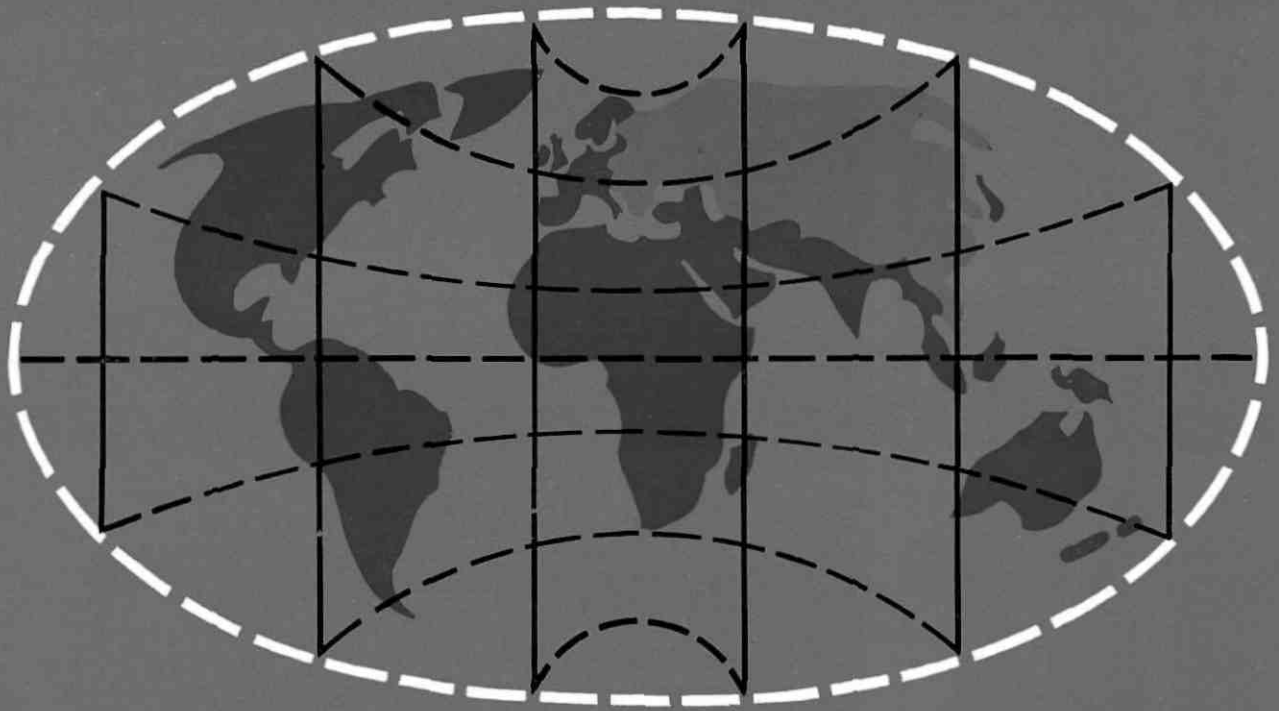


Vol XIII No 12 December 1953



ITF

**INTERNATIONAL
TRANSPORT WORKERS' FEDERATION**

INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS' JOURNAL

Monthly of the ITF

Head Office: Maritime House, Old Town, Clapham Common, London SW 4
Telephone: Macaulay 5501-2 Telegraphic Address: INTRANSFE
Branch Offices: USA 20 West 40th Street, 6th Floor, New York 18, NY
INDIA 4 Goa Street, Ballard Estate, Fort, Bombay 1
LATIN AMERICA Palacio de los Trabajadores, Habana, Cuba

Contents

	PAGE		PAGE
The Asian Maritime Conference in retrospect <i>by Omer Becu</i>	177	Permanent conference of European Ministers of Transport	189
The Rome International Railwaymen's Conference <i>by Paul Tofahrn</i>	179	The German railwayman in the Soviet Zone	190
The OTV International Summer School at Mosbach <i>by J. K. Eaton</i>	183	German goods traffic approaching pre-war level	191
Out of the ashes	185	Maritime nations call for establishment of IMKO	191
Norwegian aid to Indian fishermen ...	186	Driving round the clock in Poland ...	191
Overfishing problems discussed in London	188	How many road vehicles are unsafe?	192
A Norwegian seaman looks at a 'People's Democracy'	189	An unwanted catering system	192
		Seafarers' hostel in Stockholm	192

Forthcoming Meetings:

