



INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS JOURNAL

Vol. VIII. Nos. 1/2. JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1948

Published by the
International Transport
Workers' Federation,
Maritime House,
Clapham Common,
London, S.W.4.

**GENOA 1920, GENEVA 1935, COPENHAGEN
1945, SEATTLE 1946, GENEVA 1947**

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

By **J. H. OLDENBROEK**

General Secretary of the I.T.F.

Affiliated Unions in :

ARGENTINA
AUSTRALIA
AUSTRIA
BELGIUM
CANADA
CEYLON
CHILE
CHINA
DENMARK
DUTCH GUIANA
EGYPT
FINLAND
FRANCE
GREAT BRITAIN
GREECE
HOLLAND
ICELAND
INDIA
INDONESIA
IRELAND
ITALY
JAMAICA
KENYA
LEBANON
LUXEMBURG
MEXICO
NEW ZEALAND
NORWAY
PALESTINE
RHODESIA
SPAIN
SOUTH AFRICA
ST. LUCIA
SWEDEN
SWITZERLAND
SYRIA
TRINIDAD
UNITED STATES

DURING the second world war, seafarers' representatives from many Allied countries held numerous meetings in London. *They were determined to profit from past experience; they remembered how seafarers' representatives had between the two wars trailed from one maritime conference of the I.L.O. to another, from one meeting of the Joint Maritime Commission to another—Genoa, San Sebastian, Paris, Geneva, etc.,—without succeeding in securing the international regulation of working hours at sea which had been their object ever since the end of World War No. 1. During the first gigantic struggle, as during the second, governments and peoples had recognized the vital importance of the role of merchant seamen, and in public statements leading statesmen made lavish promises to the heroes who manned the ships. All too poorly protected against the perils of war, seafarers had continued to do their duty, and tens of thousands of them made the supreme sacrifice in defence of freedom against militarism and tyranny.*

Did the men of the merchant navy then in any way abuse the position by raising extravagant demands? They certainly did not. What they wanted in 1919 was no paradise on earth, but merely international regulation of their working hours on the basis of a forty-eight hour week; and they wanted to get it through the International Labour Organization. They rightly perceived that though it might be possible to secure a forty-eight hour, and perhaps even shorter working week in some countries, by national effort, such an achievement would be in constant danger in the case of countries in competition with one another for the same trade, and that, therefore, international and simultaneous acceptance of the forty-eight hours was an indispensable condition of lasting success.*

But at Genoa in 1920 the proposed Convention was rejected. Not only the shipowners opposed it fiercely; some governments, including the British, also voted against. Britain was at that time still the leading maritime nation, and when it took a certain line other countries could use the convenient excuse that they could not go farther than the Government of the United Kingdom.

Soon after 1920 a terrible slump set in, which also hit the shipping industry very hard. But shipping companies had been making money hand over fist, paying handsome dividends and watering down their capital by the issue of bonus shares. Maritime countries old and new had embarked on extravagant building programmes, so that the shipyard industry had also been fully

employed. Soon there was far more tonnage in the world than needed to carry the goods, and so the crash came. *It is well to remember all this, for it must be evident to everyone that the shipping world is to-day heading for the same disaster as it was in the years after 1918.* Unless the maritime nations of the world, old and new, agree on a common programme of shipbuilding and tonnage sharing, most of them will find in the near future that there will be no employment for a considerable part of their ships. They will discover that a lot of energy and capital has been spent on unprofitable expansion. Indeed the situation to-day in a war-stricken and impoverished world is even more perilous than it was after 1918. With the world crying out for relief in every branch of economic life, it is no time for wilfully wasting capital and energy.

But let us look back again at 1919 and the years which followed. The aim of the Allied seafarers then, to maintain a monthly minimum wage of £15 for an able seaman, was soon frustrated, and the idea of building up an international code of conditions for seafarers had to be abandoned. Several efforts were made to raise the question of hours at sea again in the I.L.O., but they failed completely, *and it was not until 1935 and 1936 that the matter was seriously reconsidered and a convention adopted by a Maritime Labour Conference.* The convention was by no means satisfactory to the seafarers, but it was thought to be better than nothing.

What had happened in the meantime? Firstly, in a number of countries, particularly in Northern Europe, the labour movement had gained considerably in strength, and in spite of the fact that Great Britain was not willing to go along with them, these countries had been obliged to concede improvements of various kinds to seafarers. Further, the threat of a new war did not fail to influence the nations and governments, who indeed had a bad record as regards their treatment of merchant seamen. However, when the war actually came the 1936 Convention had not yet come into force, and the United States of America, Australia, Belgium and Sweden had been the only countries to ratify it.

Our starting point was that seafarers' representatives met in London during the late war, when they drafted and adopted the International Seafarers' Charter as a guide for the future national and international action of seafarers' organizations of all countries. Strong representations were made to shipowners, governments and the I.L.O., and with remarkable speed a conference was arranged in November 1945 at Copenhagen—only three months after the end of the war—followed by a fully-fledged Maritime Labour Conference at Seattle in June 1946. Considering the slowness with which all international machinery must work, the seafarers had every reason to be satisfied with the way in which the I.L.O. had responded to their wishes.

Since Seattle, however, eighteen months have passed, and though some consideration has been given to the Seattle decisions at the national level, far too little has been done to ensure the implementation of those international instruments. *In view of this state of affairs seafarers have to ask themselves seriously whether there will be, and whether they will tolerate, a repetition of their*

inter-war experience. During the last war they made up their minds that they were not going through the same thing over again and let themselves be duped and sent from pillar to post. Yet there are all the indications that this is precisely what is going to happen. It is evident that in 1947, just as in 1919, many governments hesitate to take a strong line, though they have the power to do so, and fight shy of dealing with the shipowners who continue to resist the introduction of an international eight hour day and forty-eight hour week at sea, and an international minimum wage. *Or is it perhaps that highly placed civil servants, with sympathies not in favour of the seafarers, can hold up decisions by putting all sorts of obstacles in the way?*

However that may be, if seafarers' organizations do not make the strongest possible stand, by approaching both their national shipowners and their national governments, and by enforcing the implementation of the Seattle decisions—in particular the prompt application of the Conventions concerning Wages, Hours and Manning, and Holidays with Pay—they will have failed their members.

