plan to open an office in Stockholm, and the groups in Paris and Amsterdam were eventually moved to England, where the chief office has been throughout the war.

Thanks to this foresight the work of the I.T.F. has never been interrupted for an instant, even in the confusion of the opening days of the war, and the amount of practical trade union work done has certainly been no less than in any similar period in the past, though owing to the changed circumstances there was necessarily a shifting of emphasis. The vital importance of shipping in the effort to overthrow the Fascist powers—in which the I.T.F. has shared unceasingly—led to more attention than usual being devoted to seamen's affairs, while the fact that most of the roads and railways of continental Europe have been in Hitler's hands has prevented much practical work being done for the land transport workers. This, however, did not prevent the holding of a highly successful International Railwaymen's Conference in London in September, 1943, which was attended by delegates from seventeen different countries, including the United States, the U.S.S.R., India and some still in German hands. One delegate arrived from occupied France while the Conference was still sitting, and was thus able to give up-to-date first-hand information about conditions under the occupation. Apart from this much planning work has been done on behalf of the railwaymen and other land transport workers, which should come into its own now that the war in Europe is over.

The I.T.F.'s work for the seamen is a striking example of what can be done by an international trade union organization even in war-time—or perhaps especially in war-time. When Hitler successively overran Poland, Denmark and Norway, Holland, Belgium and France, and finally Greece and Yugoslavia, large numbers of ships belonging to these countries were still sailing the Seven Seas, and it was important that none of them should fall into Fascist hands. Arrangements were immediately made for representatives of the I.T.F. and the International Mercantile Marine Officers' Association—with which the I.T.F. works in close partnership—to broadcast wireless appeals to the officers and crews, urging them not to return home to their own countries, but to make for Allied-controlled ports, and ignore any instructions to the contrary they might receive from their shipowners, or from German-controlled national authorities. Although censorship regulations have prevented the full results of these appeals becoming public, we know that they were highly successful, and there is at least one authenticated case of a crew having mutinied, seized some of its officers and brought the ship to a British port.

This solved one problem, but there was another hardly less important. Cut off from their countries, the crews were also cut off from their trade unions, and there was no one to care for their interests—except the I.T.F. So this job was also taken in hand. The Norwegian Seamen's Union already had a branch in London, and before Norway was occupied arrangements were made, in conjunction with the I.T.F. and the British National Union of Seamen, that this branch should become the head office should Norway be invaded. The Danes were accommodated, for the time being, in a special Danish Section of the British National Union of Seamen. Then came, in May, 1940, the invasion of the Low Countries. Plans had been made beforehand, and the I.T.F. immediately set up a Dutch seamen's union in Great Britain. The Belgians had made arrangements to transfer their union to France, but when that country was invaded several of its officials managed to escape to England, where the I.T.F. helped them to re-establish their union. Then came the turn of the French. About a quarter of their merchant fleet joined Great Britain and General de Gaulle. A French comrade who had escaped from Normandy in a rowing boat was found willing to act as secretary, and a union was established for them too. The Dutch, Belgian and French unions soon decided to pool their administration, and it was thought they might just as well take a fourth union under their wing when one was later established for the Polish seamen. Thus was born, with a fund of £1,735 generously contributed as a start-off by the British transport workers' unions, the organization which was soon known the world over as the B.D.F.P. (Belgian, Dutch, French and Polish Transport Workers' Organization). In July, 1941, the Danish Section of the British Union joined the Organization, which then added another "D" to its name. The B.D.D.F.P. operates under the auspices of the I.T.F., whose Acting General Secretary was chosen as its President. The head office is in London (at the I.T.F. headquarters), and branches have been set up in Liverpool, Cardiff, Glasgow, Newcastle and New York.

That is not all. The I.T.F. also established a branch of the Swedish Seamen's Union in Great Britain, to care for the thousands of seamen of that nationality who were cut off from their own country, and much assistance has been given to secure the recognition by the British authorities of a Union of Greek Seamen in Great Britain, and the liquidation of another organization of Fascist pattern which had been established under the régime of General Metaxas.

Nor have the Asiatic seamen been forgotten. Contact has been maintained with a branch of the Chinese Seamen's Union which was established in England at our suggestion, and in July, 1943, the I.T.F. engaged a full-time Indian organizer to look after the interests of the thousands of Indian seamen who sail from British ports. A month later a Centre for Indian seamen was established in Liverpool, and in October another in Glasgow. Each has its Advisory Council of Indian and British trade-unionists, which organizes meetings of Indian seamen, visits their boarding houses and gives them help and guidance.

The existence of so many trade unions of seamen of different nationalities on British soil has naturally facilitated co-operation between them, and has helped them to understand each other's point of view and difficulties. This cannot but redound to the advantage of the international seamen's trade union movement in the vital years that will follow the ending of the war. Advantage has been taken of their presence in England to hold during the war no less than nine International Seamen's

Conferences, which have discussed such various matters as safety at sea, rates of wages, international uniformity of wages and other working conditions, continuation of controls in the post-war reconstruction period, the position of Asiatic and coloured seamen (the I.T.F. has come out strongly for the principle of their treatment on equal terms with white seamen), the setting up of an international maritime authority, and many other questions of interest to the seamen. These Conferences have led to a highly important initiative—the drafting and adoption of an International Seafarers' Charter, embodying a series of demands relating to all aspects of the seamen's work: wages, increments, allowances, bonuses and overtime; continuity of employment; entry, training and promotion; hours and manning; accommodation, hygiene and medical services; safety at sea; social insurance; recognition of seafarers' organizations; and rights and obligations of seafarers. This Charter has been received with enthusiasm in seafarers' circles generally, and it has been approved by the Joint Maritime Commission of the International Labour Office as a basis for discussion at a Maritime Session of the International Labour Conference to be held in October 1945. There are excellent grounds for believing that, as a result of the I.T.F.'s initiative, the conditions under which the seamen work will become much more favourable, and much more uniform, than they were before the war.

Circumstances have naturally not been so favourable for work on behalf of the railwaymen and other land transport workers, but a great deal of planning work has been done, and reference has already been made to the successful International Railwaymen's Conference held in London in 1943. It chiefly discussed plans for the rebuilding of railwaymen's trade-unions, after the war, in those parts of Europe that have suffered under German occupation, and also a report on the post-war organization of European inland transport, with special reference to the railways. The discussion on the latter led to the appointment of an international European Transport Committee, which in due course brought out a report calling for the establishment of a European Transport Authority to ensure the smooth operation of transport throughout the Continent.