Hamburg	8-9	January	Regional Seafarers' Conference
Washington	25-27	January	Executive Committee meeting
Geneva	12-13	February	Dockers' Sectional Conference
Geneva	14	February	Road Transport Sectional Conference
Antwerp	3-4	March	Seafarers' Sectional Committee
Geneva	1-3	April	Seafarers' Sectional Conference

The Asian Maritime Conference in Retrospect

by **Omer Becu**, General Secretary of the ITF

LOOKING BACK ON THE FIRST ASIAN MARITIME CONFERENCE of the International Labour Organization, held from 5 to 14 October 1953 at Nuwara Eliya, in Ceylon, the results achieved cannot be regarded as unsatisfactory. In an article written about this Conference while it was still in prospect we wrote: 'The outcome of the Conference may well have a profound bearing on the whole future course of the social, economic and political history of the Asiatic region'. The discussions which have since taken place have justified the prediction.

Interest in the Conference was greater than might have been expected: eight Asian countries – Ceylon, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, Singapore, and Vietnam – and four European countries – France, Holland, Norway, and the United Kingdom – were represented by forty-five delegates and thirty-five technical advisors.

The Conference had three reports to deal with: one by the Director General of the ILO on the general circumstances and working conditions of the Asian seafarers; another on methods of recruitment and engagement of Asian seafarers; and a third on welfare facilities for Asian seafarers in Asian ports.

The problem of recruitment

The most important of the three was the second, which gave rise to somewhat violent discussion and differences of opinion. Methods of recruitment have for many years been at the root of the miseries and abuses of which the Asian seaman has been the victim, and they have been strongly criticized. For lack of a better system, seafarers in practically all Asian countries have been at the mercy of unprincipled profit seekers who exploit and rob them of a part of their scanty and hard-earned wages. They are systematically exploited by all kinds of middlemen – the ghaut-serang,

the serang, the boarding house master, shipowners' employees and the personnel of national and municipal port offices have all played their part. The writer of this article has himself had an opportunity of witnessing the luxury in which some of these sharks live, and of comparing it with the bitter poverty and hunger which are the lot of their victims.

During the last ten or fifteen years, however, there has developed a practice – fairly extensive in some countries – of trying to conceal the evil reputation

which attaches to a serang, ghaut-serang, or boarding-house master, under the cloak of the general secretary or president of a so-called trade union. To explain how this is possible it may be mentioned that in some countries, such as India and Pakistan, only seven signatures are required officially to found a trade union.

It is not denied that these scandalous conditions, coupled with bribery and corruption, often mean that a seaman has to sacrifice anything from 30% to 50% of his wages to secure a job.

A matter of life or death

It will be asked how such things can be possible or tolerated in our modern society. A few words of explanation will suffice to make this clear. In some Asiatic countries there are three times as many seaman available for work as can be engaged. Unemployed seamen stand without means of support, and in many cases without even a roof over their heads, waiting for a job. They may be unemployed for anything between three months and three years. For these men, finding work is often a matter of life or death, so they approach a boarding-house master, who takes advantage of their desperate situation to demand a very considerable part of their wages, if not the whole, for putting them up and finding them ships. Many of these seamen are constantly in debt for their miserable board and lodging, though may be they are not the worst off, for they are at least alive.



The Seafarers' Group at the ILO Asian Maritime Conference in Nuwara Eliya

In the circumstances it is not to be wondered at that the bona fide seafarers' unions have been appealing for years for the help of the ILO to put an end to this lamentable state of affairs, and that they took advantage of the opportunity offered by the Asian Maritime Conference to say what they wanted to say about it. Why should they have been diffident about bringing governments and shipowners face to face with their responsibilities? The degradation involved in the continuation of such conditions beggars description.

Shipowners opposed to change

All participants in the Conference were agreed that these conditions were intolerable, but this recognition – for which a conference was hardly necessary – is not the same thing as their abolition. Although everybody agreed that something must be done, it was not possible to reach agreement on what that something should be. A majority of the shipowners' representatives wanted to leave matters at the recognition of the evil, but those of the seafarers insisted on laying down means for overcoming it. The shipowners regarded this as dangerous to their interests, and stubbornly asserted their intention to keep to the present method of recruitment, under which they engage their crews directly, and thus have an entirely free choice of the men. And though the seafarers' delegates urged that this would bring no solution of the problem, the owners stuck to their point.

A draft resolution on the subject which was put forward by the seafarers' representatives proposed three

alternative methods of recruitment:

- 1) Recruitment under the supervision of the two parties concerned, i.e., the shipowners' and seafarers' organisations.
- 2) Recruitment under the supervision of the two parties concerned and the Government.
- 3) In the absence of bona fide organizations of shipowners and seafarers, a system of recruitment under Government control.