For our first failure plausible excuses could be found: perhaps we lacked experience as international negotiators; there was insufficient international understanding among the seamen's representatives; the officers were originally excluded from the draft Conventions; in 1920 trade unionism among seafarers was in several countries still anything but firmly established and consequently the conditions obtained in most countries were much below the international minima proposed; and finally, there were few, if any, Labour governments in power in those days, which meant that governments were inclined to come down on the side of the shipowners.

To-day the position is very different. We have built up a strong international movement, based on mutual understanding and solidarity; the officers have joined our ranks and we have succeeded in bringing them within the scope of the Conventions; seafarers' trade unions are almost without exception strongly entrenched; thanks to national effort, dovetailed with international action, conditions in almost every country have been considerably improved and are in many respects superior to the minimum standards required by the Conventions. Finally, the governments are, generally speaking, pledged to support us and with a little persuasion, and maybe even without it, will go the whole way towards accepting the seafarers' demands.

With such odds in our favour, what explanation could we offer if again we had to admit defeat?

* * *

A meeting of the Joint Maritime Commission took place at Geneva in December 1947, when the principal item of discussion was the ratification of the Seattle decisions. It transpired that only one country—Sweden—had ratified one Convention, that on Accommodation. Various governments had taken steps to submit certain Conventions to their Legislatures, but so far as was known definitely the U.S. Government was the only one to have asked Congress to ratify the Convention on Wages, Hours and Manning. As regards the shipowners, they

were as strongly opposed to enforcement of the Conventions as they had been at Seattle, and it was clear that no co-operation was to be expected from them, that if their opposition could not be overcome by persuasion the seafarers would have to use other means to break it. *So let us lose no more time, we have really waited long enough already.*

In Seattle it was agreed that governments might ratify a Convention without resorting to the customary legislative procedure, and instead use the collective agreement as the instrument of enforcement. The Seafarers' Group at Seattle did not oppose this idea. Indeed, provided a collective agreement satisfies all the minimum conditions stipulated by a Convention, it is as effective an instrument as legislation and makes the trade unions directly responsible for the observance of a Convention. But there now seems to be a tendency on the part of governments to shirk their responsibility by taking up the attitude that if a collective agreement does not come up to the minimum standards of the Convention, they can sit back and wait until it does. Is this the real intention of the collective agreement clause? Or has perhaps some back-room-boy sea-lawyer at one of the ministries been "interpreting" the clause and communicating his subtleties to some minister or other? *I would assert quite definitely that governments cannot with regard to I.L.O. Conventions adopt merely a negative attitude, but that they have the positive task of encouraging and if necessary compelling their application.* Governments adopting another view are not rendering any service to the I.L.O., they are shirking their moral obligations in the field of international labour legislation. We are often reminded by shipowners that the I.L.O. is not a super-state, that it has no power to make binding decisions. It is interesting how at times the extremes meet, how reactionaries and revolutionaries vie with one another in asserting the sacred rights of national sovereignty, always provided, of

course, that they themselves are the ones who ultimately wield those rights. . . . Seafarers, however, are very weary of those worn-out conceptions which do not fit the exigencies of a modern world. World prosperity is only possible with the best practicable conditions of work and life for the producers of wealth, and the sooner those conditions are based on internationally agreed minimum standards, the sooner will that prosperity materialize.

The Joint Maritime Commission, after considerable discussion, finally adopted a compromise resolution, proposed by the Seafarers' Group, that a tripartite conference should be convened not later than the early autumn of 1948 to review the whole situation as regards ratifications. Unfortunately the Governing Body of the I.L.O. did not, at its December meeting, come to a decision about the holding of this Conference, and if this leads to still further delay the seafarers will certainly not take it quietly. There is danger of further delay in any case, as some governments may use the excuse that they wish to await the outcome of the further conference, which is to consist of the members of the Joint Maritime Commission plus representatives of the Governments of twenty-seven maritime countries. How can that conference lead to a satisfactory result from the seafarers' point of view? *It can only be successful if a considerable number of ratifications, particularly of the Convention on Wages, Hours and Manning and that on Paid Holidays, are registered with the I.L.O. well before the date of the conference.* Only in that event will it be possible to exert pressure also on those other Governments which may be expected to lag behind. I therefore appeal to all affiliated seafarers' unions and their members to do their duty, to use their powers of persuasion and if necessary their industrial strength, in ensuring that the debt owing to the men of the sea is honoured. It is about time that we lost at least some of our patience.

DECASUALIZATION IN THE PORT OF ANTWERP

Dockers' work has always been uncertain, and ports are the only undertakings in which the workers are expected to be at the disposal of their employers day after day without drawing wages for it.

In ordinary industries unemployment is either purely accidental or the consequence of crises in world trade, but in the ports work is fundamentally inconstant and the demand for labour irregular. Opportunities of employment are greatly influenced by economic ups and downs, as well as by the coming and going of seasonal traffic, climatic conditions, etc. On the other hand port work is always urgent, and must be performed immediately, so that it is necessary to have always available a large number of workers who will hardly ever be all employed; nearly every day there will be a certain percentage of them without work.

The pre-1940 position. The problem of providing Belgian dockers with regular work has been under consideration for many decades, but it has proved to be practically insoluble, and endeavours have consequently been made to make arrangements for the payment of a minimum wage.

After six months' negotiations following a wage movement in Belgian ports in 1928, a collective agreement was signed that aimed to bring about greater stability in dockers' earnings. Two measures were considered, individual agreements and the institution of a joint unemployment fund. The collective agreement fixed the daily rate at a figure that would permit of dockers earning six days' wages by four days' work. This did not satisfy them, however, as those able to get continuous work earned considerably more than the

minimum wage, while others, unable to secure the necessary four days' work, were deprived of the benefits of the agreement.

New claims presented after the strike of May 1936 led to an increase of the basic wage, and the introduction of a seven-hour day and forty-hour week.

A second step towards the stabilization of the dockers' position was the building of hiring offices. Their use was made compulsory, and the bad old method of hiring men in taverns abolished, making practically impossible the injustice which was formerly common. The introduction of a system of paid holidays for dockers was a further advance, as was also the setting up of centralized pay offices, relieving the workers of the necessity of making long and costly journeys from one employer to another to collect their dues. The reorganization of the port canteens, providing food and drink at low prices, was the final advance made before the war. Hostilities then put an end to the progress so happily begun.

The good work was resumed after the liberation, when the wages of all dockers were readjusted. But the solution of the problem of the uncertainty of port work was still to be found.

