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## REFLECTIONS ON AN I.L.O. CONFERENCE

By P. TOFAHRN

Assistant General Secretary of the I.T.F.

THE Inland Transport Committee of the I.L.O. has just held its third session, in Brussels, from 18 to 27 May. It was not the best of the series.

The railways and roads play a far greater part in inland transport than do river transport and the port industry, and it is therefore only natural that the majority of the workers' and employers' delegates attending these meetings should come from the railway and road transport industries; while government delegates are also largely chosen for their knowledge of these two industries. But the agenda for the third session did not contain a single item of real interest to such delegates. This is probably nobody's fault, unless it is the members of the Committee who attended the second session. At any rate, the only question on the agenda which affected railway and road transport workers was that of technical methods of selecting them for employment, and by the time the sub-committee entrusted with its consideration had held its second meeting it turned out that the employers' group was not the least bit interested, and the majority of the workers' group only in a negative sense.

The conclusion was that the matter was not yet ripe for an international agreement, even in the shape of a series of rules to be recommended to the employers and workers concerned. It was hardly worth while travelling a long way and sitting out a somewhat lengthy conference to arrive at such a result.

Fortunately the delegates called upon to deal with inland navigation and port work had a more interesting task. The problem of the protection of the children and adolescents living in the barges plying on rivers and canals is as old as inland navigation itself. It was actively taken up by the few members of the Committee who were versed in the affairs of the industry, and things were carried to the point where it was possible to propose the drafting of an international convention.

The smooth running of ports is a matter of vital importance to every community. A strike of a few days' duration in a big port can seriously affect a whole country, or even a continent. But it has still not been found possible so to organize the dates of arrival and departure of ships as to ensure that the volume of port work available shall be substantially equal from one day to another, or from one week to another. The fluctuations are very great indeed. Port work, therefore, calls for a supply of skilled labour in sufficient quantity to deal with peak demands, which means that a considerable number of the men will be unable to find work every day of the week.

In the old days they were engaged and paid for half-day turns, and only a small proportion of them were able to earn a living every day of the week or

every week. During the war, however, this tradition was broken with and a beginning was made with systems of engagement and payment providing for something approaching the regularity and stability of employment which is usual in other industries, and this trend has continued since the war.

Delegates interested in the matter were afforded an opportunity to compare the methods in use in different countries, and their results, and they embodied the common principles emerging and the most successful applications of them in a Recommendation which will be a useful guide in improving existing systems and stabilizing employment in ports where the bad old tradition still persists.

It is perhaps not entirely accidental that these two sub-committees—those dealing with inland navigation and port work—were able to do more useful work than the third one. In both these industries competition is on the international plane, and the need to unify conditions in the competing countries is felt more keenly. Even the employers and governments, who are generally little inclined to enter into international obligations of a social character, ended by yielding to the force of necessity.

Although the railway managements have an old tradition of international agreements, they show little evidence of it when it comes to work through the I.L.O. Through their own international organizations they are constantly coming to technical and administrative agreements to facilitate railway traffic on a continental scale in spite of frontiers and other obstacles such as national currencies and different laws. At I.L.O. Conferences, where it is a question of lending a hand in improving conditions of employment, they feel that everyone can very well be master in his own house without suffering for the sins of others, whether of omission or commission. And so there is on the railway employers' side a total absence of willingness to make use of the Inland Transport Committee of the I.L.O.

Road transport undertakings are only just beginning to make their entry into the international field. International road transport is still in its infancy, and the employers have hardly had time to realize that unless a large measure of uniformity in working conditions can be secured competition is likely to become bitter, and eventually ruinous. At the meeting of the Inland Transport Committee they seemed hardly to be aware that the problem exists, or that the Committee affords a useful means of solving it.

But the task of the I.L.O. is not merely to solve social problems of a strictly international character : its work

extends to social problems as a whole. Now it is a peculiarity of inland transport that the solution of social problems within it would be a major contribution to a solution of the problem of the co-ordination of transport. In many a country the success of one means of transport in the competition with others is largely due to inequality in working conditions. If two competing means of transport would assume identical or equivalent obligations towards their workers in respect of wages, stability of employment, working hours and rest periods, paid holidays, pensions, and allowances in case of sickness or incapacitation for work as a result of an accident, etc., the problem of co-ordinating them would be very much simplified. In the view of the workers' group the inquiries that it is proposed to make into different aspects of working conditions in inland transport should serve to reveal ways of solving the problem of the co-ordination of transport in its social aspect. Shall we be able to count on the understanding and co-operation of the employers' side in attaining this object ?

In some parts of the world, inland transport has special social problems of its own. If a delegation from the Inland Transport Committee of the I.L.O. should undertake an inquiry in Africa or Asia, for example, what kind of report would it bring back ? Would we not find it an occasion for making special recommendations, very different from and less ambitious than the general resolutions which workers', employers' and government delegates are accustomed to adopt unanimously ?

The field of activities of the I.L.O. is the whole world, and it is to the whole world that the Inland Transport Committee should turn its attention. It will not be helping the I.L.O. to fulfil its mission unless it tries to level out the enormous differences which exist between the standards of living of the transport workers in the industrialized countries and those in the under-developed countries. The Inland Transport Committee has finished running in : now it must tackle the urgent tasks which await it in the disinherited regions of this world of ours.

*In addition to the English edition of this " Journal " there are editions published in Swedish and German. The I.T.F. also publishes a fortnightly " Press Report " which appears in the following languages : English, French, German, Swedish and Spanish.*

# THE BRITISH ROAD HAULAGE INDUSTRY

By A. DEAKIN

*General Secretary, Transport and General Workers' Union*

Forty years ago, the road haulage industry of Great Britain was in its infancy—horse-drawn in character, local in scope, and only just emerging from the "village-carrier" stage. Wages were wretchedly low, and hours unbelievably long.

The industry developed rapidly during the war of 1914-18, and trade union organization grew also, so that when the National Transport Workers' Federation called the first national road haulage conference in 1917, the seventeen unions concerned could claim a substantial membership.

