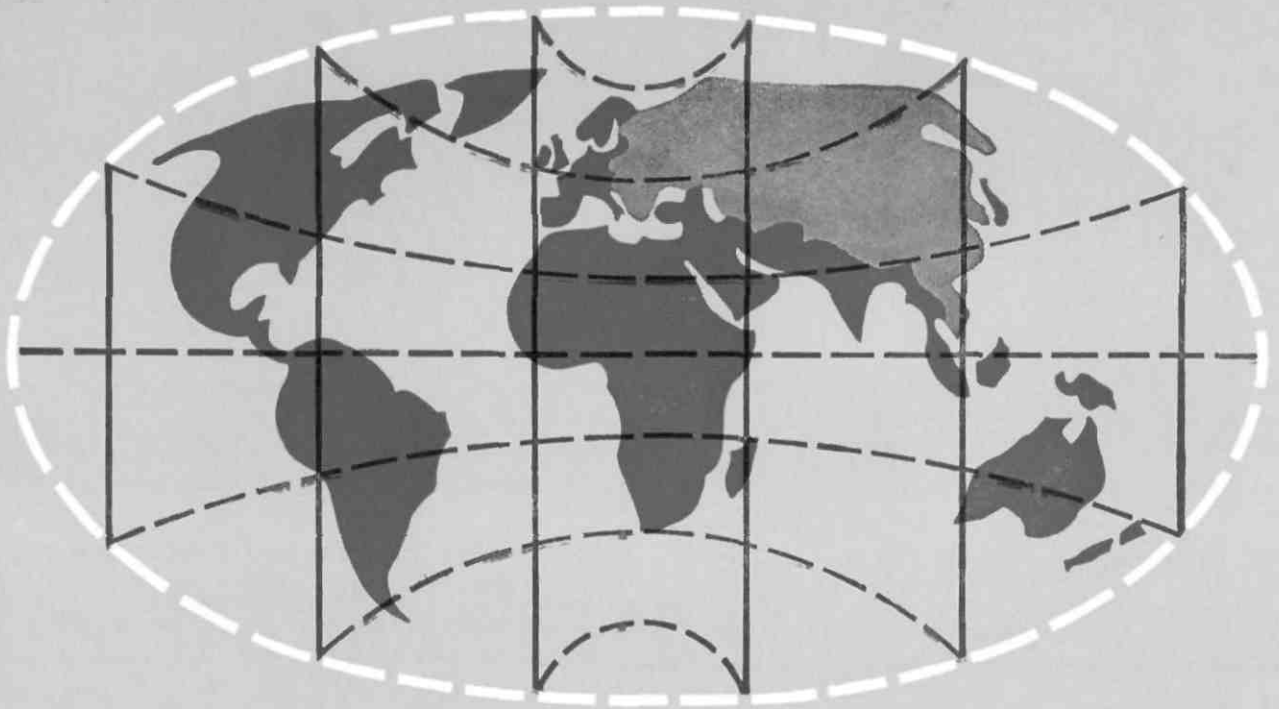


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Forthcoming Meetings:

Copenhagen	29-30 June	Executive Committee
Copenhagen	1-2 July	General Council
Rome	Autumn 1953	Railwaymen's Sectional Conference. Postponed from April. New date not yet fixed.



Meet Mr Truck Driver

by Carle Hodge

UP ROUTE 130 TOWARD NEW YORK, the road signs pointed to disaster on a frigid midnight last February. Treacherous ice paved the highway. Suddenly, near Bridgeport, N.J., a sedan lost its tire hold on the glaze. It spun crazily for a few terrifying seconds, smashed into an embankment, and was quickly cloaked in flames.

A highway thriller

Then a common but silent highway thriller unfolded. A giant tractor-trailer lumbered up, its twelve running lights blinking in the cold and its fourteen oversized tires whining against the frozen roadway. The trucker eased his twenty-two tons of machine and cargo to a halt and, fire extinguisher in hand, jumped from the cab. He might have been any truck driver. He was, it happened, a wiry six-footer named Lloyd Bright, traveling north from Baltimore with a full load of freight.

The fire by then was flickering around the sedan doors; the gasoline tank would explode any moment. But Bright coolly flung open the door and dragged out the groaning passengers — a man and a small girl. He flagged down a motorist and sent him for help. Then he and another trucker, who had just pulled up, turned

their extinguishers on the blaze.

Minutes later, without knowing or caring to know the names of those whose lives he had saved, Bright was on the road again. He couldn't forget that his 'box' was crammed with raw textiles, needed in a Manhattan factory at dawn.

Such deeds of highway heroism are routine footnotes in the log books of America's 1,000,000 over-the-road truckers. And, like Lloyd Bright, none wait around for medals; they're working against a relentless schedule. Each time Bright wheels his big 'rig' out of his home terminal in Baltimore, and into the settling dusk, he can be sure of just two things: he is pulling a load that must get through fast, and no two runs are ever alike.

Perhaps a motorist or another truckerman will need a flat fixed, or a life saved. Or maybe it will be the weather — so hot that his rimless eyeglasses cloud, and

his feet blister on the floorboards. Or it may be so wintry that he must creep a long hour after weary hour, bumper-deep in slushy snow. Or maybe it will be a flash flood, like the one in Virginia in 1951 which swept away the truck ahead, drowning its driver.

On one winter run, Bright was edging his bulky outfit down an icy Maryland hill when he saw in his rear-view mirror a sight that made his scalp tingle. A trailer was heaving past him.

'I wonder', he thought, 'what kind of darned fool is trying to pass me on a road like this?'

His trailer!

Just then, he recognized the red-circled emblem of his own company, Associated Transport. He caught his breath. What he really saw in his rear-view mirror was the side of his trailer, which had jack-knifed and was skidding sidewise down the highway!

He quickly stomped on the gas, snapping the wandering trailer, like a whip, out behind him. On ice, this is a maneuver about as easy as skating across a bathtub on a soap cake. Luckily, this time it worked.

Luckily, too, such close shaves come seldom. Quiet, bespectacled Lloyd Bright has been trucking for nineteen of his thirty-four years — ever since his legs were long enough to reach the gas pedal — and yet he has been involved in



just one smashup.

He was a skinny teen-ager then (when laws weren't so strict about who could drive), and he was piloting a 'gypsy', a truck which will cart anything anywhere anytime for anybody. On his ill-fated trip, Lloyd was taxiing a truckful of cattle. To miss a sedan which suddenly popped out from a side road, he swerved and the truck overturned. Both the cattle and the driver walked away unhurt. That was eighteen years ago. Since then, he has driven more than a million accident-free miles.

Earnings \$ 102 weekly

In the past four years, he has run two or three weekly round trips of 1,000 miles for Associated Transport, largest truck system in the country. This chore earns him an average of \$102 a week.

Sit beside him in his power-throbbing 'horse' on one of these night hauls. This trip, he is 'riding relay' to Roanoke, Va., 260 miles and eight lonely hours away. Another driver just rolled the load into Baltimore. Still another will be waiting at Roanoke to whisk it to Knoxville so the shipment will be on store shelves next morning.

Lloyd skillfully threads his massive land freighter down Route 1 through the streaming Baltimore-Washington traffic. Floodlights are already splashing up the Washington Monument in the twilight as the truck grinds through the capital and into Virginia. Bright is sweating like a lumberjack from an hour of jouncing and wrestling with his forty-five feet of rig.

At Fall's Church, Va., his tires crunch over the gravel driveway of a diner. He parks behind a row of other trucks. The roads are peppered with these 'truck



Left:

Top: One of America's 8,000,000 trucks plows through a flooded road in a western U.S. State.

Centre: An American truck driver speeds his cargo through a blinding rain storm on a night run.

Bottom: The trailer loaded, a driver backs the truck he is about to take on a 500-mile night run.

Right:

Top: Chatting with a waitress at an all-night café.

Centre: A US highway patrol officer stops a truck at a weighing station in the State of Montana.



stops'. They offer a man gas, gab, the latest highway dope, a fast meal, and sometimes, for the sleepyheads, a free bunk in the back.

Lloyd, a fellow in a hurry, never lingers. 'When you see my truck, you see me in it'. As he pays his check, a short man in a khaki shirt tells him, 'They're weighin' on twenty-nine tonight. You riding legal?'

'Legal as hell'.

Bright means, in highwayese, that he isn't overloaded: the weight of his equipment and freight do not total more than the 50,000 pounds Virginia allows. Weight laws, varying from state to state, are a thorn to truckers. If Bright's rig had left New York weighing 60,000 pounds, that would have been all right in New Jersey, illegal in Pennsylvania, easily safe in Delaware, but illegal again in Virginia.