The Fund for Security of Livelihood. Since the work could not be made regular, it was decided to try and provide regular wages. The Antwerp Joint Committee went thoroughly into the problem, and after long discussions employers and trade unions found a meeting point. The result was the setting up of the Fund for Security of Livelihood.

Before this dockers were obliged to offer themselves for employment twice a day, but only those engaged received any pay, the others got nothing.

While it is normal that port employers should always have a sufficient reserve of man-power available to attend to the irregular and always urgent requirements of port work, it is only reasonable that dockers compelled to be always available should be paid for it, even if they are not engaged.

The Fund for Security of Livelihood for the workers of the Port of Antwerp was set up by a Decree of the Regent dated 26th September 1946, and started operations on 1st October of the same year. It is financed by contributions paid by all undertakings subject to the National Committee for the Port of Antwerp. The contribution is equal to 15 per cent of the gross wages earned. The Fund guarantees to dockers who present themselves for work without being employed the sum of 101 francs a day, providing them with the difference between that sum and the amount they receive in unemployment pay.

Between 1st October 1946 and June 1947, the total amount paid out to the dockers, in unemployment pay plus the supplementary allowance from the Fund, was over 45,000,000 francs, of which the contribution from the Fund represented over 22,000,000.

These provisions place the Antwerp docker well to the fore on the path of social progress, and similar steps have been subsequently adopted at the ports of Brussels, Ghent and Vilvorde. Belgian legislation relating to dock workers appears to have been the inspiration for the

decasualization measures adopted in June 1947 by the British Minister of Labour.

Conclusions. From the strictly social point of view, however, it must be admitted that the legislation relating to port workers, and the steps taken to provide them with a minimum livelihood, still leave much to be desired. The final aim must be a policy of full employment that will raise the worker to an economic position that will shield him from necessity and enable him to reach a higher occupational and cultural level. Only the first part of this aim has been tackled, and that only imperfectly, since the legislation does not cover all the workers who fail to find employment. As far as the dockers are concerned, too, no satisfactory solution has yet been found to the problem of superannuation. Nor has much been done to provide for their physical comfort in the way of sanitary installations, baths, etc., to say nothing of the selection, training and general education of the workers. The trade unions have never ceased to draw attention to the deplorable sanitary conditions under which the dockers work. While steps have been taken to lessen the consequences of accidents occurring in the course of the work, by providing first aid posts, little or nothing has been done to provide for the cleanliness and comfort which are almost entirely lacking. Special accident insurance legislation for dockers is also urgently needed.

As a result of the urgent demands of the dockers' union, steps were taken some years before the war to erect in Antwerp decent hiring halls to provide the men with shelter and put an end to hiring in taverns, but some of these halls were unfortunately damaged in the course of hostilities, and lack of funds and building materials has prevented their immediate rebuilding, so it is still common to see masses of workers, herded like cattle, offering themselves for employment in badly ventilated rooms where not even chairs are available. It is urgently necessary that the hiring halls should be restored, and the hiring decentralized. Another trade union claim is the provision of waiting and dining rooms in different parts of the port.

The Decree of 18th October 1945, relating to sanitary installations, and that of 11th February 1946, relating to the setting up of bodies entrusted with the application of safety and sanitary measures, impose on the employers very definite obligations as from 1st January 1947, but there is no evidence that they have done anything about it.

Since the Security of Livelihood regime came into force on 1st October 1946, dockers have been required to present themselves twice a day at the hiring office, so that a sufficiency of manpower shall always be available in case of necessity. Many of the men come from afar and are unable to return home between hiring periods, and it is necessary that provision should be made, in the vicinity of the hiring halls, of canteens and dining rooms where they can find shelter and means of entertainment, such as magazines, newspapers, games, etc. Only when this has been done will it be possible to say that the Security of Livelihood regime has fully achieved the social aims which it has been set.

THE NATIONALIZATION OF THE BRITISH RAILWAYS AND AFTER

By a Special Correspondent

The end of an era. On the first day of the New Year, the second of the British Labour Government's major nationalizing enactments, the Transport Act, came into operative force for the railway branch of inland transport. A period of British railway history, covering nearly a century and a quarter, was brought to a close.

During the great railway boom of the nineteenth century, hundreds of railway companies sprang independently into existence, concerned primarily not with public interest but with private profit. They established themselves in places regarded by them as likely to be the most profitable, not where their lines would be capable of progressively satisfying social needs. Laid down with scant consideration for co-ordination, these lines were long operated with a very wasteful use of manpower and steampower.

Towards the end of the last century amalgamations had already begun to take place. By the end of the first World War the number of separate companies was reduced to 120. This tendency in the direction of monopoly was further accelerated when, in 1921, under a special Act of Parliament, the 120 surviving concerns were merged into four large private main-line companies.

Now these have undergone their final amalgamation into a public monopoly. Under the simple and appropriate name of "British Railways" this great undertaking is to be conducted as a single entity, financially unified and operatively co-ordinated under a single directing authority.

The standard of social efficiency. During the debates on the Transport Bill in Parliament the Labour Government and its supporters justified the change from private to public ownership chiefly on the ground of the greater social efficiency that would result. Certainly capitalist railway organization has been notoriously inefficient in promoting public interest, largely because of its financial basis. In some respects it could even be shown that the railway companies were inefficient in making money for themselves. The retention in operation of so much that had long become technically and organizationally out of date, the failure to introduce many modern means and methods, was due partly to the financial position of the railway companies, and partly to their finding it cheaper to carry on with the slow and wasteful technique of the nineteenth century. This disregard for modernization

The economic integration of Western Europe is a revolutionary aim; it must be recognized and exploited as such. The necessary redirection of national thinking cannot be maintained unless European unity is presented as a dynamic new ideal.

From the Memorandum by the British Labour Party on European co-operation within the framework of the Marshall Plan.

was strengthened to the extent that the companies were able to keep the wages of the railwaymen down below the level of subsistence, a ruthless exploitation which their employees only began to acquire the collective power to resist effectively in the course of the past three decades.

The measure and conditions of social efficiency. The social efficiency of railway transport, as for industry generally, can only be measured by increased production, by the degree in which a greater result is produced per unit of energy.

