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COMRADES, SIRS AND BROTHERS

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I.T.F. MEMBER organizations in the United States now number three, viz., The Seafarers' International Union of America, affiliated since 1941, and the Masters', Mates' and Pilots' Association and the Railway Labor Executives' Association, who joined in 1947.

It is not the intention to tell here how the affiliation of these three organizations came about. In the case of the two seafarers' organizations practical considerations of trade union strategy were certainly among the reasons for the decision to affiliate. In the case of the Railwaymen, the decisive motive was their desire to help fight against the dangers threatening free trade unions in certain parts of the world, and to help foster and strengthen transport workers' organizations in undeveloped countries. Once they had taken this step, they wished to make the personal acquaintance of at least some of the people they had associated with. Therefore, the Railway Labor Executives' Association—which in European parlance would be called a Railwaymen's Federation—invited the Railwaymen's Section of the I.T.F. to send a delegation on a visit to the U.S.A.

Leaders of European railwaymen's unions met their American colleagues in September last. Meetings were held in Washington, Cincinnati, Chicago, Detroit and Cleveland. Many speeches were made and numerous conversations took place with small groups.

The pattern of trade union organization on the two sides of the Atlantic is different. It has not always been as different as it is today. In the second half of the last century there prevailed on both sides the principle of organization by craft, but evolution in the two spheres diverged. In some European countries—e.g., Holland, Belgium, France, Austria and Sweden—all or nearly all the railway craft organizations gradually amalgamated into all-grades trade unions. In some other European countries—e.g., Great Britain, Denmark and Germany—though most railway crafts joined in all-grades trade unions, some of them, particularly locomotivemen and clerks, have to this day maintained their separate unions. In Norway the all-grades union started to absorb craft unions 55 years ago, and the process is still going on today.

There is one European country where the evolution is comparable to what happened in the U.S. That country is Switzerland, where all craft unions have been maintained. However, they form a Federation to whose executive bodies and officers all general powers and functions formerly exercised by the unions have been transferred. The stake each union and its members have in the Federation is so big that disaffiliation of a union from the Federation is unthinkable.

In the U.S., too, all railway craft unions have been maintained. Some Europeans thought—and perhaps even politely whispered—that twenty-two is a few too many. That view is shared by some Americans, for instance those who wish to amalgamate the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen. The U.S. railway craft unions, like those in Switzerland, form a Federation—they call it the “Railway Labor Executives’ Association”—, but with an important difference: the unions retain the whole of their powers and functions. They are independent. They can leave the Association—as two have done—without losing any of the essential means of carrying on their activities. The Association is an instrument for hammering out common policies and organizing common action. The field of common action embraces in particular relations with Government departments, legislators, and public institutions.

So much for the form of organization. What about the contents, the object, the philosophy? Are there any differences between European and American railway trade unions?

In answering this question, let us avoid the fallacy inherent in the word “European”. There are differences of aim and philosophy between the railway trade unions of the several European countries. They may be small between Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium, Austria and Switzerland, but they are substantial between these countries and France, Italy and Spain. They are bigger still between European continental countries and Great Britain.

The difference between most railway trade unions of Europe and those of America is certainly not so big as the difference between those of Great Britain and France. On both sides of the Atlantic, the railway trade unions aim to secure for their members the best possible working conditions. The difference between Europeans and Americans is one of attitude towards the railway undertaking and method of achieving their objects. In Europe, railways are generally nationalized. When negotiations between unions and management take place there is not the stark conflict between wages for the bees and profits for the drones. On both sides of the conference table sit public servants who have a common duty towards the community which has entrusted to them the running of a great public service. The trade unions have a direct interest in the prosperity of the undertaking and therefore must seek to have a say in its management. Management must be efficient and honest. Trade-union representatives in positions of authority can help to see that it is both.

The U.S. railways are privately owned and operated. There is no strategic urge to nationalize them as there was in the latter part of the 19th and early part of the 20th century in Europe. The country is so rich that the failures of private enterprise do not hurt so grievously that the Government is compelled to take over the railways, as is the case in Britain just now. Therefore the American railwayman and his trade-union spokesman are in a different, and one may say less complicated, position than their opposite numbers in Europe, and

consequently, adopt another attitude and use other methods. They can often strike a hard bargain and always must endeavour to do so, for that is the mandate of the negotiator at the opposite side of the table. One weapon they wield far more frequently than European railwaymen would think of doing is the strike ballot. The decision of the majority of the members of one or several trade unions to hand a strike notice to their employers, after the breakdown of the direct negotiations, sets in motion Government-controlled high-powered conciliation machinery provided for by law. If mediation results are found to be unacceptable the employers can lock out their workers or the workers can go on strike. But the sense of responsibility is so strong on both sides that a railway stoppage is a rare and nearly always a localized occurrence.

The European visitors in search of differences also touched, of course, on the subject of politics. They approached it with thoughts like these: “An industrial country without a Labour Party—what an astonishing thing! How can railway trade unions refrain from taking an interest in who governs the country and makes all the laws governing transport? Are they indifferent as to who frames the social legislation?”

Indeed, nearly all European trade unions are either affiliated with a Labour or Social-Democratic party or co-operate with it in other ways. France is the only exception. European railway trade unions see to it that some of their leading figures shall occupy a seat in Parliament. Not so the Americans. They leave the selecting of candidates for Congress to the machines of the two political parties. But once the parties have made their choice, the railway trade unions take a look at each candidate and decide for or against him. Many unlucky candidates in both parties have learned to their dismay what it means to be “punished” by the railwaymen. To win or lose their support means winning or losing the votes of many other electors as well. A congressman wins and keeps the support of the railway trade unions only by effectively championing their cause inside and outside of Congress.

The American railwaymen’s unions publish “Labor”, a militant weekly paper. Whoever wants to read it—be he railwayman or not—must pay a dollar yearly subscription fee. It has a circulation of 800,000 copies. Even when taking into consideration the numbers of the population and of the railway workers, this is an outstanding achievement. It can be safely said that the American railway trade unions are politically as influential as those of any other country in the world. And if a concrete proof is required one may point to the special social legislation applicable to the U.S. railway industry and its workers, which is in many respects ahead of that applicable to the other industries of the country.

As a rule European railwaymen’s trade unions are affiliated with their national trade union Federation. There are a few exceptions, but the rule and the exceptions also apply in the U.S. Most railway trade unions are affiliated with the American Federation of Labor—whose chief officials also met the European visitors—but those which are not are practically of the

same mind as the others in all matters affecting the trade union movement, exactly as in Europe.

Guests and hosts talked about international trade union affairs. The new members of the I.T.F. are no less keen than the old ones to help in the fulfilment of the I.T.F.'s task. Help must be brought to those who are struggling to maintain, stabilize and expand free trade unions of transport workers, independent of political parties and governments. Help must go to Germany and Austria, Spain and Greece, the Near, Middle and Far East. The I.T.F. must unite like-minded transport workers' trade unions and induce them to combine their efforts, particularly in Latin America and the West Indian islands. It must play its role in the I.L.O. and the transport bodies of the United Nations Economic and Social Council for the purpose of furthering the interests of the transport workers and promoting international co-operation in the economic field, with special reference to transport. Views were exchanged on the question of the association of the I.T.F. with the W.F.T.U., which is the subject of negotiations between the two organizations. Old and new members of the I.T.F. hold that the character and volume of its work necessitate and amply justify its autonomy. And both hold that pending the termination of the negotiations the I.T.F. must carry on with its work.

As the members of the European delegation progressed in their study of the forms, aims, methods, influence and mind of the American railwaymen's organizations, and American trade unions generally, their understanding deepened and their sympathy grew. Every day it became clearer that the American organizations were just as much as those in Europe an integral and highly effective part of the working class movement that promotes and drives the social progress of the world, that their prosperity is of importance to us all, and that their participation in the international trade-union work cannot be spared.

And when looking at a map of the U.S. showing the distribution of population and industry; when looking at the American scene with its skyscrapers and "unfinished" towns, its highway net and automobiles, its massive railway trains and tremendous civil aviation, its Negroes, Chinese and white descendants from all races of the Old World; when thinking of the history of a continent that was well-nigh empty three centuries ago and whose western half, barely a hundred years ago, was still so; when realizing that there has not been a

period comparable to Europe's Middle Ages or Renaissance, that the America of today was born in the industrial revolution and has grown faster than a plant in a hothouse; then one begins to think that things could not have been different from what they are, and that the trade union movement must be what it is. If there is anything to be wondered at it is the fact that American trade unions are so much akin to those of the Old World.

I will now explain the title of this article. The great majority of European trade-unionists address each other as "Comrade". In international relations they do so invariably. That is a tradition three quarters of a century old.

American trade unionists in their correspondence address each other as "Dear Sir and Brother". If they have ever used the word "Comrade" they have ceased to do so. Indeed everyone who uses it in the United States is considered to be a member of a "cell" organized to serve the purposes of a political organization that is intensely disliked by the overwhelming majority of Americans. Most members of the European delegation did not know that, but everyone of them would have been horrified at the thought of being taken for a member of the cell!

How many of our American friends know that in continental Europe the most astute defenders of shareholders' interests against trade union claims and trade union action begin their letters with the words "Monsieur et cher confrère", a literal translation of "Dear Sir and Brother"?

However, I wish to reassure Europeans that the Americans are not dogmatic in their avoidance of the word "Comrade". In the office of the Secretary of Labor in Washington there stands on the mantelpiece a photograph President Truman has dedicated in his own hand to his "Comrade" Schwelienbach.

This dissertation on the headline has a serious purpose. When a European trade-unionist wishes to express in few words that he holds a fellow trade-unionist in high esteem, that he feels friendship for him and wishes him well, then he praises him as a good comrade. The European railway trade unionists were glad to have made the acquaintance of their fellow leaders and officers of the American railwaymen's unions and the A.F. of L. They cherish happy memories of the generous and warmhearted hospitality and congenial company of their good comrades on the other side of the Atlantic.

EVERYTHING BIGGER, EVEN THE MEALS

From the windowed expanses of Chicago's huge Furniture Mart building, overlooking Lake Michigan's blue stretches, two British railway labour men, Arthur Barker and G. H. Benson peered toward Gary's distant smoke. In his crisp Yorkshireman's speech, Benson smilingly said, "This is such a vast country. There seems to be so much room for everybody."

That sentiment appeared to sway most of the thirteen European labour envoys who put Chicago on their American study and good-will itinerary. With a whimsical wit Robert Bratschi, general secretary of the Swiss

Railwaymen's Federation, pointed up the general feeling at the last evening's dinner.