The seafarers' delegates further proposed that, in recruiting crews, shipowners should be allowed a reasonable, but not unrestricted, choice of men.

The seafarers claimed, and still claim, that these minimum proposals were moderate and reasonable, and they were not prepared to forgo them. It is difficult to understand that the shipowners, who agreed that present methods were unsatisfactory and even intolerable, should still insist on going their own way and being absolute rulers in the matter of recruitment. Experience has shown – and the owners have had time enough to realize it by now – that shipowners are quite unable to remedy matters by themselves, and that the cooperation of the seafarers, and maybe also of the governments, is indispensable. In these days it can no longer be admitted that, in the absence of a powerful trade union movement, shipowners should have free choice of men in an unlimited labour market, and entire freedom to fix wages and working conditions as they deem fit.

The absence of a sound system of recruitment and proper regulation of the labour market, leaving the door open for the existing bribery and corruption,

is probably the reason why no sound seafarers' trade union movement has developed in these Asian countries, and we venture to say that unless present malpractices are eradicated there is little hope of the coming into being of such a sound improvement. And nobody nowadays can uphold the point of view that proper relations can exist between employers and workers without it.

Situation exploited by Communists

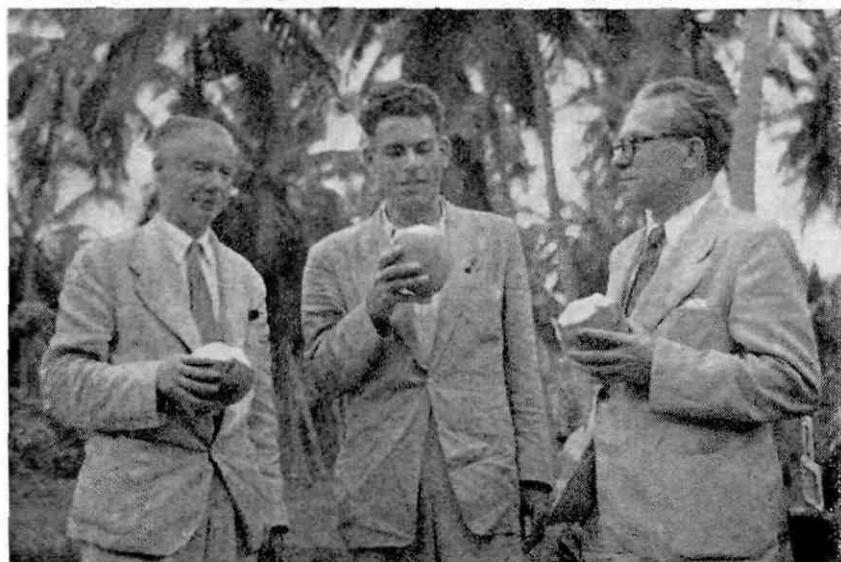
In a number of Asian countries the Communist Party has been able to make capital out of the chaotic situation, and to get the seafarers into its clutches. If sufficient attention is not paid very soon to this matter, and it is allowed to hang fire, there is a very great danger of serious political consequences. Indeed, where the Communists have succeeded in exercising a certain degree of influence in some Asian ports, they have not shown themselves very anxious to clear up the chaos; no doubt because it better suits their political book to keep the workers in poverty and hunger.

Some shipowners seem to have understood this, but few of them are prepared to abandon anything of their prerogatives, while the majority are too shortsighted to see the need to bring about a healthier state of affairs.

This is the reason why finally it proved impossible to reach any general agreement, though the seafarers' representatives had hopes of it in the beginning. A sharp conflict between the two parties was therefore inevitable, and though some of the Asian shipowners' representatives, as well as their governments, voted with the seafarers for a compromise resolution put forward by the Bureau of the ILO, with two amendments by the Seafarers' Group, most of them were adamant. The resolution was finally carried by a substantial majority, however, as the governments of the Asian countries, as well as of France and Norway, voted in favour.

The remaining problems before the Conference were solved to the satisfaction of all parties. The resolution on the welfare of Asian seafarers in Asian ports was adopted unanimously; the governments concerned being particu-

(continued on page 192)



One of the lighter moments in Nuwara Eliya. From right to left: Brother Omer Becu; Brother A. de Boon (Netherlands); Capt. D. S. Tennant (United Kingdom)

Brother Paul Tofahrn, Secretary of the ITF Railwaymen's Section, addressing the Rome Railwaymen's Conference. On his immediate right can be seen Brother Guillaume Devaux, Chairman of the Section, who presided over the Conference



The Rome

International Railwaymen's Conference

by **Paul Tofahrn**, Assistant General Secretary

THE FIRST ITF MEETING IN ITALY was the ITF Congress in Milan in 1906; the second the International Railwaymen's Conference in Rome in 1953.

