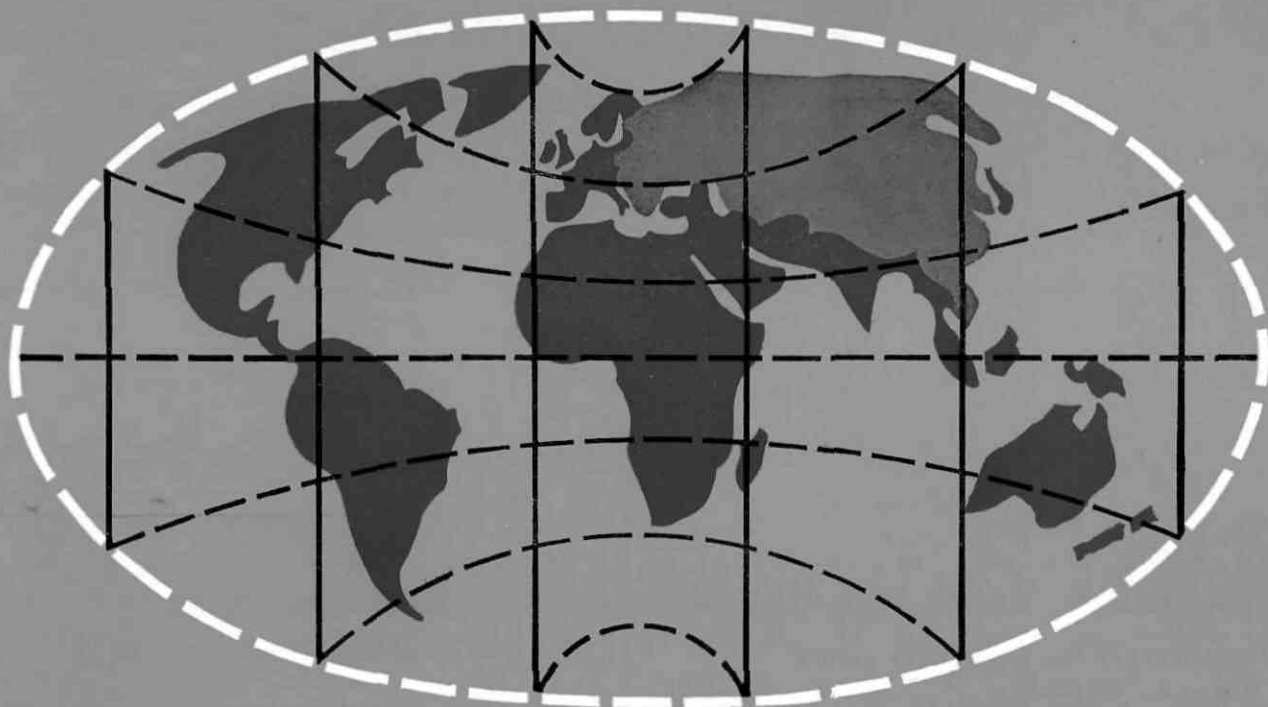


Vol XIII No 1 January 1953



ITF

**INTERNATIONAL
TRANSPORT WORKERS' FEDERATION**

INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS' JOURNAL

Monthly of the ITF

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Correction

We must apologize for an error which appeared in our Edo Fimmen Memorial Issue. In the caption to the photograph printed on page 212, the journey to Mexico undertaken by Edo Fimmen and Charles Lindley is referred to as having been made in 1931. In fact, the visit took place during the Autumn of 1938.

Forthcoming Meetings:

London	19 and 20 January	Seafarers' Sectional Conference
London	21 January	Fair Practices Committee
London	22 January	Regional Seafarers' Conference for NW Europe
London	19-21 February	Executive Committee meeting
Rome	20-24 April	Railwaymen's Sectional Conference



A meeting of ITF seafarers held at Copenhagen in 1927. The author of this article is to be seen immediately behind Edo Fimmen

Edo Fimmen - an appreciation



by J. H. Oldenbroek, General Secretary of the ICFTU

THE STORY OF ANY MAN'S LIFE can only be understood in the setting of the period in which he lived and worked. We are all born into this world at a moment which is not of our own choosing. Yet it is this moment which determines the course which we have to run.

Edo Fimmen was born in Amsterdam in the year 1881. After a long period of decline his native country of Holland, which had played such a remarkable part in the 17th century was picking up again as world trade was growing rapidly and the German hinterland was emerging as a great industrial power. This economic upsurge coincided with a renaissance of the arts, especially literature and painting, and of the sciences. It was also in these days that a social conscience awakened among the Dutch people. A labour movement mainly inspired by

anarcho-syndicalistic conceptions came into being. As a matter of fact, during the last quarter of the 19th century trade unions were springing up like mushrooms in Europe and other parts of the world and the pattern of trade unionism was changed: instead of preparing and waiting for the revolution to come the unions began to fight for better conditions. Even the general labourers, following the example of the skilled tradesmen, felt the urge to organize. The First International, the International Working Men's Association (founded in London in 1864), had to be dissolved (in Philadelphia in 1876) for lack of support, and thirteen years passed before the Second International was constituted. Of course, the Second International was a political organization, but it was customary for trade union representa-

tives to meet at the same time and place as the international socialist congresses.

Edo Fimmen, whose father had died young, was fortunate in that – thanks to the help of better-off relations – he was given a secondary school education so as to prepare him for a commercial career. However, he suffered the hardships of the workers' children of his day and his humility made him choose the side of the toilers who revolted against poverty and injustice and had become conscious of their economic strength. Hardly had he left school, when he came into contact with local trade unionists whom he assisted in an honorary, administrative capacity. He had also joined an existing clerks' union, but this could hardly be regarded as a trade union organization in the accepted sense of the term. Even among the clerks, however,

the idea began to develop that they ought to join forces with other workers and in 1905 Fimmen was among the convenors of a national congress; at this congress a modern clerks' union was established of which Fimmen became one of the leaders. In passing, it should be mentioned that he had already been victimized by his employers who had placed before him the alternative of ceasing his trade union activities or resigning his position. His honour was at stake; he refused to submit and so his promising career came to an end. Difficult years lay ahead. He worked as a commercial traveller, for which he lacked the necessary qualifications, and he did badly paid translation work, being a born linguist. Then, in 1908, the clerks' union was able to afford an organizer and Fimmen was offered the job at a weekly salary of 30/-, but even this salary the union was not always able to pay.

In 1906 a new trade union centre, the NVV, was set up with an aggregate membership of 18,000 and the clerks' union was among the founder members. The NVV was opposed to anarcho-syndicalistic tactics and sought to establish financially strong national unions, favouring the conclusion of collective agreements and the enactment of social legislation. The NVV soon became a power in the state, waging strikes and resisting lockouts. The workers involved were not left to charity, but received benefits from the strike funds they had created. In the case of large conflicts they were able to count on the solidarity of their fellow workers belonging to industries not involved in the conflict.

In 1915 (i.e. one year after the outbreak of the first World War in which Holland was to maintain a precarious neutrality) Edo Fimmen was elected General Secretary of the NVV. He had already made a name in the international trade union movement. Representing the Dutch clerks' union at an international congress of commercial employees held in Stuttgart (Germany) in 1908, the delegates from the other countries soon discovered his abilities and made him secretary of their international organization at the age of twenty-seven. It was an honorary position which he was expected to undertake in his spare time, but it gave him international experience and when he took over the general secretaryship of the NVV he brought with him ideas about the future

of the international trade union movement. It should be more than an office for the exchange of information and the rendering of assistance in the event of labour conflicts. It should be an international which would actively influence the shape of things to come and which would above all work for peace and prevent the outbreak of another war.

During the first World War the Dutch trade union movement became more and more the rallying centre of international trade unionism, with Fimmen acting as a mediator between the trade unionists of belligerent countries and more especially on behalf of the International Federation of Trade Unions and of the International Transport Workers' Federation, both of which had their headquarters in Berlin but were practically unable to function. Fimmen was able to organize a conference of the ITF at the end of 1919 at Amsterdam, followed by a congress of the IFTU in July in the same town. These dates should be noted because the war had only ended on 11 November 1918. Both at the ITF conference and at the congress of the IFTU he was asked to undertake the secretaryship of the organization, to which he acquiesced although his personal preference was to stay in the NVV. He was aware that work in the international field offered little satisfaction and he felt that he had reached the age when he wanted to reap the harvest of the seeds which he had himself sown. But there seemed to be no choice and so he started on his international trade union career in earnest.

Fimmen was above all a man of action and he did not spare himself. In 1919 he organized a relief action for Austria, in 1920 a boycott of Fascist Hungary, in 1921 another relief action, now for Russia, in 1922 a great peace congress. But in 1923 when the Ruhr was occupied by French troops he was unable to organize a protest movement against this military intervention, and he openly expressed his disappointment. He regarded that occupation as an act of aggression and predicted that it would lead to a revival of German militarism and chauvinism. When his views were not shared by the Executive Committee of the IFTU, he resigned his post as general secretary. He did, however, continue as General Secretary of the ITF and he served in that capacity until the end of his days. Fimmen's predictions about Germany came true and the result was

the outbreak of a second World War.

