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THE RAILWAYMEN'S SECTION OF THE I.T.F. AT WORK

by P. TOFAHRN, *Assistant General Secretary of the I.T.F.*

THE first post-war Conference of the Railwaymen's Section of the I.T.F., held in Brussels from 25th to 28th March, 1947, marks the resumption of the Section's normal activity. From now on international railwaymen's conferences will again be held, at longer or shorter intervals to study conditions of life and work and to formulate common objectives in respect of matters lending themselves to joint action by the railway trade unions.

The Brussels Conference differed in composition from its predecessors. Some notable absences had to be recorded. For the first time since 1890 the French Railwaymen's Federation was not represented. Its new leaders have not resumed relations with the I.T.F. because they hold that after the setting up of the World Federation of Trade Unions the I.T.F. is no longer entitled to a separate existence. In their view it should have ceased some time ago to function as an autonomous entity, and have been transformed into the Transport Department of the W.F.T.U. The new Transport Workers' Section of the Czechoslovak Council of Trade Unions was also not represented. Up to February, 1946, this organization had claimed the right, without a new application for affiliation, to take the place in the I.T.F. held before Munich by the different Czechoslovak transport trade unions. Although this claim was conceded by the Executive Committee of the I.T.F., and although the Congress of the I.T.F. had reserved for our Czech friends a seat on the General Council, normal relations have not been re-established. The Czechs did not consider it necessary to do so in view of the fact that the W.F.T.U. had decided to set up a Transport Department to which they would be affiliated automatically.

The new Polish Railwaymen's Union made contact with the I.T.F. in September, 1945, but since then has abstained from normal relations without any explanation. German railwaymen are organized again, but none of the zonal organizations is as yet effectively affiliated with the I.T.F. and one zonal organization has even no relations at all with the I.T.F.

While the Conference regretted these absences, it was able to welcome back two organizations that had been severed from the I.T.F. for a long time. The Italian Railwaymen's Union has come to life again, after its destruction more than twenty years ago. It sent a strong delegation, whose members made meritorious contributions to the work of the Conference. The Austrian Railwaymen's Union exists again and functions as a single organization throughout the four zones of occupation into which the country is divided. The Conference welcomed with pleasure the President of the Danish Railway Clerks' Association, Mr. P. From Hansen, who wished to attend as an observer of the I.T.F.'s work because his organization contemplates affiliation. Mr. Irving Brown,



attending as observer on behalf of the Railway Labour Executives' Association of the U.S.A.—a group of twenty railway trade unions with one million members—conveyed to the Conference the Association's decision to join the I.T.F. For many years the railwaymen in the I.T.F. have been hoping and waiting for this and the news gladdened and encouraged their representatives gathered in Brussels.

A new feature of the Conference was the presence of observers from official international transport institutions—the European Central Inland Transport Office and the International Railway Congress Association—a most welcome acknowledgment of the growth in status and influence of the trade union movement.

The Conference discussed in the first place an item that has been on the agenda of international railwaymen's conferences for twenty years: the one-man driving of electric and diesel-electric locomotives. None of the overseas organizations affiliated with the I.T.F. being able to send representatives to the Conference, the question was discussed from the European viewpoint, and as there are no large numbers of diesel-electric locomotives in Europe, the speakers were concerned with electric locomotives only. Those with experience of the driving of electric locomotives held divergent opinions. One school held that dead-man devices were so defective that they offered insufficient guarantees against failures of the driver through sudden death or illness; that the

strain on the single man is too heavy and leads to premature invalidity; and that the constant pressure exercised on a dead-man device is injurious to health. The other delegates spoke on behalf of Unions which no longer object to the principle of one-man driving. Provided safety devices on the locomotive and in the signalling system are adequate, most trains can, in their view, be safely hauled by one-man driven locomotives. But there are exceptions. The sudden and full application of the locomotive brakes through release of the dead-man device would cause havoc in loosely coupled trains and in trains not fitted with automatic brakes throughout.

There is also an unavoidable element of danger if trains make long runs without stop. When the driver's turn of duty starts or ends in the night there are certain hours when it is dangerous to leave him alone at the controls. But the application of both the principle and the exceptions is conditioned by the geographical and technological conditions of railway operation in any given area. As there is no uniformity, particularly in respect of automatic train control, the Conference was forced to conclude that no universally applicable rule could be framed. Each organization must examine all relevant factors and decide to what extent it must endeavour to restrict the one-man driving of electric locomotives in its country.

The locomotivemen taking part in the Conference also discussed the question of oil-firing steam locomotives. Owing to the world-wide coal shortage and the poor prospects of an increased supply railway undertakings are being forced to use oil for firing steam locomotives. Does this introduce new hazards into the life and work of locomotivemen? The answer is in the affirmative, at least on a number of railways in many parts of the world. Many locomotivemen feel that considerable technological improvements must still be made to oil-fired steam locomotives to obviate dangers to the safety of operation (e.g. boiler explosions) and the health of locomotivemen (fumes and backflashes).

The problem of automatic couplings has been on the agenda of international railwaymen's

conferences for over forty years. Considerable progress has been made in the study of technological ways and means to effect the transition from screw to automatic couplings. It is known how it can be done. But very little progress has been made in paving the way for the ultimate introduction of automatic couplings. The Inland Transport Committee of the I.L.O. adopted in December, 1945, a resolution to the effect that all new wagons for use on European continental railways should be built with a frame capable of being fitted with automatic couplings. All European railways with the exception of those of Belgium and Holland ignore this resolution. The Con-

WELCOME, AMERICAN RAILWAYMEN!

With effect from 1st April, 1947, the U.S. railwaymen's unions forming the Railway Labour Executives' Association have taken their place in the I.T.F.

Ever since the opening of the New York Office of the I.T.F. in 1941, relations between the R.L.E.A. and ourselves have been becoming closer, and but for the war, which prevented many American unions from holding their conventions, the great majority of American railway workers would have joined the I.T.F. long ago.

In 1945 a preliminary arrangement was made, whereby the R.L.E.A. affiliated nominally, on the basis of a token affiliation fee, until such time as a permanent arrangement could be made—as has now been done.

The I.T.F., needless to say, is very glad to see its membership increase by over a million, but what is even more important is the fact that twenty American unions have decided to take an active part in the international trade union movement of the transport workers, a development which will greatly increase the prestige of the I.T.F. in its task of promoting the establishment and growth of democratic and independent trade unions of transport workers in all countries on the one hand, and on the other of helping to protect and advance their economic and social interests, as well as supporting the struggle against economic exploitation and political oppression of the workers.

With a view to further strengthening the relations between American and European railwaymen, a delegation of the latter will visit the United States in the autumn of this year, and, at the invitation of the R.L.E.A., the next meeting of the Executive Committee of the I.T.F. will be held in Washington D.C.

ference instructed the I.T.F. Secretariat to do everything possible to ensure the application of this resolution throughout the European Continent. The screw coupling is one source of accidents to railwaymen which must be stopped, because it is technologically and economically possible to do so.

Should working hours on railways be regulated by an international convention? To that question the Conference replied yes, on condition that the maxima laid down per day, week, month or any other period shall be equivalent to forty hours a week. At a time where the reconstruction of railways and other transport, factories, villages and towns claims so much of the man-power of European and other countries, causing an acute shortage of labour, there is in most countries little chance that the forty-hour week would be considered a practical proposition. The Conference held that the time was not ripe for a campaign for an international convention and deferred the subject for further consideration at its next session.

War damage to railways in Europe has been extensive. The fact that practically all railway systems are functioning again and carry traffic that is nearly equal to what it was before the war, and in some cases even more, bears witness to the resourcefulness of railway technicians and the devotion of the whole of the railway personnel. The Conference listened with concern and sympathy to two tales of woe. Italy and Austria—and probably Greece—have far greater difficulties to overcome than other European countries in repairing damage to their railways, and in addition are suffering from extreme shortage of fuel. Austria cannot maintain the minimum essential traffic. Italy and Austria, therefore, stand in urgent need of outside help. In Europe as a whole railway traffic has been restored almost completely, but much of the repair is makeshift. The task of reconstruction proper has not yet begun. Plans for reconstruction are ready or are being prepared, but practically no country can hope to carry them out fully and swiftly with the means available inside its own borders. Economic co-operation on a European and world scale must become far closer than it is at present, to ensure rapid and satisfactory reconstruction of the European railways damaged by war.

