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Nationalisation of Australian Airways

The recent Speech by the Minister for Air and Minister for Civil Aviation, Mr. Drakeford, on the Australian National Airlines Bill (1945) *was an outstanding one, not only for its unanswerable logic as debating argument, but for its clarity, forcefulness, eloquence and sincerity in the advocacy of Labour's policy.*

From Mr. Drakeford's speech we publish below the first section, the introduction of the Bill.

Preamble. " In introducing this Bill for the nationalisation of inter-State airlines, I anticipate that hon. members opposite will attack it from the same political party angle as they used in attacking the Banking Bills. It was apparent in that debate that the speeches of Opposition members were based on party bias in favour of what they call private enterprise. But what we heard was, in reality, the age-old championship of the private profiteer.

" Socialisation, in any form, is anathema to those who believe NOT that it is the duty of a Government to further the interests of the people as a whole, but to safeguard the interests of individual profit-makers.

" No doubt the word ' Socialisation ' will echo through every speech in this debate from hon. members opposite—socialisation, with all the dread foreboding they can conjure. But I would remind them that had this nation depended on private enterprise to organise the country for war, we would not have accomplished one fraction of the marvellous war effort achieved in this grave crisis.

The Real Questions. " The proper approach to this important question should be :—

" IS IT IN THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE AS A WHOLE ?

" IS NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF CIVIL AVIATION PREFERABLE TO A PRIVATE MONOPOLY ?

" These are the real questions, for there is abundant evidence that a monopoly is inevitable in the near future.

" I recognize that there exists in certain sections of the community, and in the minds of some hon. members opposite, a predetermined hostility. Because of this I make the strongest possible plea for reasoned thinking. If that is granted, I have no doubt that the debate which will follow will be profitable, and that this House will pass the Bill as a constructive and progressive piece of legislation.

" Let us be clear in our minds and understand that to-day, Australia, in common with every other responsible nation in the world, is on the threshold of the air age.

" To understand that is to admit that the debate must go far beyond any question of petty party politics.

" Far from offering any apology for this Bill, the Government is proud to introduce it. It is honest and constructive in purpose, and it has a major national objective.

" There should be no need for me to have to emphasise that aviation is intensely vital to-day as a national instrument ; that inevitably it is a part of the very core of the economic, social, diplomatic and defence policy of the nation. That vital truth has been proved in the heat of war beyond all question. And, if we are to prosper as a nation and play our part worthily in world affairs, it must find full expression in the peace that is to follow.

" War, tragic as it always is, has in aviation, as in many other developments, accelerated the rate of progress in engineering and scientific development. Every nation which hopes to maintain any place in the world of to-morrow must take full advantage of the technical and scientific progress achieved during war, and make full use of their application as instruments for peace.

" The civil aviation industry in Australia during this war has performed magnificent service. Civil aircraft and civil air crews have been used in war zones to aid our own forces and those of our great Ally, the United States of America, in many perilous undertakings.

" Many of the air transport services required by our Allies have been performed wholly by civil air crews ; and many civil aviation personnel joined the R.A.A.F., providing a ready-trained nucleus. I mention this to indicate the importance of civil aviation in the air strength of the nation.

" For a considerable period in the Pacific war, Australia was a major operational base. Because of this, the Government was compelled to provide, at great cost, facilities of all kinds all over the Commonwealth in the form of airfields, landing strips, hangars, and workshops. The meteorological services, which before the war were comparatively insignificant, have been expanded to cover the whole continent and the islands to the north. New radio and navigational aids have been installed, employing the latest type of equipment, and, while the programme mapped out has not yet been completed, airways in Australia where this equipment has been installed compare favourably with any overseas.

" Most of this work was due to the urgency of war. It represents a very large capital outlay. Fortunately, much of it will be of value in the post-war development of the internal air services.

" If the Bill now before the House is examined without unreasoning hostility, it will be seen as a measure comparable to those which gave Australian Governments control of the Postal Services and the Railways.

" Do hon. members opposite—do any thinking Australians—honestly believe that there is any basic difference between these essential services and the operation of national airlines ?

" If they do, then may I disabuse their minds by quoting from an authority they particularly must heed.

Mr. Menzies in Accord. " In July, 1943, the Rt. Hon. the Leader of the Opposition, in a speech with which he opened his election campaign in the Camberwell Town Hall, made a very significant and revealing statement. I quote from the Melbourne *Argus* of Saturday, July 24th :

> ' On the question of socialisation, Mr. Menzies said few people would have any quarrel with Government control of railways, or tramways, or water supply, or such other great public utilities.'

" Who will deny, then, that, to use the right hon. gentleman's own words, the nation's main trunk airways are a great public utility ?

Referendum Lie Nailed. " An argument very widely publicized by opponents of this measure is that as the Government's Referendum proposals were defeated last year, and as one of these proposals was for Commonwealth control over air transport, the Government, in proposing this measure, is acting in defiance of the expressed will of the people.

" This accusation is not only unjust, but quite untrue.

" Those who charge the Government with breach of faith overlook the all-important fact that the Commonwealth has always had power over inter-State air transport, and that this power was not affected by the failure to carry the Referendum. It was not part of the submission to the people.

" HAD THE REFERENDUM BEEN SUCCESSFUL, THIS LEGISLATION WOULD IN ALL PROBABILITY HAVE COVERED INTRASTATE AS WELL AS INTERSTATE AIRLINES, BUT AS THE POWERS SOUGHT WERE NOT GRANTED THE LEGISLATION HAS BEEN DRAFTED WITHIN CONSTITUTIONAL LIMITATIONS.

A.O.S. Critized. " In keeping with this misrepresentation, a stream of hostile propaganda has been issuing from an organization representing certain private airline interests, and styling itself the Airlines Operators' Secretariat. Almost the whole of this propaganda is hopelessly misleading. Not a little of it, I suspect, is deliberately so.

" The activities of this organization, hastily conceived when the Government announced its intention of bringing down this Bill, are understandable. They could perhaps have rendered some worthwhile service, but their statements have been so misleading as to make no real contribution to the problem that must be faced—the problem which is the purpose of this Bill. But that, perhaps, was too much to expect.

The National Issue. " Before I enlarge on the contents of the Bill I wish to return to the wider, the national issue. The Government, being realistic, recognizes civil aviation as a national instrument.