This increase in scope and importance gathered momentum in the immediate post-war years. Many of the new entrants were ex-service men, who sank their gratuities in the purchase of ex-army lorries from the government dumps, working them alone or with one or two companions. There followed a cut-throat competition for loads, which soon reached desperate proportions. These men had often no alternative but to exploit themselves and each other, their employees and their vehicles, until the industry was a jumble of exhausted men and unroadworthy lorries. All the time, of course, they were in competition with the railways and canals, in which much capital was locked up, but which were in a neglected and run-down condition, partly due to the conditions of the war years.

It is not remarkable that public opinion, led by the Unions, began to demand legislation to regulate the industry. Wages and hours had been improved, but were still far from satisfactory.

The first official attempt to bring some order into the picture was made in 1930, when the Road Traffic Act carried out some of the demands the Unions had made before the Royal Commission on Transport a year or two earlier. The Act provided for the limitation of driving speeds and drivers' hours, and for continuous rest periods, in the interests of safety. Though this measure proved useful in the passenger-carrying industry, it was of limited effectiveness in the case of road haulage. The Road and Rail Traffic Act of 1933, therefore, regulated more carefully the hours during which a driver was to be on duty and—a vitally important point—provided for the keeping of records. This Act also classified road haulage vehicles according to use—"A" or "A contract" (public carriers—those operating "for hire or reward"); "B" (public carriers over a limited field); and "C" (private carriers—vans which a shop-keeper or manufacturer maintains for his own use). This system of licensing was deliberately intended to limit new entrants to the carriers' side of the industry, and it also prevented the extension of an operator's fleet, unless it could be shown that there was a need for the extra vehicles. It had no such effect upon the number of "C" licences, where the securing of a licence and the extension of it are largely automatic. The conditions attached to "A" and "B" licences by the 1933 Act, in

respect of wages and working conditions, did not apply to "C" licences, and this of course encouraged businesses to obtain their own vehicles. There is no doubt that the restriction on the number of operators and vehicles engaged in the public carriers' section of the industry made possible a measure of regulation, and thus helped to improve the working conditions of those employed.

It was clear, however, that more was needed to be done if the lives of those employed in the industry were to be rendered tolerable. During the passage through Parliament of the Road and Rail Traffic Act, the Minister of Labour promised the Unions to call a Conference for the purpose of establishing a Conciliation Board which could deal with wages, hours, and working conditions in the industry. Such a Board was duly set up, with Area Boards for each of the traffic areas. In April 1934 this Board issued its decisions covering general working conditions, and interim wages and classification schemes. Wages were to be based upon the carrying capacity of the vehicle, and upon a geographical grading scheme divided as follows: London and Metropolitan; important industrial centres and principal ports; other industrial areas; and rural areas. Special rates were laid down for "truck" and long-distance services. These decisions were intended to operate while the Area Boards were dealing with the question of grading, which was completed by the end of 1935.

Because of the attitude of some employers, and because of the exclusion of "C" licences from the conditions in regard to fair wages, etc., the National Board could not secure effective observance of its decisions in all areas. It therefore appealed to the Ministers of Labour and Transport, as a result of which the Baillie Committee of Inquiry was set up in July 1936, "to examine the position in regard to the regulation of wages and conditions of service of persons employed in connection with the carriage of goods by road (whether in vehicles authorized under "A", "B", or "C" licences), and to make recommendations as to action which it was desirable to take". After this Committee had reported, the Minister of Labour introduced into Parliament the Bill which subsequently became the Road Haulage Wages Act, 1938. Part I of this Act provided that the remuneration—including holiday remuneration—of work-people employed in connection with motor goods vehicles requiring "A" or "B" licences should be fixed by the Minister of Labour, on the basis of proposals submitted to him by a Central Wages Board, after consultation with the Area Boards. The rates, etc., so fixed, came into force as statutory remuneration, and were binding as minima upon the employers concerned. The Central and Area Boards consisted of representatives of the employers and workers in equal numbers, appointed after consultation with their organizations. In addition, there were independent or non-representative members on the Central

Board, one of whom was appointed by the Minister to act as Chairman.

The wages and working conditions of workers employed in connection with vehicles requiring "C" licences are, in general, arranged by *voluntary* negotiating bodies, upon which employers and workers are represented. Where this voluntary machinery is absent or ineffective, however, Part II of the Road Haulage Wages Act gives a measure of protection to the "C" licence worker. Any such worker who considers that his remuneration is unfair, or his trade union, or a trade union representing a substantial number of road haulage workers, may make a formal complaint to the Minister, who will take the matter up with the employer. If satisfaction is not obtained, the Minister must refer the matter to the Industrial Court for settlement within a month, *unless* the employer belongs to an organization which, with the trade unions concerned, has set up joint machinery for the settlement of disputes in the industry by conciliation or arbitration. In such cases the Minister must give this joint machinery a chance to settle the dispute before he goes to the Industrial Court. Once a dispute has been referred to the Industrial Court, if the Court finds the wages unfair, it will itself fix the remuneration to be paid, having regard to the wages already fixed for "A" and "B" licence workers, to any trade union agreements or other Industrial Court awards for comparable work, and to the general level of remuneration of other workers in the trade in which the employer is engaged. The remuneration so fixed by the Court becomes a statutory minimum, and there are penalties for non-compliance.

It will be remembered that a dispute arose in January 1947, and at its conclusion there was established a National Joint Industrial Council for the Road Haulage Industry. This voluntary body, which includes representatives of all the Unions concerned and of the Road Haulage Association, provides machinery for the speedy settlement of differences. A year later the Wages Councils Act, 1948, abolished the Area Boards set up under the Road Haulage Wages Act, and turned the Road Haulage Wages Board into a Wages Council. These two measures—the one voluntary, the other statutory—are designed to simplify and speed up the procedure for fixing wages and working conditions, thus helping to avoid disputes.

While the present machinery still makes a distinction between the common carriers and the "C" licence section, the power given to the Minister to regulate the wages of the latter section through the Industrial Court has tended to bring such workers into line with those in the carriers' section.

The Holidays With Pay Act of 1936 made statutory provision for annual holidays with pay for workers covered by "A" and "B" licences.