One of the consequences of war is an acute and well-nigh universal shortage of housing. In areas that have suffered devastation the housing conditions of many people, among them substantial numbers of railwaymen, are painful and sometimes even tragic. Railway undertakings feel adverse repercussions from the inability of many of their servants to accommodate themselves and their families near their place of work and they are compelled to take steps to remedy the situation. The railwaymen's trade unions welcome the interest railway undertakings take in the matter of housing, but they wish them to have in mind the future and permanent interests of the railway workers, as well as their own immediate interest. Railwaymen wish to be as free as other citizens to choose their houses to suit their personal and family conveniences, and to become owners of their homes. The Conference considered that the interests of both sides could be harmonized and recommended that the housing schemes of railway undertakings should be

planned to further the interests of the railway personnel as well as meet the requirements of railway operation.

Finally the Conference raised some questions on which information was required. Railway offices are not everywhere what they should be. Buildings are often as old as the railway itself. The volume of clerical work has increased immensely in the last half century, but the available office space has not grown in the same proportions. Many unsuitable rooms have been converted into offices and consequently have poor lighting, heating, cleaning and sanitary facilities. Many offices have been built according to ideas which are inconsistent with modern requirements as to the speed, efficiency and salubrity of clerical work. What is being done—and is it enough—to improve the physical conditions under which the work is done and to safeguard the health of office personnel? The I.T.F. Secretariat has been instructed to undertake a full enquiry into the matter.

Plans for further railway electrification are being made in several countries. What must the unions in these countries be prepared for? A survey of the social and economic effects of electrification on railway staffs would be a helpful guide. Removal of men for failing eye-sight, from branches of the service in which they have worked for many years and on which they hoped for promotion, causes many hardships and heartaches. The I.T.F. Secretariat was asked to enquire into modern administrative practice throughout the world, and how hardships are being or can be avoided or lessened. The discussion of this subject revealed also the need for looking into the question of the selection of men for certain work by psychotechnical tests.

While many participants expressed appreciation of the manner in which the Secretariat had prepared for the Conference, and of the documentary material supplied, the Secretariat expressed the wish that in the preparation of future conferences it could be assisted by a committee of the railway trade unions. Accordingly the Conference decided to resume pre-war practice and establish a consultative committee for the Railwaymen's Section.

It was a working conference offering no opportunity for brilliant rhetoric but plenty for instructive exchanges of views and information, and the participants made full use of it.

Belgian hospitality was lavish. The Public Services Trade Union proved a very generous host and its Railwaymen's Section had made excellent and helpful arrangements for assisting the Conference in its work. The General Federation of Labour of Belgium and the Town Councils of the Borough of Molenbeek, Spa and Chaudfontaine vied with each other in welcoming and entertaining the delegates, while the Belgian National Railway Corporation graciously offered them a day's excursion by special train. The combined efforts of the Belgian hosts have ensured that the Conference will rank among the notable events in the history of the I.T.F. and their kindness and generosity will still be remembered when the resolutions and decisions will have no more than historical interest.

The delegates could not help being impressed by the

(continued next page, foot of first column)

I.L.O. INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE'S SECOND SESSION

By **J. H. OLDENBROEK**

General Secretary of the I.T.F.

In May, 1945, the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization decided to set up industrial committees, including one for transport. This committee, the Inland Transport Committee, is concerned with all branches of transport, with the exception of maritime transport, for which a separate committee, the Joint Maritime Commission, has been in existence since the year 1920. Since its inception the Inland Transport Committee has held two meetings, the first in London in December, 1945, and now the second in Geneva, from 7th to 16th May last.

Within two years of the decision to give systematic attention to the questions affecting railway workers, waterfront workers, road transport workers, inland navigation workers and air transport workers, as well as the industries in which those workers are employed, international machinery has been created which may be expected to handle these matters in an efficient and intelligent manner. Let us not forget the human element which governs the machinery—the newly created Industrial Relations Section of the I.L.O., chief of which is Mr. John Price, working under Mr. Jef Rens, Assistant Director General of the I.L.O., and all the I.L.O. people who contribute to the success of this particular task of the office.

The I.L.O. certainly deserves to be congratulated on the speed with which, in this sphere, it has moved from the experimental phase to that of practical results. In the industrial committees it has been shown, if ever it has been, that in this work the drive must come from the trade unions, and that, though modesty almost forbids me to say it, participation of an international secretariat like the I.T.F. is indispensable. To what extent the I.T.F. has succeeded in the performance of its task we leave to the judgment of the Workers' Group of the Inland Transport Committee.

No fewer than twenty-six countries are entitled to representation in this Committee and each of these may send two government delegates, two employers' delegates and two workers' delegates to its meetings.*

The Railwaymen's Section of the I.T.F.—continued.

recovery the country has made since its liberation. The railways are working well and wherever there are ruins the work of reconstruction is in progress. While good luck may have favoured and may still be favouring industrial recovery, the Belgian example shows what could be achieved throughout Europe with political tranquility, intelligent policy, ability to draw on foreign resources, adequate organization and hard work. The delegates left the country encouraged and inspired and wishing it well.

It was a pity that some countries (Brazil, Czechoslovakia and Luxemburg) were not represented in Geneva, while Finland, Greece and China had sent incomplete delegations, lacking both workers' and employers' representatives. The trade unions in these countries would do well to prevail on their governments to send complete delegations in future. Even so, over 150 delegates attended the proceedings, including three representatives of U.N., one of E.C.I.T.O. and the Central Rhine Commission, and two of the I.T.F., which sent its General Secretary and Assistant General Secretary.

The Governing Body of the I.L.O. had appointed Mr. Henri Hauck, French Government delegate, to preside over the proceedings, and with him the business of conducting the plenary sessions as well as numerous committee meetings was in competent hands. The Workers' Group chose as its Vice-President of the Committee Mr. H. W. Fraser of the U.S.A. The leadership of the Workers' Group was in the hands of Mr. Harold Clay of Great Britain, and the two secretaries of the I.T.F., Messrs. J. H. Oldenbroek and P. Tofahrn. Further, Messrs. R. de Keyzer of Belgium, B. K. Mukerjee of India, D. Garcia of Mexico and E. J. Harrison of Australia were appointed Vice-Presidents of the Workers' Group.

As customary at these meetings various sub-committees were set up, with a view to a division of labour among the delegates. These sub-committees acquitted themselves of their tasks seriously. This cannot always be said of international proceedings, where there is sometimes a good deal of absenteeism, but the Inland Transport Committee was in this respect a model to others.

The four sub-committees were given the following questions to deal with: (1) Industrial Relations, (2) Employment, (3) Statistics, (4) Rhine Shipping. The latter committee was rather in the nature of an afterthought, as originally it was not intended to discuss working conditions and social insurances in Rhine shipping, but it was decided to do so at the suggestion of the Workers' Group, though it must be added that there was no opposition to such a course on the side of the governments or employers concerned. We know we speak in the name of the workers engaged in Rhine navigation when we express our appreciation of this accommodating attitude, and in particular thank the American and the British Governments for sending representatives from the American and British zones of Germany.

*In addition, countries may appoint Advisers, but the I.L.O. only bears the expenses of the two Employers' and two Workers' Delegates.

While the sub-committees dealt with the four questions mentioned above, the plenary proceedings were devoted to a keen discussion of the Director's Report and the purpose of the industrial committees in general.

What struck the delegates particularly in the Director's Report were the passages dealing with the decisions reached at the 1945 session concerning the reconstruction of the European transport systems and the calling of a meeting to discuss the question of the competition between North Sea ports. These were matters which the I.L.O. had had to refer to other international bodies, and from what the representatives of E.C.I.T.O. and the Transport and Communications Committee of U.N. said when they addressed the Committee it was clear that little or nothing had been done to meet the wishes expressed by the Inland Transport Committee. This, we think, emphasizes the importance of the trade unions being represented on those other international bodies, as well as on the I.L.O. committees, in order to speed up the implementation of the decisions of the Inland Transport Committee and other bodies.

On the employers' side a faint attempt was made to clip the Committee's wings, but it was firmly put down, especially by the workers' side. Actually this attitude of the employers is difficult to understand, inasmuch as the tripartite composition of the I.L.O. enables employers' and workers' representatives to deal on an equal footing with the governments in matters raised by any of the three parties. The Industrial Committees must be regarded, as we see it, as international bodies in which representatives of employers and workers, in the presence of government representatives, discuss questions affecting the industries they represent, with special reference, naturally, to the social problems. For the I.L.O. exists to promote social progress—not to retard it, as some employers seem to think at times. But there are economic conditions which have a bearing on social conditions, and vice versa, and it would be a mistake to ignore this or, rather, to refuse to discuss economic conditions and factors. At international gatherings there must be readiness to take cognizance of the position in other countries and of a different point of view. There must never be any fear to make an investigation and present a report. Naturally the report must be objective, which, however, does not mean that it must be insipid.