Social efficiency presupposes industrial efficiency. But it is more than this: an industry is socially efficient in the degree that its industrial efficiency is employed to serve social ends. On the other hand, before it can be thus employed, the ownership and control of the industry must be taken out of private hands. This step has now been made in the case of the British railway service.

But that is only a step. Nationalization is by itself not enough to ensure the social efficiency of the British Railways. It is an indispensable prerequisite condition for an efficient railway service. It makes such a service possible. But no more than that. To make this almost bankrupt undertaking "the safest and the most efficient railway service in the world," it is not enough to change the ownership of the service.

It is, when that has been done, necessary to change the conduct of the service from an anti-social and bureaucratic to a social democratic one. It is our case that the social efficiency of the British Railways can only be achieved through a co-partnership of its operatives, technicians and managers.

It would be nothing less than disastrous for the future of this great nationalized undertaking and the Government, were railway men and women to find that while the private ownership of railways had been discontinued, the old forms and habits of management were allowed to remain essentially unchanged.

The social conduct of the railway service. To judge by the words contained in the New Year's Message of "the Railway Executive to all Railway Men and Women," this is not to be the attitude of the management towards the operative personnel. It speaks of "our" task. It is "we" who have to make the railways "efficient." It emphasizes the personal importance and responsibility of every individual, whatever the job, in the struggle for efficiency. And it expresses the equality of status of all engaged in this immense undertaking.

But it is of supreme importance to make the democratic word flesh. Democracy as a state of mind can only have any meaning if it is at the same time a state of life. The great requirement is to get all railway men and women to act democratically, to translate the democratic spirit into the social conduct of the service, and that

means to provide them with adequate concrete ways and means for democratic practice. Those provided by the Act of 1921, the Local Departmental Committees and the Sectional Councils, are inadequate.

Machinery for democratic management. Apart from some speeches made in Parliament by representatives of the organized railway workers, such as A. J. Champion of the N.U.R. and J. Haworth of the R.C.A., very little consideration was given, in discussions on the Bill, to this question of democratic management. Referring to Clause 95, which makes statutory provision for the unions to be consulted in matters of safety, health and welfare, Haworth (Third Reading of the Bill), criticized it because of its too limited range. "That does not go nearly far enough. If we are really to get the benefit of these nationalization schemes, we must make the workers feel that they have a share in the management and control of the industries. We must make them feel that when the appointed day comes, not that they are carrying on under the same set of bosses that they always had under another name, but that there has been a definite change in which they must play a large part." Expressing the hope that the Commission and the Executive would make new and wider arrangements in their relations with the employees, he added: "Let them work right from the level of the local departmental committees at stations. I have been a member of a local departmental committee of a sectional council, and I say that as far as consultation about the management and efficiency of the industry is concerned, it was a farce. That system was not used at all."

Industrial local government machinery. For nearly forty years now, nationalization has been the declared policy of the railway unions. But it was not long before the organized railway workers began to realize that

nationalization would mean little advance in their standards and status unless the change in ownership was accompanied by a change in the ways of management to men. Thus their annual resolutions on nationalization came to contain the important addendum requiring their participation in the management and control of the nationalized railway service. Probably nothing has contributed so much to increase the weight behind this demand as twenty-six years' experience of the working of Local Departmental Committees and Sectional Councils.

The new machinery, which is now under consideration, will have to be free from all the defects of the 1921 machinery.

It must be so designed to ensure that the new bodies at the lower levels are *real* joint bodies; that they possess the power to initiate proposals and make recommendations in contrast to merely considering "suggestions"; and that their terms of reference be extended to include subjects hitherto barred from discussion on the grounds that these were the exclusive concern of "management."

Questions of wages, hours and general conditions would continue to be tackled at the national level.

Nothing is more certain to create confidence in the management of the British Railways among those who operate them than adequate provision for the closest contacts and connections between them. And it is at the lowest level that, through the working of the local machinery, the sense of individual responsibility, so indispensable to the social efficiency of the undertaking, can most effectively be fostered. So, far from managerial authority becoming weakened, it will be strengthened, because the decisions, being the outcome of full and frank discussions, will be understood and respected.

MAINTENANCE OF WAY WORKERS IN THE U.S.A.

By T. C. CARROLL

President of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees

The maintenance of way employees on 95 per cent of the railroad mileage in the United States and the entire mileage in the Dominion of Canada are represented by the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees. The Brotherhood has international headquarters at 61, Putnam Avenue, Detroit, Michigan, and is affiliated with the American Federation of Labour of the United States and the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada.

The executive officers of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees are the president, seven vice-presidents, five residing in the United States and two in the Dominion of Canada, and five members of the Executive Board, one of whom must reside in and be a citizen of the Dominion of Canada. The officers are elected by the majority vote of the delegates at each triennial convention.

Before contractual relationship can be established on any railroad, the Railway Labour Act provides that the majority of maintenance of way employees on such railroad must sign certificates of authority designating the Brotherhood as their representative agency. The Act further provides that such certification is necessary by the National Mediation Board before the Brotherhood can be designated as the representative agency for such employees. When representation has been established, an organizing campaign is conducted to enroll the maintenance of way employees as members of the Brotherhood. When a sufficient number of employees have enrolled as members, subordinate lodges are established on the railroad property to permit the members to elect their officers and conduct their business.

When a railroad system has been organized sufficiently

to permit calling a meeting of all subordinate lodge officers, the officers are convened to elect their system officers. These officers are elected in conformity with the by-laws adopted by such system division or federation for a term of office designated by the provisions made in such by-laws. The highest ranking officer on a railroad system, under the Brotherhood by-laws, is the general chairman. On some of the larger railroad systems he is assisted by a vice-chairman, assistant chairman and also a secretary-treasurer.

There are eighteen different classifications of maintenance of way employees, but the two most recognized sub-departments are the track and the bridge and building. Employees in the maintenance of way department are regularly engaged in the construction, maintenance and repairs of roadway, track, bridges and buildings within the right-of-way limits.

Railroads require that applicants for employment fill in the necessary forms and undergo a physical examination. The physical standards established by the various railroads are varied, and the requirements on one railroad may be more severe than on another. There is no extensive vocational programme in the maintenance of way department on the railroads in the United States, but a number of the railroads have attempted to adopt such a programme and at this time an effort is being made to develop it.