The work of reorganizing the railwaymen, seamen and other transport workers in the countries that have been under Fascist domination has already begun; indeed, it has been going on throughout the war, through the assistance given to the underground movements in different countries, for which plans had already been laid before the war. Communications with the occupied countries were naturally both hazardous and difficult, but the difficulties were not insuperable. The I.T.F. was in constant touch by underground channels, during the occupation, with its own representative in France, E. Ehlers, and through him furnished the French General Confederation of Labour with substantial sums of money for its underground work, and was later instrumental in securing from the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, through the Joint Council of the Miners', Metal Workers' and Transport Workers' Internationals, a further large sum for the same purpose. When North Africa came under United Nations control at the end of 1942, a substantial sum was placed at the disposal of the transport workers' unions there for reconstruction purposes, and after France itself was freed an additional amount was given specifically for the purpose of reconstituting the seamen's and dockers' unions—all this in addition to the money furnished to the General Confederation of Labour.

As soon as Sicily and southern Italy had passed under the control of the Allied armies a representative of the I.T.F. was sent to that country, with a substantial credit to back him up, for the purpose of helping, first the railwaymen and later the tramwaymen, dockers and seamen, to re-establish their trade unions. A great deal of progress has been made with this work, and flourishing unions are already in existence. An office of the I.T.F. has been established in Rome to continue this work. It may be mentioned, too, that the I.T.F. representative presided over the Bari committee that organized the first general trade union conference in Italy, at which the Italian General Confederation of Labour was resurrected. Now that the war in Europe is over, steps are being taken to render the same service to the German transport workers, as well as to those in the countries that have been occupied by the Nazis, though it is anticipated that most of the latter will be able to stand on their own feet.

Through the same underground channels already mentioned the I.T.F. has been able to maintain relations with, and look after, Italian and Spanish friends who had taken refuge in France, and were unable to get out again. Instructions were constantly given, also, to our affiliated organizations in that country, and propaganda material was even sent, with a considerable degree of regularity, into Germany.

We should not like to leave this subject without a word of thanks to the organizations in the United States, Great Britain, Ireland, Canada, Sweden and Switzerland, who generously provided us with the funds, without which much of this important work of rebuilding the trade unions destroyed by the Nazi and Fascist régimes would have been impossible. The Management Committee set up for this purpose a special fund which has been called, in memory of our late General Secretary, the Edo Fimmen Trade Union Reconstruction Fund.

In spite of war conditions, propaganda has not been neglected. For reasons of space it is not possible to give many details, but perhaps it may be mentioned that an emissary of the I.T.F. was sent on an exploratory and propaganda trip from Egypt to Palestine, the Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. There has also been much other propaganda, of course, and that it has not been without effect may be judged from the fact that during the war twenty new organizations have joined the I.T.F., from places as far apart as Kenya and Uganda, Australia, South Africa, Egypt, Syria, New Zealand, United States, Chile, France, Italy and India.

During the war the I.T.F. has continued its policy of making the maximum use of the opportunities of consolidating the bettering the position of the workers through the International Labour Organization. This

has been greatly facilitated by the appointment of our Acting General Secretary as a member of the Governing Body of the I.L.O. He was a delegate to both the International Labour Conferences held during the war, in New York in 1941 and in Philadelphia in 1944, and succeeded in carrying a resolution in favour of the setting up of a Transport Section within the I.L.O. At the latter Conference this decision was amplified to cover the setting up of other industrial sections as well. The I.T.F. was represented, of course, at the two meetings of the Joint Maritime Commission held during the war, in 1942 and 1945, which adopted important resolutions dealing among other things with safety at sea, welfare in ports, ratification of international maritime conventions, working conditions of coloured seamen and, above all, the International Seafarers' Charter to which reference has already been made.

An interesting and important activity of the I.T.F. during the war, and one intimately connected with its stern fight against fascism and the constant support it has given to the efforts of the United Nations, has been its broadcasting to trade-unionists in Nazi-occupied Europe. Jointly with the Miners' and Metal Workers' Internationals, through a Council set up for the purpose, we have made ourselves responsible, during the last two years, for regular weekly broadcasts, in fifteen languages, of information about trade union activities in the free countries, and often appeals for action of different kinds in occupied and Axis countries.

The many other activities of our International in war-time—which have included representations on behalf of transport workers' unions in the Argentine Republic, Kenya, Palestine, French Mandated Territories, Dutch Guiana, Poland, Yugoslavia and many others—it is not possible to go into here, but enough has been said to show that the close on six years of war have have been six years of solid achievement for the I.T.F. Perhaps in closing we may be permitted to quote the judgment of a member of our Executive Committee, who was practically cut off from contact with the I.T.F., in Vichy France, for over four years. After visiting London to attend an Executive meeting he wrote :

" I expected to find our International on its feet, in spite of the ravages the war and its consequences must inevitably have caused in the ranks of its leaders and its affiliated organizations, but what I did not expect to find was that in addition to still existing, the pulse of our International was beating with greater vigour and vitality than ever. I expected to give my approval to the activities and conduct of men long known to me . . . but between this expectation and what I have now had occasion to learn there is a difference for which we must thank the capabilities and efforts of the men who have guided the destinies of our International, in whatever capacity, and which it is desirable to point out, not only in the interests of justice, but because it is of the highest importance for the purposes of our organization."

REINSTATEMENT OF DEMOBILIZED RAILWAYMEN IN GREAT BRITAIN

By J. BENSTEAD

General Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen

The whole country will rejoice at the cessation of hostilities in Europe, and so far as railway staffs are concerned this will mean the disappearance of some of the irksome conditions which were inevitable in war-time. The acute man-power position, for instance, should shortly show signs of improvement. According to recent announcements by the Government the release of men from the Services will commence at an early date.

Coincident with demobilization the question of reinstatement into industry comes prominently into the forefront. Many problems will undoubtedly be encountered in the initial stages in the matter of the reinstatement of staff into their former employment, but so far as the railway industry is concerned I am confident that any difficulties will be quickly surmounted if a spirit of goodwill is exhibited by the Companies' officers and the members of the staff concerned in ensuring that the regulations governing reinstatement are properly applied.

It may be of interest at this stage to mention that the total staff employed by the four Main Line Companies (Great Western Railway ; London Midland and Scottish Railway ; London and North Eastern Railway ; Southern Railway) and the London Passenger Transport Board number over 660,000. Of this total 113,000—over 17 per cent—joined the Armed Forces or the Civil Defence services.