From June 1923 onwards Fimmen devoted himself entirely to the ITF, his ITF one might say. He was now known all over the world as a great internationalist and he was regarded as the foremost international trade union leader of his time. Others may have been greater orators, better writers or cleverer negotiators, he was the spiritual leader who taught that the trade union movement had to defend the freedom of all subjected races. At one time the Communists took a particular interest in him, obviously wanting to use him, but while he was conscious of the mistakes of his own movement and of the weakness displayed by democratic governments he did not succumb to Communist temptation. He once said to them 'I wish we had more of your dash and more of your devoted workers but there are too many criminals amongst you'. And of our own movement he would say 'with all its faults I belong to the free trade union movement, the democratic spirit and the decency of which I shall always uphold'.

Fimmen had no political ambitions. He considered the trade union movement as being of primary importance and he wanted the power of that movement to be used for trade union as well as political aims. It was not enough to fight for better wages and shorter hours in one country - it was just as imperative to support the colonial peoples in their struggle for emancipation, a struggle directed against the same interests as the unions were fighting 'at home'. Fimmen was convinced that the age of imperialism was coming to a close, but he looked even further ahead. Self-government would not automatically solve the problems of hitherto oppressed peoples and so he wanted the unions of the better paid workers to assist financially in the setting up of trade union organizations in the underdeveloped areas of the world. Today a programme as outlined above, only thirty years after it was conceived and ten years after Fimmen's death, is generally accepted in free trade union circles, but when he came forward with these ideas only lip service was paid to the proposals of an 'idealist' who proved to have far more real understanding of world developments than his colleagues who wanted to move slowly and who were very much more concerned about the interests and the problems of their own members than about those

of the workers in far distant countries.

I have to abstain from relating Fimmen's uninterrupted fight against oppression: against Mussolini the Fascist, Franco the Falangist, Hitler the Nazi, and so many lesser ones and how Fimmen did everything to help the victims of these regimes which meant war, while Fimmen, although not a pacifist, bitterly hated war.

It is regrettable that after Fimmen became physically unable to continue his work in the ITRF he did not write his memoirs as he had so often promised himself to do. Having worked under and with Fimmen for the best part of twenty-five years I know that he was a well-read man who would see things in perspective. He regarded the period of his own life as but a spell in the great struggle for human freedom and dignity which had started with the French Revolution. That Revolution had inaugurated economic, social and political freedoms which would finally emancipate the hu-

man race and lead to universal and lasting peace. As a socialist, Fimmen believed that the workers, through their trade unions and their political parties, would become the paramount influence in the world. As a Christian he was convinced that religion would influence peoples' moral behaviour. But he was too much of a realist to believe that universal patterns – except in general outlines – could be introduced or imposed to build that one world in which he was a firm believer.

Many years before his death when we came back from a funeral Fimmen said to me: 'No pomp and ceremony for me and no mourners at my graveside, but I would wish that a number of years after my death my friends would remember and talk about me and that is the only monument I desire.' Those who knew Edo Fimmen will hear him say it, but they need no reminder because they think of him often and talk about him whenever they meet.

of this wave of persecution filtered through to the outside world, but protests made by individual politicians had no effect.

The same could not be said of Fimmen's action. He called upon the leaders of the International Transport Workers' Federation to help the Hungarian workers. They decided to take boycott action against the Horthy regime and to allow no more goods to reach Hungary until the Terror had been ended.

To ensure the implementation of that decision, Comrade Fimmen himself travelled through the frontier towns supervising the boycott. An unbelievably large quantity of goods piled up on the Austro-Hungarian frontier, for the Austrian trade unions did their job in exemplary fashion. In certain other areas, however, the boycott was unfortunately not total.

Nevertheless, the action so frightened the Hungarian Government that it ordered its ambassador at Vienna to hold talks with the organizers of the boycott. I myself was present at the discussions, where we received a promise that the Government would bring the Terror to an end. That was in fact done and a few months later we returned to our own country where we were to wage a long and bitter struggle to organize the Hungarian workers and improve their living conditions.

Many years later I met Edo Fimmen again in Geneva at an International Labour Conference organized by the ILO. That meeting was to be repeated almost every year. We spoke a lot about the boycott and I found that he still thought of Hungary with affection. He showed great interest in the Hungarian Labour Movement and gave us much help and good advice. I always had the privilege of his company at Geneva and on such occasions was able to see that he had great understanding of and sympathy for our struggle.

Today, behind the Iron Curtain, the Terror is in full swing again, but we lack a Fimmen who could organize effective international action in support of the persecuted millions of Eastern Europe.

*) During the night of 26 August 1919, nearly fifty leading members of the Labour Movement in Veszprém were taken from the gaol at Siófok by White frontier guards. In a wood near Siófok, some forty of them were beaten and bayoneted to death, the remainder being hanged. A similar outrage occurred in the Orgovány region, where a band of White officers under the command of Lieutenant Ivan Hejjas instituted a veritable reign of terror. An American Commission which visited the Orgovány Forest found the bodies of more than two hundred people who had been brutally done to death there.

A Hungarian trade unionist recalls Edo Fimmen

by Karl Peyer,

ex-General Secretary of the Hungarian Trade Union Council

THE YEAR 1920 was a calamitous one for the Hungarian Labour Movement. The Communist regime of Béla Kun fell in August 1919 and, following several months of Rumanian occupation, the White Army which had been organized in French-occupied territory marched in under the leadership of ex-Admiral Miklós Horthy.

The White troops were quartered in a number of hotels in the Hungarian capital and these became the bases from which their operations were conducted. They made short work of all whom they considered to be their opponents and it was rare at that time to find a village in which the blacksmith and the local Jewish shopkeeper had not been hanged. People were arrested en masse on the slightest suspicion and even today the Hungarian people has bitter memories of the vile atrocities committed at Siófok near Lake Balaton and in the Orgovány Forest. *)

The Editor of the Social Democratic

newspaper *Népszava* and his companion were tricked into entering a car, driver outside the city, and there shot. Their bodies were thrown into the Danube after they had been robbed of their gold watches.

Many such cases of murder and violence could be quoted, but since so much has already been written about this unhappy period I should like to confine myself to but one aspect of it.

Although I was a member of the Government which had been set up after the fall of Béla Kun and was recognized by the Entente countries, I was forced by the Terror to resign from my post as Minister and flee to Vienna, where many other emigrant politicians were already to be found.

The trade unions of Hungary were completely paralyzed. Hungarian miners were placed under military control and thousands of their fellow-workers were flung into prison or the notorious Hajmáskér concentration camp. Details



Bro. Tofahrn presents the ITF's gift, a silver vase decorated with the Federation's insignia, to the President of the Norwegian Railwaymen's Union, Brother Marius Trana. Looking on are the Vice-President of the Norwegian State Employees' Cartel, Brother H. H. Bakkane, and Ingvald Haugen, President of the ITF-affiliated Norwegian Seamen's Union

Sixty years of the Norwegian Railwaymen's Union

by **Paul Tofahrn**, Assistant General Secretary

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION came late to Norway. The first railway line was not opened until 1854 and even as late as 1890 there were still less than one thousand miles of track, with a staff of about three thousand men.

An early beginning

The Norwegian democracy is old and in the 19th century there were no laws to restrict freedom of association. The first railwaymen's association was formed on 20 November 1869. It was, in the main, an educational body. During the years which followed, a number of other associations of railwaymen were established, sometimes on a local, sometimes on a regional, basis. Several of them were craft unions. In 1892, the oldest group raised the question of establishing a national link between all railwaymen's unions. The initiative met with success and on 20 November 1892 eleven associations with a total of 1,252 members, i.e. about forty per cent of the railway staff, formed the Federation of Norwegian Railwaymen's Association's which was later to assume the name of the Norwegian Railwaymen's Union.

During the next twenty years there was a good deal of fluctuation, with associations leaving or joining the Union under the impact of all kinds of ideas. For a long time the organization had little success. The management was hostile and lacked understanding for the trade unions' aspirations. Nevertheless, whatever the reverses, there were always some trade union leaders determined to hold out and do their utmost to maintain the national union.

Unrest and reaction

Then came the war of 1914/1918. Life became more difficult than ever before and unrest among railway staff was rife. This helped the organization by arousing interest in trade union affairs; and the membership of affiliated associations and their membership grew very rapidly. In 1920 the Union was compelled to launch a strike. It ended in defeat for the railwaymen, and as a result their leaders were hard put to it to preserve both the associations and the national union. It is true that in 1919 they had succeeded in obtaining staff representation on the Management Committee of

the State Railways, but that did not make any difference. From 1921 until 1931 there was a wave of reaction throughout the whole of Norway's industry, heightened by widespread unemployment. During that period, all Norwegian unions had literally to fight for their lives and they exacted fantastically high contributions – up to more than one day's pay per week – from their members in order that they might maintain themselves.

A turning-point is reached

This perseverance could not fail to bring its reward. Notwithstanding the economic crisis, the year 1931 marked a turning-point. During this period political developments helped the trade unions considerably. In the two Labour Parties then existing in Norway, discussions on ways and means of achieving Socialism led to amalgamation and the adoption of a programme and tactics on the lines of those common to the labour movements of most Western countries. This was largely a result of pressure from the trade unions.