In order to obtain promotion, the railroad requires the employees in the track and bridge and building departments to pass a satisfactory examination on the book of rules. Such examinations become more complicated when the employee is being examined for positions in a supervisory capacity, such as assistant foreman or foreman. A majority of the agreements provide that vacancies shall be bulletined to permit employees to make application for the positions. In filling the positions, ability is of first importance, but where two able employees apply for the same position, seniority prevails. When negotiating working agreements it is the policy of the committees to provide that seniority shall be the governing factor.

All maintenance of way employees, with the exception of a very few employees who are paid on the all-services-rendered basis, are paid time and one half for services performed in excess of eight hours. The punitive rate of pay on the time and one half basis is also paid to maintenance of way employees for services performed on Sundays and seven designated holidays. Other provisions contained in the agreement provide for double time to be paid after sixteen hours of service within a twenty-four hour period. Agreements also provide for a minimum payment of three hours in cases where employees are called to report to work outside of their regular working hours.

Maintenance of way employees are also accorded vacation benefits, an employee who has rendered 160 days of compensated service in the preceding calendar year being entitled to six days' vacation with pay. An employee who has rendered 160 days compensated service for five or more years (not necessarily consecutive) is entitled to two weeks' vacation with pay.

Rates of pay for maintenance of way employees are not

standardized on the railroads in the United States, but the average straight time rate of pay for the various classifications of maintenance of way employees is indicated in the following table:

Bridge and Building Gang Foremen	\$294.37	per month
Bridge and Building Carpenters	\$ 1.218	per hour
Bridge and Building Iron Workers	\$ 1.347	per hour
Bridge and Building Painters	\$ 1.235	per hour
Bridge and Building Masons, Bricklayers, Plasterers and Plumbers	\$ 1.347	per hour
Maintenance of Way and Structures Helpers and Apprentices	\$ 1.093	per hour
Portable Steam Equipment Operators	\$ 1.26	per hour
Portable Steam Equipment Helpers	\$ 1.074	per hour
Pumping Equipment Operators	\$.978	per hour
Extra Gang Foremen*	\$257.04	per month
Section and Gang Foremen*	\$251.94	per month
Extra Gang Men	\$.955	per hour
Section Men	\$.962	per hour
Maintenance of Way Labourers (other than Track and Roadway)	\$.976	per hour
Bridge Operators and Helpers	\$ 1.076	per hour
Crossing and Bridge Flagmen and Gatemen	\$ 7.49	per day

* Based upon 204 hours of service.

The Constitution and By-Laws of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees provide for the quarterly payment of dues. The dues are apportioned in such a manner as to finance the operations of grand lodge, the system division and the subordinate lodge. The grand lodge portion of the quarterly dues is \$3.00, but the system dues and subordinate lodge dues on the various railroads differ, though on the majority system dues are \$1.50 per quarter and subordinate lodge dues 50 cents per quarter. Subordinate lodge dues are retained by the subordinate lodge to finance the activities of the local lodge, and the system division dues are retained by the system division to finance its activities. The enrolment or initiation fee for membership in the Brotherhood was \$3.00 prior to March 1st, 1947, but the 1946 Convention increased it to \$5.00. In cases of returned war veterans, the initiation fee is waived and a veteran of World War II may become a member of the Brotherhood without the payment of such fee. Members laid off through force reduction may obtain an unemployment card and are not required to pay the initiation fee when returning to work.

The Brotherhood does not maintain any insurance plan, but there is a gratuitous payment at the death of the member providing he has established an accumulated death benefit fund in compliance with the Grand Lodge Constitution and By-Laws. It is based upon his years of membership, age at joining and continued membership. An employee less than fifty years of age, becoming a member of the Brotherhood and paying his dues within the first thirty days of each quarter, accumulates a death benefit of \$50.00 at the end of the four quarters. This amount is increased by \$50.00 for each additional four quarters, provided he continues to pay his dues within

(continued at foot of next page)

U.S. RAILWAY SHOPMEN'S WORK AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

By **FRED N. ATEN**

President of the Railway Employees' Department of the A.F. of L.

The group generally referred to as Shopmen on the American railroads are represented by seven International Organizations operating through the Railway Employees' Department of the American Federation of Labour. These are:

- International Brotherhood of Blacksmiths, Drop Forgers and Helpers.
- International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders and Helpers of America.
- Brotherhood of Railway Carmen of America.
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.
- International Association of Machinists.
- Sheet Metal Workers' International Association.
- International Brotherhood of Firemen, Oilers, Helpers, Round House and Railway Shop Labourers.

All of these organizations except the Firemen and Oilers represent mechanics, helpers and apprentices doing the work of the craft indicated by the name of the organization. For example, the International Brotherhood of Blacksmiths represents blacksmiths, helpers and apprentices and that would be true of each of the other six

Maintenance of Way Workers in the U.S.A.—contd.

the necessary time limits. The maximum death benefit which can be accumulated by a member who is less than fifty years of age when becoming a member is \$500.00. The maximum death benefit payable to a member who enrolled after reaching the age of fifty years is \$150.00. No additional assessment is levied against the member to support the death benefit plan since all payments are merely a gratuity allowance made to the beneficiary in gratitude for the employee's prompt payment of dues while a member.

The Brotherhood maintains a national legislative representative at Washington, D.C., who keeps in close contact with the activities on Capitol Hill. Through the efforts of this representative, the Brotherhood is apprised of all legislation unfavourable to organized labour which will be introduced in Congress. Close collaboration of the Brotherhood with other standard railroad labour organizations in the United States has made it possible to defeat much adverse legislation which would have impeded the progress of the railway labour organizations.

Brotherhood representation in the Dominion of Canada is similar in many ways to the representation in the United States. System officers and vice-presidents have similar duties and the Board of Conciliation in the Dominion of Canada is similar to the National Mediation Board in the United States. Close collaboration between the States and the Dominion of Canada has resulted in satisfactory gains for our membership.

mechanical crafts. The International Brotherhood of Firemen and Oilers represents power house employees; that is, stationary engineers, firemen, water tenders, oilers, coal passers, etc., and in addition labourers employed in railway shops.

Our agreements have qualification rules which establish very definite qualifications an employee must have to secure a job as a mechanic in one of the six mechanical crafts. He must have served an apprenticeship in that trade or have had four years' varied experience in all branches of the trade to qualify for a position as a mechanic in a railway shop. Skill is acquired by an apprentice training course and we have in effect on all railroads agreements providing for a four year course of apprenticeship for each of the six mechanical trades. Specific rules governing the employment of apprentices and the details of their training are in these agreements.

