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FIRST REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE I.T.F.

Havana, 11 to 13 September, 1949

By J. H. OLDENBROEK

General Secretary of the I.T.F.

FOR the past twenty years the I.T.F. has been devoting increased attention to the question of regional organization. If the international trade union movement is to be successful, it must unite like-minded organizations all over the world under one banner. The need for this has been understood by those called to play a role at the centre of international affairs, but it was not so apparent to many whose main field of activities lay on the periphery.

The centre of international activities was for many years in Europe, and countries outside it were, with but few exceptions, inclined to regard the international trade union organizations which existed there as European bodies to which they acknowledged theoretical allegiance, but in which for one reason or another they did not play an active role. In this article I will not analyse all the reasons for the absence of co-operation on a world basis, but confine myself to a few main aspects.

The first obstacle encountered in international relations are the great distances separating the outlying countries from the centre, which prevented the organizations there taking the same direct part in international affairs as those situated more favourably. In such cases, participation in conferences and other activities is hampered owing to the heavy expenditure of time and money involved. Secondly, composed as they consequently were mainly of European organizations, international organizations tended to concentrate their attention on problems of a European character, and to take too little interest in the affairs of remoter countries. Thirdly, trade unionism in many extra-European countries was undeveloped, with the consequence that the organizations there had difficulty enough to find the funds for carrying on their own work, without paying affiliation fees, even at a reduced rate, to international bodies, to say nothing of the other expenses connected with international work.

As long as we think of the trade union international as a body which holds meetings from time to time and issues occasional publications, it does not seem to matter so much for how many countries, organizations and members it speaks. But if the international is to be of real service to its constituents, if it is to speak on behalf of trade unionists of all countries, then it must have the necessary means and the necessary authority ; then it must succeed in developing the structure and technique required for the proper performance of its tasks and must secure the affiliation of trade union organizations in every part of the world. First and foremost among which tasks, in our view, is to help to bring about equitable standards of labour and to raise them to the highest possible level. This is in the interests of those whose conditions lie below a given minimum ; it is equally in the interests of those whose conditions are above that minimum ; and perhaps even more important, it is in the interests of the

economic and social progress of society as a whole. The fact, however, was—and still is—that most international organizations had only succeeded in uniting the European organizations and found but a few extra-European organizations prepared to enter their ranks, and even these only maintained relations of a loose character.

An important contribution to the solution of the problem was made at the I.T.F. Congress, held at Stockholm in 1928, which devised a scheme for the establishment of regional secretariats in different parts of the world. The following years witnessed various attempts to carry this scheme into effect, but owing to force of circumstances they did not lead to lasting results. Thus in 1931 a regional organization was started for the Far East, with headquarters in Japan, but political developments in that country, culminating in the concentration of all power in the hands of Japanese militarists, frustrated the realization of our aims. In 1937 the Japanese Seamen's Union, which had been entrusted with the affairs of the Far Eastern Secretariat of the I.T.F., was compelled to withdraw from the International. Likewise a Pacific Conference which had been scheduled for the beginning of 1940, in New Zealand, came to nought, and the outbreak of war put a stop to the plan to set up a secretariat for this area.

With the return of peace, however, the efforts to build up regional organizations were resumed, and this time the preparatory work led to a concrete result. In September last there was held at Havana the first regional conference of the I.T.F., which was attended by representatives from seventeen Latin-American countries and created the first regional sub-division of the I.T.F., with its own rules and its own secretariat at Havana.

This sub-secretariat will perform on a regional scale a task similar to that of the General Secretariat of the I.T.F. on a world scale. It is intended to be an organizational link between the General Secretariat and the transport workers' organizations of Latin-America and at the same time to become the mouthpiece of those organizations. It is hardly practicable for the General Secretariat, even if it could have ambassadors at a large number of points, to have a detailed understanding and a correct appraisal of the problems and policies of every part of the world. For it is not enough to peruse the reports and publications from a certain country ; for a full understanding of all the problems there must be constant and active participation in day-to-day affairs. The sub-secretariat is designed to perform that function.

Fears have been expressed that regional organization may lead to isolationism and encourage disintegration. The danger no doubt exists, but experience has shown that without regional organization it is not possible to build up a live world movement which covers all countries eligible for membership and can count on the effective participation of each in the international work. We are confident that the dangers of isolationism and breakaways can be overcome if the General Secretariat allows the regional organization sufficient scope to look after its own affairs, and if in its turn the regional organization is prepared to line up with the policy of the General Secretariat on wider issues.

As regional organizations come into existence, they will have to be given every possible opportunity to help in the framing of international policy. They must be kept fully informed of the decisions taken by the executive bodies at the centre, and such objections and suggestions as they put forward must always be given the most earnest consideration. As time goes on the whole structure of the international trade union movement may have to be revised, so as to ensure that every affiliated organization can, if possible directly or otherwise indirectly, play its due part in the shaping of the policy, the drafting of the programmes and the management of the affairs of the parent organization.

At the same time it must not be forgotten that neighbouring countries as a rule have more in common and a better understanding of one another's problems and difficulties. That is to say, they have points of contact which make it possible to find a joint approach to problems, and this paves the way to a better appreciation of wider international issues. Such regional associations will experience the need for wider co-operation as they come to recognize, on the one hand, that they must render assistance to countries worse off than themselves and, on the other hand, require the aid of those who are better placed.

The ultimate aim must be to arrive at a co-ordination of policy and, as far as possible, equality of conditions. Cemented together, the countries will be able to protect one another in case of setback in any one of them. The existence of strong regional organizations, linked internationally with similar organizations in other parts of the world, will be a powerful deterrent to reactionary forces whose aim is to lower labour standards and to undermine trade union organization.

It was with such ideas in mind that the I.T.F. convened the recent conference in Havana. The trade union representatives who participated in it showed that they were thinking on similar lines. With the creation of the first regional organization the constituent unions have been given the tool, and they must use it for the end we have in view. Organized transport labour in other countries will watch with interest this first full-scale experiment in regional organization. We have no doubt that it will fulfil the hopes which have been placed in it and that the transport workers' unions of the Latin-American continent will thereby have set the pattern for similar ventures in other continents in the not distant future.

THE RAILWAYMEN'S CONFERENCE AT INNSBRUCK

By PAUL TOFAHRN

Assistant General Secretary of the I.T.F.