The trade union took an active part in securing the Convention adopted by the I.L.O. just before the war in 1939, which dealt with the regulation of hours and rest periods, record books and the night work of professional drivers of road vehicles. Immediately after the war—in 1945—the I.L.O., on the suggestion of the

Government of the United Kingdom, established an Inland Transport Industrial Committee, tripartite in character and fully international in scope, charged with considering the social problems of the industry during the transition from war to peace, and future international co-operation concerning social policy and its economic foundations in the industry.

The struggle for trade union organization and recognition has been a long and bitter one, because of the rapid growth and disorganized development of the industry, and because of the small size of the unit and the isolation in which many of the employees work. Another source of the difficulty has been the uncertain lines of demarcation, as, for instance, between "transport" and "distributive" workers, particularly in the "C" licence section. In practice, this has been overcome by giving all the Unions concerned seats upon the various negotiating bodies, and by building up a system of "spheres of influence", none the less effective because usually informal in character.

The Unions have always recognized that wages are not the only thing to be considered in the industry. They have also concerned themselves with hours and rest periods, safety and welfare. For road transport workers, as for those in other industries, they have struggled to secure adequate social insurance and a real measure of social security, and they have warmly welcomed the great series of measures which have recently been enacted in this field. In other directions they have rendered service to their members, by providing special legal assistance to those who are accused of offences under the road traffic acts, by inquiry into methods of improving roadside cafés and resthouses, and—more recently—by helping to work out an education scheme for those who wish to prepare for higher positions in the industry.

Above all, the Unions have always insisted that road haulage should be organized so as to render service to the community, and to give a decent living to those engaged in it. For these reasons, nearly twenty years ago, they pressed for a Royal Commission on Transport, and also for the various measures which, since that date, have sought to regulate the industry and make it conscious of its responsibilities. For those reasons also, they were solidly behind the Labour Government in its determination to nationalize the industry.

The Transport Act in 1947 established a British Transport Commission. Among other duties this body (through its Road Transport Executive) is to acquire all road haulage undertakings which were, during 1946, mainly engaged in long-distance carrying under "A" or "B" licences. "Long-distance" for this purpose is defined as "the carriage of goods by the person carrying on the undertaking for a distance of forty miles or upwards in one goods vehicle or a succession of goods vehicles in such circumstances that the vehicle or one or more vehicles is at some time during the carriage more than twenty-five miles from its operating centre". The carriage of liquids in tanks, most livestock, heavy indivisible loads and ordinary furniture removals are not included. Apart from this "exempted traffic", after the appointed day, it is a condition of "A" licences that

goods shall not be carried more than twenty-five miles from the hauliers' operating centre without a permit from the Commission. Compensation is to be in British Transport stock, or in cash if the amount does not exceed £2,000, based on the net value of the assets plus, in certain cases, compensation for cessation of business, etc. The Bill, as originally presented, contained provisions relating to "C" licence vehicles, but these were

later withdrawn by the Minister "after considering the difficulties of the current trade situation."

Harold Clay, Assistant General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, was appointed a member of the Road Transport Executive, as was Archie Henderson, formerly an officer of that Union. John Benstead, of the National Union of Railwaymen, became a member of the British Transport Commission.

APPENDIX—FIGURES

Size of Industry

Number of vehicles authorized and in possession :

Licences	1936	1937	1938	1946 June	1946 Dec.	1947
"A" and "B"	143,302	144,876	148,122	140,726	149,069	162,295
"C"	316,714	362,380	365,025	306,443	383,738	487,151
TOTAL	460,016	507,256	513,147	447,169	532,807	649,446

Number of Licence holders :

Licences	1936	1937	1938	1946 June	1946 Dec.	1947
"A" and "B"	61,832	61,078	61,086	47,741	50,908	55,545
"C"	161,221	186,559	178,268	149,192	197,779	253,548
TOTAL	223,053	247,637	239,354	196,933	248,687	309,093

By November 1948 the total number of goods vehicles licensed had risen to nearly three-quarters of a million.

Numbers employed and trade union organization

The number of workpeople employed (and the number organized in trade unions) is impossible to assess, since drivers of "C" licence vehicles are included in the total of distributive or productive workers, and indeed are not always engaged solely upon driving duties: on the other hand, some vehicles require a statutory attendant as well as a driver. In November 1948 the number known to be employed in the common carriers' section was just over 170,000.

Wages and Working Conditions

A. 1914 (72-hour normal working week).

London —Horse-drawn vehicles—27s. to 38s. per week, according to size.

Motor vehicles—29s. to 40s. per week, according to size and carrying capacity.

Provinces—Horse-drawn vehicles—24s. to 30s. per week, according to size and area.

Motor vehicles—27s. to 42s. per week, according to carrying capacity and area.

B. April 1920 (48-hour normal working week).

London —Horse-drawn vehicles—61s. to 77s. per week, according to size.

Motor vehicles—59s. to 79s. per week, according to size and carrying capacity.

Provinces—Horse-drawn vehicles—60s. to 76s. per week, according to size and area.

Motor vehicles—50s. to 84s. per week, according to area and carrying capacity.

C. May 1940—Workers in common carriers' section (48-hour normal working week).

London —Motor vehicles—59s. to 78s. per week, according to carrying capacity.

Provinces—Motor vehicles—48s. to 75s. per week, according to area and carrying capacity.

Trunk or long-distance motor vehicles—63s. to 73s. per week, according to carrying capacity.

Grading—London and three provincial grades.

Special rates for overtime, night-work and Sunday work.

Guaranteed payment to regular workers of 48 hours each week.

Payment for all statutory and proclaimed public holidays.

One week's annual holiday with pay.

D. June 1947—Common carriers' section (44-hour normal working week).

London—Motor vehicles . . . . .	89s. to 108s.	} per week, according to carrying capacity
Provinces—Grade 1 motor vehicles	85s. to 103s.	
" " " " " " " " " " " "	82s. to 99s.	
Trunk or long-distance " " " " " "	93s. to 103s.	
Carriage of heavy indivisible loads:		
(London) . . . . .	116s. to 163s.	
(Provinces) . . . . .	111s. to 159s.	

Three Provincial grades reduced to two—lowest grade included in intermediate.

Special rates for overtime, night-work and Sunday work.

Guaranteed payment to regular workers of 44 hours each week.

Payment for all customary and proclaimed public holidays.

Two weeks' annual holiday with pay.