An important factor to be borne in mind is that at the outbreak of war the Government took over the control of the railways, and under an agreement the period of control extends to at least twelve months from the date of cessation of operations.

Following the outbreak of war the railways were called upon to handle a greatly increased volume of traffic, consisting of war material, troop trains, etc., and in order to meet the acute man-power position, bearing in mind the large numbers released for service with the Forces and the Civil Defence, it was necessary to give consideration to the position in relation to staff requirements. Normally, staff employed in what are known as Conciliation Grades (i.e. other than clerical and workshop grades) retire on the attainment of 65 years of age, and in the case of Clerical and Supervisory staff retirement is optional on attaining the age of 60. With the object of assisting in the war effort a very substantial number of those who were due to retire on reaching the age limit were induced to continue in the railway service, but notwithstanding this it was necessary to recruit staff from other sources as a war expediency. In this connection

135,000 women were taken into employment on the railways during the war period, in addition to such male labour as could be obtained either by voluntary effort or by direction through the Ministry of Labour.

There was a definite understanding that the employment of women in capacities in which they had not hitherto been utilised would be purely a war measure. At the outbreak of war in September, 1939, the railway companies and the London Passenger Transport Board issued a notice intimating that staff who entered the Forces or the Civil Defence services with the permission of the particular undertaking would be treated as absent from duty with leave, and on their return, *subject to being physically and otherwise fit*, they would be reinstated in positions as nearly as possible similar to those vacated by them. Members of the staff who received the necessary permission to join the services indicated, whose civil pay was in excess of their service emoluments, qualified to receive the balance of their civil pay to bring up their total emoluments, service and civil, to the level of their civil pay. These arrangements applied to :

(*a*) Permanent staff.

(*b*) Staff who, during a period of not less than six months immediately before the 3rd September, 1939, had been directly and continuously employed otherwise than on a seasonal, casual, or similar engagement.

It will be observed, therefore, that the railway companies made full provision for the reinstatement of their employees on their release from the Forces or the Civil Defence services.

The Government, however, gave consideration to this very important question of reinstatement from a National standpoint and laid down certain definite provisions which were embodied in the Reinstatement in Civil Employment Act, 1944, which came into operation on the 1st August, 1944. Under this Act a very definite obligation is imposed upon all employers to reinstate all their former employees on their release from service with H.M. Forces, and I think it appropriate to quote in full the particular section of the Act dealing specifically with this aspect of the matter, i.e. :

Section I—Obligation to Reinstate former Employees.

(1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, where a person to whom this Act applies whose war service ends after the commencement of this Act makes an application to his former employer to be taken into his employment, the former employer shall, so long as the application remains in force, be under an obligation to take the applicant into his employment ;

(*a*) in the occupation in which the applicant was last employed by the former employer before the beginning of his war service and on terms and conditions not less favourable to him than those which would have been applicable to him in that occupation had he not become a person to whom that Act applies ; or

(*b*) if it is not reasonable and practicable that the applicant should be taken into employment in that occupation and on those terms and conditions, in the most favourable occupations and on the most favourable terms and conditions which are reasonable and practicable in his case.

The Act also contains a stipulation that the employer is under an obligation to employ reinstated staff for a period of 52 weeks provided they had been in the continuous employment of such employer for a period of not less than 52 weeks prior to release for the army and for a period of 26 weeks where the period of continuous employment amounted to less than 52 weeks.

Quite naturally in a large undertaking such as the railway industry some definite procedure required to be formulated governing reinstatement on discharge from the Forces. The subject has already been discussed between the National Union of Railwaymen and the railway companies and there is an understanding that former employees on release from the Forces will be contacted by the appropriate railway officer and arrangements made for them to return to railway employment as soon as they are ready to do so. This contact will be made during the period of leave granted on demobilization. To enable this contact to be made with due promptitude, however, it is imperative that each and every former employee should, on release from the Forces, forward a notification accordingly to the appropriate local officer of the Company, and at the same time apply for reinstatement. By the adoption of this very essential preliminary they will have discharged the onus placed upon them by the Reinstatement in Civil Employment Act.

By a gradual process the services of staff engaged as a war-time measure will be discontinued to accommodate former employees on release from the Forces.

Entirely apart from their legal obligations under the Civil Employment Act, 1944, I am convinced the railway companies will welcome back their former employees in view of the considerable difficulties experienced during the war in relation to staff requirements.

The railway industry has played a most important and necessary part during the war years. That they will continue so to do in the future will not be denied, and experienced staff will indeed be a great asset and at a premium. Consequently I conclude there will be a genuine desire on their part to facilitate the reinstatement of their former employees, and difficulties will only be apparent in cases of an exceptional character.

The unions can be relied upon to exercise a watchful eye, not only upon the reinstatement, but also the recruitment of staff, with a view to ensuring the highest level of conditions of service and the prevention of " blind-alley " employment.

" We cannot succeed in building a peaceful world unless we build an economically healthy world."

—The late President F. D. Roosevelt in his message to Congress on 26th March, 1945.

" The vast revolution in the powers of science and technology has placed within our grasp a future and security never hitherto dreamed of by mankind."

—The former President, Herbert H. Hoover, in a speech at Oakland, California, on 19th May, 1935.

ITALIAN RAILWAYMEN HELP IN RECONSTRUCTION

The first number—dated 1st December, 1944—of an interesting little bulletin has reached the Secretariat of the I.T.F. It is published by the Italian Railwaymen's Union which, since its reconstitution in Bari in January, 1944, has rejoined the I.T.F. The bulletin is entitled *GRIVOFER*, which is made up of the first letters of *Gruppi Ricostruttori Volontari Ferrovieri*, which means Railway Volunteer Reconstruction Groups. A few introductory words, addressed to the railwaymen of liberated Italy, explain that the bulletin is being published in response to many requests for information, and that it will be used in the future to issue instructions.

How the first Grivofer started. The bulletin states that the idea first came to a locomotive driver in Rome, Umberto Colella, that the Italian railwaymen might make a direct contribution, by means of a voluntary effort, to the reconstruction of the country's railways. It was later taken up by several other railwaymen, who prepared a plan which, after approval by the Central Committee of the Italian Railwaymen's Union, was submitted to the Minister of Communications and the Director General of Railways, who both promised their warm support. And so the first Grivofer was born.