The Inland Transport Committee, in the nature of things, is and no doubt will remain the largest of the industrial committees. It will be necessary to decentralize its work, because although all means of transport have the same function, namely to transport persons and things by land, water or air, the circumstances in which this is done vary widely, while in addition geographic and climatic conditions play an important role and call for regional division. It is indeed clear that international traffic has its points of contact at the frontiers of the countries, and that, in other words, a very important part of international traffic is confined within a certain area. Co-operation between the countries within such an area should therefore be very close. Ocean shipping and air transport are the only exception, and even they

in respect of part only of the traffic concerned.

The second session of the Inland Transport Committee adopted a number of important resolutions and referred a large number of matters to the I.L.O. for attention and action. Here is a list of them :

Conditions of employment

(1) An investigation with a view to revision of the Convention on working hours in road transport.

(2) Constitution of a special committee on Rhine shipping, with a view to fixing international minimum conditions and to adopting a convention concerning the application of social insurances to all workers engaged in Rhine shipping irrespective of residence and nationality.

(3) Protection of young workers and children in inland shipping.

(4) Decasualization of dock labour.

Safety

(5) Resumption of efforts to introduce automatic couplings on railways.

(6) Compulsory accident insurance in inland transport.

Studies

(7) On co-ordination of the means of transport.

(8) On conditions of employment in civil aviation.

(9) On employment of women in transport industries.

Statistics

(10) Proposals regarding the compilation of transport statistics.

(11) Suggestions for internationally comparable statistics.

Industrial relations, employment, vocational guidance

(12/14) Detailed proposals of two sub-committees concerning industrial relations, employment and vocational guidance.

During the ten days on which the Committee met many decisions were come to and many new subjects broached. The question now is how will the Committee's decisions be implemented in practice. The procedure is that the I.L.O. communicates the decisions to the governments and sends them reminders on the subject from time to time. *It is clear, however, that upon the trade unions falls the main duty of watching for enforcement of the decisions, both in the countries represented on the Inland Transport Committee and in others.* Before long, however, the Governing Body of the I.L.O. will have to put a certain pressure behind these decisions, say by applying to them the same procedure as to Recommendations, concerning which governments are under the obligation to report on the measures which have been taken to implement them or on the reasons for not having taken any. Not until this stage has been reached will the industrial committees have attained to the full status to which they are entitled.

Up to now there have been few signs of States being willing to forgo unrestricted national control of national transport policies.

Brig.-Gen. Sir Osborne Mance

International Road Transport, Postal,

Electricity and Miscellaneous Questions—1947

FIFTY YEARS OF PROGRESS

THE BRITISH RAILWAY CLERKS' ASSOCIATION'S GOLDEN JUBILEE

By G. M. H. MORRIS

Assistant Secretary, R.C.A., and Editor, "Railway Service Journal."

The I.T.F. has no more loyal affiliate than the Railway Clerks' Association of Great Britain and Ireland, which celebrated its 50th birthday on May 8th, 1947. It came into the I.T.F. in 1924, and has played its full part in the international movement. It never fails to send delegates to I.T.F. Conferences, and to all appeals for assistance, financial and otherwise, its response is more than generous. When at the outbreak of World War II the I.T.F. found itself homeless, it was the R.C.A. that came to the rescue by placing its headquarters offices at our disposal. Its General Secretary, C. N. Gallie, who retires in November next, is a member of the Management Committee of the I.T.F. It is fitting, therefore, that the I.T.F. should congratulate the R.C.A. on attaining its Golden Jubilee and on the progress it has made during the last fifty years, and wish it even greater success in the future.

It is well known that black-coated workers are more difficult to organise as trade unionists than their manual colleagues, but it is equally true that when they are organised they serve the workers' movements wholeheartedly and frequently take on positions of leadership, locally and nationally. That is particularly true of the R.C.A.

Railway clerks were slow to recognize that the only remedy for their wretched conditions of service was by combining together to enforce improvements. Fifty years ago rates of pay were pitifully low, and bore little or no relation to the value of the duties performed and the responsibilities carried. Hours of duty were virtually unlimited—12 hours a day were by no means unusual—and there was no additional payment for overtime or Sunday duty. Offices were often unsuitable, dark and dirty, and ventilation and lighting so poor that tuberculosis and eye troubles were rampant. Other working conditions were equally bad, yet the great majority of the railway salaried staff viewed with suspicion and even active hostility the attempts to build up the infant organization born in 1897. After ten years only 10 per cent had enrolled.

In 1906 A. G. Walkden, now Lord Walkden of Bookham, became General Secretary, and under his strong leadership, inspiration and driving force, the R.C.A. began to grow steadily. As early as 1903 it had affiliated to the Trades Union Congress, and in 1910 it affiliated to the Labour Party. With the help of these bodies it defeated, through Parliamentary action, attempts by some railway companies to prevent any but station clerks joining the Association, and by 1914, when the first World War broke out, there were 28,000 members.

Although the railway companies refused to recognize or negotiate with the Association, they could not ignore the fact that their clerical staffs were combining to secure better conditions. Working through deputations of the staff to the directors of the various companies, the R.C.A. secured improved scales of salary, payment for Sunday duty and other easements. During the 1914-18 War, membership grew rapidly to 71,000, and in February, 1919, the railway companies were compelled

under threat of imminent strike action to recognize the R.C.A. and to open negotiations on its programme for national agreements covering salaries and all other conditions of service. After long and difficult negotiations, and another strike threat, satisfactory settlements were reached covering all sections of the salaried staff except those in the Professional and Technical and Workshop Supervisory Grades. An agreement for the latter was eventually secured in 1942, but only this month (June 1947) have the draughtsmen, chemists, research workers and other professional grades been brought under a national agreement. The fight for them has been a long one. Not until the middle of World War II could the R.C.A. establish its right to represent the majority of that section, and twice action had to be taken in the House of Commons before the companies would concede "recognition." The salaries just awarded by the Railway Staff National Tribunal bring over-due improvements to the great majority.

Between the two wars the R.C.A. had to meet repeated attempts to reduce rates of pay and to worsen other conditions, and although during the world depression of the thirties it had to yield some ground, it had regained it all by 1939. Since then it has secured further improvements, and is now engaged, with the other two railway unions, the N.U.R. and the A.S.L.E. & F., with whom it is on friendly terms, in endeavouring to secure new standards of salaries and reduced hours to accord with post-war conditions.

The R.C.A. can indeed look back upon fifty years of hard but fruitful toil for its members. In that period it has not only raised their standard of living very considerably, but has given to the railway clerk a dignity and independence of thought and spirit undreamed of half a century ago.

To-day its members can be found in office in all wings of the workers' movement, in Trades Councils, in Local Labour Parties, and on the Management Committees of Co-operative Societies. The highest offices have been held by its representatives—A. G. Walkden became Chairman of the Trades Union Congress; the late George Lathan was Chairman and later Treasurer of the Labour Party, and the late George Ridley died in his

year of office as Labour Party Chairman; George Perkins is Chairman of the Co-operative Union.

The R.C.A. has played a full and worthy part in the long struggle for democratic socialism and for the election of a Labour Government in Britain. Hundreds of its members sit on county, city, borough and town councils, and scores have held the honourable position of Mayor, whilst many others are magistrates. In the present House of Commons there are fifteen R.C.A. members, including the President of the Association, Alderman Percy Morris, and the Treasurer, Mr. J. Haworth. Three hold important Government Offices as Under Secretaries in the Board of Trade, the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Ministry of Social Insurance.

The nationalization of railways has been one of its objectives for forty years. It is fitting that in its year of Golden Jubilee, Parliament should be passing legislation to bring all forms of inland transport under State ownership and control. R.C.A. members have pledged themselves to do all in their power to ensure the success of the nationalized railways.

At the end of its first year of life the R.C.A. had 200 members and no money. To-day its membership is nearly 90,000, including 17,500 women, and its funds amount to £875,000. At its Jubilee Conference in May over 600 delegates from its 445 branches dedicated themselves anew to the task of carrying forward the torch of progress handed to them by the gallant pioneers who founded and built up this great Association whose keynote is "Fellowship." That note was clearly to be heard in the warm welcome extended to fraternal delegates from Austria, Belgium, Holland, Sweden and Switzerland, led by Comrade Joustra, who represented also the I.T.F.

The R.C.A. has been magnificently led by its General Secretaries, A. G. Walkden, Will Stott and Charles Gallie, who retires next November. Under his successor, Fred Bostock, the R.C.A. will continue on its path of progress, making its full contribution to the cause of organized labour and social democracy, both nationally and internationally, and of world-wide peace and brotherhood.