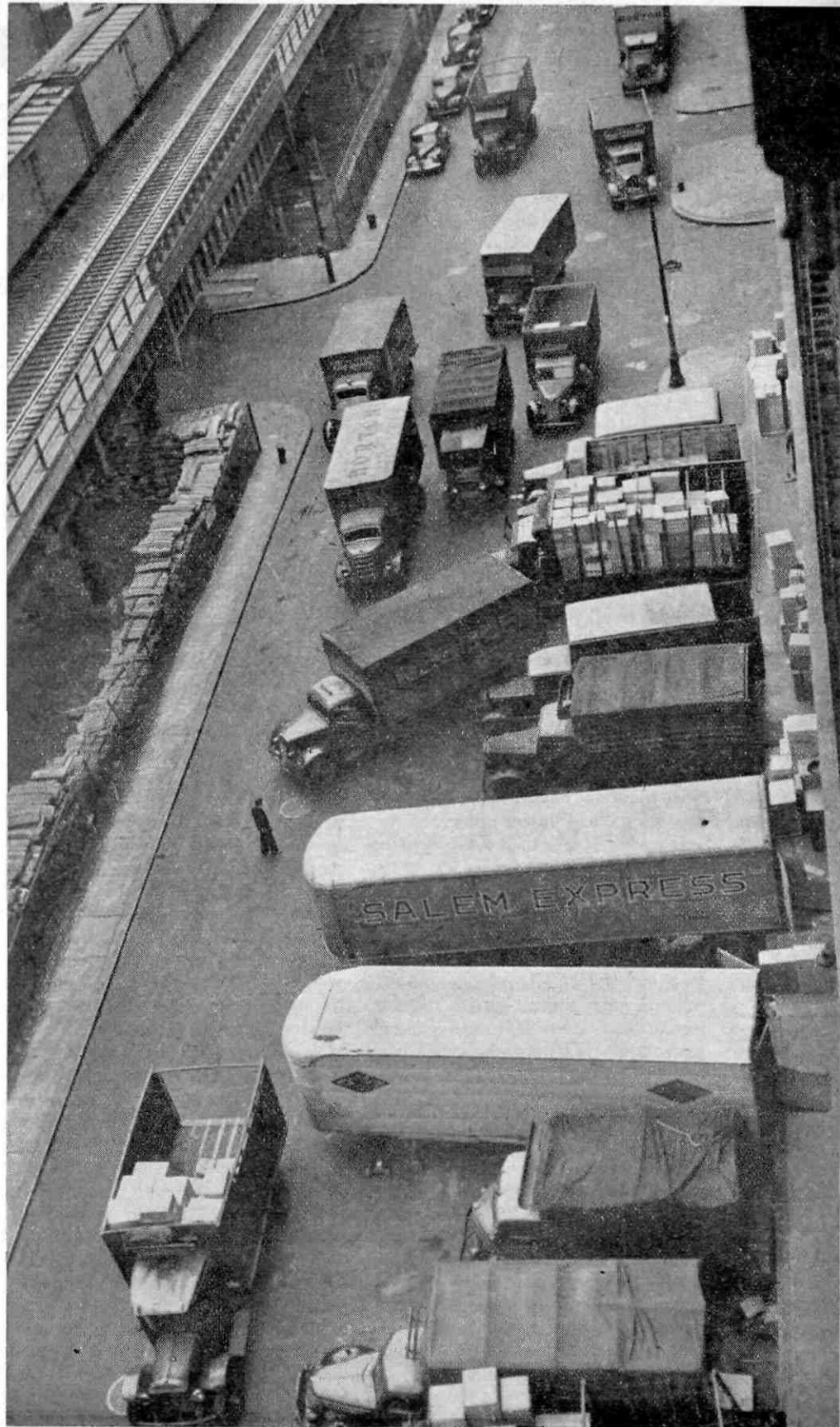
Critics say that trucks grind up the roads. The truckers answer, through their official spokesman, the American Trucking Associations, that reasonably loaded trucks do not grind up the roads, and that, anyway, they pay at least a fair share of highway taxes.

Lloyd's truck spurts into the road again, a road he knows as well as the six-room, white shingle-house he and his wife own in a Baltimore suburb. But his speed is a steady forty miles an hour. He doesn't need grim posters to remind him that the ten tons of cargo behind him are ready, if he had to stop quickly, to rip on through his cab and crush him against the dashboard.

No horn-blowing

On the entire trip, he touches his horn only two or three times. Bright talks with other truckers, though, in the universal sign language of the big rigs. His headlights are dimmed. If he wants to pass another truck, he flicks them on to the bright and quickly off again. The truck ahead flashes its lights once - meaning, go on and pass. Or jiggles them several times - which indicates danger ahead, go slowly.

After midnight, there are fewer and fewer private cars, and the pavement belongs at last to the roaring trucks. Villages, shapeless ghost towns in the dark, flow past. Bright's world is bounded by the little patch of highway which his headlights pick out; it is noiseless ex-



Long-distance trailers and trucks are unloaded at a busy US freight terminal.

cept for the rickety-rack of the mighty 175-horsepower Diesel under his hood, gulping a gallon of fuel every seven miles.

He rolls through farmland. A 'sleeper' truck, northbound, winks a greeting as it hurtles past. One man aboard is sleeping in the bunk behind the seat while his partner spells him at the wheel; they cover long distances nonstop.

Near Charlottesville, as he begins shoveling his steelcovered wagon up into the Blue Ridges, an oncoming rig blinks out the flash-flash-flash warning of trouble ahead. Then, on a curve, there's the unmistakable fuzzy crimson glow of a flare which a trucker has spiked into the ground.

Lloyd slows to a turtle's pace, ready to obey the unwritten code of the road - stop and help. A truck-and-trailer has overshot the bend and careened over on its side into the ditch. It lies there, a helpless giant. Flashlights of other truck drivers motion Bright on past; everything is under control.

His worries aren't over. He nervously watches in his mirror a coupe which has kept behind him for miles. Hijackers? He shakes his head confidently and looks around the cab for a bit of wood to rap his knuckles on. 'It's never happened to me yet.'

Just the same, he knows hijacking can happen, and does. He sighs happily when the coupe finally honks, then pulls around him and drones away.

It's after four a.m. by the time he 'beaches' his rig beside a dock at the Roanoke terminal, a bustling beehive, brightly lighted in the slumbering city. Mechanics are ready to check the truck's engines and slake its thirsty fuel tanks. Dockmen are rapidly packing and unpacking other trailers. Bright turns in his compact 'safety kit' - extinguisher, flares, flags - and punches a time clock.

'On the button, Lloyd', the dispatcher grins at him sleepily. 'Did you have any trouble?'

Lloyd rubs a kink from his leg. 'Nope, not this time.'

He trudges wearily into the company dormitory. In the dark, someone is shaking a sleeping figure: 'C'mon, Joe. Your Pittsburgh load is ready.'

Lloyd Bright sprawls on to a cot. Tonight: the 260 miles back to Baltimore, more freight to be hauled, a thousand miles this week, and more the next, and no two of the runs ever alike.

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The United Nations and road safety

IN AN EFFORT TO REDUCE the ever-growing number of road accidents, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe recently convened a Working Party on the Construction of Vehicles, consisting of representatives from Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America (also representing the occupied zones of Western Germany).

Meeting from 10-13 February under the chairmanship of Mr. W. van Hemert (Netherlands), the Working Party made a number of recommendations designed to promote road safety, rounding off earlier recommendations of ECE experts on other aspects of this difficult problem.

On the subject of the lighting of vehicles, the Working Party considered a report from the International Organization for Standardization (one of the several international bodies taking part in the discussions), and recommended the drafting of a European agreement on headlights and passing lights as a first step towards the world-wide standardization envisaged in a resolution adopted by the United Nations Conference on Road and Motor Transport. It was appreciated that it will be many years before such standardization becomes a reality, although a certain amount of agreement had already been reached on a European level.

On the subject of the adjustment of headlights, the need for Governments to introduce a system of regular and periodic inspections was stressed. If this could not be introduced at once, periodic checks by private organizations should be encouraged. The hope was also expressed that Governments would agree to the international standardization of testing methods. The introduction of marker lights where the width of a vehicle or its trailer exceeded the maximum figure laid down in national regulations was also recommended.

The Working Party also dwelt at some length on the question of rear lights as being of the greatest importance in road safety. It noted that most countries had already made rear lighting on motor vehicles compulsory or were contemplating doing so, and that, as regards bicycles, some European countries required either a red light or a reflector, or both. In view of the primary importance of the correct and adequate lighting of bicycles, Governments were urged to introduce provisions making it compulsory for bicycles and other slow-moving

vehicles to carry both rear lights and adequate reflectors.

Other aspects of vehicular construction as a factor in road safety which were discussed and made the subject of recommendations were: the total weight of commercial vehicles, brakes, safety glass, and trailer couplings. A draft recommendation was approved providing that the permissible maximum weight of a motor vehicle should be determined by the competent authority of the country in which it is registered, but that it must be compatible with the vehicle's technical characteristics. The action urged by the Working Party on the serious question of brakes was similar to that on the adjustment of headlights, namely that a regular periodic inspection of brakes should be carried out under government supervision, failing which, periodic checks by private organizations on a voluntary basis should be encouraged.