E. February 1948 to date—common carriers' section (44-hour normal working week).

London—Motor vehicles . . . . .	101s. to 119s.	} per week, according to carrying capacity
Provinces—Grade 1 motor vehicles	96s. to 114s.	
" " " " " " " " " " " "	92s. to 110s.	
Carriage of heavy indivisible loads:		
(London) . . . . .	119s. to 167s.	
(Province) . . . . .	115s. to 163s.	

Only small towns and rural areas are now included in Grade 2. Other conditions as for 1947.

Earnings

At present a good deal of overtime is being worked in the common carriers' section. An inquiry carried out by the Ministry of Labour in October 1948 showed that in the sample week the average earnings of adult men were 135s. 4d. for a week of 51½ hours or 2s. 7½d. per hour. These earnings are rather lower (and the hours rather higher) than those for the other industries included in the inquiry, largely because of the absence of opportunities to earn piecework or bonus payments. Workers in the road passenger-carrying industry had slightly higher hourly earnings, but worked fewer hours, and therefore had a smaller pay-packet.

Index of Prices and Cost of Living Figures (at each of the dates quoted in the earlier tables, for comparison purposes)

1914 . . . . .	(Old cost-of-living figure basis)	100
April 1920 . . . . .	( " " " " " )	241
May 1940 . . . . .	( " " " " " )	180
June 1947 . . . . .	( " " " " " )	203

(Last date on which old basis figures were calculated.)

June 1947 . . . . .	(New index of retail prices)	100
February 1948 . . . . .	( " " " " " )	106
February 1949 . . . . .	( " " " " " )	109

## FISHERMEN'S CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

The following report sets forth briefly the results of a preliminary enquiry into the conditions of employment of fishermen which was recently undertaken by the International Labour Office.

### Origin of the Enquiry

Although several preliminary discussions on certain aspects of conditions of work in the fishing industry were conducted by the Joint Maritime Commission of the International Labour Organization before the war, it was in 1946 that the Office first undertook a comprehensive study of all these conditions. In June of that year the Twenty-eighth (Maritime) Session of the International Labour Conference, meeting in Seattle, adopted a resolution which asked the Office, in consultation with the interests concerned, to make the necessary studies with a view to considering the possible adoption of an International Fishermen's Charter, setting out, on the lines of the I.T.F.'s International Seafarers' Charter, minimum standards of wages and working conditions, continuity of employment, social legislation, etc., for the industry.

This resolution was submitted to the Governing Body at its Ninety-ninth Session (Montreal, September 1946), and the Office was instructed to proceed with a study of the question.

A valuable contribution to this study was made by the International Fishermen's Conference held under the auspices of the International Transport Workers' Federation in Hull, England, in June 1947. Here the representatives of fishermen's organizations of seven countries met to consider the formulation of an International Fishermen's Charter, setting forth the international standards desired by the organizations present, on the lines of the International Seafarers' Charter already referred to. As fishermen have hitherto generally been excluded from the scope of most International Labour Conventions on maritime questions, the Office had little up-to-date information on the subject of the fishing industry. Owing to the complex and varied nature of the industry, it was essential to collect the fullest possible background information as the first step towards considering what international action was possible. Therefore, a very detailed questionnaire concerning the organization of the fishing industry and the conditions of employment of fishermen was sent to forty-four State Members of the International Labour Organization in January 1947.

Replies have been received from twenty-four countries, whose total production is estimated at about 65 per cent of the annual world production of fish in 1947. Although the information received has not yet been fully analysed, it serves to reveal the scope and difficulties of the problem. This will be clear from the following preliminary survey of the situation in the various countries as shown in their replies to the Office questionnaire.

### Extent of the Industry

The following table gives the number of persons engaged in fishing in the countries that furnished this

information. The figures for both full-time and part-time fishermen are indicated, as well as the total of both categories :

Country	Number of fishermen		
	Full-time	Part-time	Total
Australia (1943-44) ..	—	—	13,200
Belgium (1946) ..	—	—	1,992
Chile ..	—	—	6,140
Denmark (1944) (incl. Faroe Islands) ..	19,000	6,000	25,000
Finland ..	4,000 families	4,600 families	8,600 families
France ..	55,000	50,000 (beach fishermen)	105,000
Greece ..	15,000	17,000	32,000
Iceland ..	4,500	1,500	6,000
India (1947) ..	470,800	263,000	733,800
Ireland ..	1,886	8,191	10,077
Netherlands ..	—	—	13,000
New Zealand ..	877	536	1,413
Norway ..	34,830	38,843*	112,404
Poland ..	2,496	796	3,292
Siam ..	—	—	20,000
Sweden ..	16,000	9,000	25,000
Turkey ..	—	—	8,000
Union of South Africa ..	—	—	8,000
United Kingdom ..	—	—	32,000
United States ..	65,300	59,500	124,800

\*Fishermen whose principal occupation is fishing.

†Part-time fishermen.

It will be seen that part-time fishing accounts for the employment of a large number of persons in every country that furnished separate figures. Not the least important reason for this situation is the seasonal nature of fishing, which is conditioned, not only by local weather conditions, but by the movements of the various types of fish. In some countries these conditions are so marked that in addition to the fact that a large proportion of fishermen are occupied only part-time, the majority of them must find some form of supplementary employment in order to earn a living.

Fishing practices have been found to vary, not only between the various countries, but within national boundaries, because of the different types of fish that are caught. The type of vessel employed, the number of men engaged, the accommodation, food, hours of work and rest, in fact, all the conditions of employment, are dependent upon the type of fishing. Conditions also vary between industrially employed, self-employed and co-operatively organized fishermen. The standards of employment are not universally applicable, but must be formulated to meet the individual requirements of each of the major types of undertakings.

### Wages ; Hours ; Manning

(a) *Remuneration.* There are several systems of remuneration in the fishing industry, but the system in

most general use is found to be that of a share in the value of the catch. This may take the form of a share of the gross proceeds of the sale of the catch, a share of the proceeds after a fixed amount for expenses has been deducted, or a share of the net proceeds after the actual expenses of the particular trip have been deducted. In most cases the percentage allotted to each member of the crew depends upon his rating. However, in many co-operative undertakings each member of the crew, except the skipper, shares equally in the proceeds.