What the Grivofer propose to do. The reconstruction of the railways is, of course, a pretty big job, and the bulletin stresses the need for the Grivofer to realize their limitations. They could not, for instance, undertake the repair of a big railway bridge, a tunnel that has collapsed, or a half-destroyed building, but there is much that they can do by co-ordinated effort, such as repairing railway platforms ; clearing the tracks of fallen masonry and fencing ; replacement of rails and sleepers and repair of fences ; restoration of telephone and telegraph lines, point levers, pumps and signals ; light repairs, and perhaps even more enterprising ones, to locomotives and rolling stock ; restoration of buildings used by passengers and personnel ; salvaging of machines, materials, tools, etc., and, in short, all kinds of work that the railwaymen understand and that volunteer gangs of railwaymen are able to do and that need doing.

How the Grivofer work. The Grivofer start from nothing, at a time when the railway stores are practically empty, for it must be understood that the Germans were not content with tearing up the rails, blowing up bridges and tunnels and carrying off the rolling stock, but also laid hands on picks, shovels, bolts, and anything else that might be used to get the lines into working order again ; and such things are unfortunately in short supply in the market. The Rome Grivofer, however, has little to complain of in this respect, as the instructions given by the Management have made it possible to collect together not only the tools required, but also the bedding, food supplies and everything else necessary to equip the gangs.

The railwaymen of the Grivofer. The railwaymen of the Grivofer are all those who have asked to be admitted to a group and who are working, either singly or in gangs, to make possible the resumption of traffic on the damaged lines. The rules which are being drafted for these groups lay it down that " the work is done on a voluntary basis and will not call for any payment other than that for the normal service." It is the intention, however, to grant special recognition in certain forms, and a commemorative ribbon has already been granted to the volunteers, at their own suggestion.

The personnel of the Grivofer, while detached for this special service, retains all its legal rights, including those connected with social insurance. Normal disciplinary rules are applicable to them, but the bulletin gives expression to " a fervent hope that they will only be interpreted in a positive sense. It is necessary that the Grivofer railwayman shall feel himself to be a citizen in the fullest sense of the term."

Rules of the Grivofer. The legal form the Grivofer is to take has not yet been definitely decided. It may possibly be co-operative in character. Each local section will have its own group, while that in Rome will act as the co-ordinating body. There is an Executive Council of seven members in Rome, but it is considered that in the smaller places one of three members will be enough.

First results. Several months have been needed to get the thing started, but the first results are now becoming apparent. At the date of the bulletin (1st December, 1944) it was hoped that some of the secondary railways running out of Rome would be in working order before the end of the year.

Let us take as an example the case of Viterbo. At this railway centre, thanks to the initiative of the Railwaymen's Union, a Grivofer group has been started, of which the station master, the local departmental chiefs and all the railwaymen are members. One tunnel has already been cleared, the station platforms have been made fit for use, and two large locomotives and many wagons have been repaired, and all this with very inadequate equipment. In addition several hundreds of tons of iron, steel, sheet iron, copper, etc., have been salvaged, and endeavours are being made, under the direction of two engineers, to salvage two wagons which threatened to fall into the valley below.

It is noteworthy that the municipal councils interested in the restarting of the lines in question show high appreciation of the railwaymen's activities. They have at their own expense undertaken certain small building jobs, and have placed dormitories, kitchens, etc., at the disposal of the railwaymen.

Expenses. The expenses incurred by the Grivofer in connection with their work are borne by the Railway Management. When the group needs to spend money directly—which is avoided as far as possible—the Management advances the necessary funds, or refunds what has been spent.

(*Continued at foot of page* 31.)

RAILWAY TRANSPORT IN THE U.S.S.R.

By LIEUTENANT-COLONEL OF TRANSPORT, D. SVETOV

It would be as impossible to conceive of England without a strong Navy as the Soviet Union without a well-developed railway system. As Stalin pointed out in 1935, the U.S.S.R. could not be regarded as a State unless it had a first-class railway transport system linking up its many far-flung regions.

During the period of the Five-Year Plans, Soviet railways were re-equipped and a number of new railways (the Moscow-Donbas, Turkestan-Siberia, and others) were built to link up the remote regions with important industrial centres ; this brought the total length of the railways up to about 62,000 miles by the outbreak of war in 1941. Even in war-time, building continued. During the war the North-Pechersk line was put into operation to bring down coal from Vorkutin in the far North. The new Kizlar-Astrakhan railway, built in record time along the Caspian shore, shortened the route followed by Baku oil to the Volga region. During the battle of Stalingrad a short railway line was built at high speed to bring up necessary men and munitions to encircle and wipe out Germany's army there.

There has been a regular annual increase in goods traffic on the Soviet railways ; at the outbreak of war it was about 250,000 million ton-miles, six times greater than in 1913. The percentages of the various types of load carried were the following ; coal 25 per cent of the total ; oil 5 per cent, ores 6 per cent ; iron and steel 5 per cent ; timber 9 per cent ; building materials 20 per cent ; and grain 8 per cent. The growth in goods traffic shows the tremendous economic growth which took place in the Soviet State, especially in the heavy industries.

The role played by transport in the national economy of the U.S.S.R. is to be seen not only in traffic data but in the fact that the equipment and property of the railways form one-sixth of the basic property of the whole country's economy ; and use 20 per cent of all the iron and steel made in the country and 25 per cent of the coal mined. Ninety per cent of the heavy loads in the Soviet Union are carried by the railways, 8 per cent by river transport, and only 2 per cent by sea-going vessels. This can easily be understood if it is remembered that the territory of the U.S.S.R. is over 8 million square miles.

The war clearly demonstrated the tremendous role which the railways play in the life of the Soviet State. In peace-time the railways were the main nerves of the economic life of the country ; in war-time they became the most important means of connecting the front and rear.

When Hitler Germany made her treacherous attack on the Soviet Union she did not believe that the Soviet railways would be able to ensure the moblization and deployment of the Red Army forces. The enemy based his plans on the " backwardness " of the Soviet railways. But Germany had made another mistake ; the smooth work of the railwaymen completely upset the Germans' plans. The railways were fully able to cope with the tremendous traffic required by the defence industry ; all of which had to be done under conditions in which all economic relations had undergone complete change.

During the first months of the war, when heavy army traffic was carried, the railways also effected a great evacuation—a " migration of factories " and of millions of people. Suffice it to say that 1,200,000 wagons of factory equipment and other material were evacuated from the southern regions, which the Germans had temporarily occupied.