The recognition of the fact that the breaking of a windscreen of ordinary glass can lead to a serious accident, led the Working Party to consider the question of introducing unified conditions for the approval of a safety glass for the windscreen of vehicles which would remain transparent after shock. Whilst the expense involved was acknowledged, it was thought that it would be compensated for by the prevention of accidents and the consequent saving effected. Finally, the attention of governments was drawn to the need for national legislation making the approval of trailer couplings by the administrative authority compulsory. At the same time, stress was laid on the desirability of couplings being dealt with internationally.

In addition to the countries mentioned above, the following international organizations also took part in the discussions: the World Touring and Automobile Association, the Permanent International Bureau of Motor Manufacturers, the International Road Federation, the International Organization for Standardization, and the International Road Transport Union.

Indices of numbers of road motor vehicles and number of inhabitants per vehicle in Europe

	Year	Austria	Belgium	Denmark	Finland	France	Germany (Western Zones)	Italy	Luxembourg	Netherlands	Norway	Sweden	Switzerland	Turkey	United Kingdom	Yugoslavia	All countries	Year
<i>Index 1938=100</i>																		
All vehicles	1950	202	167	119	135	89	106	150	115	145	128	155	193	269	131	125	119	1950
	1951	225	204	126	155	..	122	176	129	161	143	188	214	..	138	134	131	1951
Private cars	1950	159	168	109	103	80	84	116	123	139	117	161	196	216	117	47	104	1950
	1951	184	208	..	127	89	95	147	143	157	125	200	224	..	123	51	116	1951
Buses	1950	137	172	149	114	114	127	129	81	132	163	154	146	284	146	327 348	140	1950
	1951	147	184	..	132	123	140	133	86	136	172	160	152	..	149		146	146
Lorries	1950	318	165	144	187	129	179	273	100	160	160	136	184	328	184	169	169	1950
	1951	335	195	158	202	..	212	282	104	173	170	156	185	..	197		184	184
<i>Number of inhabitants per vehicle</i>																		
All vehicles	1938	139	37	25	80	17	43	113	25	58	32	29	43	1 806	18	819	34	1938
	1950	71	23	24	65	20	48	81	21	47	28	21	25	819	15	687	31	1950
	1951	63	19	23	57	..	36	70	70	19	42	25	17	..	14	651	29	1951
Private cars	1938	209	57	35	141	22	56	148	39	87	53	40	56	3 752	23	1 134	44	1938
	1950	136	35	36	150	28	79	138	31	73	51	28	32	2 214	21	2 523	46	1950
	1951	116	29	..	123	25	71	109	109	27	65	48	23	..	20	2 368	42	1951
Buses	1938	2 824	4 758	2 066	1 249	3 461	5 144	1 483	1 922	1 263	1 288	3 014	16 433	919	16 314	2 229	2 229	1938
	1950	2 141	2 851	1 571	1 198	2 044	3 239	4 324	1 800	1 693	790	930	2 315	7 056	670	15 019	1 753	1950
	1951	1 964	2 679	..	1 049	1 716	2 970	3 541	1 709	1 666	824	905	2 246	..	656	..	1 684	1951
Lorries	1938	489	108	94	215	95	187	523	71	194	89	110	200	4 419	94	3 589	160	1938
	1950	160	67	73	126	74	124	208	70	142	68	90	122	1 643	54	1 011	104	1950
	1951	149	57	67	118	..	106	202	68	132	59	79	123	..	51	..	96	1951

a Index 1937 = 100
 b Excluding Northern Ireland.
 c To arrive at an index for all the countries listed, estimates have been made for those countries for which no figures are shown.
 d 1937 e 1949

Czech railwaymen sabotage 'socialist competition'

IN THE 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACIES', where there are no bona fide trade unions to protect the interests of the working people, unlimited opportunities exist for Communist rulers to exploit their workers. One of the favourite methods used is the system known somewhat euphemistically as 'socialist competition'. Ostensibly voluntary in character, the aim of such 'competitions' is to increase output to the very limit of human endurance and then establish new 'working norms' based on the results.

The present rulers of Czechoslovakia, ever ready to imitate their masters in Moscow, have not been slow to introduce Czech workers to this Communist refinement of the speed-up. Unfortunately for them, however, the working people of Czechoslovakia are not only still strongly imbued with trade union traditions but have also had considerable experience of sabotage under an earlier dictatorship. The Communists have discovered that although Czech workers seem to enter into the spirit of 'socialist competition', the results achieved are sometimes a little unexpected. For instance, this is what happened recently on the Czech railways:

Railwaymen employed at one of the most important rail junctions in Bohemia were challenged to take part in a 'socialist competition' to improve the regularity and efficiency of railway transport. The junction in question is on a vital rail artery linking the western part of Czechoslovakia with Slovakia, and much used for the transport of goods to the Soviet Union. Heralded by the usual propaganda fanfares, the competition was held in November and December of last year, but by the time it was over the Communist railway authorities were wishing they had never started it.

The resultant chaos was well described by J. Kos, Chairman of the Communist Railwaymen's Union, at the meeting of the Central Trade Union Council held on 22 and 23 January. Train delays of many hours became the rule, with only some thirty per cent of fast trains arriving on time. The speed of goods trains also decreased drastically and confusion was made worse by an acute shortage of locomotives, which resulted in many trains being shunted on to sidings and their locomotives removed for use elsewhere. Fast trains be-

tween Prague and the junction were unaccountably held up on the way, although they were not scheduled to stop anywhere along the line.

The chaos was increased by various contradictory orders issued by the Ministry of Railways. First came a decree stipulating that footplate staff should be relieved after ten hours' duty. Then came a second order, annulling the first and introducing a bonus of 150 Kcs. (about £1) for footplate men on duty for more than ten hours. Two days later, this order was withdrawn in its turn because it had been issued without the

knowledge of the Deputy Minister and the Labour Department of the Ministry.

Afterwards, many leading railway officials admitted that the situation was a direct result of 'socialist competition' aggravated by such factors as the bad quality of the coal used for firing and the inadequacy of mechanical equipment. Such criticism, however, was rejected as 'bourgeois-minded' and undermining the authority of railway management.

The Central Committee of the Railwaymen's Union, after analyzing the results of the competition, issued the usual spate of 'self-criticism', admitting that officials of the union had been caught unawares and had not tried to improve the situation, thereby causing great losses to national property.

That in itself is a damning admission. Nevertheless, the recent farce on the Czech railways proves more than that. It shows, firstly, that the chaos in the transport industries of the satellite countries is increasing rather than decreasing. More important still, however, it demonstrates once again that the railwaymen who were affiliated with the ITF in the days of the free Czechoslovak Republic have not yet been cowed, but are still fighting their Communist oppressors.

The proof of the pudding

A striking (and unsolicited) testimonial to the success of nationalization on the British railways was recently heard from a rather unexpected quarter. Speaking in the House of Lords on 23 February, the Earl of Radnor, himself a former director of a privately-owned railway, had the following to say:

'I was a railway director for nearly twenty years - I resigned when the 1947 Act came into operation - and I did everything I could to oppose nationalization of the railways. I believed that the service to the public would suffer under nationalization and that a vast organization such as the nationalized railways could not possibly be economical in its working.

It is my belief that the service to the public has continued at as good a level as, if not better than, could have been maintained by the railway companies had they been in private hands.

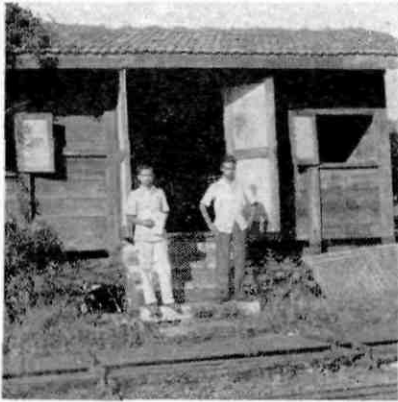
British Railways last year had a programme for the building of 2,000 pas-

senger coaches, but they had not enough steel to build one of them. So that the faults which may lie with British Railways in the way of service are faults which would have affected the privately owned railway companies just as much.

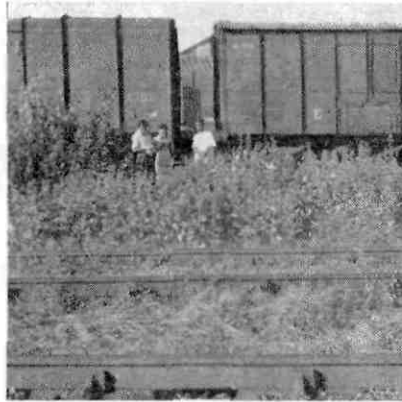
So far as economy in working is concerned, I have been proved entirely wrong. Entirely as a first result of unification of the railway companies, economies to the extent of £60 millions per annum have been effected. Very few of these economies would have been effected by the separate railway companies at a time of rising prices, rising wages and rising costs generally. I think that that is a very remarkable achievement of organization.