" Let my first example come from the United Kingdom, where, under the leadership of a Conservative Prime Minister, civil aviation has already been shaped into just such an instrument. In the shaping, the following highly significant statement appeared in a White Paper on the subject, issued in March of this year by the United Kingdom Government :

> " ' Air Transport,' the White Paper declares, ' is a service in which the community as a whole has a direct interest. The criterion as to whether a particular route should be flown is not merely : Is it commercially profitable ? There are services which are essential in

the public interest, but which offer little or no prospect of a direct financial return. Unlimited competition in the air by private operators would mean that competing services would be concentrated on the remunerative routes ; and that the taxpayer, while reaping no benefit from the more lucrative routes, would be compelled to support by subsidies those services which, although desirable for public or social reasons, would, initially at any rate, be run at a loss, and might in some cases, never show a profit.'

" The essential point in that statement is the admission that the tax-payers are unable to reap the benefits from lucrative routes while paying for subsidies. To this the private airline operators have no effective reply.

" Further, we find that, while admitting this undeniable truth, the British Government was not prepared to take the logical course and completely nationalise the airlines, although the evidence in its favour was, and always will be, overwhelming.

British Labour's Policy. " The British Labour Party, on the other hand, has pledged itself to nationalize the airways. By the British Overseas Airways Act, 1939, the privately owned Imperial Airways was superseded by the present British Overseas Airways Corporation. When that Bill was before Parliament, practically the only opposition to it came, significantly, from Labour members, who complained that it did not go nearly far enough.

" Lord Swinton, British Minister for Civil Aviation—himself a Conservative—under whose guidance the White Paper to which I have referred was issued, clearly takes a very progressive view of the question. The *Sydney Morning Herald* staff correspondent in London, on February 23rd of this year, reported him as having told a meeting of the Aerodrome Owners' Association that the United Kingdom Government regarded no one as having a vested interest in air transport except the travelling public.

" That is Lord Swinton's view. But I will go further. I will say that this Government insists that the so-called vested interest in air transport, far from being confined to the travelling public, belongs to the entire community. Development of air transport on truly progressive lines, as is proposed in this Bill, must inevitably have a deep influence on the social conditions which govern the lives of millions of people who may never leave the ground.

Other Conservatives Agree. " Nor is Lord Swinton alone among Conservatives in the British Parliament in his intelligent outlook on this question. During the debate on the British Overseas Airways Act, 1939, in the House of Lords, the Marquis of Zetland, representing the Government, made this important admission :

" ' In our view, a non-profit-making public corporation, set up by Statute, will offer greater possibility of advancing British civil aviation than a limited liability company, which must, of course, quite properly, watch its shareholders' interests, and also be sure of its subsidies and contracts before it can embark on a farsighted development programme for the operation of new air services with up-to-date and increasingly costly aircraft.'

" Taking the other British Dominions as examples, we find that in Canada the entire Trunk Route system, comparable to the Australian inter-State airways system, is under Government ownership, control, and operation.

" In South Africa all air services are owned and operated by the Government.

" The New Zealand Government has recently announced its intention of nationalizing the whole of the Dominion's airlines."

CONGRESS OF FRENCH RAILWAYMEN

French railwaymen have taken a prominent part in the fight for the liberation of their country. Silent and cunning sabotage was the weapon most widely used, by practically all railway servants in France. Spectacular acts of sabotage were performed by leading groups of the Résistance, often composed entirely of railwaymen and always helped by railwaymen. Railway strikes took place to force the Occupying Power to improve the conditions for work and to prevent the deportation of Frenchmen to Germany, and there is on record one successful strike to save from execution seven railwaymen sentenced to death for participation in acts of sabotage. The resistance organizations needed help to organize the escape of men bound for Germany, to carry clandestine papers and instructions, to contact each other and to transport their material. Railwaymen always helped at great peril themselves.

Then came the liberation of Paris. On 10th August, 1944, the big railway stations were closed down. From that day on the strike spread like wild-fire throughout the railway system, thus preparing the ground for the general strike and upheaval that ended with the liberation of Paris, practically intact, on 19th August, 1944.

French railwaymen have a big casualty list. Prominent among the hundreds of railwaymen put to death were :

Pierre Semard, General Secretary of the French Railwaymen's Federation,

shot by the Germans on 7th March, 1942 ;

Georges Wodli, Secretary of the Railwaymen's Union of Alsace-Lorraine,

hanged by the Nazis ;

Jean Catelas, Secretary of the Railwaymen's Union of Northern France,

guillotined by the Vichy Government ; and

Garnier,

killed in a gas chamber and, not dying quickly enough, finished off with an axe.

French railwaymen know the value of their contribution to France's liberation effort. It makes them proud. It gives them the right to be outspoken, a right of which

they made ample use at the first post-liberation Congress, held on 5th, 6th and 7th August, 1945. Over 1,500 delegates represented 882 local branches in metropolitan France and about 100 branches in Alsace-Lorraine, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. From 50 to 60,000 members on the day of liberation, the Federation has grown to 367,000 in the summer of 1945. It has so great authority with its members that the leaders of the railway industry consult it in all major questions of management, and at every level. Moral and material conditions are so difficult that without the active help of the Federation the railways could probably not function at all. No wonder, therefore, that the Congress was filled with pride and a sense of power that is probably unique in the annals of trade union history.

A characteristic feature of the assembly was that the railwaymen's duty towards the community was in the forefront of all preoccupations and discussions. Some sixty speakers from the floor showed concern for making the railways work faster, better and more. But they emphasized and illustrated many times that the enthusiasm for work amongst the rank and file is thwarted by the indifference and incapacity of men in positions of authority. For the railway trade unionists of France it is beyond doubt that some of the people in important managerial positions are consciously the tools of capitalist saboteurs. Rapid recovery of the country's economy seems to be the aim of the Left exclusively. That aim the railwaymen pursue under the slogan : " We must win the battle of production ! " To win that battle the Railwaymen's Federation recommends working 54 hours a week wherever necessary and, when this is impracticable, working in two or three shifts. Very few delegates opposed this principle, claiming that sound planning, proper tools and rational methods of work are capable of producing equal or better results than the 54-hour week. The mood of the Congress was such that it needed more than average courage to utter such views.