Bratschi put it this way: "Here the houses are bigger; the meals are bigger; the waterfalls are bigger; and even the locomotives are bigger. But big as all these things are I am even more impressed at how much we and American railwaymen have in common. We have a sense of pride and a sense of being together, a unity that now expresses itself in the I.T.F."

From *The Railway Conductor* (U.S.A.), November, 1947.

HOW U.S. RAILWAYMEN ARE ORGANISED

Most railway trade unions in the U.S. are craft unions. Some of them, like the Brotherhood of Clerks and Freight Handlers, extend beyond the demarcation line of a craft and are semi-industrial or departmental unions. All attempts to create a fully fledged industrial union have been unsuccessful. The most noteworthy of them was that made by Eugene Debs towards the end of the last century.

The long-established unions which have nation-wide recognition by the vast majority of railwaymen, the railway companies, government departments and, last but not least, public opinion, call themselves "standard railroad labor organizations".

These standard organizations fall into four groups :

A. The transportation brotherhoods.

- (1) Order of Railway Conductors of America (Independent), Cedar Rapids.
- (2) Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (Independent), Cleveland.
- (3) Brotherhood of Locomotive Fireman and Engineers (Independent), Cleveland.
- (4) Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen (Independent) Cleveland.
- (5) Switchmen's Union of North America (A.F.L.), Buffalo. ("Switchmen" are known as "shunters" in many English-speaking countries.)

B. Other brotherhoods of railroad employees proper.

- (6) Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks, Freight Handlers, Express and Station Employees (A.F.L.), Cincinnati.
- (7) Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (A.F.L.), Chicago.
- (8) Order of Railroad Telegraphers (A.F.L.), St. Louis.
- (9) Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (A.F.L.), Detroit.
- (10) American Train Dispatchers' Association (Independent), H.Q. Chicago.
- (11) Railroad Yardmasters of America (A.F.L.), Chicago.

("Signalmen" are skilled mechanics and electro-mechanics in the railroad department responsible for maintenance, installation and repair of signals. The term "Telegraphers" includes signal operators).

C. The Railway Employees' Department of the American Federation of Labor, Chicago, a federation of railroad shopcraft organizations comprising :

- (12) International Association of Machinists (Independent), Washington.
- (13) International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders and Helpers of America (A.F.L.), Kansas City, Kansas.
- (14) International Brotherhood of Blacksmiths, Drop Forgers and Helpers (A.F.L.), Chicago.
- (15) Sheet Metal Workers' International Association (A.F.L.), Washington.

- (16) International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (A.F.L.), Washington.
- (17) Brotherhood of Railway Carmen of America (A.F.L.), Kansas City, Missouri.
- (18) International Brotherhood of Firemen and Oilers (A.F.L.), Chicago.

With the exception of the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, all these organizations have large memberships outside railway workshops. Railway membership, though substantial, may represent only one tenth of the total membership.

D. Organizations catering for men employed in railway-owned ships, docks and catering establishments.

- (19) National Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots (A.F.L.), New York.
- (20) National Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (C.I.O.), Washington.
- (21) International Longshoremen's Association (A.F.L.) New York.
- (22) Hotel and Restaurant Employees' International Alliance.

In this group only the Hotel and Restaurant Employees' Alliance has the bulk of its membership among railway employees, viz., dining-car staff.

The standard organizations have formed a joint body called the Railway Labor Executives' Association. The word 'executive' means here the chief official of the organization, generally the president. All the standard organizations, with the exception of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, belong to the R.L.E.A. The R.L.E.A. headquarters are in Washington, and its Executive Secretary is Mr. A. E. Lyon, Grand President of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (on leave of absence) to serve as full-time Secretary to the R.L.E.A., Harry W. Fraser, President of the Order of Railway Conductors, is Chairman of the R.L.E.A. and Fred N. Aten, President of the Railway Employees Department (group C above), Vice-Chairman.

A stable Europe is imperative for a stable world. An economically strong Europe is essential to the security of the Western Hemisphere. I hope that the United States will rise to the present occasion and devote the same energy to winning the peace as it devoted to winning the war. We must not let this opportunity of laying the foundations for a decent world society pass without utilizing it to the utmost. If we become guilty of this grievous error, historians of the future will record our hesitancy, our lack of understanding, and our indecisions as one of the most colossal blunders in the annals of mankind.

Secretary of State Marshall on 21 July.

THE AMERICAN RAILWAY UNIONS

By A. E. LYON

Executive Secretary of the Railway Labor Executives' Association

This article is intended, in what will necessarily be an incomplete and generalized manner, to provide some information concerning the structure, procedures and operating methods of the American railway labour organizations.

Perhaps at the outset attention should be called to the fact that nearly all of the unions to which we refer are composed of railway workers in both the United States of America and in the Dominion of Canada. The word "international" appears in the official names of many of these unions and is intended only to indicate this fact. A number of the unions, however, which do not describe themselves as international organizations in their official titles also represent all the railway workers of their classes or grades of service in Canada as well as in the United States.

The fact that the same labour organizations, with minor exceptions, represent workers in the two countries is an entirely natural development. The international boundary line is in many ways imaginary rather than real. The people of the two countries have much in common in addition to the important fact that they use the same language. Working people in the two countries, from almost the beginning of their efforts to establish effective trade unions, worked closely together, recognizing their common interests and needs and the value of having international unions representing their respective crafts, classes or groups.

Most of the twenty-two national or international American railway unions were formed forty or more years ago. Some of the oldest have been in existence for three-quarters of a century. Railwaymen engaged in the actual operation of trains were the first to successfully establish labour organizations. The obstacles they surmounted and the opposition they encountered from the owners and managers in the early days continued and were probably intensified in respect to the subsequent organizing by other groups of employees. The early history of all American railway unions is one of constant and determined struggle for survival and expansion to the point of effectively carrying out their objectives. It was not until about thirty years ago that trade union organization was established on a nation-wide basis for practically all major occupations in the railway industry. However, the three subsequent decades have not been without an enormous amount of organizing activity and constant effort to build and frequently re-build the strength and resources of most of the unions.

The Unions' Internal Structure. The typical American railway union can, I think, be described as consisting of three general levels—that is, its internal structure can be divided into three departments or divisions of operation. These divisions are, of course, well co-ordinated into the whole. At the bottom or at the base of the structure is

the local lodge or local union consisting of members employed at one point or on one operating division or sub-division of a railway company. Usually, but not always, these local lodges are formed of the employees of the one employer only. These local lodges are chartered by the parent body—the national or international organization which we generally call the "Grand Lodge." The Grand Lodge is, of course, the top level of the whole organizational structure. It consists in the typical case of a staff of elected officers, who in most cases devote their entire time to the work of the union, and of elected delegates to the regular conventions. The third level in the organizational structure, and a most important one, can be said to operate between the local unions and the Grand Lodge. On each railway line or system we generally have a "General Committee" which has its own officers and operating fund. This committee consists of all of the Local Chairmen, to which later reference will be made, from the various local lodges or from the various operating divisions or seniority districts of that particular railway system. It is the body which deals, on behalf of the union, with the top levels of railway management in all matters affecting the employment of the members of the union.

Local Unions. The typical railway union has a large number of local lodges or local unions. As an example, one relatively small organization with a total membership throughout the United States and Canada of about 15,000 members has about 200 local unions. A large organization, such as one having 200,000 or more members, will often have more than 1,000 local unions. There is a separate General Committee for each large railroad. But we also have many small railroads and terminals and in many cases one General Committee will represent the members on several lines or terminals.

Each local lodge has its own set of officers—a President or presiding officer, one or more Vice-Presidents, a Financial Secretary who handles all receipts and disbursements of funds, a Recording Secretary who keeps the minutes and handles correspondence except that involving finances, and such other officers as are customary for the orderly conduct of membership meetings. In addition each local lodge has one or more Local Grievance Committees. Usually there is one such committee for each operating division or seniority district under the jurisdiction of the local lodge. Such a committee typically consists of three or more members, with one person elected as Chairman, whom we always call a "Local Chairman." The Local Chairman's principal function is to handle, under direction of the local lodge, all matters involving the employment of the members with the lower levels of railway management. Most matters of controversy between employees and management are adjusted through conferences or correspondence

between the Local Chairman and railway officers, such as supervisors or superintendents, without having to be appealed to the higher levels of management. The Local Chairman is ordinarily considered to be a key man in the successful functioning of any organization. It is his duty to enforce, from the standpoint of the members of the union, the provisions of the written agreement covering wages and working conditions and to generally look after the welfare of all members in all matters where their employment is in any way concerned. He and his committee also usually take responsibility for seeing that new employees become members of the union and that the general condition of the organization on his territory is made known to the higher ranking officers, calling on them for advice and assistance when needed.

Each Local Chairman, by virtue of his office, is a member of the General Committee on that particular railway system. The principal function of the General Committee, in addition to exercising general supervision and administrative guidance to all activities of the union on that railway system, is to handle all matters, including the negotiation of new agreements, the revision of existing agreements, and grievances or complaints involving the application or interpretation of agreements, with the higher levels of railway management. The principal officer of a general committee is known as a General Chairman and he usually is a full-time officer of the union. In some cases he has one or more full-time assistants. In some instances the secretary-treasurer of the general committee is also a full-time man. The General Chairman is regarded as the principal representative of the union on the railway system involved and much depends upon his ability and devotion to the objectives of his organization.

Many organizations have associations of General Chairmen, formally organized, which hold periodic meetings and establish uniform policies and programmes on a nation-wide basis. On occasion when all or substantial groups of unions in the industry form joint and co-operative movements, as for a wage increase for example, it is found desirable to hold joint meetings and conferences of all General Chairmen of all the unions involved.

The National or International Organization. The "Grand Lodge" of the typical organization consists of the elected Grand Lodge officers and of the delegates elected by the local lodges to represent them at conventions. Between conventions authority is delegated to the officers, but with various checks and controls which are carefully stated in detail in the constitution of the organization. The Grand Lodge is the sovereign body of the organization—that is, the top level of authority, of administrative responsibility and of policy-making and policy execution. Usually an organization's Grand Lodge officers consist of a General President or Grand President (the chief executive officer); an Assistant President in some cases; a number of Vice-Presidents—some unions have as many as twelve or fifteen and some have as few as four or five; a general Secretary-Treasurer; and either a Grand Executive Board or a Board of Trustees. In addition to the elected officers there is usually a con-

siderable staff of appointed or employed representatives, such as organizers, field workers, etc., who work under the direction of either the President or of the Vice-Presidents. The Secretary-Treasurer may also have a staff in addition to that employed in his office headquarters, as he is usually the general auditor of the entire union and exercises general supervision over the accounting and fiscal affairs of all units.