Two other economies have been made by British Railways in the five years they have been in existence. One is in locomotive and rolling stock distribution. By eliminating boundaries, British Railways have been enabled to put rolling

(continued on page 64)



A converted carriage is his work-place



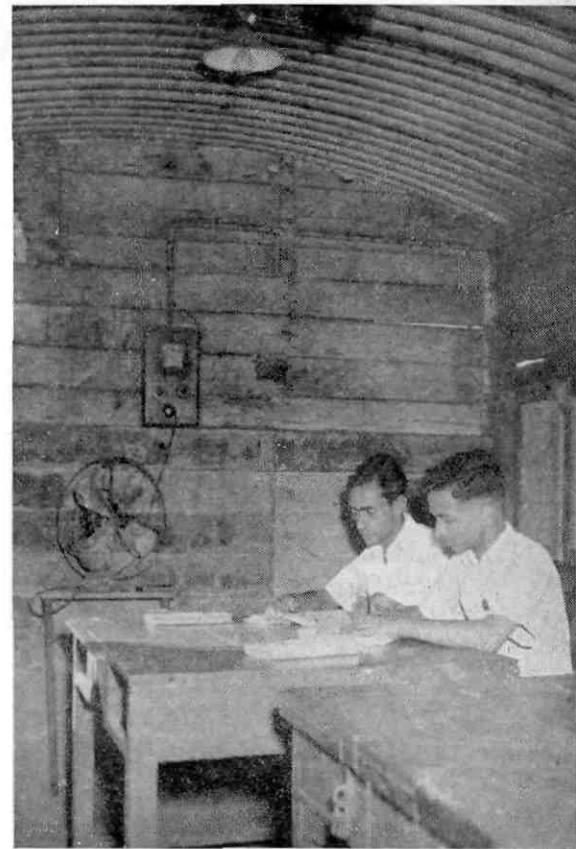
The jungle invades the clerk's domain



An umbrella shields him from the sun



A view of one section of the goods yard



The bare interior of the train clerk's office

The unhappy lot of the Indian train clerk

THAT THE LIFE OF A TRAIN CLERK on the Indian railways is as full of trials (if not fuller) than that of his counterpart elsewhere is brought home to us by an article in the Bombay 'Railway Herald', upon which we have based the following.

Anyone who has to while away time at an Indian railway station cannot fail to notice one unhappy creature in particular. Loaded with a wide range of odd assortments, his bobbing figure can be seen everywhere within the station precincts, scuttling up and down the platform, jumping over the lines, and, completely regardless of personal safety, diving under a string of wagons (with or without engine attached). No need to ask who it is. It's the train clerk. And the lot of the Indian train clerk, like that of the policeman in the opera, 'is not a happy one'. Far from it.

His duties it would seem defy enumeration, his responsibilities are apparently unlimited and his trials many and varied. An important link in the move-

ment of all rail traffic, he has to act as clerk to all incoming and outgoing trains, as yard foreman for shunting operations and, at times, even as deputy station master. If anything goes wrong (and things will go wrong in the best run of railways) he is the official receiver of all 'rockets'. No wonder he looks hunted and harassed! He *is*.

He is expected to know the exact location of every vehicle in the yard, its contents and destination, and to see that everything gets to where it is supposed to go with a minimum of delay. And then forms have to be made out, and signatures obtained. All this for the magnificent starting salary of Rs 55 (about £4) a week. His chances of promotion or of transfer to another branch

are as good as nil. Deliverance from his unhappy state is secured only by a) his resigning or b) Providence mercifully stepping in and arranging for him to be run over in the station yard. Failing either of these he carries on, in the broiling Indian sun, in the chill of the night or during a monsoon downpour, endeavouring to the best of his ability to combine those feats of gymnastics, legerdemain and clairvoyance which the management obviously expect of him.

The management also expect him to supply his own clothes. He does not, it is pointed out to him, come into contact with the public. And so he gets no uniform. True, management generously supplies overcoats and raincoats to newcomers to the service, but it is apt to overlook the need for them during the first two or three years. And when the newcomer finally does get these garments he finds that he is now expected to make

them last for five years instead of three. The Controller of Stores is out to economize, which also accounts for the inferior quality of the pencils and the fact that his lamp leaks, thus spoiling his clothes.

If there is a bright side to the Indian train clerk's life, the writer of the article from which we have taken the above, fails to point it out. Perhaps, in his desire to get those of us in other climes and lands to spare a thought for the Indian train clerk, the writer has painted his picture in somewhat sombre colours. If we have supplied a few lighter touches, it is not because we feel lightly about the subject but because we hope thereby to bring it into sharper relief.

Hours of work on Indian railways

'Hours on duty for a driver are calculated from the time the train starts and he should work for 12 hours. The engine crew arrive at the loco-shed 45 minutes prior to shed departure for engine attendance (to oil and examine) after taking over charge. After leaving the shed, 15 minutes is occupied to go to the traffic yard to work a train with detention for creating vacuum and start. In the case of a goods train in marshalling yards, engines have to wait for formation and track much longer. Excluding all these periods he has to work 12 hours from the time of starting a train, he is really working beyond 12 hours or even 16 hours at times.'

THIS QUOTATION is culled from an article by 'A driver' in 'Labour Times', the journal of the Southern Railway Employees' Union of India.

Our comment can be short: Such working conditions for locomotive men prevailed in some European and American countries in the nineteenth century. They do not exist any longer. The time is at hand for the Indian railway administrations to make a move forward. The scheduled working day of a locomotive man, i.e. the time between reporting for duty and 'knocking off', should never exceed eleven hours on any one day. If every day stands by itself, all time in excess of eight hours should be paid for at overtime rates. If that is found too expensive, the alternative is to limit the average length of the working day to eight hours, taking the week or the fortnight or even the month as a basis for calculation. This limitation of railway

Joint negotiating machinery on Indian railways

IN A RECENT LEADING ARTICLE, *Labour Times*, the official organ of the ITF-affiliated Southern Railway Employees' Union, has drawn attention to some of the problems raised by the new system of joint negotiation on the Indian railways.

It points out that one of the decisions reached in discussions between the Railway Minister and the All-India Railwaymen's Federation concerned the establishment of joint negotiating machinery, at three different levels, for the settlement of labour-management problems. The scheme envisaged bi-monthly discussions between branches of recognized trade unions and the district officers on matters of purely local interest and the implementation of decisions reached at higher level; quarterly meetings with the General Manager of a Railway to negotiate matters above district level; and half-yearly discussions between the Railway Board and the All-India Railwaymen's Federation concerning wages, service conditions, and matters affecting all railways.

The genuineness of the Railway Minister's motives in formulating this scheme, writes *Labour Times*, cannot be disputed; and the Railwaymen's Federation accepted the offer in that spirit. At the same time, however, it points out that the success or failure of the scheme depends on the manner in which negotiations are conducted by both the railway administration and the trade unions.

On the Southern Railway, says the journal, the experiment is least encouraging. One quarterly meeting has already been held and another is pending. At the district level, several meetings have been held, most of them, however 'remaining a catalogue of undisposed references or pending issues'. Matters discussed at district level are only those relative to the implementation of decisions and policies, and in such cases delay can be extremely damaging.

According to *Labour Times*, most of the answers furnished by the district of-

working hours is necessary for protecting health of the workers, for ensuring safety of operation, and for meeting the claims of social justice in a proper manner.

ficers are of an evasive nature, covered by such stock phrases as 'under correspondence', 'is being looked into', 'referred to . . .'. As a result, Indian railwaymen are beginning to wonder whether these bi-monthly meetings are only a show. In fact, one of the branch unions has suspended the meetings pending decision on at least some of the points discussed, as in the opinion of the branch 'it serves no purpose to pile up a catalogue of undisposed references'.

The Central Committee of the Southern Railway Employees' Union has drawn attention to this aspect of joint negotiation and *Labour Times* believes that it is high time that the railway administration took stock of the situation and improved its procedure.

At the same time, the journal considers that from the district officer's point of view 'this contact with labour is becoming too frequent a feature'. Each district officer has to negotiate with more than one recognized union, in addition to the Staff Councils created by the administration itself and the newly-established welfare organization. The result is that there is more contact than service, and the district officers find themselves in a real dilemma. They cannot question the wisdom of this system of multiple negotiating units, but at the same time they have to be careful (or *tactful*, as the administration puts it) not to give undue weight to the views of any one of the negotiators. Their task thus becomes one of diplomacy rather than of negotiation pure and simple.

It is therefore no wonder, says *Labour Times*, that a well-conceived scheme of labour-management liaison is being wrecked. Those responsible should pause and think for a while whether they are doing any service to the men, the railways, or even to the nation, by such outdated policies. *Labour Times* points out that one labour organization for one industry should be the guiding principle.