At the time of the former, Italy had a very considerable militant trade union movement. The Italian Railwaymen's Union, with 25,000 members, was a member of the ITF from the very beginning, and was still a member, together with the Seafarers' Federation and a number of smaller local organizations, on the outbreak of the first world war. As to the position after that war, ITF reports give the following information:

1) *Italian tramwaymen's union*: 19,150 members. Joined the ITF in 1921. Dissolved by the Fascists in 1926.

2) *Italian dockers' union*: 20,000 members. Joined the ITF in 1921. Dissolved by the Fascists in 1923.

3) *New Italian dockers' union*: 5,000 members. Joined the ITF in 1925. Dissolved by the Fascists in 1926.

4) *Italian railwaymen's union*: 9,800 members. Joined the ITF in 1924. Dissolved by the Fascists in 1926.

5) *Italian seafarers' federation*: 5,000 members. Joined the ITF in 1922. Expelled from the ITF in July 1923 for compromising with Fascism.

In 1926 the ITF set up an office in Rome, management of which was entrusted to the now still vigorous and active Giuseppe Sardelli, who was then

the leader of the Tramwaymen's Union and a member of the General Council of the ITF. Its purpose was to support the affiliated Italian unions in their desperate struggle against the Fascists. On 31 October 1926, however, the hordes of the latter destroyed and plundered the office and drove Sardelli, together with many other trade-unionists, into exile.

After the liberation of Italy by the Allied armies, the ITF took the initiative in establishing a new Italian railwaymen's union. It was sponsored on behalf of the ITF in Bari in January 1944 by Hans Jahn, who is now President of the German Railwaymen's Union. In the course of the next three years, however, it suffered the fate of all Italian trade unions, becoming the prey of the

Communist Party, the only political party in Italy that had at the time an efficient organization and properly thought out plans. The union was represented at the ITF Congress in Zurich in 1946, as the Communist officials were not yet in full command, but they took steps to ensure that membership should not become effective and eventually allowed it to die out, notwithstanding the protests of a few of the more democratic officials.

In 1948 and 1949 two democratic groups broke away from the Communist federation of trade unions and founded, among others, two free railwaymen's unions, which successively joined the ITF in 1949 and 1950.

For the Railwaymen's Section of the ITF, Italy is consequently comparatively new territory, so it will be understood that the invitation to Rome was received with satisfaction, and even some curiosity; satisfaction that the Italian railwaymen's unions should wish to make their relations with the unions in other countries closer and more intimate; curiosity because comparatively few other European trade union leaders

had any personal acquaintance with the land and people, and particularly with the railways and the railway trade unions.

The land of our hosts

The curiosity has now been satisfied. The participants in the Railwaymen's Conference are now convinced that the Italian railways are among the best in Europe, and are eager for technical advance. The Italians know how to make the most of their taste for art and architectural beauty in the building of railway stations, and even of signal boxes.

Less satisfactory to the visitor is the trade union picture. It is probable that the majority of the 160,000 railwaymen are not organized at all, while the organized majority is shared between no less than eight unions, of which the Communist one is the strongest. The democratic unions live in only just tolerable relations, and the Communists often succeed in playing them off one against the other.

As in so many other places, it is difficult to characterize the social situation in a few words, but two features stand out: a very luxurious bourgeoisie with numerous comfortably-off dependents, and a large mass of manual workers and employees who are living on a very modest scale, of whom one and a half to two million are unemployed. In general the standard of living is low, and this is strongly reflected in the working conditions of the railwaymen. The administration of the railways is purely political, so that there is something unreal about the negotiations between Management and the trade unions about important aspects of working conditions. The first and last words on matters of significance are uttered by a political department that thinks and acts in the same way as an employer applying commercial and industrial standards.

The democratic railwaymen's trade unions are therefore in a difficult position: on one side they have the Communists, with all their demagoguery, and on the other an employer who has plenty of room in his mind for political horse-trading, but little for genuine collective agreements.