The Railwaymen's Section of the I.T.F. met in conference at Innsbruck from 15 to 19 August, 1949. The European railwaymen's unions practically all sent delegates, but of the overseas organizations only the Railway Labor Executives' Association of the United States was represented. The Latin-American railwaymen's organizations were absent because an I.T.F. Latin-American Regional Conference had been convened for 11 September, while it is only in exceptional cases that the unions in Africa, Asia and New Zealand can be represented at conferences held in Europe.

A number of observers also attended the Innsbruck Conference, in representation of the Austrian Federal Railways, the French Occupation Authorities, the International Labour Office, the Economic Commission for Europe of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, the United States Embassy in Vienna, the American Military Government in Berlin, the Economic Co-operation Administration and the International Railway Congress Association.

A very wide range of questions was on the agenda. The first to be discussed was the question of the physical conditions under which employees work in railway offices. The older a country is industrially the oftener it occurs that office work must be done in old and very old buildings, some of them not intended for that purpose when they were built and others built according to plans which fall far short of modern ideas and requirements. Lighting, ventilation and sanitary arrangements are inadequate. Here the remedy must be sought in rebuilding or new building, particularly in the United Kingdom. In most European countries there is a supervising authority independent of the railways : here again the United Kingdom is the exception. The discussion showed that railway buildings other than offices—places used by train, shunting and maintenance-of-way personnel, railway shopmen, etc., for instance—also call for attention. Staff representatives, and even leading officials of the railway administrations, would probably find an international code of standard conditions useful, and the Committee of the Railwaymen's Section of the I.T.F. is to see if it is possible to draft one.

For many years now theories have been advanced about workers' participation in the management of the undertakings in which they invest their lives, and the railwaymen have already made a beginning with putting into practice the principle that workers have a right to a voice in the running of the industry. But the methods employed are not always comparable, any more than the ideas and aims in this respect. The American railwaymen, for instance, lay more weight on the right of a voice in the determination of working and living conditions, such as wages, working hours, engagement and promotion, working rules, paid holidays, defence of acquired rights in respect of sickness and accident, pensions, etc., in all of which they have a say through the collective agreements signed by their unions. In addition there are joint bodies through which disputes as to the interpretation or application of the collective agreements are resolved. When these joint bodies cannot agree arbitration tribunals take over. The composition and powers of these institutions are laid down partly by collective agreement and partly by law. For the time being the railwaymen's unions are not thinking of going any further than this, as the railway undertakings are privately owned, and neither the railwaymen nor public opinion are convinced that the people, or even the railwaymen themselves, have very much to gain from the nationalization of the railways. For the present, and for the future as far as they can see it, they are satisfied that the law imposes on the private railway undertakings such limitations and obligations as the public interest demands, and that at the same time it pays sufficient regard to and adequately protects the interests of the railwaymen. The American railwaymen's unions consider that supervision over the railways to ensure the enforcement of the law is a matter for the State, and not for them. In addition it should be pointed out that the Federal Government has the right to take over and run the railways for a shorter or longer period whenever internal or international circumstances make this desirable.

The European railways have mostly been nationalized, and the railway administrations therefore stand in quite another relation to the State, the population and the railwaymen than do the private railway companies in the United States. The European railwaymen consequently see the question of their participation in the management of the railways in quite another light than their American fellows. They all claim a right to a voice in the decisions of the top railway authorities, since these decisions have repercussions on their working conditions. Decisions on rate policy, capital investment, expansion or contraction of traffic, working methods, purchase of material, etc., can lead to favourable or unfavourable financial results. In effect, if not formally, such decisions are decisions on working conditions, for as somebody said at Innsbruck, " We cannot squeeze wage increases out of deficits."

But how far should the railwaymen's participation in management go ? About this there was less unanimity, even at Innsbruck. Is it sufficient that the highest authority—the Board of Directors or the Minister of Transport—should discuss matters with the representatives of the personnel, or is agreement with the latter necessary ? May the General Manager carry into effect without further ado the decisions of this highest authority, or must he first come to an agreement with the representatives of the personnel ? " We ask ourselves in Austria whether we have not gone too far "—declared no less a delegate at the Innsbruck Conference than Transport Minister Uebeleis. " The question whether repre-

sentatives of the personnel should take part in decisions or only express their opinions is not of paramount importance "—said Robert Bratschi, who has been thirty years a member of the Administrative Council of the Swiss Federal Railways. More important to him was the question of how much knowledge, judgment and real power there is behind the statements and proposals of the representatives of the personnel.

How should the right of participation in management be exercised ? In a series of European countries there are administrative councils composed of part-time representatives of the State, trade, industry, agriculture and the railway personnel. In the United Kingdom there is a Transport Commission with Executives for the different branches of transport, of whose members most are full-time officials and who, even when drawn from a particular group of interests, cease to be representatives of that group. In the Scandinavian countries a new system is developing of railway industrial committees—a kind of joint production committee—while the Railway Administration itself is a Government department.

It is clear, therefore, that the method by which the railwaymen exercise their right to a voice in management cannot be a uniform one, so that the Innsbruck Conference could not come to definite conclusions. The problem of workers' participation in the management of the railways will have to be gone into much more fully before it will be possible to extract the common denominator of the very differing points of view and aims.

The I.T.F. International Railwaymen's Conference, held in Madrid in 1930, went deeply into the question of the co-ordination of road and rail, and the discussion on the same subject at Innsbruck showed that the resolution then adopted—which was drafted by Robert Bratschi—had lost little, if any, of its validity. The introductory paper read at Innsbruck by Hermann Blomgren, however, laid the greatest stress on an aspect over which the trade unions can exercise direct influence—the working conditions in the two branches of transport. Greater attention will have to be paid to this point in the future than in the past, for in both forms of transport labour is the largest item in costs, and therefore the most important factor in uneconomic competition to the detriment of the railwaymen. The Conference therefore decided to ask the railwaymen's unions to work jointly with those of the road transport workers towards equalization of working conditions in the two branches of transport.