Road and rail accidents in the United States

FIGURES on United States railway accidents contained in the Interstate Commerce Commission's annual report to Congress show that, during the first six months of 1952, there was a 15.8 per cent decrease in casualties resulting from rail accidents compared with the same period of 1951. Nevertheless, the report shows that 140 railway workers lost their lives and 5,681 were injured. In the same period of 1951, 141 workers were killed and 6,581 were injured.

Accidents involving steam locomotives decreased by 26.9 per cent, but Diesel and electric locomotive accidents went up by thirty-three per cent.

The ICC report also discloses increasing hazards on US highways caused by big lorries. Lorries were involved in 32,526 smashups, an increase of twenty-five per cent over the preceding year.

The number of people killed increased by fourteen per cent to 1,986, whilst the number injured jumped to 22,070 – an increase of seventeen per cent. Damage to property soared twenty per cent to \$ 34.1 million.

Women in American transport

THE US DEFENSE TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION, in a recent study of the employment of women in the transport industries, states that it has arrived at the inescapable conclusion that women have already demonstrated their ability to assume numerous jobs in the DTA industries, and to fill them adequately.

Referring to the large-scale employment of women by the railroads during the Second World War, the Defense Transport Administration points out that many unusual jobs normally filled by men were taken over by women. There were, for example, women car distributors, women supervisors of contracts, women crew dispatchers, women executive clerks, women commission agents, and women tariff compilers. Other capacities in which women served were as chief blueprinters, crew callers, and draughtsmen in the signal and engineering departments.

The above by no means completes the list. It was found for example that women went to work as track labourers, yard clerks, messengers, baggage handlers, shop material handlers, crane operators, steam hammer operators, crossing flagmen and drawbridge tenders.

European goods wagon pool established

AN AGREEMENT on the pooling of goods wagons, covering most of the countries of Western Europe, came into force on 1 March. Western Germany, the Saar territory, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Italy, Austria, and Switzerland have agreed to establish a pool of 160,000 wagons (62,500 covered and 97,500 open trucks) to be distributed among the parties to the agreement as follows:

Country	Covered	Open
France	30,000	20,000
German Republic	10,000	40,000
Belgium	8,500	11,000
Italy	5,300	10,000
Holland	3,500	5,800
Austria	1,500	3,000
Saar	600	3,500
Switzerland	2,000	2,000
Denmark	600	1,400
Luxembourg	500	800

The members of the European wagon pool will set up a committee (the Europ-Committee) under the chairmanship of the Swiss Federal Railways. Each member-country will have equal representation and voting powers on this committee, whose function will be to ensure the fair application of the agreement and to make any necessary amendments.

Day-to-day control of the pool will be exercised by the Europ Pool Office which is to be set up in Bern and will commence operations on 1 March. This Office,

to which each member-country will send one or two representatives, will study the daily movements reports, on the basis of which it will control the supply of wagons.

A goods traffic wagon pool in Europe is no new thing. An agreement of this kind has already existed for some time between France and Germany, and the present Europ Pool owes its origin largely to the smooth running of the experiment and the useful data supplied by an examination of the traffic figures of this pool, including movements through Belgium.

It was shown that, in the case of covered trucks, traffic was evenly balanced, a maximum saving thus being effected on empty running. As a result of pooling, this had been reduced to an average per truck of forty-six kms., as opposed to 415 kms. before the agreement. The saving on open trucks, although satisfactory, showed greater disparities. Nevertheless, empty running in this case was reduced from an average of 262 kms. to 175 kms., a saving of thirty-three per cent. The control of the Franco-German Pool, operated from Paris, was carried out to the full satisfaction of both parties, and it was found that compensatory movements could be ordered in good time so that each member of the pool practically always had its rightful allocation. The experiment also showed that maintenance and repair of trucks could be effected without any difficulties.

International Bank loan for Colombian railways

DESIGNED TO ASSIST the Government of Colombia in its general economic and social development programme, a loan of \$25 million has been made by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, bringing the total of such loans, of which this is the sixth, to over \$55 million.

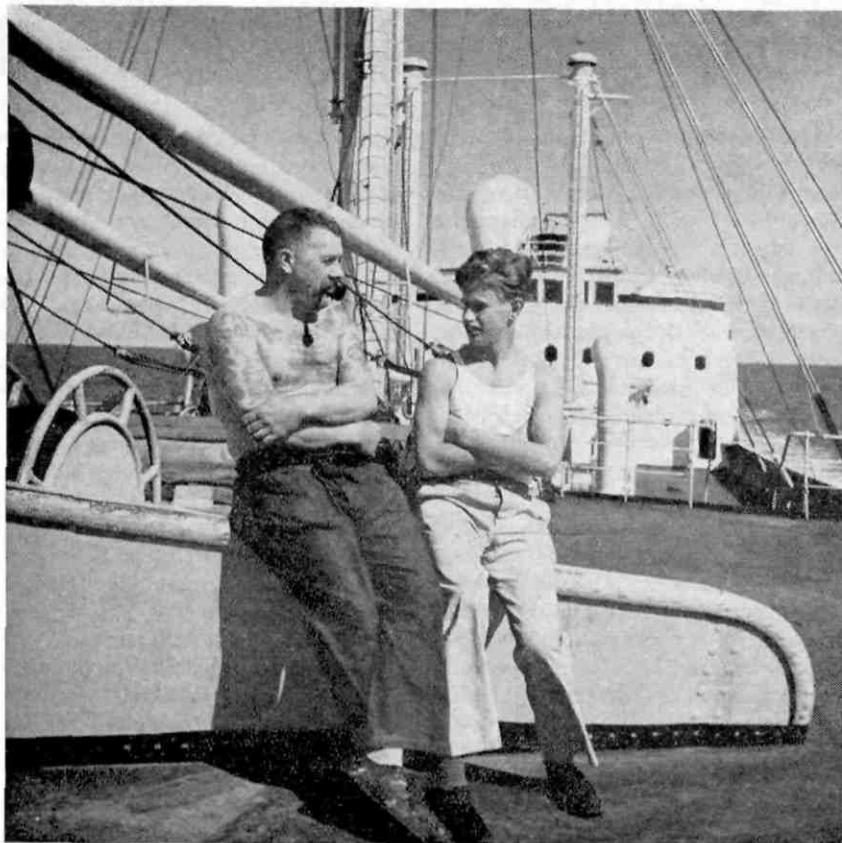
Of the latest loan, \$20 million will be used towards the construction of a 235-mile long railway in the Magdalena Valley, the remaining \$5 million helping to build and equip railway repair shops in Bogota. The loan will be used to pay for imported equipment and services needed for these projects in which the

Government of Colombia itself is investing the sum of \$24 million (in pesos). It is hoped that the work will be completed by 1956.

Communist countries establish shipping pool

ACCORDING TO the Austrian periodical *Interreport Ost*, the Communist countries have recently established a shipping pool, with headquarters in Riga. Participation by individual countries will be as follows: Poland thirty-seven per cent, USSR thirty per cent, Rumania ten per cent, Eastern Germany ten per cent, Bulgaria five per cent, China five per cent, Albania two per cent, and Czechoslovakia one per cent. Some for-

(continued on page 64)



Twenty years of social legislation for Swedish seamen

by Jerker Svensson, President of the Swedish Seamen's Union

THE SWEDISH SEAMEN'S UNION, which caters for all ratings serving in the Swedish merchant marine, was founded at a time when the world was passing through the gravest economic crisis of modern times. In Sweden alone, the number of unemployed was around the hundred-thousand mark. Hence a vast number of people were idle, with no other means of subsistence than the meagre assistance from public welfare funds and unemployment benefits. Society had still to recognize that it had duties and responsibilities towards those of its citizens who were in need.

Things were indeed bad for those on shore, but worse still for seafarers. The economic crisis had inevitably affected shipping, and the early 1930s were characterized by the mass laying-up of ships. At that time more than one half of the Union's 12,000 members were out of work for varying periods. As the unemployed seafarer, in his search for

work, had to spend so much time away from his home town, he could not even draw on the small unemployment benefits granted by the local authorities to the extent that this assistance was available to others. As the periods of unemployment even for experienced seamen at that time could be anything up to twelve to fourteen months, it followed

'In my young days we didn't expect much from the owners. Now all that's changed'

that thousands of seafarers were compelled to live in the utmost misery.

The difficulties and hardships suffered as a result of these periods of unemployment were certainly great. Things were little better, however, when a seaman did manage to find a job. True, he was then provided with board and lodging, but neither was worth shouting about. The depression had obliged shipowners to reduce their expenses, and from their point of view nothing was more natural or obvious than to start saving by cuts in the seaman's wages and food. Those union members who have taken up the seafarer's calling within the last ten years can hardly imagine the catering conditions on boats some twenty years ago.

As for crew quarters, these too often consisted of a gloomy fo'c'sle into which the greater part of the crew were crowded. The fo'c'sle had not only to serve as sleeping quarters, including wash room, but also to be used as a day-room in which the seamen took their meals as well. In most cases heating was provided by a smoky stove, burning coal.