In addition to the apprentice training rules in the agreement, we are at present engaged in establishing a most thorough course of classroom instruction and intensive supervision of the training of apprentices in railroad shops. This is simply an amplification of our previous apprentice training efforts, in order to turn out mechanics with the very highest standard of training it is possible to devise.

The hours of work are eight per day, six days per week, with the exception of a certain very limited number of jobs on which the employees may be required to work seven days per week. Our agreements provide for the bulletined hours worked per day and week, and that any work performed outside those bulletined hours will be paid for at overtime rates. Thus, if an employee worked ten hours in any particular day, he would receive eight hours' pay at the straight time rate and two hours' pay at overtime rate, regardless of whether he worked the full forty hours that week or not. Likewise, he would receive overtime rates for any work performed on Sundays and seven recognized legal holidays each year. The exception to the above rule, applicable to a very limited number of jobs, provides for a monthly salary for those employees who are on such jobs, and the salaries are fixed so that they comprehend payment for regular work days eight hours per day at straight time and for Sundays and holidays at the overtime rate, so that those employees are not required to work for less on Sundays or holidays on account of being on a monthly salary.

The wage rates generally in effect for the shop mechanics are \$1.39 per hour; for their helpers \$1.16 per hour; the labourer's rate is from 90 cents to 95 cents per hour; while the rates for stationary firemen and oilers are generally embraced in a monthly salary. Where they are

on an hourly basis, they are approximately equal to the mechanics' rate. The actual earnings of the shopmen are, of course, affected by whether they work full time or whether they lose some time on account of sickness, accident or for other reasons. There is no guaranteed annual or weekly wage.

The individual income tax, which is graduated in accordance with the earnings, is deducted from the employee's pay check under the present internal revenue laws of the United States. In addition to the income tax deductions there are deductions for railroad retirement purposes, amounting to 5½ per cent of the employees pay up to \$300.00. No deduction is made for any amount over \$300.00 earned by an employee in one month. It is impossible to figure the income tax deductions, of course, because of the very wide variation in the wages and earnings of the employees.

In 1946 we secured an 18½ cent per hour increase in hourly wage rates and in 1947 an additional 15½ cents per hour. This total of 34 cents per hour in less than two years has not properly kept pace with the inflated cost of living, so that with present prices it cannot be said that the earnings of these shop employees are adequate to provide the proper standard of living. The only thing involved in the cost of living that has been held in any measure of control up to the present time is rent. There have been some increases in rent but not in any proportion to the increases in other items comprising the cost of living.

It is impossible to estimate how much would be needed to be added to these employees' earnings to keep them in

proper relation to the increased cost of living, for the very good reason that when you take the figures available on costs in national computations you will find that many items have again increased since the basic figures you are using were issued. This now presents a problem of the most serious importance which may affect the whole economy of the country if something is not done in the near future to stabilize costs and bring them into some proper relation to values.

There is one thing I should like to comment on in this short article and that is the affiliation of these railway labour organizations with the International Transport Workers' Federation. The message generally given by those representatives of the I.T.F. who were recently in America was to the effect that affiliation of these American organizations has been most helpful.

In thinking over the whole matter of organization throughout the world, I am convinced that because transport workers' organizations not only represent employees in a very large number of countries but also, in some cases, travel between countries to a very great extent, they can have an influence not only on the future form of organization of working people but, to a very large extent, on the policies that are governing a great many of the countries in the world to-day.

I am quite sure that all of us in the shopcraft organizations are very glad to make the small contribution we can make toward determining that labour organizations the world over shall be organizations of free men and be kept free from dictation by any influences that would be detrimental to working people.

THE EFFECTS OF POWER SHORTAGE ON ELECTRIFIED RAILWAYS

In view of the fact that quite a number of Continental countries are carrying out large-scale electrification schemes which are based on either thermal or hydro-electric power, it is interesting to consider the measures that have to be taken when shortage of power due to lack of fuel or drought tends to interfere seriously with the operation of electrified railways.

During the winter of 1946-7, as well as during October and November, 1947, the Swiss Federal Railways, which have practically 90 per cent of their route mileage electrified, were forced by the drought to the most stringent economy in the consumption of electric energy for traction purposes.

One way to effect a saving of electric energy is to put steam locomotives into service. This had to be done extensively in Switzerland. The Swiss Federal Railways own at present 192 main line, 106 shunting and 13 narrow gauge steam locomotives. Of the 298 normal gauge engines at the most only about 240 can be utilized daily ;

the others are out of service for wash-out, maintenance and repair work. Of the 150 main line and 90 shunting locomotives thus available about 40 main line and 65 shunting locomotives are required for the lines that are still steam operated, as well as at stations, marshalling yards and private sidings not completely fitted with overhead equipment. So only 110 main line and 25 shunting steam locomotives remain for use on electrified lines and for the normally electrically operated shunting service. A large part of these were so used in the early part of the winter of 1947-48. During the six working days from the 5th to 11th October 1947, for instance, the performance of steam locomotives over electrified lines was 65,000 kilometres (40,625 miles) or about 11,000 kilometres (6,875 miles) a day.

The extent of any possible steam performance, however, depends not only on the number of serviceable steam locomotives, but also—and to a greater extent—on the personnel available. To man a steam locomotive

a second man of locomotive crew grade is always required. Moreover, the times for preparing and disposing of engines are much longer for steam than for electric locomotives, while the amount of work required for maintenance, cleaning and coaling up, etc., is also far greater. The resulting increased locomotive and shed staff requirements limit the use of steam traction sometimes far more than the actual number of steam locomotives available.

Moreover, the return to partial steam operation involves considerable operating difficulties. For instance, the proper selection of the kinds of trains which are to be steam operated is not an easy matter. The running times of most of the passenger trains can no longer be kept with steam traction. Moreover, the steam heating appliances on the majority of the coaches are missing, as during the recent war the steam pipes and heating apparatus had to be removed and used as scrap. Passenger trains which could be hauled by steam locomotives were therefore limited to a few, specially selected, light trains. But even with goods trains a change-over to steam traction is no easy matter. The newest types of steam locomotives in Switzerland are about thirty years old. Train weights hauled and running times have been improved to such an extent with electrification that old steam locomotives just cannot compete. Moreover, locomotive crews must again get used to the harder and more strenuous service on steam locomotives. Engine drivers who were brought up on steam locomotives are becoming rarer, and naturally prefer the easier electric operation. The younger men are trained rather for the grade of driver's assistant than for that of a fireman; they lack the agility and routine required by steam operation, apart from the more strenuous physical work. All this means that even in goods train operation the light trains have to be selected for steam working; on heavily-graded lines steam operation is out of the question.