Technological changes always have their repercussions on working conditions. The days of opposition to technological progress are long past, but that does not alter the fact that the legitimate interests of the workers are often threatened by such progress, and that it is necessary therefore to defend them. The last decade has seen many advances in the mechanization of track maintenance-of-way work, particularly in the United States. The I.T.F. Secretariat had done its best to make these developments clear to delegates, and to show that the railwaymen's unions would have to devote much more attention to the interests of the maintenance-of-way men during the next ten years or so. From the discussion it appeared that the use of machinery for the maintenance and renewal of the permanent-way calls for a higher degree of skill and efficiency in the personnel employed, and that a higher rate of pay is therefore justified. On the other hand the employment of heavy machinery raises new safety problems which will have to be given consideration.

The Executive Committee of the I.T.F. had decided to put the question of working hours on the agenda for the next Congress, and had asked the different Sections to consider the matter in the meantime. Mr. J. B. Figgins, in his introductory paper on this question, had taken over a proposal of the Road Transport Workers' Section that called for an international convention providing for a forty-hour week, but allowing of the regular working of up to eight hours' overtime, at overtime rates, in cases where there is a general shortage of man-power—what is known as the " French system ". From the discussion it appeared that it was not considered that the time had yet come for an effective forty-hour week in Europe. Most of the delegations, however, were also opposed to the idea of regular overtime. Overtime was in their eyes an evil that must be restricted, and a figure of 400 hours of overtime a year, in addition to those which it might be necessary to work for special reasons connected with the industry, was unacceptable to them, whether the basic week were 48 hours or only 40. There was therefore a contradiction between the proposals of the introductory paper and the prevailing opinion at the Conference, and no way out of this contradiction was found at Innsbruck. The Railwaymen's Section will therefore have to meet again on the eve of the I.T.F.'s 1950 Congress and try to thrash out an international policy in respect of railwaymen's working hours.

It was the International Railwaymen's Conference, held in London in 1943, that first broached within the I.T.F. the problem of the organization of European transport as a whole. Since then the I.T.F. has repeatedly put forward a demand for the setting up of a European Transport Authority, and an attempt was made at Innsbruck to sketch out, on the basis of railway experience, the tasks of such an authority. There are certainly difficulties in the way of the realization of such a demand, but those of them that are of a technological and organizational character are much easier to overcome than the political obstacles. Europe needs to be unified, and if this is to be achieved a beginning must be made in some sphere of activity that lends itself more particularly to the purpose. The political sphere has proved to be the one in which it is most difficult to take a step forward, and one in which the tendencies are rather towards the division than the unification of Europe. The economic sphere—and transport more particularly—seems to lend itself better than any other to real and effective unifying measures. And since transport, according as it is organized, can be a help or a hindrance to the economic unification of a continent, it would seem that the best way of making a start with the unification of Europe as a whole would be to unify its transport. The Innsbruck Conference saw in the setting up of a European Transport Authority a way to put European transport on a basis

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CONGRESS OF NORWEGIAN TRANSPORT WORKERS' UNION

On 2 April, 1896, the leaders of five local dockers' unions founded a National Organization of Norwegian Dockers. Its first Congress, at which the Rules were adopted, was held on 11 June of the same year. The organization had then 1,179 members.

The name adopted hardly fitted the facts. The contribution was fixed at five öre per member per quarter, bringing in a total income of 220 crowns (£11) a year ! Such an " organization " was hardly likely to be a very effective stick with which to beat the employers. As a matter of fact it was the employers who beat the organization the first time it opened fire, in May, 1899. And not only did it lose its first strike, but 800 of its 1,600 members.

But the organizers redoubled their efforts, establishing new local organizations, and it was not long before they made up the loss. The slump at the beginning of the century, however, wiped out the result of their efforts. Membership fell from 1,491 in 1901 to 293 in 1903, when there were only four local unions left. These buckled to, however, and by 1906 the membership was again up to 1,500. Between then and 1913 it rose to 2,000.

The first local union of lorry drivers was founded in the Norwegian capital on 12 March, 1893, and it was not until 1912 that a national organization came into being. It had happier beginnings than the dockers' union : during 1913 and 1914 it signed thirty collective agreements governing the working conditions of 646 workers, 536 of whom were members of the union. By that time the total membership was 641, belonging to eleven local unions.

The living difficulties resulting from the First World War brought a flow of workers into the trade unions, and by 1915 the dockers' union had over 3,300 members and that of the lorry drivers over 1,000. Since 1913 the two unions had been helping one another, and on 1 July, 1917, they amalgamated under the name of Norwegian Union of Port and Transport Workers. Membership rose rapidly : 5,830 in May 1918 ; nearly 7,000 at the end of 1918 ; nearly 10,000 at the end of 1919. The number of collective agreements in force exceeded the hundred, and they provided among other things for an eight-hour day and two weeks' paid annual holiday.

In 1920 there was strong labour pressure for increases of wages, the generalization of the paid annual holiday and the carrying out of a programme of socialization ; and to avoid large-scale strikes the Government issued a decree providing for compulsory arbitration in labour disputes. The arbitration awards which followed were a shock to the employers, on account both of their material provisions and the institution of workers' delegates whose task it was to watch over the strict enforcement of collective agreements and arbitral awards. So their counter-offensive was not long in coming. It was opened by a blow at the seamen when their collective agreement expired on 1 April, 1921. The ship-owners refused to renew it, and it was only with very great difficulty that they were brought to the negotiating table, where they proposed a 40 per cent wage reduction !

This was the first shot in a long struggle, in which the year 1921 alone saw a general strike that lasted from 26 May to 10 June ; an eight-week strike of the seamen and ships' engineers ; an eight-week national sympathetic strike by the transport workers ; a seven-week lock-out in the very important paper industry ; and a victorious offensive by the employers in most other industries. In

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more in harmony with the international ideal which inspires the members of the I.T.F. than are the conditions now ruling.

Our Austrian hosts had done all they could to make the Innsbruck Conference an experience that all who took part in it would long look back to. Thanks to their zeal and foresight, everything ran smoothly from beginning to end. The hospitality of the Austrian Railwaymen's Union was overwhelming. The string and wind orchestra of the Innsbruck railwaymen, and their choirs and dance ensembles, gave delegates an interesting and instructive, and exceedingly sympathetic, insight into the social life of the Austrian worker. The rally of the Tyrolese railwaymen was a refreshing manifestation of devotion to the ideal of international solidarity. The management of the Federal Railways placed a special train and a fleet of motor-coaches at the disposal of delegates for a trip to the Gross Glockner, a trip which delegates will never forget. The Innsbruck passenger transport undertaking carried delegates to a mountain hotel where a banquet offered by the Government of the Tyrol and the Town Council of Innsbruck afforded a splendid proof of Austrian hospitality.