The Congress realized that the winning of the battle of production against the will of the capitalist controllers of industry is no easy task. The railways in France are nominally nationalized, but in practice private capitalist interests still exercise decisive influence. As they do not respond to the trade unions' prodding for more and better work, the Railwaymen's Federation insists on the reform of the plan of nationalization, so as to oust completely all capitalist influence. Hence the intense interest of the organized railwaymen in the outcome of the general elections due to be held in October next. They are determined to throw their weight into the scale of politics, and to secure a decision against the capitalist holders of economic power.

Conditions of life and work are hard. The reason is simple. Demand outstrips supplies and therefore prices soar. It was inevitable, therefore, that increases of wages should be claimed, but the Congress pointed out that it yielded to a necessary evil. More than on wage increases, the delegates insisted on the only possible corrective of the bad situation : full restoration of economic life. The damage done to the French national economy is great. The shortage of housing is acute, particularly in the districts on the Atlantic coast. Agriculture has suffered considerably through loss of draft animals, machines and tools, and the damage to industry is very great. Serious, too, is the fact that many thousands of men and women in the prime of life are no longer able-bodied workers, as a result of years of hardship suffered in Germany and even in France itself. Much man-power has been lost through war casualties. Machines may do much of the work hitherto done by men, but they can do little of the work that must be allotted to time—the replenishment of the livestock, for instance. In spite of all, the Congress cheered the spokesman of the C.G.T. (French Federation of Trade Unions), who declared that two tasks must be done simultaneously : the restoration of the national economy and the creation of a great system of national armed forces. Meanwhile the Congress insisted that since transport was a key industry upon which the rehabilitation of all other industries depended, food resources should be so husbanded and allocated as to ensure that railwaymen are given enough to be capable of the big and prolonged effort required of them.

A topic expounded from the platform, but not discussed by the rank and file of the Congress, was that of international trade union relations. The Federation leaders insist vigorously on the replacement of the International Federation of Trade Unions, which did not include the Soviet trade unions, by a World Federation that will include them. They insist further on the integration of the I.T.F. into the World Federation, and refuse to co-operate in maintaining it as a separate autonomous and independent organization of transport workers. The hope expressed by the I.T.F.'s spokesman, that the problem will be solved in a manner compatible with their wishes and at the same time with the legitimate desire of the I.T.F.'s governing bodies to preserve what is good in our organization and tradition, appeared to be shared by the whole of the Congress.

Fraternal delegates from France's neighbours, i.e. the Spanish railway trade unionists in exile, the Swiss Railwaymen's Federation and the Belgian Railwaymen's Union, all received a very warm welcome. It must particularly be noted that the Congress publicly expressed its thanks to the Swiss Railwaymen's Federation for the help it has extended to the resisters and the fugitives during the war.

To take part in the Congress was an interesting and inspiring experience. Though the practical matters trade unionists are accustomed to deal with had pride of place, political aspects and implications occupied a much larger place than usual in the past in the French trade union movement, and a still larger one than in the trade unions of other countries at the present time. The prevailing political outlook was manifestly derived from that of the traditional workers' parties in France, the Socialist and the Communist parties, with an unveiled preponderance of communist ideas and of leading figures schooled in the Communist Party. But there was one thing that welded both " wings " of the Congress into one body : the will to contribute to the re-birth of France by the speedy rehabilitation of France's railways.

P. T.

PLANNING INDIA'S TRANSPORT SYSTEM

By H. W. OXFORD

India, land of poverty and of "dumb, semi-starved millions," to use the words of Gandhi, is to be industrialized if one of the present Plans for her development come into existence. These plans include the Government plan, which, like the Russian Plans, is for a period of five years; The People's Plan, with a socialist background, for ten years; and the Bombay Plan, to extend over fifteen years.

The last mentioned has been drawn up by the industrialists of India; and, of course, in passing, seeks to promote their own welfare as well as that of India—with priority in one way or another according to your own outlook on motives.

Nevertheless, irrespective of which Plan is finally accepted, there will be general agreement on the fact that conditions in India must be improved.

Two Methods. This can be done in two ways. Firstly, by stepping-up agricultural production to meet the needs of poverty-stricken millions throughout India so that they will have enough to eat; and secondly, by increasing industrialization in order to step up the standard of living.

Both of these developments are vital for an improvement in Indian life, and both entail considerable improvements in transport and communications because India is seriously deficient in railways, roads, shipping and civil aviation.

India, which has an area of approximately 1,580,000 square miles, had 41,000 miles of railway in 1938–39 at a capital charge of £m636. The fifteen-year plan allows for a further 50 per cent increase at a cost of £m325.

Europe, in comparison, with an area of 1,660,000 square miles (excluding U.S.S.R.) had 190,000 miles of railway and was almost five times better off than India.

Roads. Turning to roads, we find that the proportion of road mileage per 100 square miles is 35 miles in British India, 100 in U.S.A. and 200 in the United Kingdom.

The total length of existing roads in British India is about 300,000 miles of which one-quarter has been metalled. The industrialists have allowed for this total to be doubled in fifteen years, in order that the point of view of Sir Kenneth Mitchell, as expressed in his Presidential address in 1934, to the Indian Roads Congress that "no village with a population of 1,000 and over should be more than a mile and a half from a public road" will finally be the order of the day.

The cost of one mile of metalled road in India, 18ft. wide, is estimated at £750; and £m225 has been allowed for the doubling of existing roads, apart from a further £m375 for the improvement of the existing system.

There is no doubt, therefore, that the Indian industrialists mean business when they envisage the growth and development of India's status. Nor is there any doubt that they are prepared to improve the existing transport system when one-tenth of the total expenditure is to be allocated to communications. In other words, one-tenth of the £m7,500 in British currency.

Sea Transport. Ports or shipping facilities are also included, but these are not expected to cost very much. The aim will be be to improve some of the harbours for small craft in order to establish feeder services between the established overseas ports of Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Karachi.

Money is not to be the stumbling block to the architects of the Bombay Plan.

Everything is set out in their memorandum, and already, well before the war was over, some of India's leading industrialists have visited other countries, including Australia, for the purpose of establishing trade relations.

Correct Approach. The leaders of India anticipate little trouble in raising the necessary capital through internal and external sources, and their contention that "the real capital of a country consists of its resources in material and man-power," and that finance is only a camp follower to be subservient to economic requirements, should give us food for thought.

India is not the only place in need of a planned economy, but many of the moneyed interests elsewhere refuse to concede the principle of the Indian industrialists that money must be made the servant and not the master of our economy. It was the master during the last depression when food was destroyed because people were unable to pay for what they required, but the common people everywhere must see to it that it is not the master again.