The defence industry that grew up in the eastern regions needed increased deliveries of coal, oil, ores and metal. The loss of the Donetz coalfield and the Krivoi Rog iron mines meant that iron and coal for the central regions of the country had to be brought from Siberia and the Urals, a great increase in the length of hauls. The temporary enemy occupation of some regions of the north Caucasus and the main line railways brought changes in the route travelled by petroleum. Petrol and other petroleum products from Grozny and Baku formerly went to the central and southern regions over the north Caucasus railway, but when the Germans were attacking Stalingrad oil from Baku was sent first by tankers across the Caspian Sea to Krasnovodsk and then by rail right across Central Asia to the central regions of the country. This was real hard work and required great concentration of energy.

Soviet railways showed the greatest ability to manœuvre the traffic, and great elasticity in their work of transporting the Red Army and its equipment. When the Germans were attacking Moscow and Hitler was making arrangements for a military parade on Moscow's Red Square, the Red Army was concentrating forces for a decisive counter-offensive : troops and equipment were

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Italian Railwaymen Help—*(continued)*.

The example followed. The example given by the railwaymen in Rome has been followed in other centres. Groups have been started in Naples, Ancona and Florence, while in Bari, Reggio Calabria, Palermo and Cagliari the question is being considered as to whether they are necessary or not, as the damage done in these areas is very much less.

The bulletin ends with the following appeal to the Italian railwaymen : " Italian Railwaymen. Our appeal is an urgent one. It is necessary to prove once more that the railwaymen are second to none as citizens. When, a year ago, the Red Army put the aggressor to rout on the plains of the Ukraine, hardly had the battle ended when large military formations of railwaymen threw themselves heart and soul into the task of rebuilding the railways. We want to follow that great example ; we want to be worthy of the Italians who are fighting, and of the Allies who are helping us ; we want to rejoin as soon as possible our brothers who are awaiting us. Which of you wants to back out ? "

brought from Siberia and the Urals. It must be remembered that the concentration of troops for the defeat of the Germans at Moscow was carried out over the only four remaining lines leading to the city : the other lines were cut by the enemy. During the historic battle of Stalingrad three army groups, with all their tremendous amount of equipment, were served by only two railways—the south-eastern and the Ryazan-Urals. The troops that were to defeat Field Marshal von Paulus' army were brought up secretly under cover of night along a single track railway that before the war could handle a maximum of sixteen pairs of trains a day : during the war the same line carried from eighteen to twenty-two pairs of trains. The sacrifices made by the railwaymen caused many old standards to be abandoned and greatly increased the traffic-carrying capacity of all lines.

When the Red Army assumed the offensive the railways were faced with the terrific damage which the Germans did to Soviet transport. Splendid railway installations with big stations, junctions, round-houses, engines, etc., were all destroyed. On the north Caucasus line alone the Germans did damage estimated at 1,500 million roubles.

Soviet railwaymen repaired their railways and maintained a regular supply of stores to the advancing Red Army units. A special unit, organized under the Reconstruction Board and equipped with powerful cranes and tractors, carried out repair work. On the territory of the Soviet Union alone over 30,000 miles of railway line were rebuilt, most of the work having been done during 1944.

Bridges, especially those over wide rivers, were all destroyed by the Germans in their retreat, hoping to stem the advance of the Red Army. Here again their plans failed. During the war over 2,000 large and medium bridges were rebuilt, of a total length of 120 miles. The splendid bridges across the Don, Dnieper, Pripet and Sozh were all rebuilt in an exceedingly short time. The biggest bridge across the Dnieper, at Kiev, was rebuilt under the direction of General Zingarenko, a railway engineer of some note, in seven days under schedule. The timely repair of this bridge enabled the Red Army Command to transfer large numbers of troops to the right bank of the Dnieper for further offensive operations in the Ukraine, in the Zhitomir and Vinnitsa sectors, and—eventually—for the battle of Warsaw.

The reader may wonder how the traffic capacity of a line could be increased by as much as six pairs of trains a day, in defiance of all technical calculations.

In 1942 and 1943, when the traffic was at its greatest, Soviet railwaymen ran traffic over single track lines in one direction only. At night, say, loaded trains would go from the east to the front, and during the day the empty waggons would be returned. This greatly increased the amount of traffic carried and made some of the more important lines more flexible. Another war-time measure that was adopted was the despatch of trains in one direction at five-minute intervals, with special guards on board. Many engine-drivers began to develop the full power of Soviet locomotives and pull two trains coupled to one locomotive.

Stakhanovite workers, with their splendid initiative, were a great help in developing the railways. The war brought a great reduction in the amount of fuel available ; the Donets Basin, with its splendid coal, was temporarily occupied by the enemy and lost to the Soviet railways. Following the example of two engine drivers, Bolonin and Korobkov, drivers began to run their engines on wood and the low-grade Moscow coal, and with this poorer quality fuel they maintained high speeds.

Long before the war a Novosibirsk engine driver, Lunin, was well-known in the Soviet Union ; he and his crew underwent training as mechanics and themselves carried out all running repairs to their locomotive, thus obviating the necessity of running the engine into a round-house between trips. This provided a splendid reserve of forces for the railways in war-time, when thousands of drivers began to do their own repairs and lighten the work of the round-house crews. The Tomsk railway alone saved thirty million roubles in one year through the general application of Lunin's methods.

Soviet railways form an integral part of the national economy, the planned nature of which enables the most effective use to be made of transport. The whole goods traffic of the country is distributed by annual, quarterly and monthly plans amongst the railways and river and sea transport. During the war, for example, a large number of through trains were run direct from the station of origin to the destination without shunting. Seventy per cent of the country's coal is sent direct from the loading point to the factory requiring it.

Under conditions of Soviet planning, the railway is not simply a carrier, it does not merely transport that which the industrial enterprises demand, but is an important factor in correctly locating industry. The railways demand that freight which has to be transported over long distances be sent by road transport to pre-arranged railway depots, thus avoiding a lot of shunting and loading at intermediate stations.

The whole railway system is under the control of the People's Commissariat of Railways, which regulates the work of the railways, divisions, stations and depots, through a number of boards—the Traffic Board, Locomotive Board, Wagon Board—and a number of territorial services : the Central Railway Service, the Urals and Siberian Railway Service, etc. This combination of territorial and departmental organization enables the Commissariat to study the needs of each railway and make full use of the equipment available.

Direct telephone communication which exists between Moscow and distant railway services such as Khabarovsk, Novosibirsk, etc., makes for rapid and flexible control and enables Moscow headquarters to adopt any measures necessary for the regulation of traffic. The Commissariat knows immediately what is happening on the railways and at various stations and depots.