DANISH GENERAL WORKERS' UNION 50 YEARS

By **STURE CHRISTIANSSON**

Member of the Executive Committee of the I.T.F.

On 1st January, 1947, the Danish General Workers' Union celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, and its general secretary, Axel Olsen, in the journal of the Union, recalls some of the more important events in the Union's history, which may be of interest for the organizations affiliated to the I.T.F.

In the early 'eighties, and in some cases already in the 'seventies, general workers' associations were formed in many places in Denmark, particularly in the commercial towns. Between the branches of three different unions in these towns a certain amount of co-operation came about, which later was extended over the whole country, as the different unions formed more and more branches. The organizations were divided geographically: Copenhagen and surroundings, Sjælland and neighbouring islands and Jylland and Fyn. It was these three organizations which after negotiations decided to amalgamate, an event which took place on 1st January, 1897. The Union had 14,000 members when it was founded.

Even if the men who started the organization were optimistic and had great hopes of its future, they can hardly at that time have imagined the rapid and enormous development that was to take place. It was the poorest sections of workers who strove to raise their heads, men working ten to fourteen hours a day, many earning only two crowns or so a day, who tried to pave the way to a better existence.

In spite of lack of understanding of the importance of organization and unity among the thousands of unorganized workers, the Union succeeded through sheer perseverance to unite these thousands of economically oppressed and politically neglected citizens and to win

growing support for the union. To-day these endeavours are reflected in a greatly increased membership. The 14,000 have become 240,000, spread over 1,287 branches all over the country.

Increase in membership was accompanied by an improvement of the working conditions of the general workers, and no one would to-day dare to make such insulting remarks about the general workers and their organizational efforts as was done in some quarters while the organization was still in its infancy. The attacks were not only directed against the organization as such, but also against its leaders. The Union did not become stagnant, as its adversaries said it would, nor were its members the crowd of ignorant wage slaves its opponents expected them to be. They became a well organized and well disciplined army with a strong influence on and responsibility for the economic and political development of the country.

The many thousands of members have from the beginning and through the years played a very important part in the development of the organization and they received high praise at the jubilee banquet of the Union.

The Union has now reached so far in its development that it can be said that only a very insignificant part of the eligible workers do not belong to it. Its tasks are many in the trade union, political and social fields. There are no slack periods in its activities. The multitude of tasks keeps the blood circulation going in the complicated organism, and inactivity is an unknown conception.

The Danish General Workers' Union has arranged its organization in accordance with the requirements of its development. Starting out on a geographical basis, the

Union has to an ever growing extent had to turn to a system of subdivision that would permit of each specific trade being dealt with separately when changes have to be sought in wages and working conditions. The development of the Union has at the same time led to a considerable ramification of its activities which in turn has marked its wage policy without, however, affecting the general unity within the organization.

In the educational field the Union has been particularly active. Courses of various kinds, including trade union work, cultural, political and technical—the latter arranged in conjunction with the Employers' Association—have been an important contributing factor to members' consciousness of their social responsibility. There are many thousands of Danish workers who have acquired through their Union an education which has been of benefit to themselves as well as to the community, and helped to increase the influence of the working class in the life of the country.

The internal solidarity of the Union has found its best

expression in its scheme for unemployment insurance. Started in 1908, it has ever since been of the utmost benefit and importance. During the early years of the scheme some quarter of a million crowns were paid out each year in unemployment benefits, but during the years 1945-46, 179 millions were paid out.

During the whole of its existence the Danish General Workers' Union has been intimately connected with the Danish Social Democratic Party. There is no one in the Union who thinks that trade union and political activities can be separated.

At the completion of its first half-century the organization stands as one which has always done its duty both in the trade union and political spheres, a monument to trade union activity. It is an organization from which much has been demanded and which has discharged its duties towards its members and the community, and which can look back on the past with satisfaction and towards the future with confidence.

THE RHINE SHIPPING PROBLEM

By T. SMEDING

Secretary, Dutch Transport Workers' Union

"The Rhine is an international waterway, and though not ranking among the first of the great rivers, it is the most important waterway in the world. Indeed, the countries through which it flows have since antiquity made use of this trade route for transport purposes and developed important industries along its banks, while a network of rivers and canals converge on the Rhine and establish communications with other regions."

That is the beginning of the manifesto of the I.T.F. and its affiliated organizations to the workers engaged in shipping on the Rhine, communicating to them the international minimum programme.

Even in the Middle Ages the Rhine was an important waterway, and endeavours were constantly being made to secure its freedom to navigation by abolishing the many hindrances that stood in the way. The staple rights of Cologne were ended by the Peace of Munster in 1648, while measures of the French Executive Council, in 1792, in favour of freedom of navigation, were followed by the decision of the Vienna Congress, after the fall of Napoleon, to set up the Central Commission of the Rhine. After long drawn out discussions the Act of Mayence was signed in 1831, to be revised in 1868 by the Convention of Mannheim. This Convention, several times amended, regulated up to the War the freedom of navigation on the Rhine, but as a consequence of post-war political circumstances, which have led to the division of the part of Germany through which the Rhine flows into three separate zones, the free Rhine has been split into a number of sections, each of which is administered in a different manner. In addition, Switzerland, France, Holland and Belgium are also concerned with the

navigation of the Rhine. The future régime of the river depends on political and economic developments.

Up to and during the eighteenth century navigation below Cologne was almost exclusively in the hands of Dutchmen, navigation between Cologne and Mainz by the skippers of Cologne, and navigation above Mainz by the skippers of that place.

The first change was the result of the transport of coal from the Ruhr basin to the Upper Rhine. The mine owners themselves took in hand the shipment of coal to Southern Germany, establishing shipping companies for the purpose. The transport of coal to Holland, which developed later, was undertaken by Dutchmen.

Up to the first world war Rotterdam was mainly a port through which German imports and exports were carried. France had at that time no port on the Rhine, and Switzerland had no participation in Rhine navigation.

The products of German industry in that part of Germany through which the Rhine flowed were largely exported over that river, while the heavy industry of the Lower Rhine imported its iron ore almost entirely through Rotterdam. German grain imports also came through Rotterdam, mostly in Dutch ships. Apart from the small part in Belgian hands, shipping on the Rhine was shared almost entirely by Germany and Holland.

After the first world war and up to the economic depression of 1930 Rhine navigation made steady progress, but between 1930 and 1933 the depression also left its mark on the industry, leading to a great excess of shipping space over requirements. Economic nationalism in Germany after 1933 favoured the German Rhine fleet. Grain imports through Rotterdam shrunk to nothing,

while German imports of foreign manufacture were reduced to the minimum. There was a steady increase, however, in shipments of other products, such as coal, ores, basalt, etc., so that by 1937 the whole Rhine fleet was busy again.

Movement of Goods.

The figures which follow relate to 1938, the last pre-war year in which Rhine shipping was normal.

The movement of goods through Lobith, the customs station between Germany and Holland, was 55,000,000 tons, of which 35,000,000 went through Rotterdam. About one-half went up and one-half down stream.

Germany's imports via the Rhine were 25,000,000 tons, and her exports 30,000,000. Of the imports 15,000,000 tons represented iron ore, the rest being mainly grain, special kinds of coal, oil products and iron. Of the exports 18,000,000 tons were coal, and the rest mainly iron and artificial manures.

Holland's import and import transit trade by the Rhine was 21,000,000 tons, of which 14,000,000 were coal and the rest mainly building materials, artificial manure and iron. Her export and export transit trade was 20,000,000 tons, largely iron ore.

Belgium imported by the Rhine 6,500,000 tons, of which 4,000,000 represented coal; her exports by the river being chiefly ores, grain and iron.

France, who had laid out an extremely well equipped port at Strasbourg, imported by the Rhine 3,000,000 tons, including 2,000,000 tons of coal, her exports being 1,000,000 tons, one-half of which was artificial manures.

Switzerland has at Basle, which has now been made accessible to Rhine shipping, a modern port. More than one-third of Switzerland's imports are carried by the Rhine to Basle. In 1938 this amounted to 2,700,000 tons, mostly coal, grain and oil products. Since the war the capacity of this port has been raised to 4,000,000 tons, while imports via the Rhine are already 3,000,000 tons.

The total port movement on the Rhine above Lobith amounts to 90,000,000 tons of goods, of which 50,000,000 is in the Ruhr ports and Cologne, and 12,000,000 in the Mannheim-Ludwigshaven area.

The Rhine Fleet.

In 1938 the Rhine fleet consisted of:

1,366 tug-boats aggregating 434,269 H.P.

11,368 barges aggregating 7,306,035 tons.