We are witnessing, and only half realizing that we are witnessing, one of the great political-economic upheavals of history. It is not going to be subdued by military measures or by small poultices applied in the name of relief and rehabilitation. It is not going to be checked by the imposition of governments of "order." It may, perhaps, be slowed up if America and Britain are willing to back their policy of establishing or salvaging reaction with continued outlays of money and goods in war-time amounts. But Britain cannot and America will not do this. In some form the European revolution will have to take its course.—THE NATION.

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A revolutionary advance is possible in Europe only on a Continental scale—H. N. BRAILSFORD.

"QUADRUPLE GOODS TRAFFIC IN 5 YEARS!"

By D. SVETLOV

During the war the Soviet railways carried over 19,000,000 truckloads of war materials to the Red Army, to say nothing of the millions of truckloads of ores, metal, timber and coal that were delivered to industrial enterprises.

And it wasn't done under easy conditions. The evacuation of industry to new bases in the east, and then the Red Army's rapid offensive towards the west greatly lengthened haulage distances. In the districts that had been occupied by the Germans, the tracks were completely destroyed. Altogether, the enemy did several billion roubles' worth of damage to the Soviet railways.

State will Invest 25 Billion. Even so, the Soviet railways have entered on the post-war period in a very healthy condition. They are well organized and equipped. I recently met Lt.-Gen. Kovalev, People's Commissar for Railways, who told me that during the next three years the Soviet Government would invest about twenty-five billion roubles in the railways. In the same period, 250,000 wagons of modern design would be put into commission. " Such a rate of development," he said, " is without parallel in the history of railways."

Target for Soviet Railwaymen. It is intended that by 1950 traffic on the Soviet railways will be double what it is to-day. V. N. Obraztsov, one of the leading experts, has set the target : " In the next five to ten years the Soviet railways must quadruple their goods traffic, as compared with before the war."

That figure gives at least an impression of the giant construction programme that is envisaged. The railways, of course, will be developed jointly with other forms of transport—air, road and water. The very nature of Soviet economy—unified socialist planning and absence of any form of competition—ensures that the various forms will be developed in correct relation to each other.

In the next few years there will be a big increase in the output of aircraft and road vehicles, and these will take a good deal of the goods and passenger traffic. A network of air lines will cover Siberia, the Urals, the Far East and Central Asia. Arterial highways will connect the manufacturing centres with remote rural districts, and will relieve the railways of the need to carry goods over short distances.

Even so, the railway will remain the chief form of transport in the U.S.S.R. This is understandable when we remember that from 75 to 80 per cent of the freights carried on the Soviet railways are ore, coal, metal, timber, oil and grain, all of which have to be hauled hundreds of miles.

Since the Soviet Union is a country of great land masses, with constantly developing industries, it is and will remain a " railway power," from a transport point of view.

A tremendous length of new lines will be laid down in the near future. During the war the Soviet railwaymen learned to build and repair railways at high speed. But their experience was not confined to the war zones. Main lines such as the North Pechorsk railway, 625 miles long, and the Kizlyar-Astrakhan lines were built during the war.

The most urgent job is the thorough overhaul and repair of the railway system destroyed by the Germans. The volume of repair work done during the war was just enough to keep the trains running all the time. To-day the U.S.S.R. has put in hand a long-term programme for rebuilding stations, water towers, housing settlements and other installations, particularly on the railways in the Donbas, Leningrad, Kiev, Minsk and other industrial districts.

Electrification of Siberian Lines. In old Russia railway junctions often came haphazard into being, and interfered with the proper planning of the towns they served. The new railway junctions at Kursk, Stalingrad, Minsk and Orel will be planned in proper relation to the city.

The electrification of the railways, especially those that carry large quantities of freight, is to be pushed ahead. Experience has taught us that heavy frosts and blizzards have less effect on electrified railways than on steam lines. This fact is of great importance in Siberia.

Designs for powerful new locomotives are ready, and industry is preparing to manufacture them. Our biggest locomotive works, at Voroshilovgrad, were destroyed by the Germans, but are being restored at top speed.

RAILWAY EXPERTS OF THE U.S.S.R. CONFER

The Department of Technical Sciences of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., presided over by Academician Terpigorev, has been conferring on transport problems.

Academician Obraztsov reported on the reconstruction of railway transport and dealt in detail with the tasks facing transport in connection with the new Five Year Plan. He pointed out that by 1950 freight turnover would have increased considerably, a fact which called for a big reconstruction programme and for the building in the first place of new railways. Several existing railways would be reconstructed and many electrified.

The Plan provides for new types of wagons and locomotives and an increase in speed. Academician Obraztsov believes that the speed of goods trains must not be below 50 kilometres per hour, and that of passenger trains not below 100 kilometres.

A most important task, he said, was to increase the weight of trains, reduce unloading time and speed up wagon turnover by two to two and a half times.

Socialist transport, he continued, must be equipped with modern technical improvements. Radio, automatic control, telegraph, and other modern achievements of science must be widely applied.

AMERICAN RAILWAYMEN WORK FOR VICTORY

By BERT M. JEWELL,

President, Railroad Employees' Department, A. F. of L.

Every major battle which has been fought—from Marathon to the Battle of Germany—has been decided through movements of troops and supplies.

In the beginning, of course, depots of supplies and reinforcements were nearer to the actual battlefields and problems of transport were relatively simple. The soldier and his horse once did all the work. Later, when armies became larger and battlefields expanded, more specialized departments of supply were provided. With the advent of modern mechanized warfare the problems of transport have not only become more difficult and complex but have also gained immeasurably in importance.

The railways play a dual role in total war. First of all, they perform as an active auxiliary to the military machine itself. They must move the men, the machines and the supplies which are necessary to wage war. This is the traditional function of transport in warfare.

The concept of total war, however, has added other burdens to the rails. It is a commonplace now to say that we have been engaged in a war of production—our entire economy is geared as a war machine. The functioning of that machine depends on the railways more than on any other single factor. Raw materials, such as iron-ore, coal, oil and lumber, are transported from our mines and forests to the large manufacturing centres where they are fashioned into the implements of war. These, together with the huge quantities of food necessary to sustain our armies, are again transported to our principal ports, where they are transhipped to our armed forces.