Every railway is an independent unit having its own director, who in turn is directly responsible to the Commissar for Railways. Each division controls all stations, engine and rolling stock depots, line sections, etc., in its area. Each Railway Board Management plans its annual income and expenditure and sets its own standards for

the expenditure of materials, oil, etc., in accordance with the standards drawn up by the People's Commissariat. This system enables the railways to make the most effective use of the material and technical resources available.

The Soviet railways made a huge contribution towards victory, and Marshal Stalin showed high appreciation of the work of railwaymen during the war. Thousands of railway workers were awarded Orders and Medals, and 127 railway workers, from rank-and-file engine drivers to leading workers in the People's Commissiariat, have been awarded the high title of Hero of Socialist Labour.

Now that victory has been won Soviet railwaymen have new tasks ahead of them. The railways that have suffered badly from enemy action must be completely restored. The rebuilding of devastated regions and the rehabilitation of the national economy, added to the further growth of industry, will require that the railways carry ever-increasing loads. This is why expenditure for their maintenance occupies such an important place in the 1945 budget of the U.S.S.R. The allocation for 1945 is 9,800,000,000 roubles, 27.3 per cent more than last year. Most of this money will be spent on fundamental rebuilding of damaged roads, repair of locomotives and other rolling stock, and the building of new stations and new repair shops for locomotives and wagons.

Soviet railwaymen have proved themselves able to cope with all the demands made of them during the war, and now that we have entered on the period of peaceful development will develop and further improve their railways.

THE RAPE OF THE COMMONWEALTH SHIPPING LINE

Experience of two world wars has shown conclusively that private enterprise is wholly incapable of coping with the requirements of modern warfare, and that when the emergency arises it is necessary for governments themselves to build and run factories and ships. And experience after the first world war has shown that once the emergency has ended private enterprise tumbles over itself in its eagerness to prevent public enterprise from proving that it can do equally as well in peace-time as it could in war-time. Now that the second world war is drawing to its close, history is likely to repeat itself. There is topical interest, therefore, in the story that Mr. J. C. Madden, a well-known Australian radio commentator, told in a recent broadcast.

At the beginning of the 1914–1918 war the shipping companies promptly raised the freight rate for voyages from Australia to England from £2 7*s.* 6*d.* a ton to £5 5*s.* 0*d.*, in spite of the fact that the British Government accepted the war risk for the vessels. Later it went much higher still, and in 1916 the Hughes Government took up a proposal, which had been put forward by the Fisher Labour Government in 1914, to establish a Commonwealth line of steamers. Fifteen ships were purchased for the sum of £2,047,900, and with these, together with twenty-one ships belonging to enemy nations, which had been seized in Australian ports, the Austral Line of cargo ships was established, which served the Commonwealth successfully and loyally throughout the rest of the war period ; so successfully, indeed, that the fleet was later extended by the " D " and " E " class boats, and finally the " Bay " and " Dale " liners, which rendered such splendid service to the country.

Mr. Madden pointed out that up to 1919 the fleet "had carried to and fro from Australia 1,020,072 tons of cargo, and that in the case of the 'Australs,' up to 30th September, 1918, receipts exceeded expenditure by £2,121,000, while the net earnings of the ex-enemy boats from 1914 to 1919 totalled £3,576,901." Truly a magnificently successful Government enterprise. What is more, the average charge per ton of freight for wheat was £6, whilst with private shipping lines it was between £10 and £12, and went as high as £15 per ton.

" When the national need was urgent the earning of profits was relegated to the background. They carried phosphate (123,000 tons) for the use of Australian farmers ; at one stage twenty-six of the ships carried coal from Newcastle to alleviate shortages in other States ; they carried chaff to ports serving drought-stricken areas ; and they carried cornsacks to Australia at £5 per ton when they could have earned £15 per ton carrying other cargo."

And then came what Mr. Madden describes as " the blackest piece of political treachery ever perpetrated in Australia's history." This Government competition was naturally contrary to the interests of the Shipping Conference, then controlled by Lord Inchcape. The retention of the Commonwealth fleet after the cessation of hostilities quite obviously cut right across the Conference's policy of monopoly and exploitation of overseas traffic, and on its failure to induce the management of the fleet to adopt its rulings as to freights and fares, it at once commenced hostilities. Shippers using the Commonwealth line were penalized, and a bitter press campaign was carried on against it, with little regard for truth or consistency. " The fleet was said to be making huge profits out of the primary producers ; the fleet was costing the taxpayers millions ; it had entered into a conspiracy with the private lines to keep up fares and freights, etc." Pressure was also brought to bear on certain members of Parliament to get the fleet used in a manner that would cause it to lose heavily ; and Lord Inchcape even offered to buy the ships on reasonable terms or sell his own ships in the Australian trade. It is to Mr. Hughes' credit that he did not capitulate. He said : " Except for the Commonwealth line, there is no way to the markets of the world save at the price that the great combines' lines determine."

In 1923 a political calamity occurred. A new Government came into power headed by Stanley M. Bruce, who set promptly about the liquidation of the line. " By deliberate and skilful manipulation of figures he showed a bookkeeping loss of nearly £3,000,000, whereas the actual position was a profit of £2,000,000, and he successfully carried through the Federal Parliament the Commonwealth Shipping Act, which handed over the fleet and the dockyards to a Board, which in return gave

the Government debentures to the extent of £4,725,650, bearing interest at 5 per cent per annum." The line was thus "deliberately burdened with £200,000 per year interest, and Mr. Bruce, as the mortgagee, had the right of foreclosure if interest payments were not met." In addition the members of the Board were paid very high salaries and expenses and entertainment allowances, so that the line was burdened with a lot of unwanted and unnecessary administrative costs.

And then began the sale of the ships. "They were sold to Australian, British, German, Greek, Italian and Japanese shipping companies, and they were sold at any price that was offered. The eleven 'Australs,' whose market value was roughly £550,000, were sold for £248,440." The same fate befel the ex-enemy boats, and also the high quality and efficient "D" and "E" boats. "D" boats which had cost £271,000 to build were sold for £84,000, and "E" boats costing over £2,600,000 were given away for £380,500.

By the beginning of 1927 all that remained of the fifty-four vessels of the Commonwealth fleet were the five "Bay" and two "Dale" liners. "Bruce was not keen to shoulder the responsibility for the disposal of these last seven ships, so he formed an all-party committee to consider the advisability of so doing." This is what the committee reported: "Not only has the Commonwealth line been directly responsible for actual reductions in freights, but the presence of the line has exerted a material restraining influence against proposed increases. The committee, therefore, recommends that in the interests of Australia the line be continued." This finding, however, did not deter Stanley. Having done everything possible to cripple it, such as taxation of the Commonwealth fleet, and yet subsidization of private lines, loading it with interest on debentures and increased managerial charges and selling ships at fantastically low prices, Bruce produced another jerrymandered statement showing a loss of £2,800,000. Finally, without consulting the Board, in whom the ships had been vested, he disposed of them outright." The cost of construction of the ships had been £7,537,504. Allowing the liberal sum of one-third for depreciation, their value at the time of sale was £5,018,336. Bruce sold them to Lord Inchcape's Shipping Conference for £1,900,000, to be paid by instalments.