Moreover it was found in Switzerland that it is no longer possible to use steam locomotives on all sections of line, as in many places the water cranes and turntables have been dismantled.

These few items may suffice to show that utilization of steam locomotives on an electrified system has to be very carefully planned and that the possibilities of steam traction without alteration of the timetables are very soon exhausted. To sum up, the following classes of trains—apart from shunting work—can be switched over to steam traction without altering the timetable:

Light fast trains,

Through freight trains within the performance limit of the steam locomotives,

Light passenger trains, especially on secondary lines, in so far as coaches equipped with steam heating apparatus are available.

It is best to change over to steam traction, both in shunting and main line work, such services as have to be manned by two men even under electric operation.

The partial substitution of electric traction by steam traction is not only a tedious but also a very costly

matter, as the following calculation will show. In 1946 all electric motive power units performed about 58,000,000 kilometres (36,250,000 miles), for which about 22,500,000 Swiss francs* (£1,470,000) had to be spent on electric energy, so the cost in electric energy per locomotive-kilometre averaged 39 centimes (5.4*d.* or 8.64*d.*/mile). On the other hand steam locomotives which performed 4,200,000 kilometres (2,625,000 miles) required an expenditure of 11,300,000 Swiss francs (£651,600) for fuel or 270 centimes (3*s.* 1½*d.*) per kilometre (5*s.* per mile). The costs for maintenance of electric locomotives in 1946 averaged 25 centimes (3.45*d.*) per kilometre (5.52*d.*/mile) as compared with 47 centimes (6.51*d.*) per kilometre (10.42*d.*/mile) for steam locomotives. The higher costs for engine staff, lubrication, cleaning, etc.—although no exact figures are available—may be estimated at 25 centimes (3.45*d.*) per kilometre (5.52*d.*/mile). The additional costs per kilometre of steam operation on already electric lines amounted, therefore, to 231+22+25, or 278 centimes (3*s.* 2*d.* or 5*s.* 1½*d.* per mile).

In other words the replacement of electric by steam traction costs, even at the comparatively modest daily performance of 180 kilometres (112.5 miles) per locomotive—the average running performance of an electric main line locomotive is over 300 kilometres (187 miles) per day—500 Swiss francs (£28 16*s.* 8*d.*) per locomotive per day. If, as was necessary in October 1947, about 11,000 kilometres (6,875 miles) have to be performed by steam traction on electrified sections per day, the additional costs amount to about 30,000 Swiss francs (£1,730) per day, which can in no way be balanced by additional earnings or savings.

Although it is not claimed that the above calculation is an exact one, it does give an impressive picture of the effect of the shortage of electric power on the traction costs of the Swiss Federal Railways. In addition the efficacy of this rather costly measure should not be over-estimated. Even if the train weights hauled by steam locomotives are not smaller than those of the average electrically operated train, the saving in electric energy with steam traction on the scale above-mentioned only amounts to 150,000 k.w.h., or hardly 7 per cent of the average normal daily consumption. In actual fact the savings will be less, since, for the reasons stated above, in most cases only light trains could be steam operated.

It becomes essential, therefore, to explore all other means that might effect a further saving in electric energy. One such means is the reduction or complete suppression of electric train heating. If the electric heating is full on the energy consumption for heating a passenger coach is about 30 per cent of that required for its movement, but as the heating is not always full on the average current consumption calculated over the total heating period is about 15 to 20 per cent of the current required for moving of passenger trains. As about 40 per cent of the total traction energy is required for hauling freight trains, the complete suspension of train heating for the whole heating period would result in a reduction of

* £1=17.4 Swiss francs at official rate of exchange.

about 10 per cent of the total current consumption. Such a measure, however, is not practicable. While it may be tolerable to travel in unheated coaches for short distances, long distance travel in such conditions would soon react on the state of health of the travelling public. The fraction of the 10 per cent of the total energy consumption which could be saved by reducing train heating depends in the last resort on conscientious control and regulation of the coach temperatures and on the timely cutting out of the train heating switch before reaching terminal stations.

Another way in which electric energy can be saved is by the proper handling of the locomotive by the driver. By coasting and taking advantage of the profile of the line considerable savings can be effected. But this kind of economic driving is only possible if running times are ample. It necessitates accelerating trains as quickly as possible to the maximum speed, so that when the current is cut off for coasting the subsequent loss of time is kept down to the minimum. The easing on the train timings would, of course, enable greater use to be made of this type of driving, but it can only be achieved if the whole of the timetable is completely reorganized. The exact amount of energy which could be saved by economic driving is difficult to estimate.

The reduction of the train sets is another way to save energy. Even a 20 per cent reduction in the number of coaches per train saves more current than the complete suspension of electric train heating, or the use of 100 steam locomotives at an additional cost of 50,000 Swiss francs (£2,883) a day. A reduction in the number of coaches in train sets means, of course, a reduction in the number of seats available, but this appears quite tolerable when it is considered that on an average about two-thirds of the seating accommodation provided in trains in 1946 was unoccupied. Admittedly a full reduction of 20 per cent may not be feasible during peak traffic periods, and as far as heavily-loaded long-distance passenger expresses are concerned, but the 20 per cent

reduction may be considerably exceeded on secondary lines and during periods when traffic is light. With long distance trains savings of current can be effected if the number of coaches is better adjusted to the number of passengers travelling over the different sections. This applies particularly to runs on mountainous routes, where the hauling of passenger coaches which are practically empty means a very great wastage of electric energy.

On trains which show a considerable difference in the number of passengers on different days of the week, current can be saved by adjusting the train sets accordingly. As far as goods trains are concerned, savings are possible by better loading of wagons and by reducing empty haulage. The routing of freight trains over the most direct routes also brings savings in electric energy.

To save locomotive ton-kilometres as well as wagon ton-kilometres, each train should be hauled with the smallest possible motive power unit, or with a given motive power unit the train should be made up to the normal trailing load for such a unit. When making up rosters for ordinary services and providing motive power for special trains this matter must be given special consideration in order to avoid double-heading.