Perhaps an explanation of our use of the word "grand" should be made. It probably was originally used to merely distinguish between local units and the general unit having supreme authority. The word was carried into the titles of the officers for the same purpose. The president of the local lodge or local union is only a president, but the president of the Grand Lodge is the Grand President. This title is not used for the purpose of indicating that an individual is a grand man—although, of course, all of them are—but to indicate the body or unit of which he is an officer. In all American trade unions the national or international president is not only the presiding officer but he is also, in every respect, the principal executive and administrative officer of the union. The general secretary-treasurer of the typical American union is primarily a fiscal officer. His office is extremely important and he participates in the making of general policy, but we always consider him subordinate, in a relative sense, to the president. The Grand Vice-Presidents are often assigned to geographical districts and they supervise and direct the organizing, collective bargaining, etc., in their districts under the general direction of the Grand President. Usually the members of the Board of Trustees (or it may be called an Executive Board or a Board of Directors) are not full-time officers of the union but are men who spend most of their time in active railway employment or as officers of a subordinate unit. In most organizations the Board of Trustees has to do only with financial affairs, and perhaps serves as an appeal body in the consideration of certain disputes within the organization. It is the common practice for an organization to have a Grand Executive Council, consisting of all the elective officers or of all the full-time officers of the Grand Lodge. Such a body usually has broad authority, between conventions, subject to the decisions previously made at conventions and to the provisions of the constitution, on all executive and judicial matters. Its decisions, of course, are subject to appeal at the following Grand Lodge convention.

Most of our organizations hold regular conventions each three or four years. Only a few meet biennially. The convention consists of delegates elected by and for the local lodges. In some cases each lodge has a specified representation and in others the number of delegates it elects is determined by the size of its membership. Some organizations accumulate a convention fund in the Grand Lodge which is used to pay the wages and expenses of the delegates while a convention is in session. In other cases each local union compensates its own delegates. A convention is the supreme authority on all questions. It writes or re-writes the constitution (the basic law of the organization); it determines all policy; it hears and decides all appeals from decisions made by the officers;

it elects the Grand Lodge officers ; it establishes the dues, fees and assessments paid by members with, of course, careful preservation of autonomous action within prescribed limits by local unions and system divisions or general committees. In a few cases certain actions of a convention must be ratified by a referendum vote of all members before becoming effective. This is an exception rather than the rule.

Democratic Principles Applied. It should be emphasized, perhaps, that all through the conduct of the affairs of our railway unions, from the meetings of our local unions up to and including the Grand Lodge conventions, great importance is attached to democratic and parliamentary procedures. Decisions are made by majority vote and much effort is given to having all qualified members participate and take an active and informed interest in the business of the union. Rulings and decisions of officers are subject to appeal, the final "court of appeal" being the Grand Lodge convention. There are provisions for the recall or removal of officers without waiting for the expiration of their terms of office. There are provisions for the initiation of any proposed change in basic policy or in the basic law at any time and such proposals, if given some substantial support, are submitted to a referendum vote without waiting for a convention. We place great emphasis on what is sometimes called the "democratic process," and we believe our railway unions, generally, rank high in the ideal of "government of, by and for" their members.

The Railway Labor Executives' Association. Although we have twenty-two railway unions having a national or international recognition or scope, and although each is an autonomous body, there are various means by which they consolidate, co-ordinate or closely unify their policies, programmes and activities. One such means is through the Railway Labor Executives' Association, with which twenty of the unions are identified. Two of the unions at the present time do not co-operate with the others through that Association. The Association consists, as its title indicates, of the chief executive officers of the participating unions. It is much more than a personal association of these individuals, however, as the governing bodies of all the organizations have authorized or directed that this form of co-operative activity be followed. The Association meets, usually in Washington, from six to ten times each year, and it may and does consider and take action upon almost every conceivable subject of interest or importance to the organizations or their members. In many important matters the twenty organizations, through the Association, act as a unit. This is true, of course, particularly in respect to our relations with the Federal Government and its many agencies that have to do with labour or transportation ; it applies to subjects of a legislative character, especially to pending proposals before the national Congress ; and it applies to the numerous issues always before us requiring the services of attorneys.

Co-ordination of the Unions' Activities. The Railway Labor Executives' Association, as such, does not act as a co-ordinated unit for the purpose of handling the frequent joint and concerted movements in the field of

collective bargaining. Such activities are generally carried on by co-operative groups or organizations especially formed for that purpose. For example, seventeen of the unions early in 1947 banded themselves together for the purpose of obtaining, on all railroads in the United States, a substantial increase in the wage rates of the employees they represent. The executives of these seventeen organizations formed a temporary organization of their own, with a chairman, a secretary and a treasurer. They and their organizations acted as a unit throughout the various stages of the proceeding, jointly employing attorneys, economists, etc., and pooling their talents and resources. As a result of this movement an arbitration award covering the vast majority of the railway mileage in the United States was secured, increasing all wage rates uniformly by 15½ cents per hour. This temporary federation of the seventeen unions is still operating for the purpose of obtaining similar adjustments on numerous small railways which were not parties to the industry-wide negotiations and arbitration.

The procedure above outlined has been followed in many instances in the past. At present the five organizations which represent employees engaged in engine, train and yard service—three of whom are identified with the Railway Labor Executives' Association and two of whom are not—are engaged in a joint and concerted movement to obtain a wage increase and to secure extensive revisions in their working conditions agreements.

It should be noted that the co-ordination and merging of many activities of the unions does not exist at the top level alone but that similar co-operation exists at the various subordinate levels within the organizations. On many railroads there are associations of General Chairmen—the General Chairmen of the various unions having banded themselves together for consultation and joint action in somewhat similar fashion to that followed by their chief executives. There are many areas of activity where joint and co-operative action is desirable and is practised. It is likely that an objective observer, thoroughly informed, would conclude that the American railway labour movement has retained the many and important advantages of having numerous autonomous unions, each jealously and aggressively striving to improve the welfare and living standards of its own segment of employees, and has developed through gradual processes various effective means of uniting and co-ordinating their mutually important interests and activities. It may be said that they have secured most of the advantages to be obtained by unification without sacrificing many things which they consider to be vitally important in preserving and enhancing their strength and spirit.

Machinery for the Settlement of Labour Disputes. It will probably be of interest if I describe in a general way the procedures that exist in the United States railway industry for the adjustment of disputes between men and management. The Railway Labour Act, the federal law that governs railway labour relations, is not something that was imposed on railway labour. On the contrary it was developed to a very large extent, with some co-operation from railway management, by the railway labour

organizations operating through the Railway Labor Executives' Association. The labour relations law that applies to other industrial workers in this country, including the very obnoxious Taft-Hartley law enacted by the 1947 session of our Congress, is not applicable to the railway industry.

Railway labour disputes, under existing practices and under provisions of the law, generally fall within two classifications, those involving the making or the revising of agreements covering wages, hours of service or working conditions, and those involving the application or interpretation of existing agreements. The law makes it the duty of railway management and of railway employees, each acting through their freely chosen representatives, to make and maintain agreements. The law provides methods under which a Federal Government agency, the National Mediation Board, resolves questions of representation of employees. If controversies arise over the representation of classes of employees this Board is authorized to conduct elections and to certify the expressed wish of the majority. Management is then required to bargain with the designated representative.

A dispute involving the making of a new agreement between a railway company and a union or the revision of an existing agreement is, of course, handled in conference and negotiations. If the two parties fail to resolve their differences it can be referred by either party to the National Mediation Board which, acting in the capacity of a conciliator or mediator, but without any power of decision, attempts to prevail upon the parties to find, or helps them to find, a mutual basis of agreement. If the Board's mediatory efforts fail, it attempts to prevail upon the parties to accept voluntary arbitration, and if both parties accede the further proceedings are conducted under specified procedure, with the Federal Government taking care of a portion of the expense. An arbitration award is final and binding, and it is filed with an appropriate court and is legally enforceable. If, on the other hand, arbitration is declined by either or both parties, and the dispute continues and it appears that it may result in a strike or lock-out that would threaten to deprive the public of essential transportation service, the National Mediation Board will call the situation to the attention of the President of the United States, and he may, at his discretion, appoint what is called an Emergency Board. These boards are created separately in each instance and they usually consist of three outstanding and public-spirited men. They make an investigation, principally consisting of public hearings, and make a written report to the President. Sometimes the members of these boards succeed in getting the parties to reach an agreement and dispose of the dispute before the report is made to the President. It is the theory of the law that the recommendations of such a Board, having the force of public opinion behind them, will be accepted and this is usually the case.

Disputes involving the application or interpretation of agreements generally originate from a complaint by the employees or by the union. Our agreements cover nearly every phase of employment and are probably the most detailed collective bargaining agreements in American

industry. We, therefore, have a tremendous number of disputes arising over claims that some rule has been improperly applied to the disadvantage of one or more employees. These disputes are first considered by local management and the Local Chairmen. Most of them are resolved at that point. If a dispute remains unsettled the local union or Local Chairman may refer it to the General Chairman for further handling with a higher level of management. Many are settled at that point. Some remain unsettled and the General Chairman is frequently given the advice and assistance of an officer or representative of the Grand Lodge of his organization. Further conferences with management will then ensue. Some cases, of course, remain in dispute after all these efforts, and the Railway Labour Act makes provision for their reference by either party to the National Railroad Adjustment Board. This board consists of equal representatives of railway management and the unions. It is a full-time operation, with four units or divisions, located in the City of Chicago, America's largest railroad centre. The railroads and the unions each pay the salaries of their representatives on the Board, but the Federal Government pays other expenses. If the regular members of a division of the board dead-lock in their consideration of any dispute, a neutral man, who is called a referee instead of an arbitrator, is appointed and he makes the decision. Decisions or awards of any division of the Board—the divisions operate independently of each other in the adjustment of disputes—are final and binding. The law makes provision for possible court action for enforcement if a railway company refuses to comply with an award involving a money payment. It is seldom that this provision is used. Some unions prefer to find their own means of enforcement if a railway management proves to be recalcitrant. It may be observed that the National Railroad Adjustment Board is an agency that administers a permanent system of arbitration or final adjudication of disputes over application or interpretation of existing agreements. It has successfully operated for about thirteen years and has disposed of many thousands of disputes during that period. Without such machinery it is likely that many of these disputes would have resulted in critical situations involving strikes or other serious disturbance.

The Railway Labour Act is frequently criticized by some elements in railway management, usually by those who apparently would prefer to go back to the methods of industrial strife. But on the whole it is considered by the American public as having been successful in establishing an orderly procedure with due regard for the rights of all concerned.