For the greater number of seafarers, the hours of work when at sea were eighty-four a week, overtime being paid for at the rate of ninety-six öre an hour, whilst time-off was limited to half a day a month. Holidays for seamen were unknown and the lack of regulations on the manning of ships was exploited by the owners in a ruthless fashion. Seamen with some ten to twenty years experience of the sea were obliged to muster as so-called unskilled ordinary seamen at a wage of eighty to ninety kronor a month, whilst at the same time, in spite of vigorous protests from those serving, reductions were made in the size of crews.

Such was the state of affairs in the seafaring world about 1930, thus presenting the newly-formed Seamen's Union with a sufficient number of problems to tackle when it began its activities on 1 November 1932.

The economic crisis was gradually overcome and, owing to the workers enjoying increased political influence – the Social-Democratic Labour Party achieved considerable successes in the elections to the second Chamber in both 1932 and 1936 – a general campaign was started on the social front. It is not proposed to go into the gains made in

this respect during the latter part of the 1930s, suffice it to point out that, as regards the seafarers, the State authorities began to listen to the claims and desires put forward by their spokesmen.

It began in a small way by the Parliament enacting in 1934 that, in the event of a seaman losing his job as a result of shipwreck, he should continue to draw wages for the period of unemployment for a maximum of two months.

Following the adoption in 1938 of a general law on holidays, seafarers were guaranteed a twelve-day holiday a year. During the same year Parliament also passed a new measure governing working hours at sea which, among a number of benefits for seafarers, included the introduction of the three-watch system for deckhands on vessels over 2,000 GRT, a ten-hour day instead of twelve for catering staff at sea, and eight hours instead of twelve when in port.

For obvious reasons, social legislation was at first halted by the war. In 1943, however, a decree was promulgated concerning, among other matters, accommodation for ship's crews. The decree, which is still in force, introduced considerable improvements in what passed for accommodation on board ships. Central heating and electric lighting were made compulsory on practically all vessels, whilst a separate mess-room for crews in all ships of more than 400 GRT was also to be provided.

As early as 1939, in connection with a reorganization of Seamen's Homes, a regulation appeared on a seafarers' pension fund which laid the foundation of a pension insurance scheme for seamen. No real or appreciable improvements were achieved in the matter of seamen's pensions, however, and in 1941 the Parliament of the day decided to petition the King to authorize an enquiry into the subject. The report of the committee set up was ready by 1942, and formed the basis of a Bill which was considered in 1943. This was enacted as the Law on Contributions to Seafarers' Pensions, followed by a new ordinance on merchant marine pension funds. In this way a significant step was taken towards the realization of pensions for seafarers.

During the latter part of the war, the Swedish Seamen's Union had repeatedly petitioned the Government to carry out an investigation of seafarers' living and working conditions. As a result of these appeals, the then Minister for Trade set



A group of seamen on board a Swedish vessel give some thought to the new Seafarers' Law. Study circles and lecture groups like this one are a common feature of life aboard Swedish ships. New social legislation affecting seafarers is naturally followed with close attention.



The reading room in the beautifully-appointed Swedish Seamen's Centre in New York. In these comfortable and ultra-modern surroundings, the Swedish seaman can get news from a wide selection of newspapers and magazines from all parts of his home country.



Guests at a Swedish Seamen's Centre wash up before setting off on a trip into town

up a committee in January 1946 to study ways of improving social legislation affecting seafarers. The committee thus appointed was called the 1946 Seafarers' Committee, and began its work of investigation without delay. By April 1947 it had submitted its first report which dealt with the organization of seafarers' welfare in ports. The report formed the basis of a Bill which came before Parliament in 1948, and in due course a royal decree set up the Seafarers' Welfare Board to plan and coordinate welfare arrangements for Swedish seamen during their stay in port.

Under the above-mentioned law, seamen are required to pay into a welfare fund the sum of two öre per working day aboard, the shipowners' contribution being the same, whilst the State adds twice that amount, i.e. four öre. In addition to this, the Seafarers' Welfare Board has received a grant from the State every year since 1949 ranging from 200,000 to 300,000 kronor for the purpose of investment in seafarers' hotels. A Cabinet Bill was laid before Parliament in 1952 under which the sum of 10,000,000 kronor was to be placed at the disposal of the Welfare Board for the construction of such hotels.

During the time it has been functioning, the Seafarers' Welfare Board has performed outstanding services. An up-to-date hotel run by the Board has been established in Brooklyn, and large sums of money are voted annually to provide recreation facilities for seamen during their leisure hours. As a result of generous contributions from the Board's funds, it is expected that seafarers' hotels will shortly be opened in Malmö, Stockholm, and a number of other ports.

The second report of the 1946 Seafarers' Committee contained proposals for a new law governing the working hours of seafarers, and was issued at the beginning of 1948. A few months later, these proposals were largely embodied in a Parliamentary Bill which was passed with a few minor amendments. At long last, Swedish seamen had secured recognition of the principle of the forty-eight-hour week. Much remains to be done before that principle is fully observed in practice, but we are well on the road.

The next report of the Seafarers' Committee contained proposals for the payment of unemployment benefit to seaman even if they were in certain foreign ports. Based on these recom-

mendations, a Bill was placed before Parliament in 1950 enabling unemployment benefits to be paid to seamen in Antwerp and New York. Parliament approved the Bill and added San Francisco, so that now any Swedish seaman can draw unemployment benefit if he falls out of work in one of these three ports. Furthermore, it has been proposed to extend this facility to other foreign ports. In August 1951, the Seafarers' Committee submitted its recommendations for a new seafarers' law to the Minister for Trade. The Bill was approved by the 1952 Parliament with a number of significant amendments and came into force on 1 January 1953.

It is evident from this account that much has been done in the last twenty years to improve the lot of the seafarers. At the same time, we have only touched on the most important and significant changes and improvements. There are, of course, many other spheres in which legislation has stepped in and brought considerable advantages to seafarers. Nor do we propose to discuss the great advantages which have accrued to seamen as the result of collective agreements, which in many cases are complementary to legislation.

The successes won hitherto should not, however, give us occasion to pause and rest. There is still much to be done in the immediate future. The seafarers' pension scheme must be improved and extended to include the members of his family; a more equitable taxation system for seafarers is a long-outstanding claim; the catering regulations need bringing up to date; and the problems of training, at present sorely neglected, must be solved as quickly as possible. Amongst other important items on the agenda are: regulations on 'manning', and a general health insurance scheme for seafarers.

The progress made up to the present has been largely due to the fact that we have a strong trade union organization concerned with safeguarding the seafarers' interests, but we should not overlook or underestimate the support we have always received from the political party which has dominated Swedish politics in the last two decades. Owing to the close collaboration between the trade unions and the Social-Democratic Labour Party, our demands have been met to a large extent, and upon that same collaboration we base our hopes for further progress.

Efficiency factors on the US international airlines

FIGURES on operating data of the US international airlines published in the 'World Airline Record' throw an interesting light on the developments which have taken place in the years from 1942 to 1951 (the last year for which statistics are available from this source).

A study of the utilization and efficiency factors shows that, since 1942, the figure for annual ton-miles per employee has increased more than sixfold. In spite of this remarkable saving in personnel in terms of payload carried, the actual number of persons employed in the airline industry has increased from 12,803 in 1953 to 22,011 in 1951.

Any conclusions drawn from a study of the annual ton-miles per employee would be incomplete without at the same time taking into account the equally impressive increases in the average speed of aircraft, the daily miles and ton-miles flown per plane. In this connection we

find that in 1944 (the earliest year for which a figure is given) the average speed of an aircraft was 149 m.p.h. By 1951 it had gone up to 223. Between 1942 and 1951, the number of miles flown per plane daily increased from 756 to 1,350, while in the period under review the daily ton-miles per plane showed a marked rise from 1,088 to 5,144. It is interesting to note that, whereas between the years 1944 and 1951, there have been fairly wide fluctuations in the average time spent in the air, there is nevertheless no noticeable tendency for this period to be increased.

We reproduce below figures from one of the tables appearing in the above-mentioned publication illustrating utilization and efficiency factors in United States scheduled international overseas air operations (the figures relating to personnel being taken from a separate table.)

Year	Personnel	Ave. speed (mph)	Miles flown per plane (daily)	Ton-miles flown per plane (daily)	Ann. ton-miles per employee (in thous.)
1942	12,803	—	756	1,088	2,7
1943	9,625	—	722	1,252	2,9
1944	11,409	149	868	1,530	3,8
1945	17,968	151	1,063	1,858	3,9
1946	27,372	168	1,323	3,055	6,1
1947	26,154	191	1,395	3,852	8,9
1948	21,517	197	1,402	3,790	11,4
1949	22,129	210	1,310	3,690	13,5
1950	20,883	218	1,224	4,170	15,3
1951	22,011	223	1,350	5,144	16,9

Air navigation in Asia and the Pacific

A DETAILED PLAN providing for both present and future needs of air navigation in South-East Asia and the Pacific (including navigation requirements for jet-power airliners) was prepared by the International Civil Aviation Organization

at its regional meeting held in Melbourne (Australia) during January and February of this year.