Mr. Madden ended his broadcast with an apt quotation from the late J. Pierpont Morgan, the famous financier, which is not generally known, and is worth requoting. When he completed his American shipping monopoly Mr. Morgan said: "We are the advanced socialists; we have discovered that combination, not competition, means success in trade, and we are going to take the profits of combination until the people are sufficiently intelligent to take the profits for themselves."

(Adapted from *The Labor Call*, Melbourne).

WAR-TIME DECASUALIZATION OF DOCK LABOUR IN GREAT BRITAIN

II.

The description of the working of the National Dock Labour Corporation, Ltd., which appeared in the last number of the "International Transport Workers' Journal, contained certain comments and analyses of the problems it seeks to solve. The following points, however, might be considered in planning any such developments elsewhere.

The Corporation and the Industry. As has been said, the Corporation was imposed on the Industry, although knowing the intention of the Government, the Industry helped the Government in devising the Scheme and setting up the Corporation. Moreover, casual employment in the past has produced a casual outlook and the men talk nostalgically of the freedoms they have lost, though those freedoms may, in fact, include the freedom to starve.

In consequence there is naturally some resistance to the new order, both from those within the Scheme and those affected by it though they themselves may not be within. For example, foremen are outside the Scheme—a point of some importance and worth considering—and they were and still are the immediate employers of the men. They determined, from the mass at the ship's side, which should secure the day's livelihood. Petty abuse, tyranny, bribery and corruption, in some of the worst forms, were sometimes practised by some of the foremen in pre-war days. This power of the foremen to corrupt and be corrupted has not completely disappeared. The result is that probably the most virulent underground opposition to the Corporation is rooted here.

This conflict of ideas is most clearly focussed in the Call Stands built by the Corporation to provide covered shelter for the men, as against the old custom of meeting "on the stones" exposed to the weather.

The Corporation is a national body; the Industry is organized locally, except for National Agreements. Consequently the Industry is characterized rather by its diversity than its unity. This diversity is often contradictory, particularly with reference to what is regarded as port work. The basis of all Schemes in the Corporation is the definition of port transport work, because any employer or worker engaged on such work is subject to the conditions of the local Scheme and of the Corporation. Yet there is no uniformity in this regard—some diversity there must be—and there are outstanding contradictions to which reference is made in the preceding article. It is quite clear, however, that in the long-term Scheme, some measure of greater uniformity is essential to the best interests of the Industry.

It is not yet appreciated in full by the employers or the men that the Corporation is an integral part of the Industry; this will doubtless come in time.

It has been the practice for the Unions to appoint their National Officers to the National Board. There is danger that such appointments may create difficulties both for the officers of the Corporation and for the Union Officers sitting as Directors; for the former may

have on one and the same day to deal with a given person as representing the men (stating a case against the Corporation) and as a Director. Or, alternatively, the Union official, having taken certain decisions as a Director of the Corporation, may find himself having to defend the Corporation in a meeting of the men as a Union official, though he himself is open to the accusation that he is biased, having been a Director at the time the decision was taken. That but little embarrassment has arisen in either case is due to the quality of the personnel, but the difficulty is more than incipient—it is real.

Working of the Dock Labour Scheme. The essence of the Dock Labour Scheme is the limitation and control of employers and workers in the Industry in order to provide a proper allocation of labour and a fair distribution of the cost of maintaining the labour force when not allocated to employment. Employers engaged on port transport work may find themselves registered in one port and not in the next for precisely the same operation. Men engaged on work under Docks Agreements will be included, whereas men doing precisely the same job under Railway Agreements are excluded. Certain public utility companies are similarly outside the Scheme. For most of these exceptions there can be no logical reason ; they derive from the history of the set-up of the Scheme.

In spite of such conflicts the local Schemes have a certain uniformity, so that a man transferred from one port to another will find himself, as far as the Scheme is concerned, working under the same rules and regulations, but he will not find himself working under the same port conditions because of the variation in the local agreements. These difficulties have been minimised to some extent by the rapid extension of piece work to cover an increasing number of goods in a larger number of ports.

When employment is fairly good, attendance money, which is a form of stand-by payment, as calculated in Corporation Ports is fairly satisfactory but in the launching of any new Schemes it would be well worth while considering whether even this is the best method that could be devised, or whether some formula based on a guaranteed wage for the week would not be better. In this connection, it has been found that if the money earned by attendance at the call stands approximates too closely to potential earnings under industrial agreements, the incentive to work may be undermined, particularly producing disinclination to accept unpleasant or lower-paid jobs.

If, on the other hand, the formula is based on an overall wage for the week without being attached to specific attendances at the call stand, control of labour is diminished in times of good earnings because there is no financial incentive to attend.

The question of the weekly worker is also important. The earliest attempts at decasualization of dock workers took the form of the engagement of a number of men on a weekly basis. There were obvious benefits, both to the employers and the men, in this development, but obviously any considerable increase by employers in the number of weekly workers would increase the liability of the Corporation in respect of other workers for whom there would be less work. This is a matter to be planned. The Corporation has sought, by means of a reduced percentage levy, not to encourage either the increase or decrease of the number of weekly workers. The Unions would probably not wish to see an increase in the numbers of such workers, and might prefer a decrease, in order to achieve a spread-over of work among all men attached to the industry.

The machinery of the Schemes is by no means perfect, and certain problems need consideration. For example, a group of men may break their contract and lose their attendance money, either while in the reserve pool or at work. There may be, say, fifty men involved, but the amount of attendance money due to each man is likely to range from 6*s*. to 60*s*. These variations tend to create a sense of grievance. An alternative which may have to be faced in the future is a clear-cut system of fines.

A further problem arises from men who are in breach whilst in employment. The Scheme provides that the employer shall return them to the reserve pool with an adverse report. In isolated cases this is an effective step, but where large numbers of men are involved the effect would be to produce a complete stoppage of the job. The men who are returned to the pool will have been freed of responsibility to finish the job, whilst other men in the pool will not be prepared to take their places and be branded as blacklegs.