It is likely that interested observers in other countries find it difficult to understand or appreciate the reasons which have prompted or brought about the establishment of many of our practices and policies. It would help their understanding if they could become better acquainted with our people and with the great scope of our railway transportation system. We are confident that the members of the I.T.F. delegation who recently visited the United States made much progress in this direction and

(continued at foot of next page)

INSURANCE BENEFITS FOR AMERICAN RAILWAYMEN

By J. G. LUHRSEN

Member, Railroad Retirement Board

In the United States railroad employees, through the Railroad Retirement Act and the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act, have their own system of insurance benefits. The protection they enjoy is the most comprehensive and, in many respects, the most liberal in any insurance system in the country. Railroad workers are the only ones protected against all five of the major security hazards—old age, disability, death, unemployment, and sickness. The bulk of other workers engaged in commerce and industry are covered by the national Social Security Act and by the unemployment compensation laws of the several States. Under the former, insured workers may become eligible for monthly old-age benefits and their dependents for monthly or lump-sum death benefits; there is no provision for disability retirement. Under the latter, they may qualify for weekly unemployment benefits if they are able to work and are available for work, but in only two States are cash benefits payable if unemployment is due to sickness. Most of the employees of the Federal Government and about half of those of the State, county, and municipal governments and their subdivisions are covered by retirement systems which provide for old age and, usually, for disability retirement benefits. Generally, they provide also for death benefits, but these are of minor significance since they seldom take the form of monthly incomes. Civil servants are not eligible for unemployment benefits.

The old-age benefits paid to railroad employees, except in the case of some low-income or short-service workers, are more generous than those provided by the Social Security Act. The old-age and disability benefits, while not quite as liberal as those afforded Federal employees, compare quite favourably with those paid under the State, county and municipal retirement plans. Death benefits are the most liberal in the country, except for such special groups as policemen and firemen in the larger cities. In the field of unemployment benefits the railroad system ranks with the best of the State unemployment compensation laws, while in the field of cash sickness benefits it is almost alone.

The coverage of this comprehensive plan of insurance

The American Railway Unions—contd.

that they contributed much, in their contacts with officers and representatives of our railway unions, to giving us an understanding and appreciation of the fine character and aspirations of our fellow transport workers in other lands. It was a pleasure for us to do what we could, in the limited time available, to assist members of the delegation to obtain information about railway transportation and about railway labour in this country. As we learn more of each other we shall be better able to contribute to that common objective of all men of good will, the attainment of international peace and security.

extends to virtually all employees in the railroad industry, labourers and salaried persons alike, from the trackman and the station attendant to the railroad president. Likewise covered are employees and officials of traffic bureaus and other railroad associations, of the national railway labour organizations, and of numerous car-loan and other companies operated as part of the railroad industry. Street, inter-urban and suburban electric railways, however, are excluded.

Railroad workers do not have a separate Federally administered system of accident benefits. Compensation for most work-connected injuries comes under the jurisdiction of the Federal Employers' Liability Act, which covers employees engaged in interstate or foreign commerce. The alternative laws for intrastate employees are State employers' liability acts, State workmen's compensation acts, or the common law. In any event, these laws are administered apart from the Railroad Retirement and Unemployment Insurance Acts.

Historical Background. The existence of a separate, and generally more advanced, system of retirement, death, unemployment and sickness benefits for railroad workers, who are removed from the coverage of the Federal social security programme, is not accidental. It has a historical basis in certain important and special characteristics peculiar to the railroad industry and in the early recognition on the part of the railway labour organizations of the need for special legislation.

In the latter part of the last century, the problem of providing for the orderly retirement of workers was becoming a general one in American industrial life. The railroad industry, being one of the oldest in the country was the first to encounter this problem and experienced it in its most acute form. The situation was intensified by the reduction in railroad employment in the years following the first World War—a reduction that fell most heavily on the short-service, younger employees and therefore increased the proportion of older employees with long years of service. Contributing to this accumulation of older workers were the special labour requirements and employment practices in the industry. The specialized nature of railroad operations requires trained and experienced personnel, available for service and subject to call upon short notice. Because of this need, there early developed a seniority system by which rights to jobs, promotion to higher grade jobs, retention in service during periods of declining employment, and recall to service of furloughed workers are all based on length of service. This system, combined with relatively high wages in some occupations and generally good working conditions, provided a means of assuring the roads a stable and competent personnel. Also, by providing the older worker with some security of job and income, it encouraged continued and faithful service.

Even though the companies could ill afford, out of considerations of safety, to take chances with aged and infirm employees, they were naturally reluctant to cast them adrift. Such a procedure would arouse public ill-will and at the same time impede the ability of the railroads to acquire and keep the kind of personnel they needed.

The railroads attempted to solve the problem by means of private pension plans. Some were adopted as early as seventy years ago, and the idea began to spread rapidly after the turn of the century. By 1933, over 80 per cent of the railroad employees were covered, with the roads maintaining these systems employing 95 per cent of the total railroad labour force. With few or no exceptions these plans were non-contributory (the railroads paying all the costs), non-contractual (the carriers reserving the right to terminate or change them), non-funded (financed out of operating revenues with no reserves established for heavy future payments), and company-administered (the companies being the sole administrators).

The railroad pension plans had certain unavoidable limitations which prevented them from providing satisfactorily for all who had grown old in the industry. Many employees worked for companies with no pension provisions, or were not themselves covered by such provisions if they existed. Employees who were hired above a certain age limit, and those who had not reached the required retirement age when no longer able to work, were deprived of pension rights. Pensions were based on continuous employment with one road or one system, and those who had less than the proper amount of continuous service were likewise excluded. In spite of the seniority system, breaks in service were frequent. As a result of these factors, more than one-third of all employees past age 70 (the usual retirement age under the pension plans) who, from 1929 to 1932, were separated from service by all railroads, received no pensions. The amounts of individual pensions, finally, varied greatly. While some were relatively liberal, others were very low. For large numbers of employees they were inadequate to provide a satisfactory level of security after retirement.

The railroad pension plans were controlled by the companies and contained no provisions guaranteeing that pensions would not be reduced or discontinued. As the system grew older payments became relatively heavier. Since costs were financed on a pay-as-you-go basis, and no funds had been established to provide for these costs, it became less and less likely that the railroads would be able to continue to make payments indefinitely without reduction. During the depression of the 1930's they became less liberal in granting pensions, at the same time that long lay-offs decreased the number eligible under the terms of the systems. As a result, the number of retirements on pension tended to decrease during the depression and to be confined mainly to persons retired for disability. Although, with the exception of one or two very small companies, none of the carriers suspended pension payments, the great majority of them reduced payments or revised the formulas by which they were calculated, to produce lower amounts. The most common reduction was 10 per cent to correspond to the

10 per cent cut in wages adopted in 1932, but reductions on certain carriers were as much as 50 per cent. In order to reduce payments, employees were sometimes allowed to remain in service after age 70, in spite of compulsory retirement rules.

The railroad brotherhoods attempted to meet, at least partially, the problems of the older and disabled members by adopting various types of insurance and pension plans. These plans, some of them instituted as many as fifty years ago or more, included homes for the aged and disabled; death and disability benefits as a form of fraternal insurance; lump-sum payments at age 70; and straight-life, endowment and disability policies. Several also instituted pension plans, but these plans failed during the depression. They had not been based on careful actuarial estimates of the real cost of pensions, and the premiums were not sufficiently large to pay the scale of benefits promised. On the whole the trade union pension plans, even combined with their other insurance schemes, at no time covered a sizable proportion of the workers in the industry, and did not offer the solution to the retirement problem.

Beginning in the early twenties the railroad labour organizations and rank-and-file workers were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the operation of the employer pension plans, and a strong movement to secure a more comprehensive and adequate national retirement system developed. The issue was brought to a head during the depression, when several rank-and-file groups, in 1931 and 1932, secured the introduction of retirement bills in the Federal Congress. The Railway Labour Executives' Association, in the meantime, was discussing the feasibility of a national retirement insurance plan as early as 1929 and requested legislation to that effect at wage conferences in 1931. The Association had already appointed in 1930 a sub-committee which studied the problem and in 1932 secured the introduction in Congress of a bill embodying the views of the standard railway labour organizations. This was eventually enacted as the Railroad Retirement Act of 1934.

Just as in the case of retirement, so in the case of unemployment, there were basic reasons for the establishment of a separate system for railroad workers. In April 1930, near the beginning of the depression, about 115,000 railroad men were unemployed. In November 1937, about 250,000 were either totally unemployed or employed only on emergency relief work. About 100,000 more were only partially employed. In one of the earlier moves to aid the unemployed railroad workers, the Railway Labor Executives' Association, in 1933, adopted as part of its legislative programme a proposal to enact a Federal law requiring railroads to create pay-roll reserves earmarked for the purpose of stabilizing employment and paying wages to the unemployed. During the next few years, several governmental agencies proposed the creation of a Federal system of contributory unemployment insurance for the railroad industry. The Social Security Act, however, enacted in 1935, did not provide for such a separate system and the State unemployment compensation laws subsequently adopted included railroad employees in their coverage.

Experience under the State laws soon demonstrated the desirability of a separate and uniform national system of unemployment insurance for railroad workers. Labour relations in the industry are not conducted on a localized basis. Wages, hours, and working conditions are established through agreements which cut across State lines. Moreover, there is normally a considerable amount of transfer of employees among the States. Because of these special characteristics of railroad employment, and because the unemployment insurance laws of the several States were far from uniform, the railroad workers found that benefits for unemployment were greatly affected by the location of their jobs. Workers doing similar work for the same employer but residing in different States often received widely different amounts of benefits for the same amount of unemployment. Some discovered that they were eligible for benefits in more than one State; others that the peculiarities of the coverage provisions prevented them from obtaining benefits in any State. The Railway Labor Executives' Association continued, therefore, to press for a separate national system divorced from the State laws. Its efforts finally met with success when the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act was enacted in 1938.

The Railroad Retirement and Unemployment Insurance Acts underwent many changes after they were first adopted in 1934 and 1938 respectively. The former, indeed, was declared unconstitutional before it could be put into operation, on the grounds that it deprived the railroads of property without due process of law and that it was not a legitimate exercise of the commerce power of Congress within the meaning of the Constitution. Almost immediately a new plan was brought forward to answer these and other objections of the Supreme Court. The plan was adopted as the Railroad Retirement Act of 1935, but its constitutionality was again challenged by the railroads. The initiative in reconciling the opposing forces was taken by President Roosevelt who, in 1937, called a conference of representatives of the railway labour organizations and the railroads. The result was a set of recommendations, acceptable to both sides, which was later adopted by Congress as the Railroad Retirement Act of 1937. The agreement to this day represents the only instance in the United States in which labour and management co-operated in arriving at a specific retirement plan to be made compulsory for an industry through legislation.