The system of paying fixed wages which is usual in other industries is limited in the case of fishermen almost entirely to the large industrial fishing undertakings. Even on these vessels the officers are usually paid by a share of the catch or a combination of a fixed salary and a share system. Only a small percentage of the total number of fishermen in any country from which a reply was received are paid by means of fixed wages only.

A combination of the share system and the wage system appears to be gaining favour in many countries. It has long been realized that remuneration by shares alone gives rise to many injustices. It is often difficult to reach agreement on the expenses which can fairly be deducted from the gross proceeds, and the fisherman is at times given no voice in the calculation of percentages. Often the landing of a large catch has forced the sale price down to a point where the fisherman's share is insufficient to enable him to support himself and his family. On the other hand, the payment of fixed wages has not, in some cases, adequately compensated the fisherman for the landing of a large and profitable catch. Many countries have reported that the introduction of a combined system which includes the payment of guaranteed minimum wages or earnings to protect the fishermen in case of economic stress, plus a share in the value of the catch, has been of benefit to the industry. Although it

may be possible to regulate the systems of remuneration of employed fishermen in this or some other way, it is difficult to cover the remuneration of self-employed persons by legislation.

(b) *Hours of Work.* The nature of many types of fishing undertakings requires the members of the crews of fishing vessels to work unusually long hours. Many of the countries have reported that working days of twenty and even twenty-two continuous hours are not unusual in certain types of fishing, while the vessel is at the fishing grounds. Nor does it seem, under present conditions, that such hours of work during actual operations can easily be reduced in all cases. It may be that ways will be found to accommodate crews of a sufficient size to allow a daily rest of eight hours for each fisherman even during the periods when large quantities of fish are being caught. In the meantime, many countries have enacted legislation, or collective agreements have been negotiated, providing for fixed periods of rest in port while the vessel is not actually fishing.

(c) *Manning Scales.* Owing to the great variety of fishing undertakings and types of operations, it has been found impossible to determine any uniformity or pattern concerning manning scales. Some countries reported that there are provisions in the legislation or collective agreements concerning the size of crews of vessels of over a certain tonnage or horse-power used in certain kinds of fishing. In such cases, provisions similar to those governing conditions in the national merchant marine are applicable.

**General Conditions of Employment**

(a) *Holidays with Pay.* The following table gives information concerning holidays with pay for fishermen as contained in the replies of Governments :

Country	Length of annual vacation-holiday with pay, or leave between voyages	Holiday granted in virtue of legislation or agreement	Provisions concerning public holidays
Australia : in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland :	2 weeks' holiday for 12 months' employment	Legislation	—
Remaining States		Agreement	
Belgium	6 days maximum	Legislation	8 public holidays
Chile	15 days maximum for one year with the same employer	Legislation	Only necessary work to be done
Denmark	1 day's holiday for each month of work (except shore fishermen)	Legislation	—
Finland	The same as all workers	Legislation	—
France	2 days' holiday for each month of work	Legislation	Compensatory leave or overtime
Greece	None	—	—
Iceland	1 day's holiday for each month of work	Legislation	—
Ireland	No fixed period	Agreement	No work on religious holidays
New Zealand	2 weeks or more	Both	Same as other employees
Norway (wage-paid fishermen only)	2 weeks plus allowance or 18 days	Legislation	—
Poland	—	—	No fishing on public holidays
Siam	—	Agreement	—
Union of South Africa	7 days for 3 months' snooking ; 48 hours for 2 weeks on trawlers ; 48 hours for 1 week of 96 hours on the remainder	Determination	4 days at Christmas
United Kingdom (trawlers)	1 day's holiday for each month of work	Agreement	—
United States	Varies	Agreement	Varies

(b) *Medical Examination, Minimum Age, etc.* The following table gives a brief summary of the information received concerning the regulations or practice relative to medical examination, age on entry and qualifications on entry or for the various grades of fishermen, and notice of dismissal :

Country	Medical examination	Age on entry	Qualifications on entry or for various grades of fishermen	Notice of dismissal
Australia	Yes, for persons under 18 years	18 years, stokehold ; 14 years, others	None on entry ; required of some masters, mates and engineers	Six days on some trawlers
Belgium	Yes, but seldom enforced	Deck dept. : 14 years, boys ; 18 years, seamen. Engine dept. : 18 years	Yes	24 hours for coastal ; 48 hours for distant trade
Chile	Yes, for the granting of a certificate	Apprentice : 16 years ; licence : 19 years	Yes, for certificates	Six days or one month
Denmark	Yes	14 years	None on entry	None
France	Yes	15 years	—	24 hours
Greece	—	—	—	5 days
Iceland	Not on engagement, but when requested by the skipper	14 years ; engine assistants, 16 years ; stokers, 18 years	For officers	24 hours
Ireland	—	14 years	—	—
Netherlands	Yes	14 years	—	24 hours
Poland	Yes	15 years	—	24 hours
Turkey	Yes	—	Good conduct certificate	—
Union of South Africa	—	15 years	—	—
United Kingdom	Yes	15 years	Skippers and mates	—
United States	Yes, in 7 agreements	—	—	48 hours in two agreements

(c) *Accommodation and Food.* The regulations concerning accommodation on board and the food to be provided to the members of the crews of fishing vessels are, in most countries, limited to the vessels exceeding a certain tonnage or horse-power or to those vessels that make trips lasting a certain number of days. Where there are such provisions, they are usually the same as the regulations concerning vessels of the merchant marine.

Usually, the crews of small vessels either furnish their own food or arrange for it to be provided by the owner under the provisions of the collective agreements. It has been suggested that it is only on vessels that stay at sea for a period of more than five days that these questions should be subject to international regulation. On smaller vessels there is either little need for such regulation or the lack of space and other facilities would prevent their enforcement.

(d) *Safety, Welfare, Training and Social Security.* Nearly every country indicated that very strict rules exist concerning the provision of safety and medical equipment and the adherence to safety and first-aid regulations by fishing boats. The regulations covering large fishing vessels are, in most cases, similar to those applied to vessels of the merchant marine.

Very few countries reported the existence of welfare facilities for fishermen, either on board the vessels or ashore. Several Governments stated that the crowded conditions on fishing vessels and the absence of leisure time for fishermen make the provision of such facilities impracticable.