The defeat of Germany and the progress in the war against Japan have been due in no small degree to the magnificent job done by the railways. Quietly and without fanfare, railway management and railwaymen have performed a transport miracle in the face of shortages of equipment, materials and man-power. As was said by Brigadier General Carl R. Gray, Jr., Director General, Military Railway Service, in a recent article, "I think we railroad men can modestly accept one compliment that has been passed to the American railroad industry, namely, that 'American railroads are doing the greatest single job of the war.'"

The volume of traffic now being handled by the railways is the greatest in the history of our industry. Freight traffic is more than double and passenger traffic is more than four times what it was prior to the war, and both freight and passenger traffic are about double what they were during the last war. The 738,000,000,000 revenue ton-miles of freight handled by the railways in 1944 are the equivalent of transporting an average freight train of 1,116 tons more than 25,500 times around the world at the Equator. Similarly, the average passenger train containing 215 passengers would be required to go around the world almost 18,000 times to equal the nearly 96,000,000,000 revenue passenger-miles handled by the railways during the same year.

While much has been said of the part played by railway management in achieving these results, and management is deserving of the highest praise, all too little recognition has been given to the railwaymen and their important contribution to the winning of the war. Without the wholehearted co-operation of the workers the railway could not have met the tremendous demands made upon it during the war. Like a fine watch, the railways can function smoothly and efficiently only if each employee performs his job with great skill and care.

The contribution that railwaymen have made and are making is shown by the increase in productivity per employee. According to data published by the Interstate Commerce Commission, the Class I railways handled 121 per cent more revenue ton-miles and 322 per cent more revenue passenger-miles in 1944 than in 1939, with an increase of only 42 per cent in the number of railroad workers. A comparison since the last war shows that 82 per cent more revenue ton-miles and 124 per cent more revenue passenger-miles were handled in 1944 than in 1918, while the number of employees was actually reduced by 24 per cent.

Combining freight and passenger traffic into so-called traffic units at the ratio of three passenger-miles to one freight ton-mile, we find that the traffic handled per employee has increased 78 per cent since 1939 and 150 per cent since the last war.

This is truly an impressive record, but cold statistics cannot possibly reveal the high degree of sacrifice and the great measure of devotion which has been displayed by railwaymen to make it possible. Long hours of work, shortages of materials and man-power and difficult problems requiring the utmost skill and ingenuity have become the daily routine of the railwaymen.

It is of special significance that this record was achieved despite a chronic shortage of railwaymen. According to the Railroad Retirement Board, the railways were short about 75,000 workers in March. For a time the shortage was in excess of 100,000 workers. This means that the responsibility of the employees has increased tremendously—each employee has had to bear a greater share of the burden to meet essential traffic requirements.

On the other hand, the railwaymen's job has become infinitely more difficult because of the urgent requirements of the present emergency. Not only have regular schedules been maintained, but many additional trains have been necessary to handle the great increase in the volume of traffic, much of it of a specialized character and requiring the utmost speed. For example, in addition to the heavy war-time passenger traffic handled by the railroads, an average of more than 1,000,000 troops, exclusive of those on furlough, have been moved monthly

since Pearl Harbour; in some months this movement has exceeded 2,000,000 troops. Railwaymen favour the forty-hour week, but during the war they have been working up to ten hours a day, six and seven days a week, in order to do their full part in the drives against Germany and Japan.

The inability of America's railways to secure new cars and locomotives during the war years has meant that all available equipment has had to be kept in serviceable condition. Because of the intensive utilization which this equipment has been receiving, an exceptionally heavy strain has been imposed upon the maintenance of equipment forces. The same is true of the maintenance of way department, for the tracks and roadways have been subjected to terrific wear.

The railwaymen have not only done a good job at home. They have also done a good job overseas. Early in the war our organizations co-operated with the railways in training Railroad Battalions for the Military Railway Service, composed largely of experienced railwaymen. Thousands of them are now serving overseas.

Following closely behind our combat forces in Europe, the Military Railway Service reconstructed the railway lines and facilities destroyed by our bombers or by the retreating enemy and operated the lines to keep our armies supplied with food, ammunition and equipment. In addition to clearing away the debris and reconstructing bridges, communication and signal systems and whole sections of railway line under shellfire and bombing attacks by the Nazis, they had to operate the lines under the most difficult conditions.

Major General Charles J. Gross, Chief, Army Transportation Corps, has paid tribute to the men of the Military Railway Service in the following words:

"American railroad men have achieved a brilliant record of heroism and untiring work. Their story is one of courage and ingenuity, the story of how they delivered the goods to the men at the front—and got the goods there on time—despite enemy gunfire and bombs and wreckage left by wholesale demolition."

The importance of the Military Railway Service in bringing Germany to surrender was indicated in an article from official Army sources in the European theatre of operations which appeared recently in the *Railway Age*. Said the article:

"The achievements of the Transportation Corps' Military Railways in the present struggle have established the fact that their importance comes second only to that of the combat forces. Without them, the striking force is as powerless and useless as a projectile without its propelling charge."

In addition to performing their jobs well, both in this country and abroad, the railwaymen have also contributed in other ways to "keep 'em rolling" and to help win the war. First and foremost is the fact that, with insignificant exceptions, the railways have been free of strikes.

Much of the credit for the uninterrupted war-time service must necessarily go to the railwaymen who, through their organizations, after many years of effort, succeeded in placing laws on the statute books setting up effective machinery for the settlement of labour disputes. The railwaymen's record of uninterrupted service over a period of many years has not been matched in any industry of equal size.

The American organizations representing the railwaymen have co-operated with the railways in meeting many special problems arising out of the war. For example, they have amended their agreements to permit up-grading in order to meet the need for additional skilled labour. They have also co-operated with the railways and the Railroad Retirement Board in recruiting additional employees.

Railwaymen were urged by their organizations to buy war bonds through the pay-roll deduction plan and have responded wholeheartedly. In addition, they have contributed generously as individuals to other phases of the war effort.

It is apparent that the railwaymen of America did their full share toward the defeat of Germany and are doing their full share toward the defeat of Japan. In co-operation with railway management, the railwaymen have been providing the transport necessary to victory. After victory they will continue to play an important role in furnishing the transport for a nation at peace.

From *American Federationist*.

DUTCH RAILWAYS DURING THE GERMAN OCCUPATION

By H. LEEUW

When Holland fell victim to German invasion in May, 1940, times of extreme hardship began for the whole of the population.