The Railroad Retirement Act of 1937, which was an improvement over the two preceding laws, and the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act of 1938 as well, were further revised and liberalized in subsequent years. The most far-reaching amendments to both laws were those enacted in 1946, after a five year campaign on the part of the Railway Labor Executives' Association, to round out the railroad insurance programme and to eliminate many of the weaknesses of the existing laws that experience had brought to light. It was these amendments, for example, that introduced monthly death benefits to dependents and benefits for unemployment due to sickness, including maternity. It is since the enactment of these same amendments that railroad labour has had the

most advanced and comprehensive insurance programme in the country. To the details of this programme we will now turn our attention.

Benefit Programmes

Old-Age and Disability Retirement Benefits. A monthly lifetime retirement annuity is payable to an employee if he has stopped all work for wages, whether for a covered or non-covered employer (the law does not compel retirement at any age, although employers may), and if he is:

- (1) 65 years of age or over.
- (2) 60 years of age or over and has completed 30 years of service.
- (3) 60 years of age or over, is still connected with the railroad industry, and is permanently disabled for work in his regular occupation (generally his major occupation during the preceding five years).
- (4) Less than 60 years of age, is still connected with the railroad industry, is permanently disabled for work in his regular occupation, and has completed 20 years of service.
- (5) 60 years of age and is permanently disabled for work in any regular gainful employment.
- (6) Less than 60 years of age, is permanently disabled for work in any regular gainful employment, and has completed 10 years of service.

Payment is suspended if the annuitant returns to covered employment or to employment with the last non-covered employer for whom he worked before retirement, or if, in the case of disability retirement, he recovers from disability.

The amount of annuity is calculated by multiplying the number of years of service by the sum of 2 per cent of the first \$50 of the average monthly compensation, 1½ per cent of the next \$100, and 1 per cent of the next \$150. Thus, an employee retiring after thirty years of service at an average compensation of \$160 a month would receive an annuity of \$78 a month (2 per cent of \$50 or \$1.00, plus 1½ per cent of \$100 or \$1.50, plus 1 per cent of \$10 or \$.10, the total multiplied by 30).

The method is applicable to any one of the six types of retirement annuity described above, regardless of the age at retirement, except that, in the case of type 2, the result is reduced by 1/180 for each month the employee is under age 65 on the date his annuity is to begin. Thus, at age 60 (sixty months before the attainment of age 65) there is a maximum reduction of 60/180 or 1/3 of the full annuity. The reduction is not made, however, in the case of women. In the case of low earnings or short service, a different formula may be used, provided that the employee is still connected with the railroad industry and has at least five years of service. This formula provides a minimum annuity of \$50 or, if the employee had less than seventeen years of service, \$3 multiplied by the number of years of service. The minimum amount is subject to the usual reduction if it is applied to an annuity of type 2 payable to a male employee.

For the purpose of calculating the annuity, a year of service is any twelve months of service, whether or not consecutive, and regardless of the number of employers involved. A month of service, in turn, is a month in which the employee worked in the railroad industry, even if for as little as a single day. Under certain conditions, months in which the employee was in military service may be counted. All service beginning with 1937 (the year in

which retirement taxes first became payable) and ending with the year in which the employee attained age 65 is credited. If the employee had an employment status on August 29, 1935, service before 1937 is added, but only so much of it as would give a maximum of thirty years. The average monthly compensation used in calculating the annuity is the average obtained by dividing the total compensation, exclusive of amounts in excess of \$300 in any one month, by the number of months included in the years of service. To simplify the examination of old records, the average for the years 1924/31 is assumed to be the amount earned in each month of service before 1937. For each month of creditable military service, the employee is credited with \$160.

In addition to the retirement annuities described above, the Board also pays monthly benefits, called pensions, to former railroad workers who were on the private pension rolls of the employers on July 1st, 1937, and who, on that date, were not eligible to receive retirement annuities. The monthly payments are equal to the amounts originally granted by the employers—up to a maximum of \$120—with any reduction made after 1930 restored.

Death Benefits. The following benefits are payable to the survivors of an employee who died completely insured :

- (1) A monthly annuity to the widow, beginning at age 65 (or immediately if she is already 65 years of age or over), and payable for life, as long as she does not remarry.
- (2) A monthly annuity to the widow regardless of her age, payable as long as she does not remarry and has in her care dependent, unmarried, children of the employee who are under 18 and who were dependent on the employee at the time of his death.
- (3) A monthly annuity to each unmarried child who was dependent on the employee at the time of his death, as long as the child remains unmarried and is under age 18 (except that no annuity will be paid after age 16 if he is not at school although attendance is feasible).
- (4) A monthly annuity to each dependent parent beginning at age 65 (or immediately if the parent is already 65 years of age or over) and payable for life as long as he does not marry. A parent's annuity is payable only if the employee leaves no widow or dependent, unmarried, children under age 18.
- (5) A lump-sum death benefit payable to the widow, children, parents, or payers of the funeral expenses (in that order of precedence), if the employee leaves no survivor entitled to an immediate monthly annuity. The payment of a lump-sum death benefit to a widow or parent does not affect the subsequent payment of a monthly annuity to the same survivor when that person reaches age 65.

If an employee died partially, but not completely, insured, only the benefits described in (2), (3) and (5) may be payable.

Roughly speaking, an employee was completely insured at death if he was still connected with the railroad industry and if he had worked after 1936, in either railroad or social security employment, (a) for ten years, or (b) for a period equivalent to one-half the time after 1936 or his attainment of age 21, whichever was later, and before his death, retirement or attainment of age 65, whichever was earliest. He is also considered to have died completely insured if he was receiving a retirement annuity* for which he had become eligible before 1948 or if he was receiving a pension. An employee is considered to have been partially insured at death if he was connected with the railroad industry and had worked at least one-half the time in the three preceding years.

* Based on at least ten years of service.

The amount of the survivor benefits paid on the death of an employee who was completely or partially insured depends on the employee's basic amount, which in turn depends on his average monthly remuneration. To determine his average monthly remuneration, the aggregate amount, up to \$3,000 in any one year, of his combined earnings in railroad and social security employment after 1936 or the year of attainment of age 22, whichever was later, and before the quarter of death or retirement, whichever was earlier, is divided by the number of months in that period, including months in which he did not work. The basic amount is equal to 40 per cent of the first \$75 of the average monthly remuneration, plus 10 per cent of the next \$175, with 1 per cent added to the sum for each year after 1936 in which the employee's combined railroad and Social Security earnings were \$200 or more. The basic amount is not permitted to fall below \$10. If the employee was completely insured only by virtue of having been an annuitant or a pensioner, the basic amount is calculated in an analogous manner from the average monthly compensation on which the retirement annuity or the pension was based.

Where a widow's annuity is payable, it is equal to three-quarters of the employee's basic amount; where a child's or parent's annuity is payable, it is equal to half of the basic amount. The lump-sum death benefit is equal to eight times the basic amount, but may not exceed the amount of the funeral expenses where the payer of these expenses is to be reimbursed. If the total of all monthly annuities paid on the death of an employee is more than \$20, and also exceeds the least of the following three amounts: \$120, or twice the basic amount, or 80 per cent of the average monthly remuneration, it is reduced to that least amount but not below \$20. At the lower extreme, if the total of all monthly annuities is less than \$10, it is raised to \$10.

Monthly death benefits are not paid for any month in which the survivor works in covered railroad employment, regardless of earnings, or in social security employment at wages of at least \$25. Moreover, they are reduced by the amount of any retirement benefits to which the survivors may be eligible in their own right as employees.

Survivors of employees who had lost their connection with the railroad industry by the time they died look to the Social Security Act for death benefits. The latter are also based on combined railroad and social security earnings, but are computed on the basis of a somewhat less liberal formula than the one in the Railroad Retirement Act.

Unemployment Benefits. Benefits are payable to any qualified employee :

- (1) For each day of unemployment in excess of 7 in the first 14-day registration period in a benefit year in which he has 7 or more days of unemployment.
- (2) For each day of unemployment in excess of 4 in any subsequent registration period in the same benefit year.

A benefit year begins on July 1st, and a qualified employee is one who has earned at least \$150 in the calendar year (called the base year) preceding the beginning of his benefit year.

Benefits vary from \$1.75 a day, where the base year

compensation was as low as \$150, to \$5.00 a day, where it was as high as \$2,500. Benefits may be paid for a total of 130 compensable days in a single benefit year, which means, for a continuous spell of unemployment, that benefits may be paid for twenty-six weeks after the first week of unemployment.

An employee must be able to work and be available for work and must register with a claim agent (a designated railroad official) or at a Board office. He may be disqualified for thirty days for leaving work voluntarily without good cause, or failing to accept or apply for suitable work; for seventy-five days for making any false or fraudulent statement or claim to cause payment of benefits; and for any day on which his unemployment is due to a strike called in violation of the Railway Labour Act, or for which he receives other social insurance benefits under a State or Federal law. There is no disqualification if benefits are received under a non-government plan of unemployment benefits.

The Railroad Retirement Board operates a free national employment service as an adjunct to the unemployment benefit programme. The purpose of this service is primarily to promote the re-employment of unemployed railroad workers by referring them to available job openings; it thus serves to reduce the number of unemployment benefits that would otherwise be payable.

Sickness Benefits. Benefits are payable to any qualified employee:

- (1) For each day of sickness in excess of 7 in the first 14-day registration period in a benefit year in which he has 7 or more days of sickness.
- (2) For each day of sickness in excess of 4 in any subsequent 14-day registration period in the same benefit year.

A day of sickness is a day on which, because of any illness or injury, physical or mental, the employee is not able to work, and with respect to which he receives no earned income and for which a doctor's statement of sickness is filed. For the purpose of computing benefits, days of sickness cannot be combined in the same registration period with days of unemployment. Benefit rates, maximum duration of benefits, and the qualifying condition are the same for sickness benefits as for unemployment. Again, there is no disqualification if benefits are received under a non-government plan of sickness benefits.

Benefits are payable to any qualified female employee for each day of sickness in a maternity period. The daily benefit rate is the same as for unemployment and the regular sickness benefits, except that the benefits for the first fourteen days of the maternity period and for the first fourteen days following the birth of the child are payable at one and one-half times the normal rates. The maternity period is the period which begins fifty-seven days before the expected date of birth of the employee's child and ends with the 115th day thereafter. The benefits are not affected by the receipt of benefits under a non-government maternity plan.

Benefits Paid. On September 30th, 1947, the Board was making payments to 255,200 persons on the monthly benefit rolls, as follows:

	Number	Average benefit
Retired employees	190,400	\$70.79
Former carrier pensioners	13,000	59.41
Widows	41,400	29.54
Children	10,300	16.44
Parents	100	18.24

During that month, it awarded 1,400 lump-sum death benefits at an average of \$311. In September, also, the Board paid 80,700 unemployment and 53,000 sickness (including maternity) benefits, each representing payments for two-week registration periods and averaging \$28.73 and \$39.11 respectively.