One of the subjects discussed at the Rome Railwaymen's Conference was the problem of the running of trains without guards. Photograph by J. Allen Cash

Hospitality

The two democratic railwaymen's trade unions affiliated with the ITF had made great sacrifices to receive the International Railwaymen's Conference in their country. Measured by their financial capacity it was really too much, but Italian traditions of hospitality would not allow of less. The Railway Administration came to their aid by placing at their disposal a magnificent conference hall, and the General Manager also invited delegates to a cocktail party.

The Italian authorities showed considerable interest in the Conference itself, which was honoured by a visit from the Minister of Transport, Sig. Mattarella, the General Manager of the State Railways, Dr di Raimondi, and several of his immediate collaborators. The national federations of trade unions to which the two unions belong also sent representatives to welcome the Conference.

All this generous and cordial hospitality from all sides contributed greatly to make the Rome Conference of the Railwaymen's Section of the ITF a memorable event; and our Italian affiliated railwaymen's union have rendered the ITF a signal service.

Asia and Africa

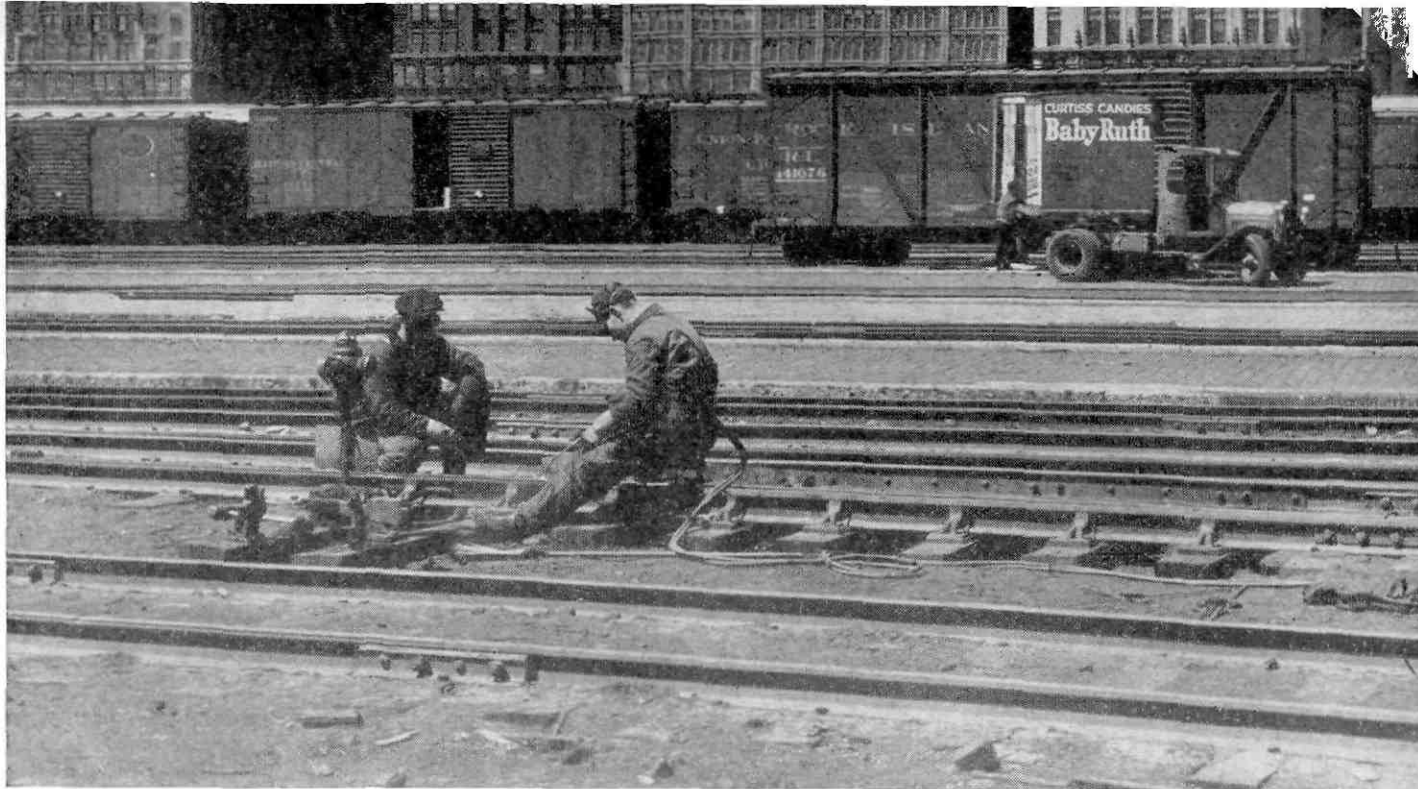
The ITF has not in the past been lacking in attention to the needs of the transport workers of Asia and Africa, but at no time in its history has it dealt so concretely with these needs as of late years - that is to say since the transport workers' trade unions in these two continents