Several Governments reported the existence of training facilities for fishermen, both on the apprentice level and for the training of officers. Others mentioned plans for the future establishment of training institutions.

In most of the countries from which replies were

received, fishermen are covered either by the social insurance schemes applicable to workers in general or by the systems designed especially for merchant seamen. In some countries inshore fishermen are covered by the general schemes and deep-sea fishermen by the seamen's insurance plans.

It is clear that, owing to the dangers and hardships involved in the fisherman's work, it is very important that he should be fully covered by all forms of social insurance. There are few types of employment in which the worker is so continuously subjected to the risks of injury, sickness and death. The economic fluctuations involved in fishing make unemployment and old-age insurance particularly desirable for the persons employed. Several countries stated that the similarity of the conditions of employment of persons engaged in the merchant marine and of those employed in fishing, especially on large vessels, had caused them to include fishermen under the provisions covering seafarers. This would appear to be worthy of further study.

#### Possible International Action

Although this is only a preliminary survey, the enquiry indicates an urgent need for the protection of fishermen and the attainment of higher standards of working conditions in the fishing industries of most countries. The nature of the industry and the methods of fishing vary to such an extent from country to country and for the different types of fishing within national boundaries that it will be difficult to obtain agreement on uniform rules to be applied universally. A certain uniformity in



the conditions of industrial fishermen on large vessels has been found, and this group might be treated separately.

However, in view of the evident need, it is hoped that it will be possible to lay down a number of fairly general principles governing fishermen's conditions of employment in some form of international instrument. It will be necessary for the Governing Body of the International Labour Office and the Conference to decide the

form, scope and content of such an instrument. Whatever decisions may finally be reached on these points, it is hoped that action can be taken in the near future to remedy internationally some of the less satisfactory aspects of the conditions of employment of this group of workers, which numbers over a million and a quarter persons in the twenty-four countries covered by the present survey.

## FIFTY YEARS OF RAILWAY TRADE UNIONISM IN SWEDEN

By *H. BLOMGREN*

*President, Swedish Railwaymen's Union*

For a country like Sweden with its vast distances, few inhabitants and highly developed industrialization, a well-organized communication system with the greatest importance laid on railways, is an essential factor in the economic life of the country. The great importance of the railways for the country can clearly be seen from the fact that although a relatively late start was made with the construction of the Swedish railway system, to-day the number of track kilometres per inhabitant is one of the largest in the world.

It is estimated that the Swedish railways at present employ about 75,000 people. The great majority of these are in the employment of the State Railways. In this connection it may be pointed out that from the very beginning the Swedish railway system was built up on such a basis that the State was intended to operate the main lines whilst the secondary and narrow-gauge lines were to be in the hands of private enterprise. The decision of this principle dates from as long ago as 1853, when it was adopted by the Parliament. The later development of the industry has, however, shown a trend towards unification of the railways under State ownership and a parliamentary decree of 1939 concerning the speeding up of State appropriations means in practice that all privately owned railways in Sweden will eventually disappear.

The fact that the State is the employer means that most of the railwaymen enjoy the status of civil servants, and their permanency of employment and working conditions are laid down by Governmental decrees and laws, although some are still employed on the basis of collective agreements.

Those with civil servant status consist mainly of staff in the operating, locomotive, office and stores departments and supervisors in permanent way departments, whilst staff employed under collective agreement are mainly permanent way men and workers in shops, as well as staff working with the road transport section of the State Railways.

Organizational endeavours amongst railwaymen started fairly late and not until twenty years after the first railway had been opened for traffic was the first trade union established. These organizations of towards the end of the 1870s were mainly benefit associations

designed for cases of sickness, accident or unemployment, with hardly any trade union aims in their programmes. During the two following decades, however, the feeling for the necessity of a trade union grew stronger and after a difficult conflict in 1897 with a privately owned railway, a group of resolute men took action in order to establish a trade union organization on a national basis.

It was in Stockholm at the famous old "People's Palace" that the Swedish Railwaymen's Union was officially founded in 1899. At its inception there were 400 members. Right from the very beginning it was decided to adopt from the organizational point of view the principle, in those days a radical one, that employees working under the same employer should belong to the same union. The reason why this so-called industrial unionism was adopted was that a number of organizations catering for different categories of work within the same trade had been founded at the beginning of the 1890s and it was realized that difficulties would arise if it were impossible to cope with the sectional interests.

The struggle between conflicting interests brought about by this development proved, however, to be both long and difficult and ended as late as 1940-41, when the last separate railwaymen's trade organization of any importance, the Swedish Locomotivemen's Union, amalgamated with the Swedish Railwaymen's Union. The membership of the union has progressively increased during the past fifty years and from the modest figure of 400 at the beginning had already by 1905 risen to the figure of 8,000. In 1910 the membership figure was more than 18,000 and ten years later in 1920, the figure was as high as 40,000. Owing to dismissals and the slump, this figure was maintained with minor variations up to 1940. The years following show a rapid increase, partly due to the above-mentioned amalgamation with the locomotivemen's 5,000 members and partly to the increasing size of the road transport section of the State Railways, so that to-day the membership figure is roughly about 68,000. The numerical difference between the 68,000 members of the Swedish Railwaymen's Union and the 75,000 persons employed by the railways is mainly accounted for by the group of supervisory staff organized in several unions, so that the union can rightly maintain

that the staff eligible for organization is nearly 100 per cent organized.

The organization is built upon the local branch as the primary unit of the union. Then come the so-called district organizations, followed by the executive, the council and the congress. In all these bodies power is invested in representatives appointed by direct election, and who are still on active service in the staff branches of the railways. This is a safeguard to ensure that the union functions in a thoroughly democratic manner. The number of local branches is about 310 and the district organizations cover the appropriate railway districts together with additional organizations for workshops and locomotivemen. Furthermore, there are a number of what are called "comrade branches" consisting of staff of the same grade or trade enjoying a definite standing within the union, but which do not themselves actually engage in trade union activities, their purpose being mainly that of a technical and free-time entertainment nature.