The capitalist holders of power became concerned when they realized that the united labour movement had become an effective rallying centre of the working masses. They changed their tune and made concessions. But what they did was too little and came too late to stem the socialist tide. The influence of the labour movement on the Norwegian working class grew steadily and the elections of 1935 left the King no alternative but to appoint a Labour Government. The elections of 1939 resulted in a Socialist majority in Parliament, marking a further advance and consolidating the position of the Labour Government. That majority has been maintained ever since and Norway is thus the country with the longest record of uninterrupted Labour rule.

This change in the political climate brought about a complete change in the relations between the Railwaymen's Un-

ion and the management. Gradually but steadily conditions of employment on the railways were improved.

The years of resistance

Then came the Second World War and the Quisling regime. Both the Railwaymen's Union and the railway management played a role in the resistance movement. There existed an official Quisling Executive Committee of the union and an official Quisling railway management committee. But there also existed clandestine counterparts of both. The two underground bodies worked together closely to sabotage the Nazis' war effort in Norway and they established a clandestine postal service which linked all sections of the Norwegian resistance movement. This joint action during the war has led to the establishment of a completely new relationship between the union and management. They now cooperate wholeheartedly with the twin aims of making the railways an efficient instrument at the service of the country and of ensuring good conditions of employment. Throughout the whole railway industry, joint consultative committees work ceaselessly to improve the railway service and the conditions of life and work of the Norwegian railwayman. ■

Sixty years of railway unionism

On 20 November 1952, the Norwegian Railwaymen's Union celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of its foundation. As was to be expected, it received many jubilee gifts. The most important and, at the same time, the most significant was a collection made among its members on the initiative of the branch committees, and yielding the handsome sum of 50,000 crowns. When handing over the gift to the President, Brother Marius Trana, the members' spokesman, requested the Executive Committee to use the money for the education of those who devote their leisure to union affairs as members of branch committees, shop stewards, and union representatives in the joint consultation machinery. Another significant 'present' was the affiliation of the 400-strong Station Masters' Association to the Norwegian Railwaymen's Union, bringing the total membership up to nearly 22,000, i.e. eighty-five per cent of the total permanent staff employed on the railways. The Norwegian Locomotivemen's Association is now the only railwaymen's organiza-

tion not yet affiliated with the Railwaymen's Union. Nevertheless, the relations between the union and the Locomotivemen's Association are excellent and the two work hand in hand.

At the functions held on 20 November in the Lecture Hall of Oslo University and the ballroom of the Bristol Hotel, representatives of many Norwegian trade unions and of the Norwegian Federation of Trade Unions testified to the high standing which the Railwaymen's Union has attained in the country's trade union movement. The General Manager of the State Railways presented a gift as a token of the Management's appreciation of the union's work. On behalf of the Government, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Communications thanked the union for its cooperation in organizing the country's transport services. The Chairman of the Labour Party - himself a former Prime Minister - paid tribute to the union's unwavering and effective support during the last thirty years.

For thirty-four years the Norwegian Railwaymen's Union has been affiliated with the ITF and during that time it has won the respect of railwaymen's organi-

zations throughout Europe. In addition to the Secretary of the ITF Railwaymen's Section, therefore, delegates from seven European countries brought both gifts and congratulations from their several organizations.

A better reward . . .

An 81-year old veteran and past President characterized the union's achievements in the following few words: 'We felt we counted for nothing in society and that we had to struggle to obtain a say in our lives and in the affairs of the country. We survivors of the older generation have lived to see our aspirations realized. The difficult up-hill struggle of by-gone days now appears to us as an indispensable stage in the work of successive generations. Today we see the evidence that our efforts have helped to bring about conditions that are a splendid fulfilment of our proudest dreams. That is a better reward than we ever hoped for.'

The Jubilee celebrations proved in no uncertain manner that the Norwegian railwaymen and their union are acknowledged as an important and beneficent factor in Norwegian society.

American seamen to get scholarships

THE ITF-AFFILIATED SEAFARERS' INTERNATIONAL UNION OF AMERICA reports that it has added another benefit to the long list of facilities it has been able to offer its members since its Welfare Scheme first got under way. College scholarships valued at 1,500 dollars a year are now being offered to assist members of the SIU or their children to take up a course of post-graduate studies at any recognized college or university in the United States. The awards, which are due to begin next Autumn, will provide for four scholarships each year for the present, and a separate fund has already been set aside to cover the next four years.

Mr. Paul Hall, Secretary-Treasurer of the Atlantic and Gulf District and Vice-President of the International, explaining the purpose of the scheme, said that it was designed to give an opportunity to seafarers and their children to enjoy the benefits of a higher education from which they would otherwise be barred for financial reasons. The scholarships

will be open to all members of the union under the age of thirty-five as well as to their sons and daughters, provided they had been in the upper one-third of their high-school graduation class. Seafarer applicants, or their fathers, must have served at least three years at sea in vessels operated by SIU-contracted shipping companies.

The grant will be more than enough to pay for tuition, college fees, books, room and board, clothing, transportation, laundry, and other incidentals for an entire year. In cases where the student wants to take up professional post-graduate work, the fund will support the deserving student for the additional time required.

The union itself will not take any part in determining the successful candidates. This will be done by a special panel of five professors, each from a different university, on the basis of the results of the College Entrance Examination Board tests, the standard examination for all colleges in the country.

Prospective chaos in British Transport



The Conservatives set the clock back • by **A. J. Champion, M.P.**

BRITAIN'S TRANSPORT SYSTEM is again in the political melting pot, but what sort of stew will emerge from the Conservative Government's cooking is not yet certain. It is true that the ingredients which go into the pot are contained in the Transport Bill, presented to the House of Commons for a Second Reading on 17 November 1952, but no one can tell exactly what will result from the boiling.

The old system

What was the condition of British transport when the post-war Labour Government passed the Transport Act of 1947? Britain at one period in the nineteenth century had no less than one thousand separate railway undertakings but by a process of elimination and amalgamation these had been reduced to the 120 companies that remained in 1921. The Railways Act of that year, passed by a Coalition Government composed predominantly of Conservatives, reduced that number to the four companies which, still under private ownership, catered for the whole country.

The railways had for many years been controlled by legislation as to the freight rates and passenger fares they could charge; and an Act of 1854 imposed upon them the duty of carrying traffic without unreasonable delay and without partiality. This made them providers of a public service and imposed them a serious obligation; so that although the railways had a monopoly of fast inland transport, they were prevented from exploiting that monopoly to the full.

Road and rail

The coming of the road motor vehicle brought a new element into the transport field, and in the inter-war years it rapidly began to challenge the supremacy of the railways as the carriers of Britain's goods. Unencumbered by public service obligations, or Acts of Parliament imposing control of freight charges, or by the necessity of meeting reasonable standards of pay and conditions of service for their workers, road transport was able to 'skim' off the most profitable traffics, leaving the railways to carry the less remunerative freight.

The competition between road and rail brought about a situation in which the railways, unable to fully remunerate their shareholders, found it difficult to raise new capital for essential developments: whilst transport workers were caught and ground between the upper and nether millstones of that competition, which brought with it cuts in wages and a general worsening of their conditions of labour.

Commission after Commission and Committee after Committee was set up in the inter-war years by successive Governments to consider and report upon the problem thus created, and Parliament passed the Acts of 1930 and 1933 to try to bring some semblance of order into the growth of road transport and to impose upon it reasonable conditions of service for its staff. But the transport problem was not solved and at the outbreak of the 1939-45 war the four railway companies were engaged on pro-

paganda designed to force the Government of the day to release the railways from some of the controlling legislation, so that the railways would have a chance of competing with the road hauliers on a fairer basis. The then Transport Minister promised in 1939 that something would be done by the Government to meet their wishes, but the coming of the war prevented any action being taken on this matter; the railways were taken over by the Government for the period of the war on a rental basis and the whole problem was shelved.

Labour's Transport Act

What the 1947 Transport Act of the Labour Government set out to do was to bring order into the chaos of our transport system, not by attempting to secure a complete State monopoly by the ownership of everything that moved on road and rail, but by State ownership of the railways and canals and of road freight transport operating for hire or reward over the distance of twenty-five miles from the operating centre of the vehicle, with just a few unimportant exceptions. Private road hauliers were permitted to operate for hire or reward within the twenty-five miles limit, and, a very important consideration, manufacturers and others could transport their goods in their own vehicles anywhere in the land. As far as road passenger transport is concerned, provision was made in the Act of 1947 for the preparation of schemes to coordinate road passenger services in prescribed areas. The intention was to secure an adequate system

of road transport for the whole of the country; and the provisions of the Act were wide enough to enable this to be brought about. The Act also enabled the transport authority to make purchases of road transport undertakings by agreement, to add to those taken over by the State by reason of their being, prior to 1 January 1948, in the ownership of the railway companies.

The Transport Commission's task

All this was to be brought into being and subsequently administered by a public board named the Transport Commission, their general duty being that of exercising their powers so as to provide, or secure, or promote the provision of an efficient, adequate, economical and properly integrated system of public inland transport and port facilities within Great Britain for passengers and goods with due regard to safety of operation. Transport by air was specifically excluded.