From the outset the Germans aimed to get control of the entire social and economic life of the country, and their aims were naturally also directed at the country's main transport system, the railways.

From the outset management and staff, co-operating closely through the Staff Board, succeeded in sidetracking the enemy, so that until the very last the industry was kept free from foreign corruption, which proved to be of the highest importance to the Allied war effort and again to the railway strike which was called, at the orders of the Dutch Government, on 17th September, 1944.

It goes without saying that serious difficulties had to be overcome. There were occasions when the Administration and the Staff Board had to take steps which were not appreciated by the general public or the average railway worker; steps which at first sight looked very objectionable, but which were the fruit of careful reflection and aimed to ensure that in this vital industry the key positions should remain in the hands of leaders the Dutch people could trust.

Often these were decisions which seemed to com-

promise those who took them. In this article, however, I hope to show that the policy pursued was the best possible under the circumstances, so that a just verdict may be passed on those who were responsible for the directives given to staff and industry during these difficult years.

First German Intervention. Immediately after the occupation, the Germans laid hands on our splendid railways and aimed to turn them to their own uses.

Hundreds of trains had to be run for the German armies. The railwaymen went about their jobs with heavy hearts, for they knew that all they did was harming the national interest and the Allied war effort. They also knew, however, that not to perform their jobs would have serious consequences for the Dutch people and that in particular the food supply would be jeopardized. Moreover, far from doing their jobs in the ordinary way, railway staff, from the highest to the lowest, strove to do them in such a way as to cause the maximum amount of damage to the detested invader.

Thus I am reminded of one highly placed official who when approached, without hesitation supplied a member of the underground movement with some very important drawings out of the railway archives, with the result that the Allies obtained some very vital information which enabled the R.A.F. to carry out bombing attacks with great precision on railway junctions.

I am also reminded of the ordinary locomotiveman, motorman, guard and shunter, who all hampered the German war machine to the extent within their power. It was quite a common occurrence to find that a train could not start when the signal was given because, say, of a leak in the brake pipes and had to wait for hours while they were repaired. Hundreds of acts of sabotage about which the public will never hear were committed by railway staff, for every railwayman with his heart in the right place had part in them.

Meanwhile the railwaymen were exposed to serious dangers from the very air attacks which they themselves helped to bring about. Some two hundred Dutch railwaymen lost their lives as a result of R.A.F. bombardments, and many others have been maimed for life.

Nevertheless the Dutch railwaymen remained at their posts, backed on the one hand by an Administration which knew the great difficulties they were enduring, and on the other by a Staff Board which uninterruptedly watched for the interests of the staff and held regular consultations with the Administration concerning their welfare.

In addition to acts of sabotage all kinds of other activities were undertaken with a view to causing the utmost possible damage to the Germans.

The railway staff which in 1940 numbered some 30,000 was in the course of a few years increased to 43,000, and the upwards of 10,000 persons thus added to the staff were without doubt saved from deportation.

Attempts were made to entice part of the Dutch railway staff to Germany, but in spite of the financial rewards offered they resisted the bait practically without exception.

Co-operation between Administration, Staff Board and Underground. It need hardly be said that throughout the period of the occupation fairly firm contacts existed between the Railway Administration, the Staff Board and the Underground. That, on the other hand, knowledge of these contacts had to be confined to a small circle of initiated persons, is also obvious.

This was made possible by the fact that there were secret persons who could speak for the Administration, and it was through these, and their opposite numbers speaking for the Staff Board, that relations were maintained with the underground organizations, so that there was a network of contacts covering the centres of resistance existing in all important localities.

An important element was that the Administration had made it possible for certain persons to be engaged in an irregular manner and under assumed names, whose real activity in the industry was to maintain underground contacts and conduct secret consultations.

The Staff Board also played its part in all this, and through its secret spokesmen participated in the contacts and consultations and in the organization of the resistance.

Thus was built an organization which without unnecessary risks to those involved could wield the Dutch railways to the best possible advantage in the Allied strategy. Numerous acts of railway sabotage were carried out without the occupier being ever able to discover whence they were organized, and thus the possibility was given for action on a wide basis when the time came.

Preparations for the Strike. Although no one could predict with mathematical certainty that the railway staff would ever be expected to perform a collective act of resistance, yet those prominent in railway circles realized that the time would come when the railway workers as a body would be called on to make a great sacrifice.

It was in part due to this realization that when a spontaneous strike was provoked in April, 1943, by the announcement that Dutch troops were to be re-interned in prisoner-of-war camps, word was issued by the Administration, Staff Board and Underground that the railway staff were not to embark on such an enterprise, as it was essential to keep our powder dry for the expected main action.

For it was considered, and the evidence of history confirms this opinion, that a railway strike could be undertaken only once and that therefore it should be correctly timed, i.e. at the moment decided on in consultation with the Dutch Government and the Allied High Command.

It was hard to wait for the whole year which still had to pass, but when the great moment finally came it proved a tremendous success, a success of which those who were responsible for it might well be proud.

What Preceded the General Strike. Before the general strike took place, however, there was another important development of which mention should be made.

On 3rd September, 1944, instructions were received, via the secret radio transmitters in our hands, that in view of the ever-increasing frequency of air attacks on trains, it was desirable for steam train crews to go into

hiding and if possible render the locomotives unserviceable by removing vital parts difficult to replace.

Needless to say, great caution had to be exercised in spreading these instructions for a partial strike, which was facilitated by the tripartite secret organization which has been described above.

A fortnight later the number of steam locomotive staff responding to the instructions had in some localities attained as high a proportion as 70 per cent.

On Sunday, 17th September came the signal for a general strike. It created a profound stir among all those who view our little country with sympathy. It was indeed an impressive spectacle when on the Monday, 18th September, the otherwise so busy Central Station of Amsterdam was completely deserted and the response to the strike call was seen to be practically 100 per cent.

The general expectation was that in a fortnight's time at the most the strike would belong to the past, and certainly no one anticipated that it would be eight months before the railwaymen would be able to return to work.

In consultations between the Administration and the Staff Board it had been decided that all station masters should be instructed to arrange somewhere outside the station for one month's wages to be reserved for each member of the staff, which was to be paid out as soon as a certain situation presented itself.