If the above measures prove inadequate, nothing remains but a reduction of the timetable, and if it is really to serve its purpose it must be drastic. When, for instance, the Swiss Federal Railways reduced their passenger train mileage temporarily, in November 1947, by 5 per cent, this only brought about a 2 per cent saving in current for traction purposes, as only the lightest and most lightly loaded trains were cut.

In order to achieve an effective reduction in energy consumption the timetable would have to be cut so considerably that it would cause serious disadvantages and losses, not only to the railways, but to the whole economy of the country. It is only natural, therefore, that all the other possibilities to effect savings should be completely exhausted before such a serious step is taken.

SOVIET INLAND WATER TRANSPORT

By *Z. SHASHKOV*

Minister of Inland Water Transport of the U.S.S.R.

There are many great rivers which cut across the vast expanses of the Soviet Union, and the Ministry of Inland Water Transport of the U.S.S.R. makes use of more than 60,000 miles of navigable rivers, lakes and canals. Soviet river vessels carry tens of millions of tons annually of various kinds of freight—timber, oil, coal, building materials, salt, ore, chemicals, etc.

Our inland water transport has undergone radical reconstruction in Soviet times. The period of the pre-war Five-Year Plans saw new waterways built which linked the separate basins in the European part of the Soviet Union into a single system of inland water trans-

port. Construction jobs completed in this period included the Baltic-White Sea Canal, which provided an outlet for vessels from the central European basins to the White and Baltic Seas; and the Moscow-Volga Canal, along which large Volga vessels now sail right up to the Soviet capital. More than fifty big sluice-gates were built.

Improved types of river-going craft were put into operation. On the Volga, for instance, a big fleet of tankers went into service. On the eve of the Second World War this fleet transported up to 10 million tons of oil products in the course of a single navigation season.

During the pre-war Five-Year Plans the number of

self-propelled vessels increased by 2.2 times, and of other types by 2.7 times. The dredging fleet was doubled. This made it possible to secure the needed depth for safe navigation on all the waterways of the country.

* * *

Also built in Soviet times were dozens of new river ports, equipped with powerful cranes, transporters and other loading installations. In Tsarist Russia river vessels were always loaded and unloaded by hand. On the Volga alone 75,000 stevedores were employed.

The Soviet State has built a number of large shipbuilding and repair yards, workshops and wharves.

As regards freight turnover (in ton-kilometres) the Soviet river fleet occupied first place in the world before the outbreak of the recent war. The turnover of our Ministry's shipping lines alone came to nearly 46,000 million ton-kilometres in 1940. It must be taken into consideration that organizations in the various republics, territories and regions are also engaged in river shipping.

The German fascist invaders inflicted tremendous losses upon the inland water transport of the U.S.S.R. They destroyed, scuttled and damaged more than 4,000 vessels, demolished 230 ports and wharves and nearly 90 shipbuilding and repair yards and workshops, and wrecked the Baltic-White Sea and the Moscow-Volga Canals.

Soviet river transport workers vigorously took up the job of restoration after the end of the war. They tackled the task set before them by the Soviet Government—to increase the freight turnover by almost 49 per cent by the end of the post-war Five-Year Plan as compared with the pre-war level. The Plan target means that in the 1950 navigation season the shipping lines of our Ministry will be handling close on 100 million tons of various cargoes. In the course of the current Five-Year Plan the power of our river fleet will be increased by 300,000 h.p. and its carrying capacity by 3 million tons.

The first two years of the post-war Five-Year Plan saw navigation fully restored on all waterways. The damaged canals and almost all of the ports were rehabilitated and a considerable part of the scuttled fleet was salvaged and repaired.

Construction of new waterways is now proceeding on a large scale. One of these jobs is the Manych Canal in the south. The waterway which links the Volga with the Baltic Sea is now undergoing reconstruction. Navigation conditions will be considerably improved when new hydro-electric stations, now under construction on a number of rivers, are completed.

Our Ministry successfully carried out the freight shipping plans for 1946 and 1947. Our river vessels handled nearly 30 per cent more cargo in 1947 than in the previous year.

The rôle played by river transport in Siberia and the Far East, with their vast natural resources, deserves special mention. The utilization of these resources

depends* to a large extent on the rate of development of river transport. Here, in many instances, the rivers provide the only means of transporting large shipments of goods. Our Ministry is already making use of some 30,000 miles of navigable rivers in the Eastern regions of the U.S.S.R. Big shipbuilding yards are being erected in Siberia.

* * *

Hundreds of thousands of people employed in river transport in the Soviet Union are bending their efforts to increase the volume of shipping year by year. Our river fleet belongs to the people and not to private owners. Everyone connected with the fleet knows that the greater the efficiency of river transport, as of any other branch of the national economy, the better will be the life of all the people.

In the socialist emulation drive now in progress on all shipping lines and on board all river vessels, the personnel are making the utmost use of available equipment, and are employing new methods of work. Chadayev, captain of the tanker *Stepan Razin* set a record by bringing loads weighing 35,000 to 42,000 tons from Astrakhan to the upper reaches of the Volga. This is considerably more than the load transported by American tankers of the "State" type, which are equal in capacity to the Soviet tanker under Chadayev's command. In the course of the 1947 navigation season many Soviet captains towed timber rafts downstream, each totalling 20,000 to 25,000 cubic metres in volume.

On the Soviet Union's huge rivers non-stop navigation of freight caravans is of exceptional importance. This problem is likewise being successfully solved by the river transport workers. In 1947 many tug-boats with oil barges and rafts in tow covered over 1,000 miles without a single stop. Fuel and other supplies for these boats were delivered by special vessels and loaded on the move.

The methods introduced by a Soviet worker and innovator in mechanization, Blidman, which make it possible to load a vessel with hundreds of tons of freight in the course of one hour, are now being widely applied at the bigger river ports. At the same time, some new kinds of machinery are being used to complete the cycle of mechanized loading. Loading and unloading of river vessels will be fully mechanized by the end of the post-war Five-Year Plan.

Navigation has now stopped in most of the river basins until next spring. In the winter period the river transport workers repair their vessels and improve their equipment. Greater quantities of freight are to be carried on Soviet waterways in the 1948 navigation season. Following the example set by the Leningrad industrial workers, the river transport workers are launching a drive aimed at achieving the Five-Year Plan in four years.

(From *Soviet News*)