have been making use of the services of the ITF to defend or promote their interests. For the first time during their almost thirty years' membership the All-India Railwaymen's Federation sent a delegation, three strong, to an ITF railwaymen's conference. Their spokesman, Mr S. Guruseami, declared: 'It was what you did for us at the ITF International Railwaymen's Conference at Utrecht that led my Federation to be represented here in Rome and to take its part in your work.' The Conference expressed a wish to strengthen its relations with the railwaymen's trade unions of Asia, and addressed to them a special appeal.

A delegation of two men also came from Tunisia, the French protectorate in Northern Africa, and they returned thanks for the considerable moral and political help that has been given to the Tunisian Railwaymen's Federation. But although the assistance the ITF has been able to give them has helped to alleviate their situation, things are still pretty bad, and the spokesman of the delegation, Brother M. L. Benghazzia, brought a strong indictment, supported by facts and figures, against the colonialism which is characteristic of both the railway companies and the French authorities in Tunisia.

The Conference, and particularly its Resolutions Committee, went deeply into the complaints of the Tunisian delegates, and subscribed to their purely trade unions claims, leaving it to the Executive Committee of the ITF to give further consideration to the political claims associated with them. None of





Safety on the permanent way was a major topic at the Rome International Railwaymen's Conference. These men working alone on a track open to traffic should be accompanied by a look-out man giving undivided attention to the safety of his colleagues

the delegates or observers at the Conference can have been left in any doubt as to the Conference's full sympathy with the endeavours of the Tunisian railwaymen and the Tunisian trade union movement as a whole.

As regards other African countries, the Report of the Secretariat of the ITF contains information about what is being done for railwaymen's trade unions that need help. In this connection it must be borne in mind that some important African trade unions are still mistrustful of international trade union organizations run by members of the white race. The confidence of those unions which are keeping apart from the ITF can only be won by patience and honest activity in defence of the rights of their members.

Abuses in Europe

Legal and social abuses are by no means confined to Asia and Africa. Had there been a discussion on conditions in Italy itself there is no doubt that it would have evoked sharp criticism. The country has had its full measure of railway strikes during the last few years, and a careful examination of their origins and accompanying circumstances shows that the claims of the railwaymen's trade

unions correspond to very urgent social needs. But decisions rest entirely with the highest political authorities, and their eyes have only been opened by the defeat which the democratic parties suffered in the elections this year. Hitherto they have been too much taken up by internal party matters to be interested in social justice.

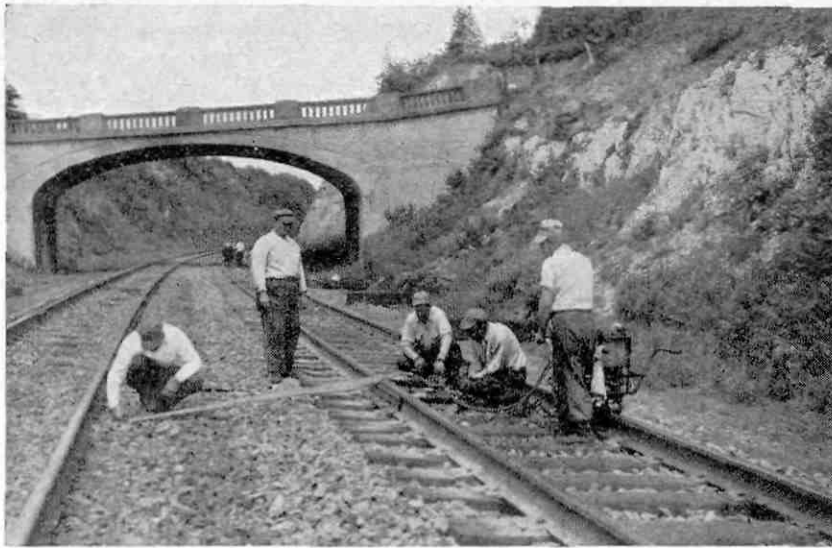
And what kind of democracy must it be, in which honorary trade union officers have disciplinary penalties imposed upon them for more or less sharply criticizing the Board of Administration of the State Railways, or higher railway officials, in the trade union press?