Innsbruck has had its share of war damage, but the building activity displayed in the city testifies to the vitality and determination of its inhabitants. Though delegates had an opportunity of seeing that there is great room for improvement in the material living conditions of the working class, from the labourer upwards to the highest railway official, the general atmosphere prevailing will have convinced them that when the Austrian people are once more masters of their own fate they will not be long in working their way out of their difficulties. All who participated in the Conference will have left the country in the hope that the unfortunate disunity among the victors in the recent world war will not for much longer force the Austrian people to bear a burden and humiliation for which there is no justification, and that they will soon regain their freedom. Their long and heroic resistance to Fascist tyranny has earned for the Austrian workers the right to expect that the promises of freedom and independence made during the war will soon be kept.

the years which followed new collective agreements and arbitral awards led in every case to wage reductions, and the continual labour retreat only ended in 1928.

By the end of 1921 the membership of the Union of Port and Transport Workers had shrunk to 6,384, and by December 1924 to as little as 5,163—the same figure as seven years earlier.

In 1931, a year of economic depression, came a new offensive by the employers : 66,000 workers in the chief Norwegian industries, paper and engineering, were locked out for more than five months ; and on top of this there were strikes in coastal shipping, sympathetic strikes in transport and on the newspapers, and still other strikes in the brewery, tobacco and building industries. But this time the employers only won a semblance of victory. It is true that they managed to reduce wages by from 7 to 10 per cent, but the trade union movement came out of the struggle strengthened and hardened. Members had fixed trade union contributions at rates hitherto unheard of : as much as 20 crowns (then more than a pound sterling) a week ! And at the Transport Workers' Congress in 1932 the President was able to announce that membership had risen to 8,480. And things were going the same way in other industries too. By 1935 there were 12,000 transport workers organized, and by 1938 nearly 20,000. Their organization had 513 current collective agreements, 217 of which had been signed in the latter year. Wages and working conditions had been improved year by year since 1933, and where agreements had been signed for the first time the improvements were very great indeed.

By 1939 the organized Norwegian workers had become a real power in the land. At the cost of very great sacrifices and suffering they had maintained and strengthened their trade unions and thwarted the employers' strategy completely. In 1937 they had put into power a Labour Government which set itself out to repeal the reactionary social legislation which had been put into force between 1921 and 1936. The revisions of collective agreements and social laws which took place in 1939 marked a new epoch in living and working conditions.

Then came the Second World War, which saw the interference of the occupying forces in labour affairs ; the Nazification of the trade unions by the quislings ; the murder, arrest and deportation of trade union leaders ; the dispersal of the workers ; the " contributions strike " in the trade unions ; the sabotage of the German war machine ; the underground propaganda and the measures of repression. 248 members of the Transport Workers' Union, including the President, were imprisoned, 68 were deported and 9 executed. 18 died in dungeons and concentration camps, and many others lost their lives during dangerous resistance operations. On 9 July, 1945, the survivors of the Executive Committee held their first meeting in liberated Norway.

The third post-war Congress of the Norwegian Transport Workers' Union met on 25 September, 1949. The organization now has more than 23,000 members. Its collective agreements govern the working conditions of all its members and of several thousands of workers who are not yet organized. Its influence is growing : the Government, Parliament and public authorities are constantly calling upon it to help in enforcing the new transport legislation and pushing forward the work of reorganizing transport. All this constitutes an achievement which the leaders reported with justifiable pride. They also put forward proposals aiming to improve the organization and build up a fighting fund. If it should ever be necessary to meet new attacks like those suffered between the two wars larger reserves will be needed than have been accumulated so far since the war ended.

The atmosphere of calm in which the gathering took place was most impressive. There was no expression of approval or disapproval of the speeches, whether the speaker was cold and logical or lively and inclined to appeal to the feelings ; whether he warmly supported or actively fought a proposal or argument. Everyone was listened to attentively but in absolute silence and with an absence of any reaction which was often most disconcerting.

The Prime Minister attended to explain to the Congress what the Labour Government had done in the past and hoped to do in the future, and why. He made his statement with the calm of a professor of the exact sciences, but in language so clear and simple that each of his auditors could easily follow him even on so complicated a question as the devaluation of the currency. As a result the Congress unanimously approved a substantial donation to the Norwegian Labour Party for electoral purposes.

While a Labour majority in Parliament is naturally a great help to trade union work in Norway as elsewhere, and tends to make it more fruitful, there is no doubt that the Norwegian trade union movement is now capable of giving a good account of itself in different political circumstances. And the Norwegian Transport Workers' Union is as real a power in the field of transport as is the Norwegian Federation of Trade Unions in the life of the country in general.

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business, four have 82 per cent of the copper business, two have 90 per cent of the aluminium business, three have 85 per cent of the automobile business, two have 80 per cent of the electric lamp business, four have 75 per cent of the electric refrigerator business, two have 80 per cent of the glass business, four have 90 per cent of the cigarette business, and so forth.

CONGRESSWOMAN DOUGLAS, CALIFORNIA . . . Although comparable post-war data are not as yet available, the National Resources Committee found that while the 200 largest non-banking corporations owned about one-third of all corporation assets in 1909, by 1928 they owned 48 per cent of the total, and by the early 'thirties the proportion had increased to 54 per cent. This long-term trend is confirmed by another series prepared by an analyst of Moody's Investment Service, which shows that 316 large manufacturing corporations increased their proportion of the total working capital of all manufacturing corporations from 35 per cent in 1926 to 47 per cent in 1938.

INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT

By SIR H. OSBORNE MANCE

President of the British Institute of Transport

Sir H. Osborne Mance is a life-long worker and an acknowledged authority in the field of international transport. He is the author of a number of recent publications on international transport issued under the auspices of the British Royal Institute of International Affairs. On 17 October Sir Osborne delivered a presidential address before the meeting of the Institute of Transport which contains views with which the International Transport Workers' Federation is thoroughly in sympathy as evidenced by its repeatedly-made call for a European Transport Authority to which the speaker referred. We are glad to be able to publish below, with the kind permission of the Institute of Transport, a selection of Sir Osborne's views which give such authoritative support to the basic ideas underlying our activity for a supra-national set-up of the organization of transport. We venture to print Sir Osborne's observation on the demand of the I.T.F. for a European Transport Authority in bold type.