A practice often adopted is for the employer to make a report, but to allow the men to remain in his employment until the job is finished. This, however, often creates a sense of grievance, the men not working well whilst a penalty is being held over their heads.

Men against whom disciplinary action has been taken and who, in consequence, are issued with notices of suspension or dismissal, have a right of appeal to a Tribunal set up by the Local Joint Council. Where a man is suspended the sentence does not become operative until the appeal, if one is made, has been heard and determined by the Tribunal. This has worked fairly successfully. The weakness has been that the appeals have sometimes been affected by local industrial politics ; the employers, for example, not wishing to create trouble in the ports, have sometimes dealt too leniently with the men, and the local Union officials are inclined to take the view that it is their job to defend the men, right or wrong. The Tribunal is composed of an equal number of representatives of both sides of the industry, and not infrequently a deadlock ensues for reasons not altogether connected with the appeal of the men. In one port the experiment has been tried of appointing an independent Chairman, and the results have been excellent. Not only have decisions been given, but the men have discovered that the hearing is conducted in a proper manner and that local influences have less play.

The principle, however, of an appeal to an independent body is fundamentally sound and encourages the men to think, quite rightly, that the administration of these most awkward clauses of the Scheme is fair and right.

It is sometimes contended by the men that the disciplinary clauses are all against the worker, and not sufficiently flexible against the employer who infringes the Scheme. This is truer on paper than in fact, but is worth

consideration. The employer may be struck off the register, but as this involves removing him from business it is not a step to be considered lightly. The Corporation has found, however, that the threat of this power, and the right the Corporation has to withhold labour or to refuse admission of employers' foremen to call stands, has proved effective in bringing more than one recalcitrant employer into line.

The relationship of the employer and the Corporation needs consideration. The Manager allocates labour to the employer on his behalf. A point arises, therefore, which is of very great importance—at what point does the employer become liable for the men ?

In Corporation ports the employer signs a contract in which the Corporation undertakes to act as his agent in the employment of labour. Therefore legally the man becomes the liability of the employer at the moment of allocation, which may well be before the employer has even seen him. Whether or not this is fair and desirable is perhaps a matter for discussion, but any Scheme should make adequate provision for defining this relationship, and an agency clause or its equivalent is therefore necessary.

Staffing the Corporation. The Schemes in the British Isles have had to be staffed in war-time at a period when labour was in short supply. On the whole the Corporation has been fortunate in the type of people it has been able to take into its service. The following points are perhaps worthy of note.

From its early days the Corporation established a training scheme whereby dockers and others considered suitable were paid for a limited period a salary of £350 per annum and sent round the ports for training, with a view to becoming administrative officers in the ports. This has worked most successfully and there have been practically no failures. It has also shown the reservoir of real ability among the dockers and has provided an outlet for the ambitious and capable worker. It has also provided a steady flow of experienced men trained for responsible jobs.

Research is also an important factor. Though this must necessarily in these early days be limited to research related to the activities of the Corporation, it may well be considered whether the Industry might not look to the Corporation to bear the costs of the research rather than leave it to the initiative of individual employers. The field of research could thereby be broadened considerably and might well be included in the prospectus of any Corporation or similar body to be set up.

If a Corporation such as this is to achieve its objects adequately it must be flexible and able to meet varying demands and local conditions. The post-war strain on the industry will require considerable developments and changes in the post-war world. The Corporation should not only be able to adjust its own methods and services to these needs, but should be able to aid the industry in estimating and shaping the solution to them.

All of this implies that the administrative officers, from the Port Labour Officer upwards, must avoid rigidity in the execution of their duties and be ready to devise new ways and means of dealing with these problems. But such adaptability rests on the assumption that the mechanics of the administration are sound, work smoothly and able to take any given strain.

The mechanics of administration include an adequate accountancy machine which will ensure the requisite information and pay being given to the men each week with unfailing regularity. At the same time the mechanics must not be inflexible.

Closely related to the mechanics of accounts is that of statistics, which must be accurate and immediately available. These are vital returns without which the Corporation cannot operate its labour efficiently.

(*Contributed*)

Read, Reflect and Write to Us

Our quotation is from an article entitled "Keep our Merchant Marine Strong," published in "American Federationist," the monthly journal of the American Federation of Labour. The writer is Harry Lundeberg, President of the Seafarers' International Union of North America.

There is a theory among certain big industrialists in this country that the United States is primarily an agricultural and industrial nation, so consequently we should not bother about an American merchant marine but should allow foreign countries to make the money in shipping to give them the means to buy our goods.

This is a selfish and shortsighted policy and does not hold water. This country must establish a permanent, first-class merchant marine, capable of carrying the large majority of America's foreign trade, regardless of the ideas of individuals and regardless of the ideas of other nations.

To-day approximately 200,000 American seamen are manning American vessels. Some of these men went to sea before the war, and have gone to sea for a number of years. Others have become sailors during the war and are now qualified seamen. A vast majority of these men who came into the merchant marine during this war are young men who never before worked in any other industry. Consequently, the merchant marine has become their livelihood. They are not going to go back to work they never had before. Also, there will be thousands and thousands of men discharged from the Navy and Coast Guard and other branches of the armed forces who will want to go to sea.

What are we, as a nation, going to do with these men ? Are we just going to discard them ?

If we give ships to foreign nations, let us say to Britain, what happens then ? Prior to the war British seamen averaged approximately $50 per month, and that is a very high figure. A large percentage of English ships were manned by coolies from the Indies at the rate of approximately $10 a month in American money. A great number of Dutch ships were operated by Malayan crews for approximately $15 per month. A large number of other nationalities' ships, including British, were manned by Chinese seamen for low wages.

Are we now going to give the foreign countries American ships, built at the expense of the American tax-payers, for foreign ship operators and nations to use to exploit their seamen and thus use cheap labour to compete with American seamen and American operators ?

That does not jibe with the theory of brotherly love, which we hear so much about these days, and it would also mean the loss of jobs to thousands and thousands of American seamen.

We should also think about the workers in America's shipyards. With a big American merchant marine there would be plenty of repair and drydock work for American shipyards, and it would relieve the unemployment which may become a fact after the war. We know that foreign operators seldom repair their ships or drydock them in American yards.

Besides, every waterfront community and seaport profits by a large American merchant marine, because the sale of equipment, supplies and food to the ships employs thousands and thousands of people. Foreign ships seldom purchase food or equipment in American ports.

We urge Congress to do everything in its power to retain a large and powerful American merchant marine for the benefit of our country.

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