Of the tug-boat horsepower 35 per cent was Dutch and 50 per cent German. The relatively high German proportion was due to the fact that on the Middle Rhine, with its strong current, towing is mainly done by powerful German tugs of 1,300 H.P. and more.

Of the barges 45 per cent were Dutch and 35 per cent German. The bigger barges run up to the Ruhr district, and this navigation is chiefly in Dutch hands.

The self-propelled fleet (steam and motor cargo vessels) aggregated 500,000 tons, of which 40 per cent was Dutch and 30 per cent German. Switzerland, that up to the first world war, owned no Rhine fleet at all, began to build one after it was connected up with Rhine navigation, but it was not of much importance in 1939. Since

1945 its further expansion is being rapidly taken in hand.

France, that had a part of the German Rhine fleet allotted to her by the Versailles Peace Treaty, shares in the Rhine navigation with a limited number of barges. She also has a considerable number of big tugs for towing on the Middle Rhine.

Belgium has on the Rhine only smaller barges and a limited number of motor vessels.

The following table shows each country's share in the Rhine fleet. Self-propelled steam and motor cargo vessels are included with barges, to give a clear picture of the relative power of the tug-boats and the tonnage of the cargo-carrying vessels. Passenger vessels are not included.

	Tug-boats		Barges	
	Number	Horse-power	Number	Tonnage
France ..	98	51,875	303	364,674
Belgium ..	—	—	1,530	864,679
Switzerland ..	8	6,255	164	125,182
Holland ..	673	161,385	6,507	3,752,118
Germany ..	587	214,754	2,874	2,199,382
	1,366	434,269	11,378	7,306,035

In connection with what will be said about social conditions, it is of importance to mention that the German Rhine fleet is mainly in the hands of big ship-owners. Up to the time war broke out the proportion of Dutch barges owned by their own skippers was 60 per cent, as against 40 per cent owned by shipowning undertakings. As far as the tug-boats were concerned, the smaller ones were owned by private persons while the shipping companies chiefly owned the larger and more powerful ones.

In Switzerland the fleet, which was of small importance, was owned by a few shipowning companies, and the same applies to France, but the latter country has an all-embracing organization that is largely under Government control.

In Belgium the fleet is owned partly by shipowning companies and partly by private persons.

War-time Destruction.

During the war the Rhine was a battlefield from Basle to Holland.

The only lock on the Rhine, a few kilometres below Basle, was destroyed, but has now been restored.

All German bridges over the Rhine were destroyed, even the one at Remagen, after the Allies had crossed it. Altogether there were over the German Rhine twenty-one railway bridges, twenty road bridges and thirteen pontoon bridges, and in Holland a further five railway bridges and two road bridges. Innumerable wrecked vessels made navigation impossible. A large number of emergency bridges were built, but all of them too low and with too narrow a fairway. Rhine navigation was completely paralyzed.

Destruction of vessels was enormous, something like 65 per cent being sunk or damaged. A great many can probably be repaired, but a total loss of something like

15 per cent of the potential must be reckoned with.

Tug-boats on the Middle and Upper Rhine have suffered still greater losses, which in this case will probably be 50 per cent.

The following figures relating to the position at the beginning of 1946 give a clear picture of the damage done.

	Tug-boats		Barges		
	Number	Horse-power	Number	Tonnage	
1935	1,230	415,285	10,649	7,076,311	
1938	1,366	434,269	11,378	7,306,035	
1946 {	Running	382	150,961	4,211	3,043,034
	Awaiting Repair	264	159,696	1,755	1,722,548
Total 1946 ..	646	310,657	5,966	4,765,582	

The following table shows the number of vessels in running order at the beginning of 1947, classified according to flag :

	Tug-boats		Barges	
	Number	Horse-power	Number	Tonnage
France ..	24	12,805	92	106,432
Belgium ..	14	3,207	910	503,570
Switzerland ..	7	9,120	123	83,769
Holland ..	260	80,000	2,400	1,800,000
Occupation Zones	137	45,829	686	549,263

The following shows the nationality of the vessels awaiting repair :

	Tug-boats		Barges	
	Number	Horse-power	Number	Tonnage
France ..	46	32,390	205	241,358
Belgium ..	1	1,350	28	30,384
Switzerland ..	35	14,000	600	450,000
Holland ..	182	111,956	922	1,000,806
Occupation Zones	264	159,696	1,755	1,722,548

The Post-war Position

When the war ended transport by the Rhine was impossible owing to the obstacles to navigation. It was not until September 1945, that it became possible to carry the first cargoes, in a very inadequate manner and with great delays.

Owing to the destruction of factories and the stoppage of heavy industry and manufacture of chemicals there are no cargoes to carry. There is no question of any trade, partly owing to the absence of any financial facilities between the several countries, and three occupation zones, through which the Rhine flows.

Owing to the very small production, coal transport,

which is all that remains, is very much below expectations. What there is of it, between the ports in the several zones, is done exclusively with the requisitioned German tug-boats and barges, manned with Germans. Coal exports overseas are sent by the occupying countries through German seaports. Imports of foodstuffs and other articles required by the occupying armies do not come through Antwerp and Rotterdam, which are the ports most suitable for the purpose, but through the German North Sea ports, thus enabling costs to be paid in marks.

Transport of piece goods to German ports with rapid steam and motor vessels is entirely suspended.

In spite of the large amount of tonnage destroyed and the greatly extended duration of the voyages, it soon became apparent that the very much reduced fleet is still too large for the quantity of goods available, and cargoes are difficult to get.

Only the shortage of towing power on the Middle and Upper Rhine, as a result of the heavy losses of German and French tug-boats, attracted a large number of boats, largely of Dutch nationality, to this area, until the very low water level in November 1946 reduced movement to a minimum.

Transport from the sea to Basle, which before the war only represented a comparatively small percentage of the total, soon rose to its pre-war level after navigation to Basle became possible once more. Owing to the shortage of piece-goods cargoes, Holland, whose fleet was far too large, before the war, for her own requirements, is going all out, with fast ships, for this trade, as the Swiss cannot themselves handle more than 50 per cent of it, in spite of the rapid expansion of their fleet.

Transport to Czechoslovakia via the Elbe, over which it was formerly carried, is not now possible, so that some of it now goes over the Rhine as far as Aschaffenburg on the Main.

Rhine Navigation based on Antwerp

The following table shows the tonnage of goods shipped :

To :	1938	1946
Germany	2,281,767	216,204
France (Alsace)	579,104	165,275
Switzerland	412,219	302,677
	3,273,090	684,156

and the following arrivals of goods :

From :	1938	1946
Germany	2,827,610	539,156
France (Alsace)	318,887	186,290
Switzerland	64,516	19,014
	3,211,013	744,460

The movement of ships between Antwerp and the Rhine amounted in 1946 to about 27 per cent of the pre-war volume, and movement of goods about 22 per cent.

In the first quarter of 1946 the total movement of goods via the Rhine beyond Lobith amounted to 263,600 tons up stream and 1,113,000 down stream, or a total of 1,376,600. This would make for the whole year about five and a half million tons, or 10 per cent of the pre-war figure. Since Antwerp's share is 22 per cent of what it was before the war, Holland's must have dropped to less than 10 per cent.

It is clear that the policy the Allies are following with regard to Germany is creating a problem of the first magnitude for Belgian and Dutch Rhine shipping. Owing to the falling off of the cargoes available they will be on the look-out for other business, and the changes in the hinterland and the connections with Central Europe via the Danube are being followed with great interest.

The Social Position of the Rhine Shipping Personnel

Before the Hitler régime started in 1933, wages and other working conditions in Germany were settled by negotiation between employers and workers, just as they were in Holland.

In spite of endeavours made, it could never be arranged that the collective agreements in the two countries should expire on the same date, and consequently there was on several occasions a strike in one country while in the other the men were bound by their collective agreement. And although endeavours were made to equalize working conditions as far as possible, they were also unsuccessful.

The system of a general wage agreement for the whole of the German Rhine shipping personnel was continued after 1933, and when the war broke out the wage agreement of 5th May 1938 was in force, though we understand that some amendments were made on 5th August 1938 and 30th January 1940. This same agreement is still in force for the German personnel sailing under Allied flags on the requisitioned vessels.

In Holland, where there was formerly a collective agreement applicable to all tug-boats and a great part of the barges, there was after the strike of 1932, that lasted eleven months, a period without a collective agreement, during which a regulation imposed by the employers was in force in the shipping companies' vessels, while on the privately owned vessels, helped by the economic depression, many impairments of conditions were introduced, and the situation generally was exceedingly chaotic.

Just before Holland was drawn into the war in May 1940 conditions became so favourable that it was possible for the Dutch Central Transport Workers' Union to negotiate a collective agreement.