The Conference did not discuss Italian conditions, but did draw a bead on two other European governments. The Greek Government has not yet seen the injustice of withholding from 3,000 railwaymen the benefits of the eight-hour day. Greece has ratified the eight-hour convention, and its Government has repeatedly promised, at the International Labour Conference in Geneva, to put an end to the exceptions imposed on a part of the railway personnel, but so far it has failed, on the flimsiest pretexts, to keep its word. No trade union conference could have a good word for such behaviour.

For reasons which it has not been possible to discover, but which it is probably ashamed to confess, the Government of the Saar Territory has abolished the right of the Railwaymen's Union to negotiate collective agreements determining the working conditions of its members. In this it has not allowed itself to be influenced either by the spokesmen of the democratic forces in the Saarland or by the protests of the ITF. Against the former it relies on the right of the strong, against the latter on an unmannerly silence. Abuse of power can put an end to a dispute, but it does not resolve the right or wrong of it. The right of governments to fix the working conditions of railwaymen unilaterally is no longer recognized in the democratic world, and it is even obsolescent in colonies. In the Saarland it must also be replaced by a bargaining right for the Railwaymen's Union. The Conference addressed a new appeal to the Government of the Territory not to persist in following the path of social regression.

Economic and technological problems

There was a brief discussion on one of the aspects of the coordination of transport - that of subsidies to cover railway deficits. Several speakers, par-



ticularly Franklin of the United Kingdom and Jahn of Germany, emphasized that such deficits were unavoidable while transport was in its present chaotic state. Railway rate policies will not solve the problem, because no government can give the railways complete freedom of action in the matter of rates, while no railway administration conscious of its social responsibilities could make any effective use of such freedom.

The Secretary of the Railwaymen's Section of the ITF expressed his full concurrence with this point of view, but pointed out that subsidies were no satisfactory substitute for a sound transport policy, and that on the other hand a sound transport policy could and probably would make subsidies unnecessary.

The Conference concluded that it was necessary to work out guiding principles for the coordination of transport on the basis of cooperation, making means of transport mutually complementary, instead of on the basis of unrestricted competition.

The European ministers of transport have now set up a permanent Conference of Ministers of Transport. Will that solve the problem of the proper organization of European transport? Brother Kanne, of Holland, answered this question in the negative. He added, however, that experience with another European authority, the Coal and Steel Community, raised the question whether the integration of Europe should be pursued industry by industry. The very fact that he asked the question showed that he had doubts whether the setting up of a European transport authority,

independent of the coming into being of a European political authority, was the right way. This is a matter which the governing bodies of the ITF will have to look into.

It would be hard to imagine a railwaymen's conference that did not 'talk shop', in the best sense of the term. This time it related to two problems connected with safety of employees and safety of traffic: prevention of accidents in the maintenance of way service and the practice of sending trains out with only a driver in charge. Another technical problem dealt with was the development of modern signalling and telecommunications. All three questions were considered with two aims in view: defence of the rightful interests of the men and promotion of the interests of the railway undertakings.

Future tasks

The Conference also had a discussion on the company medical officer system introduced in France - the employment of medical men by the undertaking itself for preventive as well as curative purposes. Nobody was prepared to express a view, unprepared, as to whether the example was wholly or partly worthy of imitation, and the matter will have to be further considered and reported upon.

The railwaymen's trade unions feel a need for reports and exchange of views on a number of questions of principle and practice, and matters held in pros-

The question of railway medical services will be the subject of further discussion by future ITF railwaymen's conferences

Constant communication between gangers and dispatchers is indispensable in modern rail traffic. No gang should work without a telephone, as this one is doing

pect for future discussion include penal and disciplinary responsibility of railwaymen for accidents; industrial psychology in the selection of railwaymen; the regulation of working hours; methods of and experience with trade union participation in the management of the railways; and methods of ensuring the safety of trains.

Brother S. Guruswami, of India, took advantage of the brief discussion on the future programme of the Section to draw the attention of delegates to the enormous practical difficulties with which Asian railwaymen's trade unions have to contend. He asked for documentary information about service conditions of railwaymen, particularly about the practice in democratic countries in the matter of relations between railway trade unions and railway managements; the rights of trade unions as against the employer; and the duties of employers towards the trade unions.

The information wanted by Brother Guruswami will have to be obtained, however much administrative work it may mean for affiliated organizations and the Secretariat of the ITF. Delegates who understood English, and who heard Brother Guruswami, will have felt that there was more behind his request than a mere wish for data with which to instruct the Asian trade unions about conditions in the democratic countries.