Payment of these wages was effected in co-operation with the accredited underground organizations N.S.F. and L.O., aided by some of the railwaymen themselves, including many of the correspondents of the Staff Board.

Each month something like 5,000,000 guilders had to be distributed, which was made possible by the voluntary co-operation of hundreds of men and women and by the practical sympathy of the Dutch people, ranged solidly behind the striking railway workers.

The central leadership, including the maintenance of essential food supply services, was throughout the strike in the hands of the Administration and the Staff Board.

Occupation of Telephone Centre. While the railway strike was a fact, the Germans tried to keep a skeleton service going with staff of their own. To achieve this it was necessary for them to ensure the functioning of the railway telephone centre.

It was contrived to place this centre under the control of sixteen persons who posed as pro-German but were actually co-operating with us. Thus we had access to all information concerning German military traffic in Holland, with the result that in many cases it was possible to have certain German trains attacked by the R.A.F. within thirty minutes of their departure. Unfortunately the arrangement did not last very long. Owing to a slip the Germans got wind of it and a few of the men involved were executed by a firing squad.

Now that the time has come when we can speak freely again, it may be said that, with the exception of a mere handful, the whole of the Dutch railway workers rendered services of inestimable value to their country and to the Allied war effort, and that this was made possible by the splendid co-operation which existed between the Administration, the Staff Board and the Underground organizations.

LIFE AND WORK ON BRITISH RAILWAYS AND TRADE UNION ORGANISATION OF BRITISH RAILWAYMEN

By J. BENSTEAD,

General Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen.

It is not possible within the scope of a short article to portray adequately to interested readers abroad a pen picture depicting the life and work of British railwaymen, and of their trade union organization, because of the many happenings and achievements which have taken place in recent years. An attempt will, however, be made to sketch a brief outline of the position and, in doing so, it should be emphasized that for a period of six years the country has been highly geared for war purposes. Consequently the life and work of railwaymen and their trade union organization has been greatly influenced by war-time requirements.

Trade unions in this country have a central or co-ordinating body known as the Trades Union Congress. At the commencement of the war the trade unions could not, and did not, remain indifferent to political measures taken by the Government to ensure its successful prosecution. Accordingly the Trades Union Congress took steps to see that the Government recognized and acknowledged the right of the trade unions to be consulted in all matters affecting the lives and conditions of the workers. A Joint Consultative Committee, consisting of representatives of the Trades Union Congress and the Employers' Federation, was set up by the Minister of Labour for the purpose of advising the Minister on matters arising out of war-time legislation. Such important questions as Regulation of Wages, Control of Employment, Direction of Labour, Labour Supply and Welfare, to mention only a few, were dealt with through this Joint Committee, and the trade union influence in such Government measures resulted in important safeguarding conditions being embodied in all such measures in the interests of the workers. For the successful application of such important measures affecting labour the Government agreed to the setting up of various regional and local committees representative of both

trade unions and the employers, and presided over by independent chairmen, for the purpose of dealing with appeals, cases of hardship, etc., and the various trade unions in the country had their representatives appointed to sit on these committees. In addition, the trade unions provided advocates to represent the interests of their appellant members.

As a result of war conditions, it might be mentioned that the trade unions recognized the necessity of avoiding national stoppages through disputes, and in this connection national arbitration machinery was set up to deal with industrial issues upon which no agreement could be reached by direct negotiation between the trade unions and the employers. In the railway industry it was not necessary to utilize this new arbitration machinery because the negotiating machinery already in existence between the railway trade unions and the railway companies proved adequate for the purpose and continued to function in the normal manner.

There are three distinct trade unions catering for the needs of railwaymen in this country, namely, the National Union of Railwaymen, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, and the Railway Clerks' Association. As will be observed by their titles two of these unions are " sectional " in character and cater only for a particular class of railway employees. The other union—the National Union of Railwaymen—is an " industrial " union and aims to achieve the complete organization of all workers employed on, or in connection with any railway, or transport undertaking in which any railway company has a financial interest in the United Kingdom or Irish Free State. These differences as to the basis of organization do not prevent the three organizations from living together and co-operating harmoniously through a Standing Joint Committee.

The National Union of Railwaymen has a membership of nearly 405,000 ; its assets amount to £3½ million and, being the largest and most influencial union catering for railwaymen in the country, if not in Europe, its importance and influence in the industrial field need no exaggeration. In the political field fifteen of its members have recently been elected as Members of Parliament. From an international point of view, the National Union of Railwaymen has always taken an active part in the work of the International Transport Workers' Federation, whose temporary headquarters, since the outbreak of war, are located in London. In addition, through the Union's affiliation to the Trades Union Congress, it has been closely associated with the work of the International Federation of Trade Unions and, at the present time, with the birth of the new World Federation of Trade Unions.

In addition to dealing with what may be described as normal day-to-day matters involving negotiations on wage adjustments, variations in agreed conditions of service, etc., the Union has had to tackle the innumerable problems requiring constant examination and negotiation, which the war brought in its train, such, for example, as the difficulties arising as a result of working under black-out conditions and under aerial bombardment, man-power problems, employment of female labour, issues arising out of the workers' service in the Home Guard, Civil Defence, Fire-watching and other branches of National Defence supplementary to their actual railway duties, rationing of essential commodities, and so on.

At the present time the Union is in the midst of negotiations with the Railway Companies' representatives in connection with a new National Programme for improved rates of pay and conditions of service affecting all employees in the railway service. Its aim is to secure a minimum wage of £4 10*s.* for the lowest graded worker, with consequent wage and salary improvements for all other grades, for increased rates of payment in respect of Sunday and other types of duty, and for numerous other improvements. It has just secured agreement that annual holidays of twelve days with pay, together with leave with pay on at least two Bank or public holidays, shall be put into operation as from January, 1946. It aims to secure a guaranteed week of forty hours.

Railways were immediately placed under Government control at the outbreak of war, and to endeavour to tabulate in full their war-time task from an operational point of view would be to attempt the impossible. They have been working to capacity throughout the war period, and in this respect some measure of their load may be obtained from a comparison with the pre-war period. In 1944 the estimated net ton-miles for lighter merchandise increased by 97.9 per cent ; mineral and heavy merchandise by 44.1 per cent, and coal class traffic by 11.7 per cent. This increased traffic was obtained partly by driving the machine harder and partly by increasing the average load. A large number of zoning schemes were planned to eliminate cross hauls and needlessly long hauls.