Since the war there has been a radical change in the method of fixing wages and other working conditions. With the full co-operation of the shipowning companies, though not always in full agreement with the private shipowners, the College of National Conciliators—a Government body—has fixed, in co-operation with the trade unions, binding regulations for all undertakings, both company and private. These regulations determine wages, the manning scale, sailing and rest periods, and holidays. For every branch of Rhine shipping there are general regulations applicable to everybody.

In Belgium before the war conditions were agreed upon

in the National Joint Committee for Inland Navigation, in which employers and workers were equally represented. They were laid down in free agreements which applied to both tug-boats and barges.

Since the war this system has been continued, but the agreements can now be made binding by the Government, though this has not yet been done for Rhine shipping.

The manning scale is fixed by legal enactment, over the enforcement of which, however, there is no control, though this will shortly be introduced.

In Switzerland conditions in each undertaking are fixed by the shipowners themselves.

In France the personnel had no trade union up to 1936, but after the formation of the Popular Front there was for a short time an organization for Rhine skippers, though it had no influence over the regulation of wages and working conditions.

Since the war contact with the personnel has been made impossible by the hindrances to navigation. Present wages are not fixed by the Government, as in other industries, but their basis is nevertheless the same. All French undertakings are affiliated to the *Communauté Française de la Navigation Rhénane* (French Rhine Shipping Corporation), which is under Government control. No undertaking can operate unless it belongs to this Corporation.

From this description of the position of the several countries since the war it is clear that each of them is doing its utmost to get the biggest possible share of Rhine shipping for itself. The first condition for this is that the transport shall be as speedy as possible, the second that it shall be as cheap as possible. Speed of transport is determined on the one hand by technological factors (fast vessels), and on the other by the time that the vessel can spend daily in sailing. This already causes many difficulties: the Dutchmen, for instance, keep to the period of night rest that is laid down, while in other countries it is otherwise, and it is possible, for instance, to buy off night rest by paying overtime.

If early steps are not taken to make social conditions of Rhine shipping personnel as much alike as possible in all countries, a great part of the burden of competition will have to be borne by the workers.

The I.T.F. and its affiliated organizations concerned with Rhine shipping have realized this, and at Conferences held in Basle and Strasbourg they have drawn up a minimum programme for the whole of the Rhine shipping personnel.

This programme comprises a manning scale for all branches of the industry, based on the nature of the trade, the size of the vessels and the power of the tug-boats; a detailed regulation of sailing and rest periods, providing for twelve hours night rest; a twelve-day annual holiday; and a minimum wage, for which that of the fireman is taken as the basis, the others being fixed in proportion.

Though at present each country, when determining its national policy with regard to wages, is compelled to take national factors into consideration, the fixing of this

(continued at foot of next page)

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME OF MINIMUM DEMANDS FOR RHINE NAVIGATION PERSONNEL

The Programme published below is the result of two Regional Conferences, held at Basle on 1st and 2nd August 1945 and at Strasbourg on 7th December 1946 respectively, where representatives from Holland, Belgium, France and Switzerland, with German representatives also in attendance as observers, discussed the common interests of workers employed in Rhine shipping.

In addition to adopting this Programme, the two Conferences decided on the publication of a Joint Manifesto, in German, French and Dutch, analysing the problem of Rhine shipping with particular reference to the living and working conditions of the workers concerned, and appealing for a regional approach that takes account of the interests of all the four riparian countries.

We publish the Programme in full here, because we consider it to be of special interest not only to inland workers in other countries besides the four directly concerned but also to others as an example of an effective treatment of industrial problems at the regional level.

I. GENERAL

In appraising this Programme it should be borne in mind that it is concerned with International Minimum Demands, and that any more favourable conditions and arrangements existing in the different countries must not be prejudiced. Further, that the organizations subscribing to it in the respective countries retain the right to put forward higher demands than those contained in the present Programme.

II. MANNING SCALES

1. Screw Steam Tugs

- a Vessels with a heating surface of up to 50 square metres¹ inclusive : master, engineer and deckhand.
- b Vessels with a heating surface of over 50 to 66 square metres inclusive : master, engineer, deckhand and learner fireman.
- c Vessels with a heating surface of over 66 to 90 square metres inclusive : master, mate, engineer and fireman.
- d Vessels with a heating surface of over 90 to 115 square metres inclusive : master, mate, engineer and two firemen.
- e Vessels with a heating surface of over 115 to 160 square metres inclusive : master, mate, deckhand, engineer and two firemen.
- f Vessels with a heating surface of over 160 to 200 square metres inclusive : master, mate, deckhand, chief engineer, second engineer and two firemen (alternatively engineer and three firemen).
- g Vessels with a heating surface of over 200 to 300 square metres inclusive : master, mate, two deckhands, chief engineer, second engineer and three firemen.
- h Vessels with heating surface of over 300 square metres : master, mate, three deckhands, chief engineer, second engineer and four firemen.

2. Paddle-wheel Steam Tugs

- a Vessels with a heating surface of over 200 to 250 square metres inclusive : master, mate, three deckhands, chief engineer, second engineer and three firemen.
- b Vessels with a heating surface of over 250 to 300 square metres inclusive : master, mate, four deckhands, chief engineer, second engineer, four firemen and messman.

The Rhine Shipping Problem—continued.

minimum wage can be of very great importance for the German Rhine shipping personnel, who are still sailing for pre-war wages, and are likely, therefore, to constitute a danger to the workers of other countries.

The carrying out of this minimum programme will have to be promoted both nationally and internationally. This is a matter of vital importance for the whole of the workers engaged in Rhine shipping.

- c Vessels with a heating surface of over 300 square metres : master, mate, four deckhands, chief engineer, second engineer, five firemen and messman.

Paddle-wheel tugs without a steam-driven capstan shall carry a boy in addition.

3. Motor Tugs

- a Vessels of up to 150 E.H.P. inclusive : master, deckhand-motorman and boy.
- b Vessels of over 150 to 250 E.H.P. inclusive : master, mate and engineer.
- c Vessels of over 250 to 400 E.H.P. inclusive : master, mate, engineer and deckhand-motorman.
- d Vessels of over 400 to 600 E.H.P. inclusive : master, mate, deckhand, chief engineer and second engineer.
- e Vessels of over 600 to 900 E.H.P. inclusive : master, mate, two deckhands, chief engineer, second engineer and assistant engineer.
- f Vessels of over 900 to 1,500 E.H.P. inclusive : master, mate, three deckhands, chief engineer, second engineer and assistant engineer.
- g Larger vessels proportionately larger crews.

4. Steam-propelled Freight Vessels

- a Vessels of up to 700 tons inclusive : master, mate, deckhand, engineer and two firemen.
- b Vessels of over 700 to 1,000 tons inclusive : master, mate, deckhand, boy, engineer and two firemen.
- c Vessels of over 1,000 tons : master, mate, two deckhands, boy, chief engineer, second engineer and two firemen.

5. Motor-propelled Freight Vessels

- a Vessels of up to 300 tons inclusive : master and deckhand-motorman.
- b Vessels of over 300 to 500 tons inclusive : master, mate, motorman and boy.
- c Vessels of over 500 to 700 tons inclusive : master, mate, engineer and boy.
- d Vessels of over 700 to 1,000 tons inclusive : master, mate, deckhand, engineer and assistant engineer.
- e Vessels of over 1,000 tons : master, mate, two deckhands, chief engineer and second engineer.

6. Motor Tankers

- a Vessels of 50 to 350 tons inclusive : master and deckhand-motorman.
- b Vessels of over 350 to 500 tons inclusive : master, mate, motorman and boy.
- c Vessels of over 500 to 700 tons inclusive : master, mate, deckhand and engineer.
- d Vessels of over 700 to 1,000 tons inclusive : master, mate, deckhand, engineer, assistant engineer and boy.
- e Vessels of over 1,000 tons : master, mate, two deckhands, chief engineer, second engineer and boy.

7. Tank Barges

- a Vessels of 50 to 350 tons inclusive : skipper and deckhand.
- b Vessels of over 350 to 750 tons inclusive : skipper, deckhand and boy.

¹ One square metre equal to 10.75 sq. ft.

- c Vessels of over 750 to 1,000 tons inclusive: skipper and two deckhands.
- d Vessels of over 1,000 to 1,750 tons inclusive: skipper, two deckhands and boy.
- e Vessels of over 1,750 tons: skipper, three deckhands and boy.