The governing body is the Congress which is held every fourth year. This usually consists of about 400 delegates representing all the departments of the Union and the meetings usually last a week. Between Congresses, the Union's Council is the governing body and meets about twice a year. The executive body is the management committee consisting of ten members, six of which work on the railways and four of which are full-time Union officials. The management committee meets twice or three times a month and is responsible for the execution of decisions taken and the division of outstanding work among the union officials.

Among the tasks of a strictly trade union nature, work and wage conditions naturally take pride of place. The wage agreements for the staff with civil service status are negotiated with the management of the railways and are, as is the case with all civil service agreements, subject to acceptance by Parliament. The negotiations are therefore of necessity rather difficult and in times of swift economic change there is a risk that the wages of these employees will lag a little behind those of other industrial workers. But the Swedish railwaymen hold fast to their position as civil servants since it has been shown that in the long run it is more advantageous. Above all, security of employment is gained and moreover, the social conditions in the civil service are substantially better than those in private industry. The Swedish railwayman has, through his organization, obtained advantages—security of employment, fair compensation for his work, and improved social conditions—that have put him among the better-off workers in the country.

Salaries are paid in accordance with the work and length of service of the employee and are divided into a large number of classes. For staff affiliated to the Union, salaries are paid in the classes 5 to 23 inclusive. These classes are then in their turn divided into cost of living areas owing to the fact that the cost of living varies in different parts of the country. There are at present five such areas and there is a difference in salaries of 16 per cent between the highest and lowest area. The lowest weekly wage for those with civil service status is 78

crowns and the highest 215 crowns. Although the majority of Swedish railwaymen cannot be said to have reached this last-named figure, it is nevertheless a fact that the average is about 150 crowns. Some idea of the purchasing power of such a wage can be gained from the fact that a normal two-roomed flat costs 20 crowns per week to rent, a good quality suit some 150 crowns, a pair of shoes 30 crowns, butter 5.75 crowns per kilo, sugar 0.80 crowns, and flour 0.55 crowns per kilo and the normal price of meat 3.75 a kilo.\* Approximately 10–12 per cent of his income is taken in direct taxation, cigarettes cost 2.0 crowns per packet of twenty and a litre of spirits between 12.0 and 15.0 crowns.

The average railwayman is entitled to a retiring pension at the age of sixty, which on the average is about 75 per cent of the normal wage being paid at the time of retirement. In the case of a railwayman's death, his widow and orphans benefit from the pension. The great majority of those employed on the railways are entitled to an annual holiday, which although varying according to age and length of service, can be said to be roughly twenty days for those under 40 and thirty days for those over 40. Railway workers are also entitled to paid sick leave, which on the average runs to forty-five days per year.

Those Union members who are employed under the terms of collective agreements, exactly one-third of the total membership, have not yet reached the same high standard as regards working and social conditions as their fellow-workers with civil service status. It is true that as regards wages they are more or less on the same level as their colleagues, but from the point of view of social conditions they still lag behind, although they have, nevertheless, a good chance of reaching this level, especially if they base their claims on the working conditions of their more fortunate comrades.

Apart from purely trade union activities, the Railwaymen's Union also prosecutes a comprehensive educational programme and to this end possesses a full-time studies secretary who is in direct contact with the study groups within the local branches. Each year two fourteen-day study courses are held in which altogether some 100 trade unionists participate. In addition, during the winter, week-end courses are also held in many places.

In order to protect those members who are not employed on a permanent basis, principally those workers in the track department, who owing to weather conditions are not permanently employed during the winter months, the Union has set up an unemployment benefit fund. This latter, which is supported by the State, pays up to 90 per cent of the worker's former salary in cases of unemployment. Although there is little or no risk of those with civil service status becoming unemployed, they nevertheless contribute to the fund. This is, however, only obligatory during the first five years of membership.

In addition, the Union also has a collective accident insurance, which in cases of fatality pays out a lump sum

\*Figures approx. 1 kilo=2 lbs. ; £1=14.50 Crowns.

of 2,000 crowns to the dependants and in cases of total disability 8,000 crowns. Since the inception of the accident insurance scheme in 1929, benefits have been paid out in 600 cases of fatal accidents and in more than 1,000 cases of total disablement.

The Union has also established a special organization which runs a convalescent home, known as "Berga", at which many railwaymen have received free specialist treatment. There is, in addition to this home, a special holiday resort, known as Särö, in Western Sweden, owned by the Locomotivemen's Union and used by both locomotivemen and railwaymen in general.

The Swedish Railwaymen's Union is affiliated to the Swedish T.U.C. and is one of the largest groups of workers represented therein, being surpassed in this respect by only three other unions: the Metal Workers', Factory Workers' and Municipal Workers'. In spite of the fact that the railway workers have civil service status they are and always have been in one of the foremost positions in the ranks of the organized workers, and have always shown a great deal of sympathy and fellow-feeling with other workers, both in Sweden and in countries outside. The Union also belongs to the Scandinavian Railwaymen's Federation and was one of the earliest members of the I.T.F. In a country which was lucky enough to

escape being involved in both World Wars, the Union has been enabled to develop into a strong organization financially and has therefore often been in a position to help needy comrades in other countries and to support trade union action.

The organization's modern, well-built offices in Stockholm are a fitting symbol of the Union's firm financial position, as is also its well-produced weekly newspaper *Signalen* (The Signal) which, distributed free to every member, is eagerly read by both railwaymen and their families.

When the Swedish Railwaymen's Union meets for its eighteenth annual conference in June of this year it will celebrate its fiftieth year of existence, and will be able to look back both on periods of effort and on many difficult tasks. However, difficult tasks, in the hands of resolute people, have a habit of ending successfully and producing excellent results, and that can certainly be said with justice of the work of the Swedish Railwaymen's Union. If in the past the Union has enabled the railwaymen to obtain an adequate measure of compensation for their important and responsible work, it will in the future, as a democratically built-up organization in a democratic country, be in a position to safeguard those working and social conditions already won.

## THE STAFF COUNCIL ON THE DUTCH NATIONAL RAILWAYS

By F. P. A. LANDSKROON

*Treasurer, Dutch Railwaymen's and Tramwaymen's Union*

The consultations between the Railway Administration and the recognized Railway Trade Unions in Holland take place in the main through the intermedium of a body known as the Staff Council, which consists of ten members, namely five appointed by the Dutch Railwaymen's and Tramwaymen's Union affiliated with the I.T.F., three by the Catholic trade union, and two by the Protestant trade union of railwaymen. The Staff Council was constituted in 1926, and during the twenty-three years of its existence has proved itself a valuable piece of industrial machinery.