Financing the Programme. The retirement and death benefits provided by the Railroad Retirement Act are financed by means of a pay-roll tax levied equally on employers and employees. The tax paid by each is at present 5½ per cent of earnings (up to \$300 a month); it will rise to 6 per cent in 1949 and to a maximum of 6¼ per cent in 1952. The system is operated on a full actuarial-reserve basis. Taxes thus far have been considerably higher than benefit payments, with the result that a sizeable reserve has been accumulated. In time, benefit payments will exceed taxes, but the interest on the reserve will by then make up the difference. The unemployment and sickness (including maternity) benefits are financed by means of a 3 per cent pay-roll tax levied on employers alone.

The Railroad Retirement Board. The Railroad Retirement and Unemployment Insurance Acts are administered by the Railroad Retirement Board, an independent agency of the Federal government, functioning outside of the regular Cabinet departments. The Board itself consists of three persons appointed, for five year terms, by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate. One, the chairman, represents the general public; a second is appointed from among recommendations submitted to the President by railroad labour (in practice, the Railway Labor Executives' Association); the third is appointed from among recommendations by railroad management (in practice, the Association of American Railroads). This type of labour-management-public administration makes the Board unique among Federal agencies.

The Board maintains its central headquarters in Chicago, Illinois, and has approximately 100 regional, district and field offices throughout the country. Its total staff numbers 2,800, of whom 1,700 are part of the headquarters staff, 1,100 of the field staff. The retirement and death benefit programmes occupy about 53 per cent of the personnel time, the unemployment and sickness benefit programmes and the employment service the remainder. Employees of the Board are civil servants and are recruited on the basis of competitive civil service examinations. Preference is given, and here, too, the agency is unique, to persons who have had railroad experience; more than 400 employees are former railroad workers. The number of employees hired, the salaries paid, the general administrative expenses, are all scrutinized and controlled by Congress, the Bureau of the Budget, and the General Accounting Office, just as are those of other Federal agencies and departments.

RAILROAD SIGNALMEN IN THE U.S.A.

By **JESSE CLARKE**

Grand President of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen of America

Signalmen on the American Railroads are those engaged in the work of construction, installation, inspection, testing, maintenance and repair of a wide variety of railroad signal and interlocking systems and devices, including all types of signals, centralized traffic control systems, car retarder systems in classification yards, automatic warnings of various kinds at highway-railroad grade crossings, automatic train control and stopping devices on the road bed and all types of interlocking equipment.

Employees performing signal work are divided into several classifications, namely: Inspectors, Foremen, Leading Signalmen and Leading Signal Maintainers, Signalmen and Signal Maintainers, Assistant Signalmen and Assistant Signal Maintainers, and Helpers.

Men generally do not have any special vocational training before obtaining a job in the signal department on a railroad. Ordinarily, the railroad selects, from among the applicants for a position in the signal department, those who have a high school education and are between the ages of 18 to 20. New employees are assigned to fill helper vacancies and are promoted in accordance with seniority and ability, as vacancies occur, to Assistant Signalman or Assistant Signal Maintainer, Foreman and Inspector positions generally, in the order named. It should be understood that Assistant Signalmen and Assistant Signal Maintainers are in the same classification and that they are the craft apprentices. The term Assistant Signal Maintainer denotes that the man is assigned to maintenance. This is also true with respect to the classification Leading Signalman-Leading Signal Maintainer and Signalman-Signal Maintainer.

The railroad usually has a period of time, varying with individual agreements from thirty to ninety days, during which the Supervisor may learn whether an employee hired as Helper is willing to apply himself to the work. If he fails to apply himself in a satisfactory manner he may be dismissed from service. If he is continued past the probationary period of time he is promoted, in accordance with his seniority, to fill a vacancy in the Assistant class, after which he will have a period of ninety days to show sufficient aptitude to learn the work. If he fails he is either dismissed or demoted to the Helper class, according to the provision in the local agreement. If he shows sufficient aptitude, he is considered to be in training for a position of Signalman or Maintainer, working with and under the direction of a Signalman or Maintainer for a period of four years. Provisions are made in agreements that a man may be promoted to the Signalman-Maintainer class prior to completion of his four year training period provided he qualifies for such position in less than four years. Here again, seniority and ability are the controlling factors. Some agreements provide for

promotion in seniority order, with a definite time limit within which to qualify. Others provide that where the qualifications of a man are questioned he will be given a reasonable working examination, which is agreed on between the General Chairman and the Management. This, however, is the exception rather than the rule.

Many agreements to-day limit the number of Assistants in training for higher rated positions. The ratio of Assistants to Signalmen vary in the different agreements, but is generally one Assistant to each three Signalmen or Maintainers employed.

In order that Assistants may become fully qualified, provisions are made for Assistants who have not completed their four years of training to be placed in positions where they will receive proper training and experience to qualify for positions of Signalmen or Signal Maintainers. Such Assistants are subject to transfer, by special written agreement between the General Chairman and the Management, to other positions in the Assistant class, without regard to seniority and without the necessity of bulletining such positions, in order that they may secure knowledge and training in all branches of the work. Not more than one such transfer is made in any six months. An Assistant who has completed his four years training period is not subject to such transfers. All new positions or vacancies must be bulletined. There are no provisions in agreements which allow the management to hire new employees for new positions or vacancies before giving men working an opportunity to make application for a new position or a vacancy.

Eight consecutive hours—exclusive of the meal period, which is not less than thirty minutes nor more than one hour where one shift is employed, or including the meal period, usually twenty minutes, where more than one shift is employed—constitutes a day's work.

Except by agreement with the union neither the hours per day (eight) nor the days per week (six) may be reduced to avoid making force reductions. The observance of the seven recognized holidays is not considered as reducing the number of hours per day or week.

Service in excess of an employee's regular assigned hours is paid for at time and one half rate, with double time in many instances for service in excess of 16 hours in a 24-hour period. Employees notified or called to perform service outside their assigned bulletined hours, or on Sundays or holidays, are paid a minimum allowance of 2 hours 40 minutes at the time and one half rate.

Monthly rated employees are paid on the basis of eight hours at straight time rate for each day in the year, which is 243½ hours per month, or of eight hours at straight time rate for each day with four additional hours on Sundays and holidays, which makes 263 hours per month, depending upon local agreements.

Wage rates for signal department employees vary as between railroads and different sections of the country, and are reasonably well represented by the following minima and maxima :

Foremen, monthly rated	\$347.00 to \$410.00
hourly rated	1.48 to 1.69
Signal Inspector : Rates range about the same as those of Foreman.	
Leading Signalman and Leading Signal Maintainers (per hour)	\$1.43 to 1.53
Signalmen and Signal Maintainers :	
monthly rated	\$335.00 to \$376.00
hourly rated	1.48 to 1.73

Assistant Signalmen and Assistant Signal Maintainers are paid on a graduated scale based on the length of service in the classification, beginning with two cents per hour above the Helper rate and increasing each six monthly period until they have served their four year apprentice training period. Their rates are from \$1.13 to \$1.31 per hour.

Actual annual earnings of the above group are very well represented in the following, which should be understood not to include any overtime :

Foremen—Inspector group :	
monthly rated	\$4,164.00 to \$4,920.00
hourly rated	3,625.00 to 4,137.00
Leading Signalmen, Leading Signal Maintainers	\$3,500.00 to \$4,137.00
Signalmen and Signal Maintainers :	
monthly rated	\$4,020.00 to \$4,512.00
hourly rated	\$3,378.00 to 4,235.00
Assistants	\$2,766.00 to \$3,206.00
Helpers	\$2,741.00 to \$2,815.00

There is a deduction of 5 1/2 per cent from each employee's salary, on monthly earnings up to \$300.00 in any month, for Railroad Retirement.

Federal income tax deductions vary according to the number of dependents and amount of annual earnings, and range from zero to approximately 17 per cent.

While the annual earnings of Signal Department employees are fairly reasonable, they barely reach the figure of what is considered necessary for an adequate standard of living.

A majority of the Signal Department employees on our American railroads are living in urban communities. Most of these live in small cottages and apartments which have modern conveniences. There are also a goodly number who live in small communities and towns. Usually they own their own homes, which are average to any working class of people in the community. They generally have all modern conveniences and are active in the civic affairs of their localities.

A few railroads have some isolated sections of railroad where living conditions are not so good. In these instances the railroad furnishes living quarters and, needless to say, living conditions under these circumstances are not too good. It is to be understood, however, that there are exceptions to this, though they are few.

The territory assigned to a Maintainer varies in length according to the amount of equipment to be maintained, the density of traffic and the importance of the trains. There are very few territories which exceed fifty miles in length except on branch lines or where traffic is very light.

An average would be about fifteen miles for a territory where only a Maintainer is assigned and thirty miles for a territory where a Maintainer and an Assistant are assigned.

Track motor cars of the inspection type, weighing from 400 to 650 pounds, are generally used as a means of transportation over a Maintainer's territory. Quite a few of these cars are equipped with windshields, tops, spring cushions and dependable head and tail lights. Concerted effort is being made to have all cars so equipped. There is a tendency on the part of some railroads to use light trucks or automobiles where highways are accessible to the railroad.

Prior to 1937 very little attention was given to any regular schedule of installation, maintenance and inspection of signal equipment. The Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen was able to have a Bill introduced in Congress and, with the co-operation of other standard railroad Brotherhoods, was successful, despite the tremendous amount of opposition from the railroad managements, in getting Congress to pass an Act to require certain common carriers by railroad to install and maintain certain appliances, methods, and systems intended to promote safety of employees and travellers on railroads. This Act clothed the Interstate Commerce Commission with authority, if found necessary to the public interest, to order any carrier, within a time specified in the order, to install signalling, interlocking or other systems intended to promote the safety of railroad operation, and further authority to set the rules, standards and instructions for installation, maintenance inspection and repair of signalling and interlocking systems and safety devices. No carrier may now remove from service or materially modify signalling or safety systems which were in service prior to the Act, nor those installed thereafter, except approval be granted by the Interstate Commerce Commission. The Commission has a staff of Inspectors who make regular inspections of signal equipment and all accidents occurring on the railroads. They report any violations of the Commission orders issued to the railroads and make recommendations in accordance with their findings. The Commission has authority to order any corrections to be made by the railroads within a prescribed time, or impose a fine for refusal to carry out such instructions.

There are approximately 15,000 men, of all classifications covered by agreements, performing signal work on the railroads. Approximately 14,000 of these are members of the Brotherhood. The Brotherhood has approximately 130 agreements in effect and holds agreements on all the Class I railroads and all others where signalling is used except a very few who do not employ more than a mere handful of signal department employees.