8. Barges

- a Vessels of up to 500 tons inclusive: skipper and deckhand.
- b Vessels of over 500 to 1,000 tons inclusive: skipper, deckhand and boy.
- c Vessels of over 1,000 to 1,500 tons inclusive: skipper and two deckhands.
- d Vessels of over 1,500 to 2,500 tons inclusive: skipper, two deckhands and boy.
- e Vessels of over 2,500 to 3,000 tons inclusive: skipper and three deckhands.
- f Vessels of over 3,000 tons: skipper, three deckhands and boy.

9. General

- a Firemen shall be not less than 20, deckhands not less than 18 years of age.
- b The foregoing provisions relate to male members of the crew. Women may only be carried provided it involves no reduction in the number of male members of the crew.
- c The pay of an absent rating shall be divided among those performing his duties.

III. NAVIGATION AND REST PERIODS, WORKING HOURS IN PORT AND WATCH ON BOARD

There shall be a night's rest of 12 hours, falling between 6 p.m. and 8 a.m.

The nightly rest period may be reduced for the purposes of passing through a lock; the time taken to count as overtime.

In case of urgent work, the nightly rest period may be reduced by two hours, which shall be paid for at overtime rate. Only highly perishable goods shall rank as urgent work.

There shall be no fresh departure on the day of arrival at the place of destination.

To permit of the place of destination being reached the same day, the journey may be continued beyond 8 p.m., but not beyond 10 p.m. In that case the following day is regarded as the day of arrival.

Crews of freighters and barges who consequently enjoy less than 12 hours of nightly rest shall be entitled to overtime pay for the forfeited part of the nightly rest period.

No fresh journey may be commenced after 2 p.m. on Saturdays or on Sundays and official holidays.

There shall be no navigation on official holidays.

If the place of destination can be reached before 12 o'clock noon on the first of consecutive holidays, the journey may be continued on that day, subject to the consent of the crew.

In port working hours shall not exceed 8½ from Monday to

Friday inclusive, between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m., nor 5½ hours on Saturdays between 7 a.m. and 2 p.m.

In cases where loading or unloading work or work connected with the ship must be performed on the day of arrival in a port, normal working hours, including sailing time and work in port, shall be 10 a day. For time worked beyond the 10 hour limit overtime shall be payable.

Board Watch

Crew members required to stay on board for watch duty on Saturday afternoon or on Sundays and holidays shall be given either adequate payment therefor or equivalent time off.

IV. DAYS OFF

The crews of all vessels shall have one day off a week. The crews of tugboats, steam freighters and motor freighters shall have their days off in the home port.

Crews of barges, tankers and motor tankers shall have not less than 12 days off in the home port in a year. If in the course of a year less than 12 days off have been given in the home port or its vicinity, the annual leave shall be extended by as many days as the number of days off given is short of the 12 which should have been given in the home port or its vicinity.

V. ANNUAL LEAVE

An annual leave with pay of not less than 12 working days shall be given, of which not less than 6 shall be consecutive.

VI. INTERNATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE

a. It is proposed that the wage of a fireman, at the rate of 325 Swiss francs, or the equivalent in the respective national currencies, be adopted as international minimum wage, in relation to which the wages of other ratings shall be fixed.

b. The wage rates in force in the different countries shall be paid to all members of the crew, irrespective of nationality or residence.

VII. HEAT ALLOWANCE

Engine-room personnel in steam-propelled vessels shall be paid an adequate extra allowance during the months of May to September inclusive.

VIII. OVERTIME

Time outside the normal hours of duty shall be paid at the following rates:

- a Overtime between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m.: not less than time and a quarter.
- b Overtime between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. and between 2 and 6 p.m. on Saturdays: not less than time and a half.
- c Overtime between 6 p.m. Saturday and 6 a.m. Monday: not less than double time.

The ordinary hourly rate is obtained by dividing the weekly wage by 48 or the monthly wage by 208.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON MAKING TRANSPORT WORK INTERNATIONALLY

By **SIR OSBORNE MANCE**

In the past the execution of works (for the improvement of transport and communications) internationally has been comparatively rare owing to the reluctance of States to forgo to the slightest extent the exercise of complete sovereign power over their own territory. The conferring of executive powers on any international body has always been resisted, and the political disputes arising from this cause in the technically essential international River Commissions between the two wars prevented the execution of major works of improvement.

Thus, the undertaking of international schemes for the improvement of transport and communications has been

discouraged by the nationalistic approach of the States . . .

In view of the internal difficulties in arriving at any national solution (of the problem of co-ordination), the most that can be hoped for is that States likely to be mutually affected will be prepared to agree on certain principles governing the co-ordination of different forms of transport . . .

Under present conditions [one of the conditions mentioned elsewhere by Sir Osborne Mance being the absence of any established technique for the co-ordination of the different forms of transport], any proposal for

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THE ORGANIZATION OF THE RAILWAYMEN IN BELGIUM

By **GUILLAUME DEVAUX**

General Secretary of the Railwaymen's Section of the Belgian General Public Services Union

Before the war a multitude of organizations calling themselves trade unions competed for the support of the 70,000 or so employees of the National Railway Corporation (*Société Nationale des Chemins de fer*). There were miniature unions with only a handful of members. Some unions supported the principle of sectional organization, and only accepted certain grades of employees.

There was, however, one large organization that had far more members than all the others put together. This was the National Union (*Syndicat National*), which organized, in addition to the railwaymen, the workers in the Post Office, telegraphs, telephones, State mercantile marine, State civil aviation and the National Broadcasting Institute, all of which came under the jurisdiction of one Minister.

The National Union, established in 1917 under the German occupation, was from the very start a great success. For many years it was the only union for the workers for which it catered, but this happy period unfortunately came to an end, and other organizations were founded, in particular the General Independent Federation of Officials and Clerks (*Fédération Générale Indépendante des Fonctionnaires et Employés*). The Christian Union, organizing the same group of employees as the National Union, was never more than a moderate success.

The Belgian National Railway Corporation was established in 1926. Before that the railways were run directly by the State. Article 13 of the Act of Parliament creating the Corporation provided for the setting up of a Joint Committee entrusted with the drafting of the Regulations governing the working conditions of the employees. It also drew up the Trade Union Regulation which provided for the setting up of a permanent National Joint Committee. "Recognized" trade unions are given representation on this Joint Committee in proportion to the number of paying members they may have. Any trade union can apply for representation provided that its membership is equal to one-tenth of the personnel of the Corporation.

The National Joint Committee is composed of twenty delegates, ten representing the employer and ten the recognized trade unions. The unions which applied for membership were the National Union, the General Independent Federation and the Christian Union. Representation was granted in the proportion of six members to the National Union, two to the General Independent Federation and two to the Christian Union.

The National Union was affiliated to the Belgian Trade Union Commission (*Commission Syndicale de Belgique*), which later became the Belgian General Confederation of Labour (*Confédération Générale du Travail de Belgique*),

and is now known as the General Federation of Labour (*Fédération Générale du Travail*). Its influence has been so great as to revolutionize the working conditions of railwaymen and other workers who come within the responsibility of the Minister of Transport and Communications. Nevertheless, in Belgium as elsewhere, the inter-war economic crisis adversely affected the material prosperity and influence of the trade union movement. On the eve of the second world war, however, the National Union still had something like 45,000 members, of whom over two-thirds were railwaymen. It continued its work until 10th May 1940, when the invasion of Belgium disorganized the whole of the life of the country, without excepting the trade union movement.

Towards the middle of June 1940 the General Manager of the National Railway Corporation gave the whole of the personnel the order to resume work. Most of the leaders of the trade unions were still in France, and it was only at about the beginning of August that most of them were able to return and resume contacts between each other and with the members of their unions.

The National Union owned real estate, and it was necessary to take steps to safeguard these and other assets. But the General Confederation was dissolved by Citizen de Man, of unhappy memory, and replaced by a new totalitarian organization which wore the name of Union of Manual and Intellectual Workers (*Union des Travailleurs Manuels et Intellectuels*, or U.T.M.I.).

In the beginning the trade unions were led to think that they would be able to continue their work without interference from the occupation authorities, but they were soon disillusioned. At the end of 1941 General Reeder, speaking for the occupation authorities, gave orders to the unions that they were to be inspired by and respect the principles underlying the U.T.M.I., which was not long in claiming the right to direct and administer all of them. Most of the leaders thereupon withdrew from their posts. The immense majority of the railwaymen, however, thought they had stayed too long. Those who had tried to accommodate themselves to the U.T.M.I. had lost the confidence of the masses.

Under the Law enacted to deal with persons who proved themselves bad citizens during the war, the U.T.M.I. is considered to have been a German organization as from 1st April 1942.