So far as passenger services are concerned, despite drastic restrictions, passenger journeys on the four main line railways in 1944, including season tickets, were nearly 20 per cent more than before the war. About 10,000 special trains for troops and their baggage were run in the first five months of 1945. The average distance per journey increased by about half and there has been an increase of about 70 per cent in passenger-miles, although passenger train-miles have been reduced by about 30 per cent. The severity of discomfort experienced by passengers may be judged from the fact that train loadings have increased by about 140 per cent over pre-war.

It should also be stated that these figures of increased traffic were reached despite depleted staffs and impaired equipment, and it is estimated that in a year locomotives spend 7,000,000 (or 11 per cent) more hours in traffic. Account must also be taken of the fact that railways had to cope with enemy air attacks, and in this respect, between June 1940, and March 1945, there were 9,000 incidents of damage and delays to railways.

The total staff employed by British railways and London Transport exceeds 668,000, and included in that figure are 114,000 women. Over 110,000 men and women served in H.M. Forces and in full-time Civil Defence. Nearly 100,000 railwaymen served in the Home Guard and 130,000 were fully trained in Civil Defence.

The foregoing will at least convey an impression of

some aspects of railwaymen's problems, and it is not inappropriate perhaps, at this stage, to quote the following testimony published by the Railways Official Press Office :

" Many years of discussions through the railway machinery of negotiation have undoubtedly built up between men and management a relationship of mutual confidence and a spirit of co-operation. Indeed the high morale of the staff of British Railways and London Transport is a striking testimony, not only to the character of our railwaymen, but also to the principle of collective bargaining. Without this spirit of co-operation the railways could not have been of the same service to the community at this time of national emergency."

Railways, and railwaymen, are gradually entering a transition period when war conditions will give way to peace-time conditions. The relaxation of the many war-time legislative measures will involve much planning and, at the same time, the future of the industry, the question of whether it will revert to private ownership or whether it will be nationalized, looms ahead.

The National Union of Railwaymen has, for many years past, advocated nationalization, and with the advent of a Labour Government in office with power for the first time in its history, pledged to legislate for the public ownership of inland transport, railwaymen throughout the country await with anticipation and confidence the fulfilment of this important aim and the dawn of a new era in the transport world, bringing with it a cheap and efficient service in the interests of the nation as a whole and the removal of many of the labour problems which have confronted organized Labour in the past.

Read, Reflect and Write to Us

The purpose of this column is to provoke thought on world problems and those of our own movement, and it will contain matter from all parts of the world. This matter will be presented as it was served up, whether you or we like it or not. We are not responsible for the views expressed and for the present pass no comment thereon. Matter will be selected because it shows evidence of perceiving a problem, because it is calculated to provoke thought, and because it may contribute towards a clarification of thought.

Our first quotation is a short contribution from Ruth Taylor to " Federation News ", the weekly of the Chicago Federation of Labor, entitled " Capitalists are Americans too".

The other day one of the " intelligentsia " told me that I should be more careful in writing for the Labour press ; that nothing should be written that might be construed in favour of free enterprise : or which inferred there might be a " good " employer, for any such concept was anti-union.

Now, this was news to me. I had never found any Labour group that felt that way. But I went back over my articles with a fine tooth comb. I couldn't find anything that struck me as N.A.M.-ish or anything but unqualifiedly trade unionism, as it was taught to me by old timers who had grown up, fought for and suffered to establish a strong labour movement.

But while I was puzzling over the criticism, a historic document was being written—the Peace Charter for Labour and Management. I was proud to be a member of a labour organization when I read it.

You all know it by heart. It has received as much publicity as any of the charters—because it is a charter for that internal peace without which there can be no external peace.

But there are two paragraphs I want to quote : " The right of private property and free choice of action, under a system of private competitive capitalism must continue to be the foundation of our nation's peaceful and prosperous expanding economy. ***Free competition and free men are the strength of our free society.*** We in Management and Labour agree that we have a common joint duty, in co-operation with other elements of our national life and with government, to prepare and work for a prosperous and sustained peace."

We who believe in trade unionism, who want better things for all workers, are against discrimination of any sort—be it racial, religious—or class. We hold that we are all Americans, no matter what our backgrounds—and that capitalists are Americans too, entitled to the same rights and responsible for the same obligations as the rest of us.

The other night I attended a dinner for an A.F. of L. organizer. There were labour men, government representatives and employers. I couldn't tell them apart—by their speeches or by their looks. They were just friends gathered together to do honour to a man who had done a good job. That is America—where we can disagree hotly—and after the argument is resolved—sit down and break bread together.

No—I don't think my critic was right. Capitalists are Americans too, and I know that Organized Labour would be the first to say so !

Our second quotation is from an article entitled " In Time of Peace, Prepare for Peace", published in " The Canadian Unionist", the monthly of the Canadian Congress of Labor.

. . . People must find a new approach toward their institutions. In the past they have been masters rather than servants of mankind. There is no question as to the desirability of establishing institutions. They are a part of the social pattern, and serve a very useful purpose in continuing to exist after the individuals who have formed them are no longer on the scene, and thus giving continuity in the performance of the functions of the institution. But, on the other hand, they also tend to create the illusion of permanence in the minds of the people, and to perpetuate evils which would otherwise be remedied. The dead hand of the past rules humanity to a very considerable extent in the fields of government, law and finance, to name only a few. They have become strongly rooted ; it takes almost a revolution to change or abolish them. Very often it is not so much that institutions outlive their usefulness as that they stand in the way of something better which would take their place, if they themselves were not regarded with such reverence and with such a conviction that man is unable to improve or abolish them. It is said that the good is always the enemy of the best, and when that feeling is combined with such respect as makes institutions almost impregnable, the chances of progress become very slight.

All institutions are substantially alike in that they are not permanent, but their founders and their followers do the best they can to make people think they are permanent and essentially untouchable. A little reflection, however, should indicate that the only justification for the existence of an institution is the service it can render to the common people, in the way of preserving or promoting their happiness and well-being, and when any institution stands in the way of that objective it should be very critically examined, and, if it is found wanting, tossed on the scrap-pile of history. Many people think that humanity is now at the cross-roads and that decisions now reached are likely to determine human destiny for centuries to come. Whether or not that is true we can at least accept the idea that now is a very good time to examine our institutions and see whether or not they measure up to proper standards or are merely blocking the highway to progress.

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