The Transport Commission took over the railways and canals on 1 January 1948, which in itself is a considerable undertaking, employing as it does, some 600,000 people with a daily wage bill of £ 650,000. They also began to acquire the long distance road haulage undertakings and up to the end of 1951 had purchased some 3,700 road undertakings, comprising 40,000 vehicles, at a cost of £ 62.6 million – of which the Transport Commission estimate that £ 33 million is accounted for by the purchase of the goodwill of the undertakings. Some area passenger schemes were in process of negotiation but none had been adopted. The position in November 1952 is that the Transport Commission owns the railways and canals, 55,700 goods road vehicles, including those owned by the former railway companies, and 24,000 road passenger vehicles. In the ownership of private firms there are some 120,000 road goods vehicles, operating mainly within the twenty-five miles limit, 781,000 vehicles owned by manufacturers and others for the purpose of carrying their own goods, and 53,000 road passenger vehicles.

In the four and a half years of the life of the Transport Commission considerable progress had been made towards achieving the aims of the Act, but the task was by no means complete. It took many years to unify the railways following the 1921 Railways Act and in the important field of the unification of ra-

tes structures, eight years were required. The task of the Commission is, of course, much greater than that of the four railway companies, whose concern was one of railway operation only at that time.

Labour's aims

What does the Labour Party claim in the way of progress towards the aims of the Act? It claims that considerable progress has been made towards a greater efficiency, which is the first instruction to the Transport Commission. By every accepted test that can be applied to railway operation, the nationally-owned railways come out well, despite the fact that overriding national considerations prevented many necessary capital improvements being carried through. All the evidence available points to the fact that in 1951 railway freight operating reached the highest level of efficiency ever recorded in this country. Net ton miles per total engine hour, probably the best test of all, showed that the figure had increased from the 461 of 1938 to 595 in 1951. Unification alone has accounted for a saving of some £ 15 million per annum, while other economies are estimated to have resulted in an annual saving of £ 35 to £ 40 million. The intricate process of welding the various road undertakings into one that would provide an efficient service went on without any sign of a serious interruption in services to trade and industry. Indeed, a network of local and national services has been built up, which responsible bodies of users, who are by no means Labour supporters, have expressed themselves as anxious to see retained. The Association of British Chambers of Commerce, representing some 60,000 private firms, has made it clear that it fears the loss of these services. And whilst the Transport Commission has been building up these services, it has had to face the task of reaching a much higher standard of vehicle fitness and maintenance than that with which the private operator was so often content.

Progress in transport integration

What progress has the Commission made towards providing 'an integrated system of public inland transport'? And by integration is meant, to use the words of the Chief Officer of the Research and Charges Section of the Road Haulage Executive, 'the combination and selection of the employment of the several forms of transport and relevant staff,

premises and equipment controlled by the Commission in such a manner as to assure that trade and industry as a whole will find available the most suitable and economical services that intelligent and experienced blending can produce'. Although the Conservatives would like to persuade the British people that there has been a complete failure in this respect, much has been accomplished and the groundwork prepared for a greater degree of integration between all the forms of transport owned by the Commission. Examples of integration already in operation can be listed under twenty-one headings and these range from the closing of branch railway lines and the provision of the necessary services by road, the extension of agreed charges arrangements to permit of combined quotation of road/rail charges, to the zonal collection and delivery by the road haulage undertaking for the railways. All this has been done, with a full and sympathetic realization of the human problems involved in the creation of redundancies and transfers of men from one class of work to another, in four and a half years.

Conditions of employment

Conditions of employment of all men in the industry have been considerably improved, but this is not to say that there is not still a lot remaining to be done in this matter. Perhaps the biggest strides forward have been taken in respect of the road haulage men, for trade union agreements are observed to the full and a new standard of welfare arrangements is coming into being.

Financial results

What of the finances of this great undertaking? The Transport Commission was able to say of the year 1951: 'The continued improvement in the financial results each year since 1949 is primarily the result of hard work by those responsible for the Commission's undertaking, coupled with a determination to give the Commission a balanced budget and to work out and adhere to sound principles of business administration. The balancing of the account in 1951, and the hopes of continued balance in 1952, are far from being based on a transfer to the customer of ever-rising costs. The total rise in fares and charges since pre-war days (93% British Railways, 43% London Transport up to the end of 1951) has been kept to a much lower

level than the total rise in the prices of materials and wages. (150% British Railways, 120% London Transport). The explanation of this lies partly in the substantial economies which have been obtained and in the considerable improvements which have been made in all-round efficiency.'

Retrograde proposals

The picture of transport in Britain now is of the growing success of the nationalized industry; of a new outlook by transport men; of order taking the place of chaos. All of it is to be sacrificed to a philosophy that dates back two centuries and has proved to be wholly inappropriate in modern industrial conditions. No wonder that a leading technical paper, *'Modern Transport'*, with no socialist sympathies, said of the Conservatives' Bill: 'Despite attempts by Government spokesmen, from the Prime Minister downwards, no statement has been made which, in the light of truthful examination and critical judgment, can justify its wanton destruction.'

What do the Conservatives propose for the future of transport in Britain? They describe their Bill as one which has for its main purposes 'the disposal of the British Transport Commission's road haulage property, to modify the position of the Commission in relation to charges and to provide for the reorganization of the British Railways. The Bill also provides for the modification of the powers, duties and composition of the British Transport Commission and for a levy on certain goods vehicles and tractors used on the roads.'

Road transport sell-out

The Transport Commission is instructed to dispose of their road haulage property, with the exception of the railways' road and collection services and, with a slight addition, the equivalent of the road haulage interest held by the railways before nationalization - which amounts to about 4,000 of the 40,000 it now owns - as quickly as is reasonably practicable. The Commission have the duty of deciding how to split up their road undertaking into 'operable units' in order that it might be sold to the best advantage. These units may comprise any number of vehicles up to fifty and with them will go such other property as would make it possible for the purchaser to immediately go into business as a road haulier operating for hire or

reward. When that has been done, offers for the operable units are to be sought from potential road hauliers. In order to give the purchasers of these operable units a chance of establishing themselves in the long-distance haulage business, and enhance the prospects of finding buyers, they are to have an advantage over the existing road hauliers, who are confined to the twenty-five miles limit, because they will have no restriction as to distance placed upon them. The restriction of twenty-five miles on the existing road hauliers will remain until the end of 1954, and then the whole field of operation will be thrown open to all. This means that the purchaser of an operable unit in, say, July 1953 will have a clear start of eighteen months.

It is estimated by the Conservative Government that the sale of these units will cost the Transport Commission a sum of £ 1 million in what is called 'disturbance' and also the amount of the difference between what was paid for the various road haulage undertakings and what the operable units as a whole will fetch. The amount of the loss so caused has been variously estimated and ranges from the Government's estimate of £ 20 millions to the £ 50 millions of some transport experts.

In order to compensate for any losses sustained by the Commission as a result of the sale, a levy will be charged on certain classes of goods vehicles. These being, broadly, all vehicles carrying goods on the roads if their weight unladen exceeds one ton, no matter whether reward or are engaged in carrying the manufacturers' own goods. The amount of the levy being fixed for the initial period at thirteen shillings and sixpence for every quarter of a ton by which the vehicles exceed one ton in weight. This amount of the levy can be adjusted upwards or downwards at stated intervals in order to ensure that it brings in sufficient to meet the charges that will fall on the fund into which the proceeds are paid. It is estimated that this levy at the 13/6d. rate will bring in some £ 4 millions a year. It must be added here that in addition to paying the Transport Commission's losses on the sale of their vehicles, the levy fund will be used to pay compensation to employees who suffer loss of employment or loss or diminution of emoluments or pension rights or whose position is worsened as a result of the operation of the Bill.

The position of Labour

On this proposal to sell out the road haulage section of the nationalized industry, the Labour Party in the House of Commons has made its position quite clear. It believes that it is a disastrous proposal and when the Party again forms the Government of the country it will take over such undertakings and vehicles as are necessary to enable it to carry out the purposes of the 1947 Act. In order that no one may be under any sort of misapprehension about what will be done when that time arrives, it has been clearly stated on behalf of the Party that it will undertake to buy back only such of the vehicles and undertakings as are needed for that purpose. A Labour Government will not again compensate anyone for loss of business or severance or goodwill. It has been stated beyond any possibility of doubt that if the vehicles are purchased from the nationally-owned undertaking, the purchasers take big risks and instead of making handsome profits, they may quite well be involved in serious losses.

New railway problems created

To try to meet the point of the old complaint of the railways, that they were hampered in meeting the competition of the road hauliers by reason of legislation imposing upon them considerable obligations in the matter of charges, the Bill makes provision for sweeping away some of these obligations. As previously mentioned these duties as to charges were born of monopoly conditions that no longer applied since the coming of competition by road transport. These obligations related in the main to equality of charges, to undue preference, to protection for harbour authorities and coastwise shipping and charges agreed with individual traders, and they are the ones to go. But there will be added as a result of this Bill provisions whereby railway users are protected against unreasonable or unfair treatment by the railways, and for the protection of the competitors of the Commission against charges made with a view to eliminating competition. Critics of the Bill assert that something is being given to the nationalized railways with the one hand and much of it is taken back with the other; for not the slightest attempt is being made to place road haulage undertakings under the same obligations as to public service

and the publishing of maximum charges as is the case with railways. Neither is there any provision being made to permit of traders complaining of excessive charges for the carriage of goods by road or a competitor complaining of charges being made with a view to eliminating competition.