Towards the summer of 1941 the old leaders who had refused from the very beginning—even on the pretext of trying to save what there was to be saved—to be associated in any way with a trade union movement authorized by the occupying power, and which they could not regard as a free movement, formed an underground committee which laid the foundations of a great organization

covering all persons in the employ of the public authorities. It was divided into "sections" enjoying complete autonomy in so far as their trade demands were concerned, and was to be known as the General Public Services Union (*Syndicat Général des Services Publiques*).

A charter was drawn up and many thousands of copies were distributed throughout the country. Pamphlets and circulars informed workers in public employment that it was the intention to set up, after the liberation of the country, a renovated union from which all persons would be rigidly excluded who might have collaborated with the enemy or his tools in the country.

In addition to the General Public Services Union which, in so far as the railwaymen were concerned, included the old leaders of the National Union, there was started, also underground, a movement which bore the name of Trade Union Struggle Committees (*Comités de Lutte Syndicale*, or C.L.S.), and which aimed, according to declarations made at the time, to impress upon the workers the necessity of uniting in a single organization.

Liberation came, and the C.L.S., which associated themselves directly with the Communist Party, transformed themselves into *Syndicats Uniques* (industrial unions). Meetings were organized throughout the country, and thanks to widespread propaganda they succeeded in forming unions based on the principle of one union to each undertaking. These unions set themselves up against the General Public Services Union.

Representatives of the Railwaymen's Section of the General Public Services Union got into touch with representatives of the former General Independent Federation and they decided to amalgamate. The Independent Christian Union was also drawn into the amalgamation, together with two or three other little organizations which had led a more or less obscure existence before the war. As a result the General Union, which included the responsible leaders of both the old National Union and the General Independent Federation, had eight seats out of ten on the National Joint Committee.

After prolonged negotiations agreement was also reached with the leaders of the *Syndicats Uniques* movement, and they entered the amalgamation in 1945, the General Union and the *Syndicats Uniques* Groups becoming *Centrale Générale des Services Publiques* (again to be translated as "General Public Services Union").

This Union organizes, apart from the railwaymen, all workers in services run by the State, Provinces or Communes, or by concessionnaires of these authorities—in other words, the employees of all services and undertakings of a public nature. It has at present over 100,000 members. The Railwaymen's Section, which is far and away the most important in the Union, has about 50,000 members, out of a total of about 90,000 employed by the National Railway Corporation. It should be borne in mind that of these 90,000 some 20,000 are "temporary."

The Railwaymen's Section of the Public Services Union has secured substantial improvements in working conditions during the last two years. The relations between the trade union leaders and the directors of the

National Railway Corporation have undergone a remarkable evolution. Before the war they generally met as two adversaries: to-day the spirit is quite a different one. Up to now, at any rate, all matters raised by one or other of the parties are considered with a genuine desire to try to find a solution that will square with the interests of both of them.

It is worth mentioning that our organization has succeeded in securing the cancellation of certain glaringly dubious appointments that were made, during the occupation, by the man who was General Manager at the time. Citizen Rongvaux, the Minister of Communications, assisted in this cleansing operation in a manner worthy of every praise. The General Manager of the Railways and several of his immediate assistants were asked to resign. The Board of Directors was thanked for its services, and another took its place. Our organization has two delegates on this Board, one of whom is a member of the standing committee which manages the day to day affairs of the Corporation.

The cleansing process was carried on in a very active manner. Committees of enquiry were set up, in all districts, composed of a chairman and two assessors, one appointed by the Corporation and one by the recognized trade unions. All of these assessors were required to have a background of activity in the resistance movement. The committees enquired into over 4,000 cases, and severe penalties were imposed wherever a desire or endeavour to serve the occupying authorities was proved.

Among the material improvements in working conditions that have been secured, one which particularly deserves mention is the fact that manual workers, officials and clerical workers have now been placed upon a footing of equality in respect of payment of wages in case of sickness. The National Railway Corporation has instituted a "Social Service." Lack of space makes it impossible to go into the details of its purposes and powers. Suffice it to say that it is based on the principle of joint administration, and joint committees operate in each one of its subdivisions.

The year 1946 saw the issue of new wage scales for the personnel of the Belgian National Railway Corporation. In the principles underlying them they mark a veritable revolution, for they have swept away all the old distinctions and differences between officials, clerical employees and manual workers. In 1947 we are expecting to get a uniform holiday regulation which will give to all employees, irrespective of their grade, a fortnight's holiday a year.

The Railwaymen's Section of the Public Services Union enjoys a great deal of prestige, both with the authorities and the railwaymen. The task of increasing its membership is rendered somewhat difficult by the peculiar state of mind of the working classes brought about by four and a half years of an enemy occupation that was at times a nightmare. In spite of this the feeling prevails among the railwaymen that the Railwaymen's Section of the Public Services Union is the really representative organization of the Belgian railwaymen.

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 from an article entitled "New Trade Union Tasks", published in "Der Oeffentliche Dienst", the weekly of the Swiss Union of Public Servants.

It seems to us that the new conditions in which the British working class finds itself, as a result of the political revolution, call for a fundamentally new conception of the tasks of the trade unions. Today—and England is the example—it is more than a question of fighting for better living conditions for the working class within the framework of the present private capitalistic order of society, or, to put it more bluntly, for a somewhat larger share of the crumbs from the boss's table—it is rather a question of replacing the boss by a community of the people, of transforming the whole economic system. For, as "Daddy" Greulich has put it:

"The trade unions can win better living conditions for the workers: they cannot do more. The boss remains the boss."

Nowadays trade union tasks largely overlap with the political tasks of the working class: a clear-cut division between the two would no longer satisfy the requirements of the present times. A momentary relinquishment of claims to better living conditions, the subordination of the immediate aim to the interests of the future, amount in effect to taking a step backward to gain impetus for a further spring forward. The times make great demands on the discernment and ethical and moral perception of the working man—on his "categorical imperative", in other words. But this, precisely, is what is involved in socialism, it is an inseparable part of this humanitarian idea. The aim of socialism is not lotus-eating, but the conquest of freedom and human dignity, and with it—for it is inseparable—the dignity of labour. Our era, and the generations that live in it, are called upon to blaze the way, and for this the strengthening of the social conscience of the working class as a social vanguard is an indispensable condition. It is the duty of every socialist government to create the necessary material and psychological bases by pursuing a far-seeing and clear-sighted policy.

Our second quotation is from "Labor", the weekly of the workers in the railway industries of the U.S.A. The article is entitled "Is munitions making only road to prosperity?"

Harvey W. Brown, chief of the Machinists, one of the largest labor unions in the world, observed the following paragraph in "Barrons' National Business and Financial Weekly," which stands very high on Wall Street:

"An armament boom is the only ultimate major alternative now visible to a decline in business. Such an armament program in the long run appears inevitable if we don't want to commit national suicide, but it isn't in sight at present."

And Mr. Brown, in an editorial in the "Machinists' Journal," made this comment:

"In other words, financial and business experts are contending there can be no continuity of operation of our industries, and that abnormal unemployment cannot be avoided, unless we have periodical armament booms. If such is the fact, it is a terrible indictment against our economic system."

"But there is another way for our economy to operate without business depressions and periodical slaughtering and maiming of millions of men on battlefields."

"When wages or workers' earnings represent amounts that will enable the toilers to buy the products and services of industry, there will be steady employment for all."

"If organised greed again tailspins the nation into another business depression and we have a repetition of those dark days we experienced in the early thirties, it may mean the end of capitalism—which during World War II was, for obvious reasons, referred to as "free enterprise."

International Transport—continued

such international co-ordination of transport must be entirely speculative, but it may be useful to explore what might happen in the hypothetical case of closer political union.

As with other forms of transport, it will probably not be found practicable except under war conditions [for instance] for an international pipe line to be run jointly by an inter-governmental organization of sovereign States.

So long as the competing [transport] systems are situated in independent sovereign States, the only method available is that of mutual agreement, usually arrived at after hard bargaining, sometimes after ascertaining the relative competitive position as the result of a rate war.

It will have become clear that the problem of co-ordination of inland transport is not likely to be satisfactorily solved unless there is some measure of inter-

national agreement on the system to be adopted. There may be some advantage in the fact that no country has yet solved the problem nationally, as this may give an opportunity for its discussion before any country is irrevocably committed to a national policy.

It may be said that the ideal international co-ordination of transport only exists where international traffic passes in the way it would do if the whole of its journey was carried out in the same State.

Whether there is any half-way house between complete sovereign independence and complete political union is one of the fundamental questions before the world to-day, not only in transport matters, but more particularly in regard to collective security.

Selected from *International Road Transport, Postal, Electricity and Miscellaneous Questions*. (Oxford University Press, 1947).