The present plan is largely based on an earlier one drafted five years ago and now revised in the light of recent developments in aviation, particularly the progress made in jet aircraft. The height and speed at which these fly have made

it necessary to effect considerable improvements in the weather reporting service. A recommendation was therefore made to establish 530 weather observation posts which should report four times a day, several of them being equipped to observe weather conditions up to a height of 55,000 feet (16,500 m.). The plan also proposes to set up thirty-four main weather-forecasting offices and forty offices. It is interesting to note in connection with the meteorological problems with which the ICAO is faced, that this body is considering the development of a special technique to be used in tropical regions for forecasting the winds and weather in the upper air.

Noting that the lighting of aerodromes to facilitate night operations had now become the rule rather than the exception in the area under review, the meeting recommended the installation at nine principal aerodromes of the high-intensity approach lighting systems made standard by the ICAO for night landings and operations in foggy weather. At the same time, the old plan giving the number and types of aerodromes was revised to meet the needs of increased traffic, new routes, and new types of aircraft.

On the vitally important matter of plane-to-ground communication, a detailed plan designed to secure more efficient working was adopted and will in due course be put into effect. Meanwhile an interim plan was recommended providing for more voice communication by radio-telephone in preference to the use of the wireless code — a procedure long advocated by the ICAO.

Further proposals made at the meeting concerned the flight information service. In addition to a modification of the boundaries of the existing flight information regions, delegates also proposed the establishment of further flight information services on the Cocos Islands, on Biak (an island off the coast of New Guinea), and on Formosa.

This recent meeting of the International Civil Aviation Organization is one of a series held by that body in each of the flight regions of the world. These regional meetings examine air navigation facilities and services, compare them with requirements, and recommend changes and additions to effect such improvements as economic and technical conditions permit. The Melbourne conference was attended by twenty-three member-nations of ICAO.

Life on a fishing trawler (2)

by David S. Blanchard, International Labour Office

The first trawl

At 5 p.m. a loud summons came down from the skipper. It was time to prepare the net for the first trawl. During trips to and from the fishing grounds the nets rest on pegs set on top of the gunwales along each side of the vessel. The port-side net is the one in reserve in case of loss or serious damage. Each net is about forty feet long and about forty feet wide at the forward end. When dragged through the water it resembles a large cone. The mouth of the net is kept open by two otter boards at the sides attached to the boat by wire cables, and by small floats at the top. Along the bottom of the opening is a heavy chain covered by rubber rings to withstand damage when the net is being pulled over the sea bottom. At the narrow end there is a reinforced bag covered at the bottom with rubber sheeting.

As two members of the crew spread and examined the net for possible holes, the other two led the wire cables through blocks and pulleys to the winches. At a signal from the skipper the net was thrown over the port side and let out a short distance. Returning to the bridge, the skipper advanced the idling engine to full speed and swung the boat in a full circle to port. After a quarter of the circle had been completed he gave another signal and the remaining length of cable was let out as fast as possible. When the required length of tow had been attained the winches were braked and the speed of the vessel reduced.

According to the depth indicator, the *Liliane* was trawling in water of about sixteen fathoms between two shallow banks. There was a slight westerly wind and a course of north by north-west was set. For the next three hours, the vessel would trawl with the tide some fifteen to twenty miles off the eastern coast of England. As there was nothing to do but wait the allotted time before the trawl was brought in, the watch was changed and the skipper and other members of the crew went below.

Working hours

During the actual fishing the watch is

changed with every new trawl, each member of the crew except the engineer taking turns. While the net is being brought in and let out, and while the catch is being processed, the skipper remains on the bridge and all members of the crew – including the engineer, although he is not obliged to do so – work at putting the fish below deck. Therefore, if the net is not brought up in a damaged condition and no other difficulties are encountered (a situation that is most unusual) six or seven trawls may reasonably be expected during a 24-hour period, and each of the four men standing watch will be on duty in the wheelhouse once every fifteen hours. It normally takes from forty-five minutes to one hour to process the catch, depending upon the number and type of fish caught, so that each man should have between eleven and twelve hours of work a day.

But the fishing operations seldom proceed so smoothly, and in practice the hours of work are much longer. According to the crew, during the winter months when the fish are more plentiful and prices higher, it is not unusual to work twenty-four hours without rest, except for short periods for meals. When the sea is rough and the weather stormy, the net is almost always brought up in a damaged state, and often requires seven or eight hours' work by all hands to repair it. When the boat is surrounded by thick fog it is necessary to have two men on continuous watch. The crew estimated that their hours of work at sea averaged between eighteen and twenty a day.

With the first trawl out, the mate, Franz Major, took over the watch. He is the skipper's brother and the youngest of a family of five boys, all of whom are fishermen, and one girl, who is married to a fisherman. Their father, also skipper of a fishing boat, died in 1937 after being caught and crushed between an otter board and its steel frame on deck. Franz holds a skipper's certificate but does not consider that he has yet sufficient knowledge of the fishing grounds to take command of a boat. His title of 'mate' is more honorary than

real, as no such certificated officer is carried on boats of the size of the *Liliane*. His duties are mainly the same as those of the two deckhands, but he draws an additional ½ per cent share of the catch for carrying out the added responsibilities of sorting and icing the fish in the hold after they are caught, and placing them in baskets before the catch is unloaded on arrival in port. He lives with his wife and baby in a new four-room apartment near the fish quay, for which they pay a rent of 700 francs a month.

At 9.15 p.m. the mate gave a shout to the men below, the skipper again took control of the vessel, and all hands pulled on their rubber hip boots and tied on rubber aprons before bringing in the first trawl. The steel clamp holding the two cables of the net tight against the after part of the boat to prevent fouling was to be released, the skipper steered sharply to port after increasing speed, and Ted and Franz at the two winches began pulling in the net as soon as the vessel had completed a half turn. The cables were pulled in until the otter boards were clear of the water and rested against their frames; the rope ends of the net were then detached from the otter boards and led round the warping ends of the winches until the orifice of the net had cleared the side of the vessel, when it was dropped on deck.

With the vessel at a complete stop, the skipper and all members of the crew, standing abreast along the rail, began pulling in the net by hand. With each roll of the boat the men reached further down the net, and then pulled with all their strength, bringing a foot or two on to the deck with each lunge. When the bag was near enough, a rope sling was put around it and, by means of a wire running over a boom in the bows to the winch, the bag and its contents were swung up over the forward deck on the port side. The mate bent quickly under the dripping, squirming bag to untie the knot at the bottom. With a sudden jerk the knot came loose and the jumping fish and other sea creatures tumbled in a mass on the railed-in deck.

The first catch was very meagre: three lobsters, a shark, and a few dogfish, turbot and skates. The skipper decided to go immediately to another fishing ground, and while the crew repaired a small tear in the net he headed due north at full speed. Processing the catch took very little time. The fish worth saving were thrown one by one to the star-

board side of the deck where Julien washed them with sea water from a rubber hose. The dogfish and skates require no cleaning and were thrown directly into the hold, where Franz sorted them into different compartments and covered them with a layer of shaved ice. The turbot and the shark were cut open and gutted before being thrown below. Lobsters and sea snails are considered as 'stocker', the whole proceeds after sale belonging to the crew. Lobsters are kept alive in a barrel of fresh sea water until the boat returns to port.

Trawling continues

The second trawl, brought in at 1.15 a.m. on the second day, contained a good catch and the skipper decided to continue fishing in the same area, changing direction from north to south and then back to north every six hours with the changing tide. During the whole of the second and third days the catches were all average or good in quantity and quality. Not knowing what type of fish is likely to be in highest demand on the day when the catch is landed, every skipper prefers to have as wide a selection as possible. This time, however, it was known from conversations over the wireless with the skippers of other boats which had arrived in port that soles were fetching a good price. The crew were glad, therefore, that the ground chosen was usually a good one for soles and that an increasing number of these fish were brought up in each trawl.

Welfare

The skipper enjoyed listening to the wireless receiver every morning and evening when, for a certain period of time, the crews of the Ostend boats are permitted to talk to one another over an allotted wavelength. On the morning of the fourth day he spoke to a brother, the skipper of a large boat, who was returning to port after having been at sea for eighteen days. A second wavelength is reserved for the use of the Ostend radio station which relays messages and even telephone calls to the fishing vessels, and a third wavelength is for the use of the boats in speaking to the Ostend station. Much to the disappointment of the other members of the crew, the skipper did not seem to enjoy

listening to music or to any other regular radio programmes.