The Transport Commission is instructed to prepare a scheme, for submission to the Minister, for the reorganization of the railways. Here the intention is to abolish the Railway Executive whose task it has been to run the railways for the Commission, and to decentralize the railways. What sort of scheme the Commission will prepare under this instruction it is difficult to forecast, excepting that it can be said that it looks as though there is a distinct possibility that we shall return to the pre-war set-up of distinct railway groups, working under boards of directors. This is opposed by the Labour Party, mainly on the grounds that the Railway Executive was doing a fine job of work, as the efficiency statistics prove – the amount saved by unification under that Executive being estimated at some £ 15 million per annum, certainly strengthens the argument.

Road passenger transport changes

The other major alteration proposed in the Bill is that relating to road passenger transport. The Commission is relieved of the obligation of preparing area schemes for the provision of road passenger transport. They are also deprived of the power to acquire further undertakings and the Minister is empowered to order the Commission to dispose of a sufficient number of the securities they hold in some of the omnibus undertakings to cause the Commission to lose a controlling interest in them.

In addition to the foregoing there are a number of minor amendments, with which only those who are deeply interested in the technical aspects of the matter would be concerned.

Future outlook unsettled

What will be the effect of this Bill when it becomes an Act of Parliament and its provisions are carried out? That is, of course, if they ever are, for it is clear that should a Labour Government be returned before that day arrives, most of the Bill will never be translated into administrative acts.

The country's railways and canals

will remain a nationalized undertaking run under the general supervision of the Transport Commission, but operating (as far as it is possible to foresee what the scheme will contain) as six or so separate under boards of directors appointed by the Minister of Transport after consultation with the Commission. These railways will be faced on the freight-carrying side of the industry with the competition of all the road haulage undertakings and of the manufacturers' own haulage vehicles. On the passenger side, the railways will have to meet the competition of the omnibus undertakings, without themselves being able to take any effective part in the control of these undertakings.

To enable the nationalized railways to meet the freight and passenger competition they will have a little more freedom as to charges, but this is a very limited freedom. The railways might have to raise their charges on the heavy raw materials that they carry at what are known to be uneconomic rates in order to try to meet this competition by low-

ering their charges on the traffics in which they are in serious competition with road haulage undertakings. Road transport undertakings will be in violent competition with one another and with the transport undertakings of the manufacturers, until the normal process of amalgamation and elimination carries them along the inevitable road towards privately owned monopoly.

The transport workers will be in danger of being caught between these interests and finding their standards under heavy attack as a result. The country will see its precious capital being wasted on the rebuilding of two complete transport systems running side by side. This being something that in its altered position vis-à-vis the remainder of the world it can ill afford.

This is not a pleasant picture for any transport man. It represents the madness of those who refuse to learn from experience, who will not accept the obvious solution to the country's difficulties that lies in coordinated effort, who still believe in the philosophy of the jungle.

Road safety and acuity of sight

THE IMPORTANCE of the role played by good vision in road safety was stressed in a memorandum from the British Association of Optical Practitioners recently submitted to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Road Accidents. The Association expressed the view that the standard of vision required for the issue of a driving-licence in Britain was not high enough for the high speeds of today and that the test, whereby an applicant must satisfy the examiner that he can see and read a car numberplate at a distance of twenty-five yards, is carried out perfunctorily – in most cases without any attempt to check.

It was suggested that both the licence application form and the Highway Code should stress the gravity of the risks incurred if drivers allowed their visual acuity to fall below a certain standard. If spectacles were worn to reach the required visual standard, the licence should be valid only when they were being worn. Fields of vision and night vision should be measured when doubt exists.

Amongst other recommendations made by the Association were obliga-

tory brake-lights, the putting forward of lighting-up time by thirty minutes, a minimum standard of rear-light visibility for all cars and the standardized use of cats'-eyes on all major roads and busy minor roads.

Pointing out that the daily experience of opticians made it clear that the public did not, in general, appreciate the importance of good vision as a factor in road-safety, the Association recommended a fact-finding inquiry by the police and the Road Research Laboratory, or other suitable agency, to convince the Minister of Transport of the significance of vision in relation to road accidents.

Increased motorization in Japan

IN A RECENT STATEMENT, the Japanese Ministry of Transport revealed that at the end of December 1951, there were 502,000 motor vehicles in Japan – more than double the 1948 figure of 230,000. The total was made up of 141,000 taxis and private cars, 325,000 lorries, 21,000 buses, and 15,000 special vehicles, including fire-engines.

German railway official flees to Western Zone

THE CHIEF BOOK-KEEPER of the Schwerin Reich Railway Directorate has fled to West Berlin with his wife as he was expecting arrest for refusing to send members of his staff to do so-called 'demonstrative harvest work'. On arriving in West Berlin he reported that the East German railways had been forced to make rigorous cuts in expenditure because the 1952 budget had been far exceeded. Such action was having a damaging effect on the railway services. The Schwerin Directorate alone had overspent by about DM 4,000,000. The gravest economy measure was the dismissal of crossing keepers on both main and branch lines.

Quality and quantity in European Transport

AT LAST YEAR'S MEETING of the International Chamber of Commerce *Commission on Transport Users*, Mr. Corbin, Chairman of the *Ad Hoc* Group of Transport Experts set up by the OEEC, explained that his group was preparing a report on the transport developments required in Europe over the next five years in order to handle the proposed twenty-five per cent increase in production. He said the OEEC wanted from the ICC a general judgment of users as to whether transport is adapted to present requirements and how it can best be adapted to future requirements.

The question was discussed by the Commission and there was fairly general agreement that attention should be given to the quality rather than the quantity of transport. It was pointed out that in many countries transport exceeded present requirements; it was therefore preferable to make better use of existing facilities and caution was advisable before engaging in new investments in equipment.

US rail workers set new productivity record

ACCORDING TO an official study published by the US Department of Labor, the productivity of American railway workers increased six per cent in 1951 over the previous year 'to an all-time high', reaching a rate 58.5 per cent above the 1939 figure. The study was prepared by the Department's division of produc-

tivity and technological development, which has been making a series of surveys on output increases in various United States industries. The productivity is measured by the volume of revenue freight and passenger traffic handled per man-hour of work.

The study disclosed that revenue freight ton-miles per man-hour in 1951 rose nine per cent and revenue passenger traffic per man-hour almost ten per cent. There was a small increase in man-hours worked, but the net gain in productivity stood at six per cent for the year.

'The trend of traffic per man-hour has been markedly upward during the sixteen-year period covered by the study', the Department's report declared. 'From 1935 until the peak war year (1943), revenue traffic per man-hour rose steadily with only one minor setback between 1937 and 1938. After 1943, a gradual downward movement set in, lasting until 1946.'

French trade unionists study American Railways

WHAT IS DESCRIBED as one of the largest railway labour-management teams ever to visit the United States under the Mutual Security Agency's technical assistance programme has just completed a study tour of the American railway network. The team was made up of 13 French railway officials and leaders of non-Communist railway unions.

United States railway unions cooperated with MSA to make the tour as informative as possible, and the itinerary provided for visits to many union headquarters. Among those organizations which played host to the team were the Locomotive Engineers, Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, and the Trainmen. The tour ended in Washington, where the French delegation met officials of the ITF-affiliated Railway Labor Executives' Association.

The fishing industry in Israel

THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT has started a scheme for the development of all branches of the fishing industry. It proposes to employ 5,000 men, seventy-five trawlers, sixty motor-boats and 500 row boats to produce about 15,000 tons of fish, and to build a new port at Sdot Yam (Caesarea) as the centre of the industry, and a smaller port at Mishmonet. The scheme will include a thorough study of fishing methods as carried out by Britain and America.

Fishing in Israel can be divided into three groups: pisciculture, Mediterranean fishing, and lake fishing.

Pisciculture is the principal branch of the industry and provides almost three-quarters of the total production. It is mainly practised over an area of some 6,000 acres in the northern part of the Sea of Galilee. It has been shown that carp can be bred on a commercial scale, and it is hoped that new methods will develop this section of the industry into a profitable enterprise.

Mediterranean fishing provides about twenty per cent of the total tonnage. There are about thirty trawlers operating at present, each producing some fifty tons of fish a year. There are great possibilities for development here and a Tel Aviv company has shown its enterprise by fitting out two trawlers to oper-

ate in the North Sea this winter. The herrings caught will be frozen at Ostend and sent to Israel. Surface fishing has also been started recently, and groups of newly-arrived immigrants and demobilized soldiers have begun to work along the coast near Haifa.

Lake fishing is carried out on Lake Tiberius and Lake Huleh, which are kept replenished from a government pisciculture centre in Galilee.

However, the Israeli fishing industry can still produce only a quarter of the consumption of the population, which is very high owing to the lack of meat.

Pan-Arab merchant fleet to be established

THE GOVERNMENTS of the Arab countries have decided to establish a Pan-Arab merchant fleet and to this end have ordered a number of tankers and freighters from shipbuilders in Sicily. The company which will operate the fleet will be established in Sicily in order to take advantage of the concessions which the law allows in that country, e.g. exemption from the payment of certain dues during the first ten years of a company's existence. A number of shipbuilding companies on the Italian mainland will also be engaged on the construction of the Pan-Arab merchant fleet.