The Grand Lodge officers are Grand President, Secretary-Treasurer, six Vice-Presidents, who comprise the Grand Executive Council and a Board of three Trustees. There are 189 Local Lodges with 326 Local Chairmen and 77 General Chairmen.

All officers are elected every two years and their term of office extends for a period of two years or until succeeded. Each Local Lodge elects one Local Chairman

(continued at foot of next page)

CONDITIONS OF LIFE AND WORK OF AMERICAN ENGINEMEN

By D. B. ROBERTSON

President, Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen

Railroads spanning and interlacing the broad and varied lands of the United States of America and the Dominion of Canada drive through a multitude of geographical and climatic as well as traffic handicaps, all of which affect the working life of a man in engine service. So diversified are these local and regional conditions that several volumes would be required to accurately describe the job performed by firemen and enginemen. Generalizations, therefore, are demanded in an article as brief as this, but it must be understood that for every generalized statement there exist many exceptions.

The North American locomotive hauls cargo and passengers into cold northern countries where summer is brief and winter long and white; into burning desert wastelands; across wide ranchlands; through crowded, populous industrial areas. In each, working conditions vary and working rules have been developed according to experience gained by years of service in the particular localities.

Broadly, however, we find that much is true of the working life of every fireman and engineman. He begins as a raw student. Strict physical standards are imposed and definite levels of literacy are set. A number of our important companies now demand that new employees pass aptitude tests, but these have not been standardized and usually are designed to screen out applicants who lack mechanical abilities or potentialities.

Life for the beginning fireman falls into the pattern of the newly apprenticed worker in all trades. He is assigned to several student runs, during which he first observes, then performs under the closest possible supervision and instruction. That preliminary period is followed by slightly less rigid observation from the engineman or operator.

The beginner who survives the preliminary training is offered opportunities to continue to learn both by doing and by studying. Copies of operating rules are made available and he has the opportunity to learn them by practical observation and participation. The same is true of the mechanics of his job. He is acquainted with

the functions of the locomotive and daily is given added responsibilities in its mechanical operations. From the elements of maintaining a proper fire and steam pressure he progresses to an understanding of handling water, air brakes, lighting systems, lubrication.

Train operation responsibilities likewise must be mastered. He must learn to understand train orders and must discuss them with the engineman. He must acquire a thorough knowledge of all signal systems and develop and maintain a constantly alert attitude and attention toward everything aboard his locomotive and all that is external and may in any way affect the safe and orderly operation of the locomotive and its train.

Formal examinations mark his progress toward promotion to engineer. Not until his fourth year aboard a locomotive may he anticipate promotion. He will receive progressively more technical and complex examinations, written and oral, the first usually is given at the end of his first year, another at the end of the second year and a final examination at the end of the third. If no openings are available at the end of his prescribed training period, he is subject to review examinations at a later date when he may be called for promotion.

It is to be borne in mind that during his training period, the fireman is protected by the contracts and working rules of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen and under those has certain rights to appeal for re-examination in event of failure to pass the above examinations. This prevents the examination being used as a pretext for dismissal when other reasons prompt the company.

An eight-hour working day is provided for by law for the American engine service worker and law likewise provides that he shall not be required to work more than sixteen hours in any twenty-four hour period. These laws were attained through vigorous political action by organized American railroad employees.

It is many years since an incentive wage plan first appeared in American railroading, and that incentive basis now is interwoven with the hourly measurement of a day's work. While many exceptions exist to these general principles, miles worked and hours worked customarily are calculated as follows:

Eight hours or less, or 100 miles or less, of engine service constitute a day's work. If the day's work is less than 100 miles, eight hours are paid. If more than 100 miles are worked within eight hours, the miles in excess of 100 are paid for at the rate of one hundredth of eight hours' pay. When more than eight hours are required for the 100 miles, the hourly basis of figuring pay is used. Overtime is paid at time and one-half rate. Those calculations apply to freight service.

In passenger service, a basic day is 100 miles within five hours. Passenger trips customarily are longer than

Railroad Signalmen in the U.S.A.—*contd.*

for each railroad division or supervisor's territory on that particular railroad system. The Local Chairman elect one of their number as General Chairmen for their system. Two or more railroad systems sometimes join in electing a General Chairman to act on full time basis. The Constitution provides that each Local Lodge may send two delegates to the Biennial Convention, regardless of how large or small the Lodge may be. Grand Lodge officers are elected by the delegates at such Conventions.

freight ; schedules faster, work less arduous. Wage rates have been established accordingly and average perhaps 15 to 20 per cent less per mile than freight, but allow similar total earnings.

In yard or switching service, mileage seldom becomes a factor in calculating the days' earnings and the hourly rate will prevail.

A plan of equalizing the opportunity for work has been devised and is demonstrated by the following provisions which generally prevail :

For a man in engine service, certain minimum and maximum mileages are established. The minimum mileage is to be 3,200 miles within thirty days in freight service and the maximum 3,800 miles within thirty days. If the engine service man falls below the minimum, the seniority roster (call board) is adjusted to assure the senior men the minimum. If the maximum is exceeded, junior men are brought up.

These junior men (extras) are likewise protected by minimum and maximum provisions. In freight service the extra man's minimum is 2,600 miles in thirty days and 3,200 maximum. Adjustments either way are provided for when the limits are exceeded.

Passenger service having a lower mileage wage rate, has different mileage regulations designed to equalize the differential. Thus in passenger service there is a 4,000 mile minimum and 4,800 mile maximum.

For switching or yard service the maximum and minimums are spelled in terms of days, twenty-six days being the minimum for any thirty day period.

The earning provisions, and all other agreed upon working conditions, are policed carefully by the workers and the officers in protective (collective bargaining) departments of our brotherhood.

As noted above, work-weeks do not figure in the American railroad engineman's method of calculating hours of work. At present, no differentials have been established for Saturday, Sunday or holiday work, nor is there bonus time.

To obtain a share of technological improvements, wage rates vary not only in class of service, such as through freight, local freight, yard and passenger service, but also according to power of the locomotive. Because of lack of standardization in locomotive design, weight of the locomotive on drivers has been agreed upon as the presently best representative factor of its power, and it is so that wages are determined.

A few representative coal and Diesel rates are quoted :
Firemen and helpers (passenger service) \$8.30 for locomotives less than 80,000 pounds on drivers ; 80,000 and less than 100,000 \$8.39 ; progressing in various weight brackets up to \$9.81 for locomotives weighing 850,000 to 900,000 pounds on drivers, with still additional allowances for heavier engines.

Firemen and helpers (freight service) \$8.78 for the minimum weight locomotives through various classifications up to \$11.67 for the 850,000 to 900,000 pound locomotive and higher brackets as weight increases.

Firemen and helpers (yard service) begins at \$9.08 and follows up through weight brackets.

Engineers (passenger service), \$10.02 for the minimum

locomotive with additional pay as weights increase. Engineers' minimum in freight service is \$10.75 and in yard service \$10.62.

At present 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent of each dollar for the first \$300 earned each month is deducted from the pay of all railroad employees for contribution to the retirement fund. The carriers contribute a like sum.

Income tax deductions are difficult to cite accurately, as the deductions will vary according to the number of dependents claimed by each earner and the fact that he may present additional exemptions in his annual income tax report, in which event the Government will refund him sums deducted from his regular wages.

With cost of food, clothing, fuel, housing and services, including health protection, rising rapidly in the United States, the worker upon American railroads has found that his wages are failing to meet adequately the good standard of living which is traditionally associated with his highly skilled employment. For that reason, together with increases in his productivity, transportation workers now are asking a 30 per cent wage increase and revisions in numerous provisions of collective agreements in an effort to restore their real purchasing power.

American railroads, pointing to the war-time shortage of man-power and complexity of operation, and claiming low income rates, have managed to lag behind the other industries in providing technological benefits for employees. Negotiations are now being conducted in an effort to remedy this backwardness.

Our organization is participating in demands for longer paid vacations, now limited to one week per year ; bonuses for night work ; double time for holidays worked and time and one-half for work performed on Saturdays and Sundays ; elimination of various differentials in pay scales ; and improved opportunities to share in the technological progress made by railroads.

At the conclusion of our present movement to improve wages and working conditions, we expect to see the American railroad transportation worker enjoying the knowledge that he is both performing service in an industry vital to the progress of the world and that his labours are appropriately recognized and rewarded.

AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENTS ON POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE MARSHALL OFFER

Secretary of State Marshall, in his Chicago speech on 18 November : "This government is willing to co-operate with every nation that pledges a generous effort to the common cause of European recovery. We are now intimately working to this end with governments of various political descriptions."

The Harriman Committee report : "While the committee firmly believes in the American system of competitive free enterprise as the best method of obtaining high productivity, it does not believe that this programme should be used as a means of requiring other countries to adopt it. . . . The imposition of such conditions would constitute an unwarranted interference with the internal affairs of friendly nations."

MARITIME LABOUR IN NEW INDIA

By S. KASTURI

August 15, 1947 is a turning point in India's long and colourful history. British supremacy over Indian affairs is formally at an end on that day. India, split into two Dominions, India and Pakistan, is to take its place as two sovereign, independent nations in the world comity. All power over India is to be transferred to the two Constituent Assemblies which, in addition to their tasks of drawing up the new Constitutions, are also to function as sovereign legislatures for the interim period. The formation of these two Constituent Assemblies, each consisting of representatives of all sections of public opinion in its respective territory, and the partition of India according to the generally agreed plan of June 3, mark the conclusion of a prolonged period of bitter political controversies on the agitational plane between India and Britain on the one hand and between the major parties within India on the other. Even those who may hold entirely different opinions as to the outcome of the labours of the Constituent Assemblies and of the new Dominion Governments will agree with me that these two events mark the beginning of a new and vital phase in the political evolution of this country.

Vast possibilities of good or evil lie in the hands of these Constituent Assemblies; their efforts and conclusions will decide the future of this vast land for the next decade or two, if not more. The burden cast on the shoulders of the Congress and the League—to evolve political structures suited to modern conceptions of democracy and the rights of the individual and satisfying the political aspirations of every section of the 380 million Indian people, structures which will enable India and Pakistan to tackle their economic and social problems without wasting further time on political suspicions and misunderstandings—is immense. Great statesmanship, a high spirit of accommodation and a deep understanding of human problems is called for. Let us hope that those leaders who have captured the imagination of the people will rise to the occasion and build a great pattern of true democracy in India. It is the duty of every Indian, even of those who are sceptic about the results of the venture, to help in the task in a spirit of co-operation in the interests of the country as a whole.