Some twenty-five years ago I had the honour of reading a paper before the Institute, entitled " Recent developments in the international aspects of transport ". I am afraid that our traditional insular outlook is disclosed by the fact that no paper on international transport has been read before the Institute since that date. That gives me a clear field at a moment when international relations in transport are in the melting-pot.

I propose to deal with the subject in general terms which are equally applicable to all forms of transport.

OBSTACLES TO A SUPRA-NATIONAL SET-UP OF TRANSPORT

The segregation of transport systems into national territories restricts the free play of economic forces which would normally influence development in a single system. As a result some countries are starved in transport and others equipped up to the hilt. Uneconomic routes and services are established simply to ensure that certain channels of communications important to the national economy lie wholly within a state. The construction of strategic lines of communications still further distorts the lay-out which would have developed in the same area in the absence of international frontiers.

OBSTACLES TO THE FREE FLOW OF TRAFFIC

Next we come to quite a different category of the consequences of having to cross a frontier. I refer to the hindrances to transport, which are the bugbear of transport operators just as much as of the users, such as customs, passport formalities, currency control, consular formalities, regulations affecting immigration, epidemics and the diseases of plants and animals, and various other formalities resulting from international conventions, such as the arms convention and the opium convention. In the disturbed post-war conditions all the above hindrances are present in an exaggerated form.

Another obstacle to the freedom of international transport lies in the deliberate use by a state of its means of transport as an economic or political weapon. With state-owned railways continental governments tend to subsidize their national industries, their ports or their shipping by uneconomic railway rates, that is to say, rates lower than would be granted by the railway as a business undertaking.

Another instance of the same kind is discrimination in favour of national means of transport, in particular flag discrimination against foreign shipping, whether by direct legislation granting privileges to national shipping even to the extent of lower import and export duties, or by the granting of concealed railway rebates as part of combined tariffs over rail and sea. Before the First World War such discrimination was exercised to induce emigrants to travel in national vessels. These discriminations are not the same thing as open subsidies paid for out of the national revenues, to which other considerations apply.

Since the Second World War deliberate interruptions to transport on political grounds have increased.

INTERNATIONAL CO-ORDINATION

During the past twenty-five years two developments have taken place, both of which involve international transport problems which have not yet been solved.

The first of these developments is the impact of road transport on the older forms of inland transport and, more recently, of air transport on both inter-continental and internal transport—in other words the problem of the co-ordination of transport.

With the further development of aviation the problem of air-sea co-ordination may well become a burning question requiring an international solution. With inland transport we are on more familiar but more difficult ground. No country has satisfactorily solved its internal problem of co-ordination to its own satisfaction. I am here only concerned to point out that the problem has important international aspects and that if the different countries, at least on the same continent, do not take council with each other before deciding on their respective policies for the co-ordination of inland transport, they are running the risk of technical and economic troubles when it comes to international traffic.

WESTERN EUROPEAN UNITY

This is particularly the case in the light of the second of the new developments affecting international trans-

port, to which I have referred, a development of quite recent origin and which opens up a range of problems on which it is as difficult to be objective as on the subject of road and rail co-ordination. I refer to the recent discussion on the possibility of a Western European Union. Up to now every country has considered its own transport problems on the basic assumption of its complete national sovereignty. International agreements have been arrived at only where transport could not function without them or where there have been obvious immediate advantages to all the participating countries. For example, there have been cases of agreements as regards the rates for, or the division of, competitive traffic where the alternative would have been mutually-destructive competition. In most matters each country reserved the right to decide its transport policy in its national interest regardless of whether the measures taken to this end were economic from a wider standpoint. But if Western Union means anything it means some pooling of sovereignty. It means that transport, among other questions, will have to be considered in the light of the interest of the wider community. In short, it means co-ordinating the previously competing national transport systems. This is a different question from the co-ordination of the different means of transport, but it will be evident that the international co-ordination of transport systems will be more difficult if the countries concerned have adopted divergent national policies for the co-ordination of their different means of transport.

All this is delicate ground where it affects the existing strong competition between national transport systems, for example, between ports and transit routes. It is important to remember that even complete political union will not remove much of this competition which is as legitimate as the competition between two ports in the same country. The fundamental difference is that in a unified system any government intervention will be exercised in the economic interest of the whole area, whereas the governments of different foreign countries will not hesitate to render, if necessary, uneconomic assistance to their own transport system for the sake of the direct or indirect national benefits which are expected to result. The ideal of international co-ordination of transport is that international traffic should pass in the way it would do if the whole of its journey took place in the same state.

We need some original research. I suggest that this should start with the study of the transport organization and policy which might be adopted in the ultimate case of complete pooling of sovereignty in matters of transport of every kind. With such a background, or shall we say "forward-ground", we are less likely to go astray in working out the intermediate stages corresponding with the gradual pooling of sovereignty.

This is breaking fresh ground with a vengeance. I hope the investigators will not be deterred from following a promising line of enquiry by the thought that their conclusion might be unacceptable to national interests in the present international atmosphere. The first aim should be to decide what would be the ideal arrangement without taking into account what may be immediately practicable. Once the final objective is clear, the means of attaining it, in appropriate stages, may well prove easier than appeared at the outset.

A European Transport Authority

The International Transport Workers' Federation have recently proposed that the Western European Union should set up a European Transport Authority. This authority, among other matters, would exercise economic functions including finance, capital investment, control of rates and fares, and the allocation of traffic. It would issue directives to all transport agencies. The constitution of the authority is left for further study.

Such a proposal, which is admittedly not practical politics at the present time, involves considering the possibility of unification of all or part of the transport systems of the Union. Undoubtedly transport would be one of the subjects controlled by any joint political body. With a common economic and commercial policy, including a policy for the co-ordination of the different forms of transport, the subjects of tariff policy, finance and development might well be directed by some central body. On the other hand, operation would have to be decentralized. As regards railways this would tend to be on the basis of present national systems, if only on account of the language difficulty. The same considerations would probably apply to the upkeep of inland waterways and roads. Control of inland waterways operators would, however, be a different matter as they can move about in any part of the Union territory under regulations which would presumably be uniform. The form of control of these operators would depend on the Union policy as regards nationalization and as regards the co-ordination of the different forms of transport.