Comparative table of Able Seamen's monthly wages

December 1952

(according to current collective agreements)

Country	Basic rate*)	Maximum rate*)	Remarks
Belgium	£ 35 16 s. 0 d.** (B.Frs. 5007)	£ 37 10 s. 0 d.	Maximum after 3 years' sea service
Denmark	£ 32 0 s. 0 d. (D.Kr. 618,50)	—	
Finland	£ 29 18 s. 0 d. (F.m.k. 19,340)	£ 37 0 s. 0 d.	Basic rate includes 5% increment after 6 months' service in industry; maximum reached after 18 years with same owner
France			
Trade zone I	£ 20 18 s. 0 d. (Fr.frs. 20,490)	—	
Trade zone II	£ 22 6 s. 0 d. (Fr.frs. 21,870)	—	
Trade zone III	£ 24 8 s. 0 d. (Fr.frs. 23,910)	—	
Germany	£ 22 2 s. 0 d. (DM. 260)	—	Family allowances represent substantial element of income 10% increase applied for
Greece	£ 30 0 s. 0 d.	£ 32 10 s. 0 d.	Maximum after 12 months in same ship
Italy	£ 23 5 s. 0 d. (L. 39,600)	—	Includes one-twelfth of annual bonus
India			
Bombay	£ 11 5 s. 0 d. (Rs. 150)	—	
Calcutta	£ 9 7 s. 6 d. (Rs. 125)	—	
Japan	£ 4 16 s. 0 d. (Y. 4900)	—	Family and other allowances constitute substantial element of income
Netherlands			
over 500 GRT	£ 21 13 s. 0 d. (D.fl. 230)	£ 23 3 s. 0 d.	After 3 years' sea service
up to 500 GRT	£ 18 17 s. 0 d. (D.fl. 200)	£ 20 3 s. 0 d.	According to tonnage
Norway	£ 32 17 s. 0 d. (N.kr. 657)	£ 35 17 s. 0 d.	Maximum after 8 years with same owner
Sweden	£ 37 5 s. 0 d. (S.kr. 540)	£ 41 7 s. 6 d.	Maximum after 10 years' sea service
United Kingdom	£ 24 0 s. 0 d.	£ 28 0 s. 0 d.	Maximum after 4 years' sea service
United States	£ 108 0 s. 0 d. (\$ 302.32)	—	Subject to approval of Wage Stabilization Board

*) Including cost-of-living allowance

**) Currency conversions based on official exchange rates

Japan rebuilds her merchant marine

DURING THE WAR Japan lost some 2,500 ships or 8,300,000 GRT, of which 2,000,000 GRT represent her final losses. Japanese firms, with American assistance, are at present engaged in salvaging some eighty-eight ships totalling 400,000 GRT. One of the most difficult problems was, and still is, the financing of a building programme. The cost of repairs, alterations and rebuilding had formerly been financed by the shipowners and the shipping and ship-building cooperative society, 'Sempaku-Kodan', to the proportion of thirty to seventy per cent. Plans are now being considered for the establishment of a shipping bank, which however could function only if sponsored by the Government, there being little hope of financing a shipping programme from private capital.

The reconstruction of the Japanese merchant fleet is being carried out under so-called 'shipbuilding programmes'. The first four of these were confined to the repair and alteration of old pre-war vessels and to the construction of new fishing boats, small passenger and freight steamers and tankers. At the end of her fifth shipbuilding programme in March 1951, Japan possessed 939 steel ships (including 762 freighters) with a total tonnage of 1,750,000 GRT which

had increased to 2,182,000 by the end of 1951. Compared with 5,639,000 GRT in 1939, however, the present tonnage is well below the pre-war level.

It is hoped in Japanese shipping circles that the figure of 2,700,000 GRT will be reached by the end of 1952, in spite of retrenchments in the seventh and eighth shipbuilding programmes, due to lack of funds. Government plans envisage the carrying of fifty per cent of Japan's export trade in Japanese ships as compared with sixty per cent before the war. In the year 1951, however, this figure did not exceed twenty-two per cent.

At the present time there are some 130 ships engaged in Japanese tramp shipping. Regular services are now being operated to Okinawa, South America, Bangkok, India, Pakistan, South and East Africa, New York and the west coast of America. Further services are planned to Indonesia, Hong Kong, Formosa, Australia, and Korea, as well as to the Philippines, the Marianas and the Bonin Islands.

Revenue earned by Japanese shipping from foreign trade amounted to sixty milliard yen in the financial year 1951/52. This is equivalent to £ 60,000,000 and is six times more than in 1950/51.

Ceylon to found national shipping company

THE GOVERNMENT OF CEYLON is negotiating with a British shipping firm with the object of establishing a national shipping company. This company will operate Liberty and Victory ships under the command of British captains. The government propose to carry forty-nine per cent of the share capital, the remaining sixty-one per cent being supplied by private investors. The government has deliberately refrained from taking out a majority of the shares in order to ensure a flexible management by business interests.

Sicilian ship registration law challenged

THE ITALIAN MINISTRY of Mercantile Marine has denied a rumour to the effect that two leading United States shipping concerns had applied for registration of their vessels at Palermo in order to benefit from tax relief and exemptions granted by a recently promulgated Sicilian law. In a special communique issued by the Ministry it is pointed out that only vessels fulfilling the conditions prescribed by the Italian maritime code with respect to nationality are eligible for registration in Italy. Attention is also drawn to the fact that the law in question has been challenged by the Italian State Commissary and its legality and validity from the point of view of Italian constitutional law has been referred to the Sicilian High Court for decision.

New shipping undertaking for Mexico

REPORTS FROM MEXICO indicate that an attempt is to be made to revitalize the country's ailing shipping industry by establishing a new Mexican-North American shipping company, which will be known as *Atlantico Pacifico*. The new undertaking will have a capital of approximately 100,000,000 Mexican pesos – forty per cent of American origin – and will operate mainly with chartered vessels.

It is pointed out that during the past few years, the existing Mexican shipping companies have not – with the exception of the Pemex oil tanker fleet – been able to increase the size of their fleets to any appreciable extent. At present, their aggregate tonnage is between 170,000 and 180,000 gross registered tons.

New merchant marine flag causes a stir

QUITE A STIR was caused recently among American coastguard officials and navy commanders on duty in the strategically important Norfolk and Hampton Roads area when a vessel hove in sight flying a red flag. Navy commanders on duty as part of the special surveillance for this important section of the United States coast veered off course to take a closer look at the tanker flying the unusual flag. They were not so much worried about the predominant colour. After all the Red Ensign is not an uncommon sight on the high seas. What had them guessing was the little extra something to which the field of red was but the background. Closer inspection, however, put their minds at rest. No agricultural or other implements were on show. Just a black star. And so the tanker flying the strange new flag pro-

ceeded on its way to port – under a reassured but still wondering escort.

Apparently, all unknown to the USA Coast Guard, and, it would appear, to the US Navy, a new merchant fleet has been born. By using the word 'fleet' we are perhaps being a little too generous and possibly anticipating events. As far as is known, only one ship – a tanker – is currently flying a black star on a red field, or in other words the new merchant flag of Morocco. She is the 10,627-ton 'Meanara', French-owned and manned by French officers, with a crew which includes twelve Moroccans.

It is understood that the captain of the 'Meanara' was glad when it was time to leave port as he had grown not a little tired of explaining to enquirers, both official and unofficial, what the black star was not.

René Châret du Rine, the author of this article, is a Dutchman, 33 years old, and a member of the ITF-affiliated Federation of KLM Flying Personnel. A radio officer who is in love with his work, he lives in Zaandijk, some 12 miles north of Amsterdam. He is happily married, with three children who like their father very much because he usually brings them bananas back from Bangkok. He likes writing down his impressions, but his handwriting is so bad that he has to borrow a typewriter. That explains why he has only written one article up to the present

Four hours delay

by René Châret du Rine



The radio officer of a KLM Constellation tuning in a weak morse signal. The man on whom so much depends in an emergency like that described by our contributor

THERE WAS NO MOON, but a sub-tropical night, with its countless stars, can manage to be bright without that. Our plane glided unbelievably quietly westward through a cloudless sky.

We were on the Karachi-Cairo run; a ten-hour trip. In the cockpit the pilot was sitting in darkness. Only the illuminated pointers and figures of the instruments seemed to keep him company. But that was as it should be. In a few minutes we would see the sparse lights of Shariyah below us—and why have unnecessary illumination to distract your attention. Nick, our flight engineer, sat behind his 'console', seemingly doing nothing. But you could be sure that at any given moment he could tell you all about manifold pressure, power setting, fuel supply, temperature, oil pressure, and everything else connected with his highly responsible job.

A routine flight

Tonny, our co-pilot, who was navigating, had just come over to him for some information, for it was about time for

the hourly position check and weather report. Willem, the 'Sparks', peeped round the corner, in between taking two met. reports, to see how things were going. In three minutes, the report, in the form of a number of figure groups, was due to be transmitted to the control centre—and a date is a date. Nic had his information ready. He can tell the time too, and smooth cooperation, especially in flying, is number one priority. Pity really that there is nothing better than that 'number one', that would be something especially for us. Be that as it may, fuel consumption, fuel remaining, and the time we could still safely stay in the air were all turned into cypher groups in a flash and Tonny shoved it under Willem's nose with a gesture which said: 'You don't have to be on my tail, there's still a minute to go'. Willem quickly counted the number of words, filled in the preamble, and looked at the second-hand of his watch. 'They won't catch me being late', he seemed to say as he called up Basrah on the dot. Just YIP PDC (Basrah, this is PH TDC with a report).