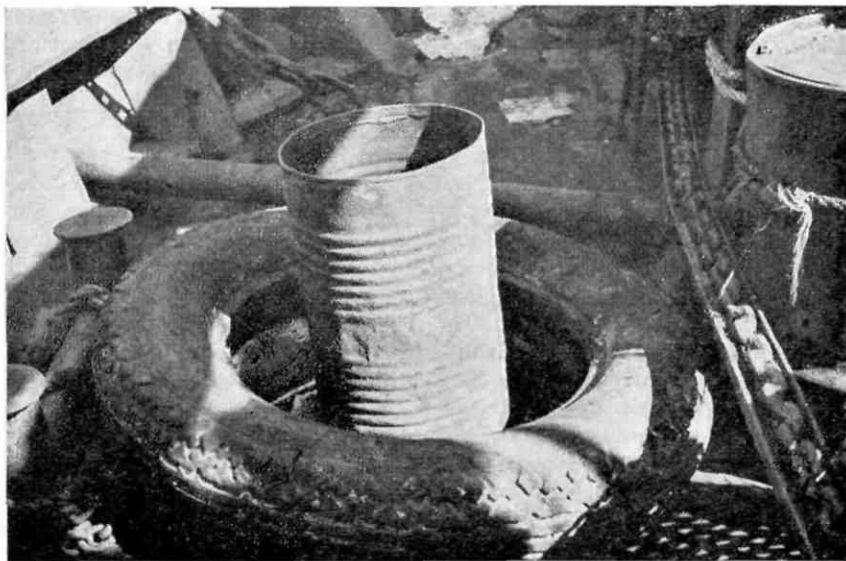
As the fishing was progressing smoothly, with at least two hours between every trawl, the crew had time to talk over personal problems, and, among other things, to discuss what they would do during the annual lay-up period. Once each year the boats are laid up for a period of from four to five weeks in order to be completely overhauled. This usually takes place during the summer months (a period of light demand for fish) in order to make the boat ready for the hard winter season ahead. In the case of the *Liliane*, the overhaul this year will take place during the month of August. The only member of the crew who continues to be employed during this period is the engineer, who helps in dismantling and repairing the engine. For this work he receives 200 francs for each day of employment. The other members of the crew will be unemployed and will therefore be eligible to receive unemployment benefit amounting to one hundred francs a day. The unemployment insurance scheme is administered by the trade union, and contributions for its support are included in the union dues of fifteen francs a week paid by each member.

By the time the annual lay-up period arrives, most of the fishermen will already have taken their annual paid holidays directly after Easter. To qualify for the maximum of six days' annual leave, a fisherman must work at least 275 days during a 12-month period, his daily leave pay being based on total annual income divided by the number of

working days. The annual leave scheme and the compensation paid for eight public holidays are part of the National Social Security System administered by the Government. It also includes sickness and accident insurance (medical care and hospitalization) and old-age pensions. Each fisherman pays a contribution of sixteen francs a day, and the owner pays thirty-two francs a day for each of his employees.

Until noon of the fourth day, the fishing continued without serious incident. At one time the boat was brought to a complete halt when the dragging net caught on a high promontory on the sea-bed, but when the trawl was brought in it was found that the net had scarcely been damaged at all. On two other occasions unusual objects were brought up – a ship's anchor, which was kept to be sold later as scrap iron, and a large plank. The objects caught by the net are usually of no value and are only a source of annoyance to the crew as landing the net is made more difficult: on the previous trip, however, the landing gear of an aeroplane was found and later sold. During the period directly after the war it was not unusual, according to the skipper, to find unexploded mines and depth charges in the net.

On two successive occasions when the trawl was brought in during the afternoon of the fourth day, serious tears were found in the net and the catch was almost negligible. Again at 4 a.m. on the fifth day a hole was found which required more than three hours' work by all hands to repair. While this was being done, the skipper headed the boat south



The somewhat primitive 'W.C.' of the Liliane, used by some members of the crew. Others prefer to use the side of the boat.

to try fishing elsewhere. But the next trawl, brought in at ten a.m. was even more discouraging; a large section of the net had been torn away. As much trawling time had already been lost, the skipper decided to put out the starboard reserve net while the port net was being repaired. This was brought in at 1.30 p.m. but contained very few fish. At 4.30 p.m. the port-side net, which had by then been repaired, was again put out, but when brought in at 7.30 p.m. the double-strength bag at the end had been ripped and not a single fish was caught. The crew were very discouraged and the frustrations caused by the events of the previous thirty hours began to be evident. The men had worked hard during almost the entire period and yet they would receive absolutely no compensation for it.

The skipper again changed direction and headed north at full speed. The net would not go out again until after midnight. He believed that the damage was not only due to the rough ground over which they had been trawling, but also to the action of the spring tide which was exceptionally strong that day. The trawls during the remainder of that night were brought in without damage but the catch was still small, and on the morning of the sixth day the skipper notified the owner that he would return to port early the following morning.

(to be continued)

Norwegian plan to aid Indian fisheries take shape

A NORWEGIAN ENGINEER, Diderich H. Lund, has flown to India to supervise the technical assistance programme which Norway is to implement in the Travancore-Cochin area. The programme will be concentrated on raising the standard of living of thousands of fishermen in this district on the West Coast of Southern India.

Mr. Lund will shortly be joined by a small staff, including another engineer, a fisheries expert, an economist, a doctor, and a nursing sister. Later, additional Norwegian specialists and craftsmen by sent. Dr. Karl Evang, the Norwegian Director of Public Health, is also to visit India, and Mr. Lund will consult with him concerning health measures to be applied.

Raising health standards is an important part of the Norwegian aid plan, and the provision of fresh drinking water is

one of its major aims. It is further proposed to build a small hospital, and to improve sanitary conditions.

For the large number of fishermen now operating under very primitive conditions it is proposed to build an ice-factory, and also to establish a chain of freezing stores inland to promote the distribution of fresh fish, for which there is an almost unlimited demand.

An important feature of the plans for assisting the fishing industry is the proposed mechanization of the fishing fleet. Two Indian fishing boats have been shipped to Oslo, where experiments are to be carried out to determine the most suitable type of engines for such craft.

Norway and Holland to develop atomic ships

THE BRITISH TRANSPORT weekly *Modern Transport*, reports that Norway and the Netherlands have decided to keep abreast of Britain and the United States in developing atomic-powered merchant ships, and expect to launch their first atomic-powered vessel within the next five years. Preparations for the ship's construction were begun last year, when the Dutch-Norwegian Nuclear Research Institute was opened at Kjeller, near Oslo. Now, plans are so far advanced that Mr. Gunnar Randers, head of the Institute, has inspected the Rosenberg shipyard at Stavanger, and decided that the vessel can be built there.

Mr. Randers is reported as saying that it would not be economical to construct an atomic-powered ship smaller than at least 10,000 tons. He said that financial calculations showed that bigger ships, which stay in port as short a time as possible, were the most useful types. Large oil tankers were therefore the most suitable ships for atomic power.

(continued from page 54)

stock where it was most required, regardless of regions or companies. The number of locomotives has gone down by about 1,500 and the total amount of rolling stock has decreased very materially. Yet the railways are able to do their job, because of that flexibility which is centrally controlled from day to day and which would not have been achieved if such authority were delegated to local bodies.

Another major economy lies in the standardization of construction. I do not mean only the fact that the number

er. The cost of such a ship would not be tremendous, he said, adding that a tanker normally costing about £ 535,000 would cost about fifty to hundred per cent more when equipped with atomic power. Such a tanker, however, would easily reach thirty to forty knots, more than double the average speed today.

Seafarers run world's biggest football league

IN PORTS ALL OVER THE WORLD, seamen from Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish ships are competing in the Scandinavian Mariners' Football Series, claimed to be the world's biggest football league, with hundreds of ships' teams participating. In some major ports, matches are fought out on pitches owned by Scandinavian seamen's welfare organizations. The Norwegian Seamen's Welfare Office, for instance, has its own football pitches in Rotterdam, Antwerp, Baltimore and San Pedro. Lorang Ridder-Nielsen, who organizes sport for Norwegian seamen, says he hopes to acquire a football pitch for seamen in London also, in cooperation with the other Scandinavian countries. Ridder-Nielsen reports that though football is easily the most popular sport among Norwegian seamen, swimming and various forms of athletics are also pursued by the 720 sports teams aboard Norwegian vessels.

Certificates of competence in the various branches of athletics are being awarded to an increasing number of seamen. Last year, for instance, every member of the crew of the Norwegian freighter *Granheim* won the certificate for prowess in swimming. Such certificates are awarded on exactly the same conditions as those which are normally issued to sportsmen ashore in Norway.

of types has been reduced from 400 to twelve. I mean also that the actual method of construction has been standardized on modern construction lines.'

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ty per cent of the pool's activities will be devoted to traffic between the participating countries, the remainder to East-West trade. The Soviet Union is reported to have ensured that sixty per cent of her shipping requirements will be met by the new East European pool, thus making good her own deficiencies in respect of merchant marine tonnage.

INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS' FEDERATION

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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

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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.

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