It would probably be too much to expect each member of the Union suddenly to adapt itself to a new economic policy, the execution of which may at times run counter to its immediate local interests. Thus, in any political central body set up to control the operation of a unified system there is likely to be internal friction which would prevent the quick and clear decisions required for the efficient operation of any commercial service.

A possible solution is to entrust the management of the technical and commercial operation of any system extending over more than one state of the Union to an independent commercial corporation enjoying identical concessions from all the participating states and operating on a purely commercial basis. Such a corporation would resist uneconomic proposals made to it for political reasons and in its own interest encourage the maximum development of its system. A plan on these lines would have the advantage of not being dependent on the full merging of sovereignty.

A European Air Corporation

One of the first transport measures contributing to closer European union might well be the creation of a European Air Corporation. The obvious economic advantages of avoiding the existing duplication of effort by numerous parallel and competing lines would alone justify this development. Operating efficiency on the air lines of the Western countries is sufficiently on a par to

justify common services. A start has already been made by numerous pooling agreements. Every scheme has its difficulties, but if these cannot be surmounted in this comparatively simple case there does not seem to be much hope as regards the far more complicated problems involved in the mildest form of European Union.

EXISTING INTERNATIONAL MACHINERY

In transport, as in other questions, long-term agreements between several governments usually take the form of international conventions which have to be ratified by governments. In some cases, when a convention would mean relating progress to the most backward countries, an international agreement may take the form of a recommendation of the objectives aimed at to be applied successively in each country as soon as conditions permit. It is evident that agreements requiring national legislation for their implementation can only be concluded between government delegates.

On the other hand, non-governmental organizations have an important part to play in representing particular kinds of interests and have frequently assisted, where they have not taken the initiative, in drafting international conventions dealing with their respective fields. Moreover, there are important categories of agreements which can be entered into between national administrations, whether privately or state-owned, and which do not require legislative approval. I might mention, as examples, shipping conferences and analogous agreements between air transport companies, together with numerous questions dealt with by the International Railway Union.

I am sure most of us are sometimes appalled at the number of transport organizations and the amount of overlapping in some of their functions. In the case of inter-governmental organizations unnecessary machinery has resulted, either from the practice of convening special conferences to deal with each question as it became ripe for international agreement, or because between the wars the Western hemisphere preferred to have its own international agreements and organizations, instead of joining in a world organization, this being partly due to U.S.A. non-membership of the League of Nations ; or again, for political reasons as we see in Europe to-day where, unless care is taken, there are likely to be three similar organizations dealing with inland transport over the same area.

In the case of non-governmental organizations, to which I will refer again later on, parallel international organizations have arisen, in some cases from the elevation to the international scale of competing national organizations, in other cases from the establishment of numerous bodies dealing with particular aspects of transport, and in other cases directly or indirectly from political considerations.

Now that transport is being dealt with more and more on a world basis it is important that opportunity should be taken of the present desire for world co-operation, at least west of the Iron Curtain, to simplify the structure of international transport organizations, both governmental and non-governmental.

THE INTERNATIONAL APPROACH TO TRANSPORT PROBLEMS

I have tried to give you briefly an outline of the problems which have to be solved if there is to be free and efficient movement of goods and persons across international frontiers. The movement of ideas is chiefly in the sphere of postal and telecommunication services, but the written or even the spoken word from a distance is a poor substitute for personal contacts which enable ideas to be developed by discussion. Only in this way can each party hope to understand the background and real views of other parties. In international questions this is not so easy as it looks, as there may be a political or economic reason or an undisclosed vested interest which underlies the views expressed on a particular matter. In such cases, when the underlying difficulty is brought to light by frank and friendly discussion it is often found that a matter can be settled without involving the more fundamental issues, once mutual suspicion has been allayed.

Where it is purely a question of technical co-operation transport people can be trusted to work out the best solutions. After all, they have a common objective ; but we have reached an important stage when wider problems are coming to the fore, problems which involve reconciling divergent economic and political national interests. Here it is becoming more and more essential to have this exchange of ideas which, by making known the outlook of other peoples, will promote an objective study of international problems and the reconciliation of differences arising out of a clash of interests.

We must get into the habit of approaching the problems I have outlined internationally in the first place, and only then consider how best to adapt our individual interests to a goal recognized as being desirable in the general interest. The subjective way of reacting first to the possible immediate repercussions on particular interests will not help to get us anywhere.

It is evident, however, that we still have a long way to go before we can count on an objective approach from representatives of individual interests.

We can hope that as a result of the interlocking of ideas there will grow up an increasing number of people who are internationally-minded and inclined to take the long view when there is a clash of interests. This way lies the prospect of agreement satisfactory to all parties. We also need what may be termed " objective specialists ", who enjoy the confidence of other peoples besides their own, to serve as senior officials of international bodies to which they would owe their first allegiance.

There has already been developed in a large number of persons this international loyalty in their capacity as international civil servants. The possibilities of Western Union will raise the question of the wider loyalty in the case of individual citizens. The slogan, "My country—right or wrong", is no longer respectable since it was inscribed on the gateway of Buchenwald concentration camp, and is incompatible with the spirit of international understanding. We have to discipline ourselves to thinking internationally and it is in this spirit that I commend to the members of the Institute the studies which I hope they will be induced to make in the fascinating field of international transport.

POST-WAR AIMS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE BELGIAN TRANSPORT WORKERS' UNION

By R. DEKEYZER

General Secretary, Belgian Transport Workers' Union

Since the liberation of Belgium the Belgian Transport Workers' Union has displayed an activity that has enabled it not only to reach once more its pre-1940 strength, but even to increase its membership very considerably—though this has been largely due to amalgamation with the Belgian Union of Tramway, Light Railway and Motor Bus Personnel. Our membership has now passed the 46,000 mark, and we are hoping to reach 50,000 by 1950.

The B.T.B. only organizes workers engaged in transport. The Docks Group, which next to the Tramway Group has the largest number of members, covers all men working in the ports except the cranemen and other municipal port personnel. Our ports belong to the municipalities, so that the cranemen, lock-keepers, etc., are organized in the Public Services Union. The dockers are 95 per cent organized, and the lion's share of them belongs to the B.T.B. ; the Christian Transport Workers' Union having less than a quarter.