As a citizen of the Dominion of India, and in view of the fact that the vast majority of Indian Merchant Navy Officers and men are likely to come within the orbit of this Dominion, I am confining this article mainly to the relations between maritime labour and the Government and Constituent Assembly of the Dominion of India. But almost everything that applies to India applies equally to Pakistan. It will be hoped by sea-going officers and men—who generally are reputed to have a cosmopolitan outlook on all things—that even as separate sovereign states India and Pakistan will find some means of co-ordinating their policies,

so that together they can wield greater influence in the world than they can singly.

What should be the attitude of maritime labour towards the Constituent Assembly and the Government of new India? How should representative organizations of Indian seamen and officers approach these bodies in order to ensure that the interests of maritime labour do not suffer for want of proper representation? I am one of those who strongly feel that such organizations as the Maritime Union of India, Indian Seamen's Union, etc., should adopt a general policy of good-will and co-operation towards the new Government and the Constituent Assembly, and submit concrete proposals to these bodies to safeguard the interests of maritime labour. Both the Congress and the Muslim League, which are the main political parties of India, have proclaimed as their official policy the introduction of adult franchise, the statutory protection of certain universally recognised fundamental rights, and in general the introduction of a democratic constitution giving the maximum of autonomy to cultural and linguistic units. Both have stood for adequate protection of the interests of peasants and industrial workers. In fact the election manifestos of both organizations show a distinct trend towards a Socialist democracy, though it is yet premature to assess how far actions correspond to words. It is the special responsibility of organizations representing merchant seamen and officers to suggest concrete methods by which the general promises regarding adult franchise, fundamental rights, etc., could be given specific application in the case of a people who do not have a permanent residence and are continuously on the move on the high seas. It is also the duty of these organizations to make practical suggestions to meet special difficulties and problems of the seamen and to represent effectively and at the highest level the need for permanent statutory bodies to look after the interests of the seafaring community, so as to ensure an efficient merchant navy for the country.

The seaman's problems are peculiar. He cannot enjoy normal home life for long stretches of time. He has to live in a confined world when he is out at sea and yet he may be said to live in the broad world as he goes from port to port and place to place. He is at the same time a world citizen and no citizen at all. Peoples of other nations who come into frequent contact with our seamen tend to judge our country and its civilization by the standards our seamen set up before them. Thus our sailors are in a sense ambassadors of our country. Hence we have to ensure that the seamen we nourish on our ships are cultured and efficient, and in good trim. The sailor cannot take part in the day to day political and social life of his people, and being away from home for most of the time, cannot clearly grasp the political and economic issues confronting the country. Having to live in a small space with limited scope for

social activity, he tends to develop the instincts of a prisoner, and this may, to some extent, explain the free-lance ethics of seamen.

The living conditions of seamen all over the world were acknowledged to be appalling up to the beginning of World War II, and the lot of the Indian seamen was the worst. Even now, after the war has shaken up and improved or at least brought to the fore-front the problems of seamen in other civilised countries, Indian seamen continue to be treated in the most scandalous manner both by foreign and Indian employers. The accommodation offered them on board merchant ships can compare only with the slums in India, and the general conditions of service are far below standard. Often it is contended that Indian seamen are less efficient and that consequently more Indians have to be employed to do the same work as men of other countries. But it never seems to be realized that the fault is not that of the seamen but of the employers who have never cared to see that facilities were provided for special training to be given to seamen to enable them to come up to modern requirements and standards, in spite of the fact that the shipowners have, by reason of their wealth and attendant power, always had great influence with the governments of their countries. Partly the reason for the backwardness of the Indian seamen can be traced to the backwardness of India itself in recent years. Also Indian seamen have been used by foreign shipowners only as cheap labour in competition with seamen of their own countries, and to do this effectively, a premium had to be set on ignorance and illiteracy.

All these and other troubles of the Indian seamen have to be set aright by the National Government of India. The Constituent Assembly has to provide for special methods of application of the general principles governing adult franchise and fundamental rights to ensure that the moving seaman gets the same effective voice in the governance of his country as every other citizen, and that he is properly represented in the legislatures and governments through people in whom he has confidence and who understand his problems. I know full well that nothing specially applicable to sailors or for any other section of the people can find specific mention in the general articles of a Constitution which lays down the basic political structure of the State. It will be the duty of our organizations to see that nothing finds its way into the Constitution which will hinder the application in practice of fundamental rights of citizenship in the case of seamen. There must be provision for a system of secret postal voting for provincial and federal legislatures, and for arrangements to ensure that the roving seaman can exercise his rights as a citizen in the same way and to the same extent as any other citizen in any other profession.

It will be to our advantage if some sort of professional constituencies can be created in the Federal Legislature, and if seamen's interests can be represented by a seaman elected in a seaman's constituency. In the provincial plane it is essential that every seaman belonging to a province should be able to exercise his vote in the elections of his province, wherever he may happen to

be at the time. When the seafarer can effectively influence the policies of the State both as a member of his profession and as a citizen of his country, he will have received justice at the hands of the Constituent Assembly.

While nothing spectacular and of immediate benefit to seamen can result from the work of the Constituent Assembly, much can be done by the new Government to improve their lot. Representatives of Indian seamen, shipowners and the Government have participated in recent international maritime conferences, and certain conventions regarding minimum conditions of service and wages have been adopted by these conferences. The National Government must ensure that the shipowners adopt and give effect to these conventions without delay. The Government should also take early steps to study the question of training seamen on modern lines, so that they can go about as equals in education and efficiency in any land they visit. Indian shipping is full of eager expectation that the National Government will soon reserve the entire coasting trade to Indian vessels, and secure for them an equitable share of the overseas trade and passenger traffic. Indian seamen fully endorse this demand and add that the Government should ensure a fair and just deal to the backbone of all shipping, maritime labour. In this connection I would suggest that the Government should insist on Indian shipowners investing only in well-built modern ships, with the latest types of machinery, modern conveniences and decent accommodation. I would further suggest that the Government should appoint a planning commission with executive powers to plan the future merchant navy of India, the types of vessels and of the machinery and equipment installed in them, the standard of accommodation, etc., taking into account the nature of the trade, available fuel and other relevant considerations; and get the shipowners to conform to this plan. There is imminent danger otherwise of a chaotic expansion of the merchant fleet, with obsolete vessels sold to Indian shipowners after they have been worn out by foreign owners. In this connection it is sad to note that recent additions to its fleet by a leading Indian shipping concern have mostly been old vessels with obsolete machinery and equipment.

So far I have stressed only the things the Indian Government and Constituent Assembly should do to help us seamen. Now I must lay equal stress on things we should do to help them. We must remember that even though everyone may not feel equally happy about the composition of the Government or the Assembly, and may have his own party affiliations, this new Government is a distinct advance on all previous governments, which were not responsible to any section of the people. We should not forget that the leaders who dominate the political scene today, and have formed the Government, are all men who have captured the imagination and support of a vast majority of the people of India. It would be no use to us if we were to take a hostile attitude to them from the start. We should also remember that far greater and more intricate problems affecting the poorest sections of the Indian people, the agricultural masses, are also awaiting the immediate attention of

the new government and so it should cause no surprise or disappointment to us if the Government does not attend to our needs and problems as promptly as we would certainly like them to do. We must guard against vested interests and others being able to influence the Government by a more friendly and reasonable attitude while we on our side irritate and antagonize popular leaders by a spirit of intolerance and impatience. It is not my purpose here to plead for the members of this Government, or to argue that they are the most progressive in policy and action. They can well defend themselves. It is in the interest of maritime labour itself that it should be guided by a sense of constructive

effort and a correct sense of proportion in dealing with its own problems. And such criticism of official policy as we are compelled to voice should be at once constructive and reasonable.

Before I conclude, I must appeal to all comrades at sea and all seafarers to remember that unity of purpose and action among them is the most effective solvent of all their difficulties and troubles; that united we can make our voice heard and respected, while divided we shall achieve nothing either to advance our own cause or that of India.

From OCEANITE, published by The Maritime Union of India.

EDUCATIONAL WORK AMONG NORWEGIAN SEAMEN

By **EINAR BERGH**

Secretary, Educational Department, Norwegian Seamen's Union

The Norwegian Federation of Trade Unions and its affiliated unions have for many years realized the great value and importance of well organized educational work on behalf of the rank and file, and a special organization, the Workers' Educational Association, was established for the purpose. Schools have been built or rented, and are attended by hundreds of union members every year.

In 1939 this kind of work was also taken up by the Norwegian Seamen's Union. A special educational secretary was elected to organize the work, and already before the last war many study groups were in existence on board Norwegian ships and schools were being held ashore for ships' delegates and union members.

The work was interrupted by the war, of course, but plans were prepared by the Norwegian seamen's representatives who were in London during that period, so that well organized educational activity for seamen might be resumed once the Nazis had been overcome.

In execution of these plans, special schools are being held ashore every year. They are attended by ships' delegates and rank-and-file members desiring to become delegates upon completion of the courses. All union members can apply to attend the courses, and a special educational committee selects some 25 to 30 of the applicants. The courses last a fortnight, and all expenses are paid by the Union. In addition, compensation is paid in respect of lost wages, 50 or 75 crowns a week, according to whether a student is single or married.

Tuition covers the history of national and international trade unionism, the laws, regulations and agreements applicable to seafarers, and the duties of ships' delegates. The history of the students' own Union, and its relations with international organizations like the I.T.F. and the Scandinavian Transport Workers' Federation, constitutes a special subject.

Great attention is devoted to the history of the I.L.O., its foundation after the first world war, how it was built up, the results achieved, and the plans for the future. In this connection special consideration is given to the results of the Maritime Conference at Seattle, the International Seafarers' Charter, and what can be done to obtain the necessary ratifications of the Seattle Conventions and Recommendations.

In addition, experts lecture on "post-war problems", both national and international, and what must be done to return to or advance beyond the standards of living of pre-war days.

Students are instructed, also, how to organize "ships' committees" and "study groups" on board ships, with the object of imparting information about the union and its work and stimulating rank-and-file activity.

Today there are 100 or so study groups counting about 500 members in the Norwegian merchant navy. A study group has three to nine members, and often is conducted by a seaman who has attended a Union school. All the necessary equipment, books, etc., are provided by the Union free of charge, and the Educational Committee of the Union gives advice and information as to how to make the work of the groups as successful as possible. Within the Groups much the same subjects are studied as in the schools, although naturally more time can be given to them. In addition many Groups study languages, mostly English, but sometimes also Spanish.

On the whole it may be said that the Norwegian seamen of today understand the value and the necessity of educational work more than ever before. Results are already being achieved which will do much to help solve the future problems of the men of the Norwegian merchant navy.