Why say any more, the chap in Basrah was listening out and reception was ideal. As if to confirm it, a loud PDC K (PH TDC go ahead) came back through the headset. That was even shorter. 'OK' and immediately the report started on its journey through the ether in rapid, rhythmic dots and dashes. These ground types are pretty good, thought our wireless operator, that chap didn't break in once, he knows his stuff.

An unexpected incident

Funny that you think so much while you are rattling a key. And how you can read everything from a report of ten or twelve figure groups, just as if it is in plain language—that's funny too. Position in latitude and longitude, time, ground speed, altitude, your heading, weather conditions, wind at cruising altitude, and so many other things. And in between it all you start thinking again: how long will it be before we see those great fires of the oil fields in Dharan?

Then, suddenly, it happens. What? It doesn't register right away. But there,



The sure hand of the pilot moves among the (to a layman) bewildering array of dials and levers which are part of his normal life. A mistake can cost many lives



... at any given moment he could tell you all about manifold pressure, power setting, fuel supply, temperature, and oil pressure, and everything else connected with his highly responsible job'. Our picture shows a KLM flight engineer at his station immediately behind the captain, with whom he can make direct personal contact

through the port window, you spot a lot of fire, very close. Big yellow tongues of flame. A scene from the film 'A matter of life and death' flashes through your mind. Fire in engine number three. Nic is suddenly very busy, and yet completely calm. Typical, that you stay calm. Not only Nic, but Piet (the pilot) and Willem and Tonny too. Calm, but completely concentrated. Piet has switched off the automatic pilot and is now flying the plane himself. Willem catches himself thinking that in spite of everything he has sent out his report and is sure that he did it well. He knows that his second morse transmitter is on the night DF frequency and that the R/T is on the distress frequency. No worries about that, then. Nic, just before the flames, had seen the engine power falling off, completely off. Manifold pressure, fuel flow, oil temperature 'normal' flashes through his brain. 'Feather' is the automatic reaction. Fuel selector closed, CO₂ selector on number three, but not yet open. Mixture off, prop feathering switch on. Don't use the extinguisher yet, wait and see what happens when she stops. Then, in a split second, number three is stopped and the flames have gone. Our Nic carries on calmly, without panic or haste.

Magneto switch off, generator off.

What had happened?

Meanwhile his brain is working at top speed. What was the reason? When we left Karachi everything, including number three, was all right, otherwise we wouldn't have taken off at all. A twisted blower torque shaft? Could be, but not likely under normal cruising conditions, with no change in power setting or rpm. That fire couldn't have been really serious. Just a sign of retarded ignition. Your fuel isn't burning in the cylinders, but in the exhaust. More possibilities flash through his brain, but he rejects them one after another on the strength of his instrument readings while it was happening. A twisted torque shaft, after all? Piet lets Nic carry on in his calm way. A chap like that knows his job, leave him to do just what's necessary at the moment.

A change of course

Willem is ordered to request descent clearance to 8,000 feet. We were flying at 14,000, but on three engines it is better to come down to a lower altitude where the head winds aren't so strong. Saves you fuel. Within a minute we have

a reply from Basrah. No traffic in your vicinity between 6,000 and 16,000 feet. OK to come down to 8,000. Tonny has already worked out on his map how long it will take to reach an alternative air field and the course which will have to be flown. Everyone is doing his job. Piet and Nic are talking things over. Nic's idea is 'most likely a twisted shaft'. That means a new engine from Amsterdam. There is still 6 1/2 hours' flying time to Cairo. And unless it is absolutely necessary, you don't fly over the desert at night with an engine U/s. Turning back to Karachi isn't a good idea either. Piet's decision is short, but to the point. We'll make for Basrah, and then see what can be done there. Tonny gives the new course, 38 degrees North, and calculates that we've still got two hours twelve minutes to fly.

Whilst the Connie is reducing altitude to 8,000 feet, poor Willem is extremely busy. In addition to his routine work, i.e. position reports, hourly met. reports from Basrah, Bagdad, Dharan, Bahrein, and Shariah, he has a bunch of extra messages to send. First to Basrah. 'We're on three engines, not flying to Cairo, but landing at Basrah. Warn KLM ground personnel. Arrange accommo-

dation for 40 passengers'. That's logical, for you don't know how long it might take. Put the passengers to bed for the time being, they'll sleep better than in a kite, and anyway it is night when all's said and done.

Difficulties with Cairo

Basrah's OK then. Now warn Cairo that we're flying to Basrah, plus reason why. But that's sooner said than done. Cairo is a little slow in coming back at night. In the daytime it's not that difficult. You call him up and then send SEG. That's Arabic and stands for 'sabagh el gher', which means 'good morning' or something like that. Usually he comes right back at you with a spate of Arabic, of which you won't understand a word, but to which the answer is 'esh khurak' – 'thank you'. Contact is established and that's the whole idea.

Willem works out quickly what a Linquaphone Arabic course would cost. With that you would at least know what to say to these people at night. He calls Cairo several times, but gets no reply. Fortunately that station works on the same frequency as all the European long distance aircraft transmitters. Let's try Amsterdam first, then. He comes back right away. Once again the tale of three engines and that we're proceeding to Basrah. We make an arrangement with him that he will listen out for us every hour at a fixed time. OK says Amsterdam. Thanks, answers Willem.

Now for another try at Cairo. Still no reply. But he won't get away with it, for now half Europe starts calling Cairo too. SUO (Cairo) de (from) HEW (Geneva), HEZ (Zurich), PHK (Amsterdam) ONB (Brussels), IOA (Rome), SWA (Athens) – even Stockholm, Copenhagen, and Khartoum join in. Everyone is keying: Cairo, you are being called by PH TDC. Good show, boys, sounds just like an aviary with all those different transmitting tones. It's good to know that everyone is listening out for you and knows what is happening. Geneva is the first to raise Cairo and he gives it him hot and strong. QRZ PH TDC fr. 10 min. (PH TDC has been calling you for 10 minutes).

The laconic Eastern reply is SRI QRN (sorry, I am having trouble with interference). He's been having trouble! Anyway, contact is made, and within a few

minutes the KLM people in Cairo know what is going on and now won't wait in vain for us.

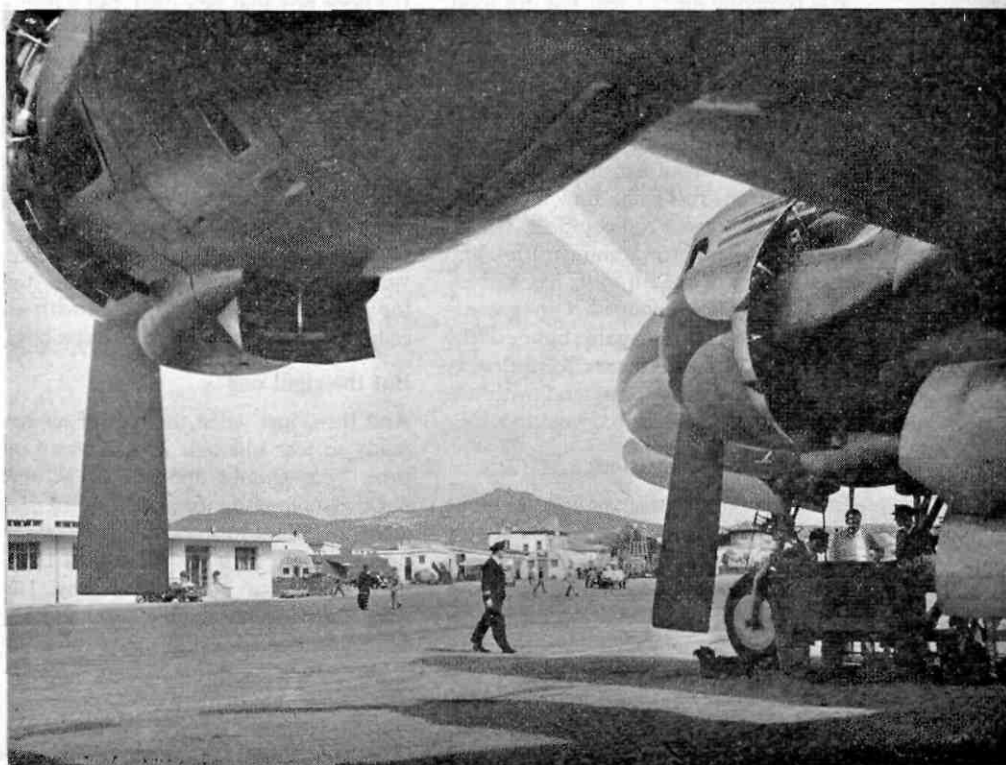
More difficulties with R/T

In the meantime, we are abeam of Bahrain, and the steward brings us our hourly cup of coffee and asks if we want anything with it. Our laconic answer is 'a double brandy'. We know we won't get that, but we talk him into giving us some cheese sandwiches. He tells us that the passengers didn't notice anything. Pity, you don't see a fire like that every day. When we contact Amsterdam again we still cannot give a definite answer to the Technical Department's question – 'What's cooking?' But we ask them to listen out for us after we've touched down, which they promise to do. As we approach Basrah and get clearance to come down to 2,000 feet, Willem tells Piet and Tonny, who has now taken over the co-pilot's seat, that they can speak to the tower on R/T. Close to an airport, R/T is quicker than morse and ground/air communication is good. Willem jokingly asks Piet: 'What would you have given for your chances if you hadn't had a wireless operator and had had to rely on that speech business when you were in trouble and miles from anywhere?' Piet's reply is a shout of 'Pipe down'. Tonny laughs and Nic counters with