The ratio in the Tramway Group is about the same. Since the liberation this group has increased its membership by close on 5,000.

The B.T.B. also has a Seafarers' Group, to which not only the lower ratings of our merchant marine but also practically all the officers—navigating, engineer and wireless—belong. It is probably the only organization in the world in which officers and crews act in brotherly unity under the same leadership. And it is satisfactory to be able to say that all workers' seats in the Joint Committee for the Merchant Marine are held by the B.T.B.

The B.T.B. also organizes fishermen, and in spite of the fact that they are religious by nature the overwhelming majority of them belong to our Union.

We also have an Inland Waterways Group, covering all workers on tugboats, barges and dredgers. Here again the overwhelming majority, not to say all, have been in the B.T.B. for many years past.

We also organize the workers engaged in loading and discharging barges on our many rivers and canals, and the coalmen, that is to say the men who deliver coals from house to house.

And last, but not least, there is the Road Transport Group, which organizes all motor drivers, taxi-drivers and furniture removers. Although the group already has several thousands of members, and is steadily growing, it still has a big field for its activities. Owing to the present structure of our national trade union movement, a combination of industrial and craft organization, we find some difficulty in getting all motor drivers into one and the same union. We hope, however, that one of these days we shall realize our aim of getting all motor drivers into the B.T.B.

That is the present make-up of the *Belgische Transportarbeidersbond*. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that before long we may be able to found a Transport Workers' Federation, of which the railwaymen would be one of the chief components. The desire exists on both sides to see established on the national plane what we already see on the international. This would make us one of the biggest organizations, if not *the* biggest, in the Belgian Federation of Trade Unions. The B.T.B. is proud to have played an important part in the Belgian trade union movement, and to be regarded as one of the pioneers of our labour movement. Even before the Second World War we had won our place in the sun.

There is no doubt that in so far as activity and results are concerned the Docks Group is very much in the foreground. Even before 1940 the organization had secured for the dockers wages that would stand comparison with those of the skilled workers in other industries, and since 1936 they have had the forty-hour week without any reduction in the daily rate of pay.

Working conditions in the port of Antwerp can be regarded as exemplary. We have official hiring halls in all Belgian ports, and no docker can be engaged unless he is in possession of a card furnished by the Port Joint Committee. Control by both workers' and employers' representatives is so strict that sentences are pronounced on both the employer and workers concerned—and carried out—for the slightest breach of the collective agreement.

Since the liberation we have succeeded in improving wages and working conditions still further, and very considerably. Not only have wages been adjusted to post-war circumstances, but the livelihood of registered dockers has been secured under a measure which gives them an allowance equal to 60 per cent of the basic daily wage when they do not get work. This measure, the cost of which is borne by contributions from the employers, is being imitated, though somewhat hesitatingly, in other industries. We may add that our transport workers, like all workers in the country, enjoy the benefits of the Social Security Act, and get pay for all public holidays and double pay for the annual holiday.

During the war years we suspended all overt trade union activity in occupied Belgium, though most of our leaders were working in different ways underground. We can now only pay tribute, in all humility, to those leaders of the Belgian Transport Workers' Union who were shot or tortured in the concentration camps of Breendonck and Dachau, or who were among the many carried off to Germany who joined the numberless army of the missing.

Our Seamen's Group spent the five war years in the service of the Allies, and in spite of all danger continued to keep our merchant ships on the seas. In this the number of the victims was very great indeed : in proportion to the size of its merchant fleet Belgium was the country that suffered the greatest losses.

As several of the leaders of the B.T.B. managed to reach England after the fall of France, the Union was reconstituted on foreign soil ; and thanks to the help of the I.T.F. an Allied seafarers' group was set up which looked after the interests of the Belgian, Dutch, French, Danish and Polish seafarers. The Allied fishermen also belonged to this group.

In spite of the war, new collective agreements were secured for several of the national seafarers' groups, and thanks to the close contact maintained between the Allied seafarers' unions and the staunch co-operation of the I.T.F., which was, in fact, the inspiration for this action, the International Seafarers' Charter came into being, followed a year or two later by the International Fishermen's Charter.

On our return to Belgium the advantages secured in England were carried over to our own national sphere. Our seamen now enjoy the advantages of a new collective agreement, of which we can say with some pride that it gives them the best wages and working conditions of any European seafarers. Not only have they secured a reduction of their working hours, better wages, more leave and better accommodation on board, but the seaman's calling has now become a closed one and he gets special allowances during periods of unemployment.

The Belgian seaman comes under special legislation which gives his union a number of social tasks to deal with which come under the general social legislation in the case of other industries.

The holding by our Union of a strong position in the industry is, of course, the best guarantee for further social advance and the maintenance of a decent standard of living among the seamen. We can boast of a real voice in the industry, and that is something that has probably never been so important as it is to-day.

The Tramway Group is one of the most revolutionary trade union groups we have in our movement, and its activities have resulted in wages and working conditions of which it has every reason to be proud. We need only mention that apart from double pay for their annual holiday they have additional paid leave of 26 days a year, and that at the end of their career they get a pension amounting to three-quarters of the wages they were earning.

During the occupation there was officially no trade union activity of any kind, but contact with the men was maintained and interests defended as far as possible, with the result that a number of permanent officials and committee members paid with their freedom, and sometimes with their lives, for their audacity in the face of the Nazi invaders.

It is satisfactory to be able to say that our Tramway Group has succeeded in organizing no less than 70 per cent of the personnel of the several tramway and light railway companies.

The Road Transport Group has had to face many difficulties, one of the most important being that of the demarcation of trade union jurisdiction. Thousands of motor drivers belong to the trade unions of the food workers, metal workers, builders, etc. We have been fighting for years against this, pointing out that the motor drivers have every interest in being united in one and the same union, but so far, unfortunately, we have been unsuccessful in convincing other trade unions of the soundness of this contention. It is hardly necessary to draw attention to the disadvantages which the drivers themselves suffer from this dispersal of their forces.