The functions of the Staff Council are laid down in regulations which have been approved by the Minister of Transport and Communications. These regulations presume the existence of trade unions which are to nominate the personnel of the Staff Council. Just as in the period prior to 1926, provision is made for direct consultations with the various trade unions, and the relevant provisions are given pride of place over those regarding the Staff Council. The regulations provide for the constitution of a Staff Council by the trade unions prepared to cooperate on the basis of this body.

The Staff Council, therefore, in no way supersedes the trade unions, but plays the rôle of a liaison organ in industrial relations. The members of the Staff Council and their substitutes are chosen by the Executive Com-

mittees of the railway unions from among active railway staff and/or officers of the unions. Their period of office is two years. The Railway Management provides the administrative assistance and office and meeting facilities at the headquarters of the Dutch National Railways.

The Staff Council may express itself on the regulations governing conditions of employment on the railways as well as on all those of a more general character which affect the rights and duties of railway staff, amendments to such regulations and proposals for new regulations, except in so far as provision is made for the appointment of special committees which include staff representatives, for advising, or consulting with, the Railway Management concerning certain matters.

The Staff Council is further entitled to bring wishes and complaints of a general character affecting staff interests to the notice of the Railway Management in writing, and to apply for discussions with the Management on such matters. Attendance at meetings and discussions of the Staff Council, in the capacity of member or substitute member, ranks as service. The Staff Council draws up its own standing orders, which are brought to the notice of the Management and trade unions.

Within the complex framework of the railway industry, the Staff Council has developed into a very useful and

efficient piece of machinery for dealing with all matters affecting the interests of the staff. This has been made possible, on the one hand, by the broad view which the Railway Management takes of the trade union movement, its recognition that the interests of the staff and of the industry call for frank discussion of staff affairs, and the importance which it consequently attaches to these joint consultations. On the other hand, the success of this machinery has to be attributed to the sense of responsibility of the three participating railway unions, which in this field of joint representation have put aside all mutual rivalries and in the discussions with Management and railway officials place the interests of the staff above everything else, whilst at the same time having due regard for the interests of the industry and the community at large. In this way, a tradition of fruitful negotiations and consultations has grown up from which the staff has reaped a profitable harvest.

Matters affecting individual members of the staff first are taken up locally with the superior of the individuals concerned. If this intervention does not have the desired result, or if the matter is outside the jurisdiction of the local official, it is referred to the head office of the union concerned, which takes it up with the appropriate higher official or, if necessary, with the Management. In such cases, therefore, the Staff Council does not intervene.

The Staff Council likewise does not intervene in matters where the point at issue, though general in so far as it affects a number of persons, is strictly local in character and does not affect staff interests in other localities. Such cases are taken up directly with local officials by the joint committee of the branches of the unions in the locality concerned. If no satisfaction is obtained, or if the matter is beyond the competence of the local official it is referred to the head offices of the unions concerned, and these in their turn refer it to the Staff Council.

Consequently, there is no direct contact either between individual members and the Staff Council or between local union machinery and the Staff Council. The Staff Council only deals with matters referred to it by the head offices of the unions.

The matters to be discussed with the Management or railway officials are usually raised by the Staff Council in writing. If this does not produce the desired result, discussions take place at the request of the Staff Council.

The Staff Council has chosen from its midst a Bureau of three members, viz. a Chairman, a Secretary and a Treasurer, which meets the President of the Railways each Monday morning. At these talks there is usually no formal agenda, but any urgent staff matters or other matters affecting staff interests are dealt with. The Bureau further meets the Management or railway officials to discuss matters for which it is not deemed necessary to convene the whole Staff Council. The Staff Council usually meets at intervals of a fortnight to consider matters which are on the agenda. It is not uncommon for the number of items on its agenda to run to thirty. Meetings between the plenary Staff Council

and the Management take place monthly and in addition whenever there are questions of sufficient importance to render an interim meeting desirable.

The Staff Council has formed within itself a number of committees which are responsible for dealing with certain matters requiring special knowledge.

The Staff Council is represented on all committees, funds and the like which are concerned with matters affecting the interests of railway staff, e.g. the Railway Staff Relief Fund, Railway Pensioners' Relief Committee, Board of Administration of the Sick Pay and Relief Fund, the central and sectional committees organizing training and educational courses for railway staff, committees on hours of work and rest periods, committee on service clothing, sport and recreation committee, the drafting committee of the railway staff magazine, etc.

The members of the Staff Council are naturally not able to undertake all these assignments themselves in addition to their activities in the industry and/or the union, and therefore the Council in some cases resorts to others than members and substitutes for the purpose.

The chairmen of the Disciplinary Boards as well as the chairman and the members of the Advisory Board on Staff Dismissals, are appointed by joint consultation between the Management and the Staff Council. The choice of board members and of the spokesmen who may be chosen by defendants is still made separately by the three unions.

Attention may be drawn to Article 6 of the regulations governing conditions of employment, which provides that wishes or complaints of an individual character may be raised with a superior official or with the Management, but that matters of a collective character must be submitted through a recognized trade union. This rules out any groups of unorganized staff making collective representations to superiors or Management.

From time to time, nevertheless, some group of non-unionists or others try to take up some collective issue. They are invariably referred to the Article 6 which has been mentioned and advised to present their claim or complaint through one of the recognized trade unions.

The Management even allows the Staff Council to play a larger rôle than strictly speaking it is required to, by repeatedly discussing with the Staff Council the general situation of the industry, its prospects and its plans. Last year the President of the Railways visited the railway centres and delivered lectures on questions of this kind under the auspices of the Staff Council. When important technical changes are introduced in the railway industry a competent high official delivers lectures on the subject for the benefit of the staff concerned, again under the auspices of the Staff Council.

The Staff Council has thus acquired an official voice in all social questions affecting the industry, and although voluntary consultations between the two sides of the industry do not entail a share of control, they nevertheless ensure that staff interests are also considered in connection with managerial policy and technical affairs.