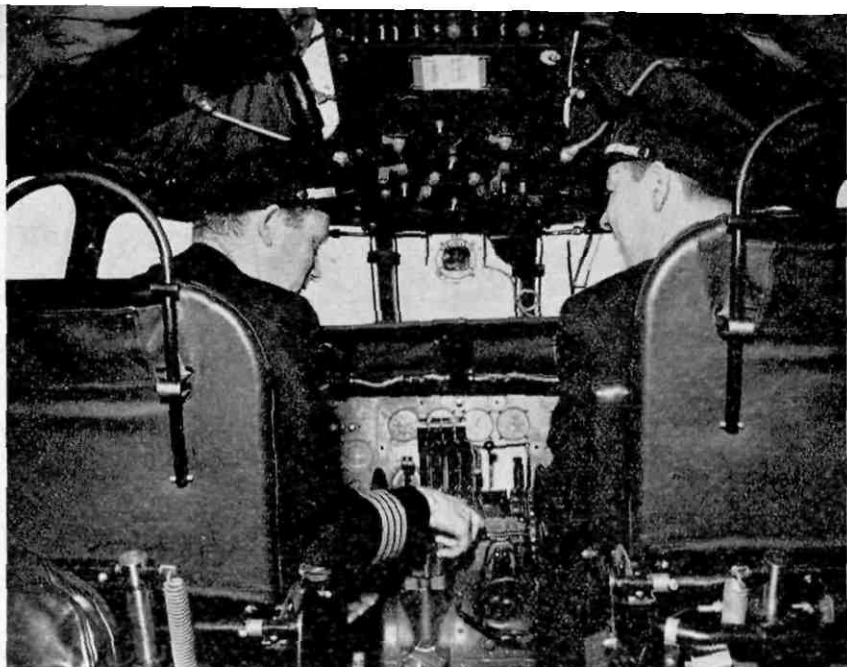
'Don't fish'. But all four of us are sure that we wouldn't have stood an earthly with just R/T. In fact, we get proof of that now. Basrah asks, on behalf of KLM, what the trouble is. We try to tell him as simply as possible. Three or four times. But he doesn't get it. And yet, it's in good English, for Tonny, more British than an Oxford-English speaking Lord, born and bred in Albion, does the talking. No, that's not the trouble. Of course, when you stick to short standard phrases and words there is no bother at all. We put an end to the hopeless conversation by saying: 'Inform KLM after landing'. Which we did.

Passengers first priority

The first thing to do after touch-down is to take care of the passengers. Nic, with his second and the ground mechanics, have the cowlings off number three in no time and are already standing on steps in the glare of floodlights. Piet and Willem are up at ops for debriefing and to find out what communication between Basrah and Amsterdam is like. 'Fairly good, but not direct', is the answer. They reckon that an answer to a telegram would take two hours. That's too long. Can we contact Amsterdam from the aircraft? They have no objection. That's fine, for now we can, in a manner of speaking, telephone direct to



After the touch-down at Ciampino airport near Rome. On the last leg of the journey back to Amsterdam and a well-earned rest



Pilot and co-pilot in the cockpit of a KLM Constellation preparing to take off

Schiphol with our morse transmitter. When Piet and Willem return, the aircraft is just being towed to a hangar. That doesn't suit our Sparks. In an iron cage like that, you can just write off your radio-set. So the plane is slyly moved back on the apron, with its tail pointing north-west towards Amsterdam, in order to get the best results from Willem's mystery box.

A quick call to Amsterdam: 'How are you receiving me?'. Clear but not loud, is the reply. 'Will you listen out for us?', asks Willem. 'Shall do', answers Amsterdam. Meantime, the engineers are hard at work. They have to be quite sure about what's wrong, for you don't order a new engine from Amsterdam without good reason. Just think how much that costs. The second radio officer, who is also responsible for administration and the loading of the aircraft, has had essential luggage unloaded. Our passengers, who are in the capable hands of the stewards and stewardesses, have already been given their rooms, and within a few minutes get their baggage too.

A fantastic explanation

In a corner of the deserted apron, stands our aircraft – ghostlike in the floodlights and surrounded by busy little human beings. Nic needs some advice from Amsterdam. Willem ducks down behind his set and once again rhythmic dots and dashes fly through the ether. Within five minutes, a reply has been received. Tension begins to grow, for now Nic has found out that it isn't a twisted shaft af-

ter all. He begins to check everything methodically and half an hour later reports that he has located the trouble. It is something quite fantastic. It seems that one of the magnetos has got out of phase, due to an interruption in cog-wheel transmission – despite the fact that there wasn't a millimetre of play in it. It's so fantastic that everyone says: 'Nic, old son, are you sure?' In such a way that it means: 'Well, we can't tell the poor boy that he's mad, but a licensed flight engineer who suddenly finds that firmly-enmeshed cogwheels can jump certainly needs at least a couple of months' holiday.'

In the meantime, however, one of the ground mechanics has dashed off to the stores in the jeep to fetch a new magneto, while Nic and his second are busy removing the 'jumper'. He says: 'When we've changed magnetos, we'll run up for a test and then take this dud with us right away to Amsterdam.' What a boy!

But the right one

And then, just when the rest of us are ready to tear our hair at this waste of time, who should appear out of the darkness – looking for all the world like a friendly giant in some fairy tale or an operatic hero arriving through a trick door – but our good old Tonny. He steps into the floodlights, carrying an enormous tray stacked high with even huger glasses brim-full of cool squash. 'Everybody happy', he asks, naturally ascribing our red faces to the cool subtropical night air. 'I thought you people

might be thirsty'. In our hot and bothered state, we almost choke ourselves with the squash. Not so our flight engineer, however, who yells from somewhere under the engine cowlings: 'Pass me that big screwdriver'. And then suddenly we realize that this chap is working, whilst we are exciting ourselves with perhaps ill-considered criticism. Nic gets his screwdriver and his squash. Shortly afterwards the new magneto is firmly installed, the cowlings are closed and the steps taken away for a run up. The prop turns slowly on the starter motor, 10, 15, 20 revolutions, 30 revolutions and then just when everyone is thinking 'there you are', number three says 'there you are' and starts running smoothly. First at 1,200 rpm to get a good cylinder temperature, 1,500, 2,000, and then, with a deafening roar, to take-off power – 2,800 rpm. We doubting Thomases just stand and look at each other. It's no use saying anything, for in that noise nobody will hear you, but one by one our thumbs go up. As the roar of number three dies away, Nic looks out of the cockpit and gives the thumbs up sign too. The expert gives his fiat, so everything is OK now.

A new confab. The best thing is to let the passengers sleep until morning. If Cairo hasn't any urgent payload, we can fly direct to Rome. Once again, morse signals flash through the air. First to Cairo, then to Amsterdam for approval of our plans, not forgetting to tell them what was wrong and that it's now all right. Everything goes smoothly. Cairo will send its urgent freight with the extra Skymaster landing there in the afternoon. Amsterdam gets a list of transit passengers, who might otherwise lose their connections now that we're somewhat behind schedule.

It could have been worse

When the sun has been above the horizon for a few hours, forty rested passengers and a refreshed crew board the aircraft and we set course for Rome. Piet sits up in front once more, Nic is at the flight engineer's station, Willem takes a lot of met. reports and keeps an eye on flight safety, Tonny calculates that in fourteen minutes we will be a-beam of Heraklion. If everything works out all right, we'll be in Amsterdam with four hours' delay. That's a lot but it could have been worse.

With acknowledgements to 'Het Logboek', Organ of the KLM Air Crew Federation.

INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS' FEDERATION

President : R. BRATSCHI General Secretary : O. BECU Asst. Gen. Secretary : P. TOFAHRN

Founded in London in 1896. Reconstituted at Amsterdam in 1919.
Headquarters in London since the outbreak of the Second World War.
147 affiliated organizations in 50 countries. Total membership: 6,000,000

Seven industrial sections catering for

RAILWAYMEN · ROAD TRANSPORT WORKERS · INLAND WATERWAY WORKERS · DOCKERS
SEAFARERS · FISHERMEN · CIVIL AVIATION STAFF

The aims of the ITF are

*to support national and international action in the struggle against economic exploitation and political oppression and to make international working class solidarity effective;
to cooperate in the establishment of a world order based on the association of all peoples in freedom and equality for the promotion of their welfare by the common use of the world's resources;
to seek universal recognition and enforcement of the right of trade union organization;
to defend and promote, on the international plane, the econ-*

*omic, social and occupational interests of all transport workers;
to represent the transport workers in international agencies performing functions which affect their social, economic and occupational conditions;
to furnish its affiliated organizations with information about the wages and working conditions of transport workers in different parts of the world, legislation affecting them, the development and activities of their trade unions, and other kindred matters.*

Affiliated unions in

ARGENTINA (ILLEGAL) AUSTRALIA AUSTRIA BELGIUM BRITISH GUIANA CANADA CEYLON CHILE CHINA
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