Another difficulty lies in the fact that Belgium has so far no law providing for a driving licence. Anybody, be he half-blind, colour-blind or half-deaf, and with no acquaintance whatsoever with the code of the road, is allowed to drive a motor vehicle ; the only requirement being that he shall be not less than 18 years of age. This has very harmful consequences, not only in respect of road accidents, but also for the wages and working conditions of the workers who earn their living by driving a motor vehicle. We are hoping that the discussions now going on within the Economic and Social Council of the U.N.O. with a view to the abolition of the international driving licence will lead to a national driving licence becoming compulsory.

Notwithstanding the difficulties with which our National Motor Drivers' Section has to contend, the results secured for this group are not to be despised. The unremitting efforts of the permanent officials of this group have resulted in a constantly growing membership and we are hoping in time to raise it to the point where the group will be the largest in the B.T.B.

Our organization also has the task of looking after Inland Navigation, which is of very great importance to us, not only for inland, but also for foreign transport. Our inland waterway men not only carry on the Belgian rivers and canals, but take their vessels far into Holland, Germany, France and Switzerland.

Although during the post-war years the economic situation has been rather on the unfavourable side for inland navigation, we have succeeded in obtaining a number of important improvements for our people, of which we will only mention the introduction of Sunday rest, the legal manning scale, extra pay for dirty, insalubrious and awkward cargoes, etc. The Union's activities on a national scale, the attraction of the work done by the Antwerp branch in particular, and the great services rendered by other branches as well, has made it possible to more than double the membership of the section during the last two years, so that we have at present something like 3,000 members working in inland navigation. As in other branches of transport, the overwhelming majority of the workers belong to the B.T.B.

Finally a word about the river, coal and canal workers. As Belgium is criss-crossed with canals and navigable rivers, most of our towns have small groups of men whose work it is to load and discharge barges. The B.T.B. has managed to organize these men and even to secure national wages and working conditions for them.

This survey of the activities of the Belgian Transport Workers' Union would be incomplete without a few figures indicating our financial position. Our dockers and seamen pay weekly a purely trade contribution of 20 to 25 francs ; the other transport workers between 10 and 17 francs.

On 1 January, 1947, the Union's assets amounted to Fr. 9,197,296.72. Although we paid out in strike pay during 1947 and 1948 a total of Fr. 6,519,069.75, our assets had risen by 31 December, 1948, to Fr. 12,185,003.36 ; an increase of Fr. 2,987,706.64.

This figure of twelve million francs may seem a large one, but it does not satisfy our Executive, and it is our aim to push the financial reserves of our Union up to such a point that any action that we may at any time consider necessary in the interests of our members shall never be hampered for lack of funds. Our purpose is to form a substantial strike fund and to be able to finance properly our extensive services.

The Belgian Transport Workers' Union has a special department whose task it is to manage the social institutions belonging to the Union and at the same time to undertake investigations and preparations for other social work which falls more properly within the ambit of its several trade groups.

The most important social institution run by the B.T.B. is undoubtedly its De Mick Sanatorium. Prior to 1940 this was one of the most ultra-modern institutions of its kind in the country, but after the war nothing but rubble was left of it. We now have only a temporary sanatorium with capacity for about 60 patients, but we hope this year to begin building a new sanatorium that will be even more modern than the old one, and that will have room for 150 patients. We still have a number of financial difficulties to overcome in this connection, but we are convinced that we shall succeed.

Our social work also includes the giving of information and advice to those of our trade groups that have social matters to deal with in addition to their ordinary trade union work. In most of our ports, for instance, there are not only hiring halls, but also—in being and in process of being—waiting and dining rooms, sanitary installations, modern drinking fountains, first-aid posts, etc. ; while in most undertakings, such, for instance, as the Antwerp Taxicab Company, Health and Safety Committees have been set up whose legal task it is to watch over the health of the workers and see that safety regulations are strictly observed. These Committees are on a joint basis. In some undertakings the workers' representatives are permanently employed, their wages being paid from contributions by the employers.

As an organization we have very considerable influence, not only among the workers, but also in official circles. We are represented on the Executive Committee of the Belgian General Federation of Trade Unions, in the Central Industrial Council, on a number of departmental committees and also in several international organizations. So as Belgians we can claim not to have made a bad showing.

Our intentions are to continue along the path we have chosen. We want to get *all* transport workers in one and the same trade union ; we want to raise the social standards of the transport workers still higher than they are at present ; and finally we want a full voice in the economic management of the transport industry, for which purpose we have already asked the Government to set up without delay an Industrial Council for Transport.

We are in the vanguard of the Belgian trade union movement ; a fact which gives us rights, but also obligations.

Finally we want to express our deep appreciation of the guidance and co-operation we have always had from the International Transport Workers' Federation. We are proud to belong to an international trade secretariat that is pointing out to the workers of all countries the way to their complete emancipation.

ECONOMIC CONCENTRATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Excerpts from the debate in the House of Representatives, 15 August, 1949, on HR2734, an amendment to the Clayton (Anti-Trust) Act of 1914.

CONGRESSMAN BOGGS, LOUISIANA . . . There has been a growing trend toward economic concentration in the United States during the past half century which has reached the stage at which it constitutes a vital threat to the American way of life. In 1909 the 2,000 largest non-financial organizations in the United States owned one-third of the assets of all non-financial corporations. By 1929 they controlled 48 per cent, and their control had risen to 55 per cent in the middle 'thirties. During the war which has just been concluded, the giant corporations increased their economic power enormously. For example, the 100 largest corporations received 75 per cent of the war contracts. They operated half of all the new private facilities constructed during the war and three-fourths of all the Government-owned facilities. Moreover, only 68 giant corporations received two-thirds of all the funds for scientific research and development.

CONGRESSMAN CELLER, NEW YORK . . . There are to-day over 3,000,000 units of business in the country. But only 445 corporations or one-eighth of 1 per cent of all corporations are reported to own 51 per cent of the nation's gross assets. Because of this loophole that I have mentioned, between 1940 and 1947, more than 2,500 formerly independent concerns disappeared as a result of mergers and acquisitions. Their assets were $5,200,000,00 or 5½ per cent of the total assets of all manufacturing corporations. Mergers have reached an all-time high. Two hundred and fifty concerns now control two-thirds of the industrial facilities of the country that were controlled by 15,000 companies before the war. These 250 concerns have already bought up 70 per cent of the huge war plants built with Government funds.

Four companies now have 64 per cent of the steel

(*Continued on page* 54.)

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