Except for a comparatively few territories it can now be said that Asia belongs to the Asians. The elite of the continent are now setting to work to fight hunger and misery and bring about

(continued on page 185)



The ÖTV International Summer School at Mosbach

by J. K. Eaton

.....

The Michael Rott Trade Union School in Mosbach (Baden) was opened by the ITF-affiliated German Union of Transport and Public Service Workers (ÖTV) on 5 October 1951. Primarily intended for the training of trade union officials and shop stewards, it provides free residential courses which are open to all ÖTV members of at least two years' standing. The union pays students' travelling expenses, makes good any loss of wages, and provides textbooks. Students are chosen by the ÖTV Educational Department, which works in close collaboration with local, district, and area branches of the union. Courses include training in public speaking and the organization of meetings, trade union history and aims, economics, labour law and collective bargaining. In addition, considerable attention is paid to the special problems of the various groups organized in the ÖTV. Finally, the Michael-Rott-schule organizes an international summer school, the ÖTV paying the expenses of foreign students from the German frontier. This year, the summer school was held from 9 to 22 August and was attended by fifty students from nine European countries. In the following article, a British visitor gives his impressions of the course.

.....

'Auf Wiedersehen, bleibt nicht so lang...'

The strains of this German farewell song have haunted me since the fortnight spent as a guest of the ÖTV at their International Summer School in August. I have no doubt that the other colleagues who participated in the course, from as far north as Glasgow to as far south as Bologna, are still reminiscing about the Michael-Rott-Schule, and will continue to do so for many a moon.

The Michael-Rott-Schule, owned by the ÖTV and used by them for courses throughout the year, overlooks the ancient village of Mosbach in Baden, which lies in the beautiful Neckar Valley in South Germany. Those of us who travelled from the north had a partial view of this beauty on the train from Mannheim, where the Neckar joins the Rhine. But this was only a preview, as we were able to see more of it on our various bus excursions during the course.

The school is ideally situated in beautiful countryside, and is a wonderful tribute to Michael Rott, a former President of the ÖTV, a Christian trade unionist who had helped in the building of a united German trade union movement. Specially built for the purpose, it has all the amenities necessary for combining study with pleasure. In addition to a lecture-room, a study-room and a library, there is an indoor swimming

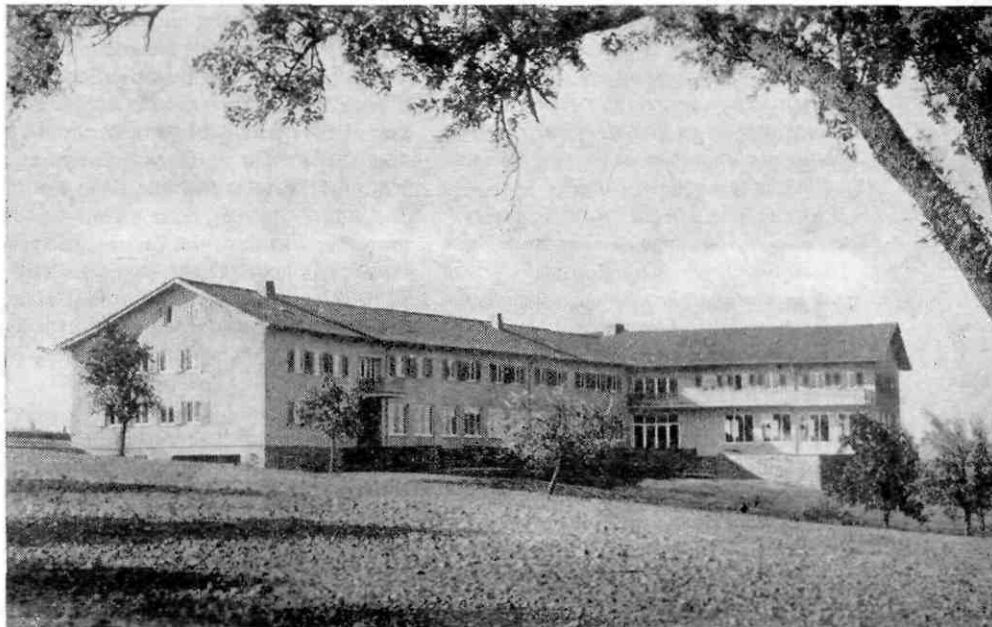
bath for the energetic, and a beer-cellar for the Bacchanals. To satisfy the gourmets, or should one say the materialists, (to quote Feuerbach: Man is what he eats) the food provided is of the most excellent quality, and quantity. Added to all this is the homely atmosphere developed by the staff and permeating all, staff and students alike.

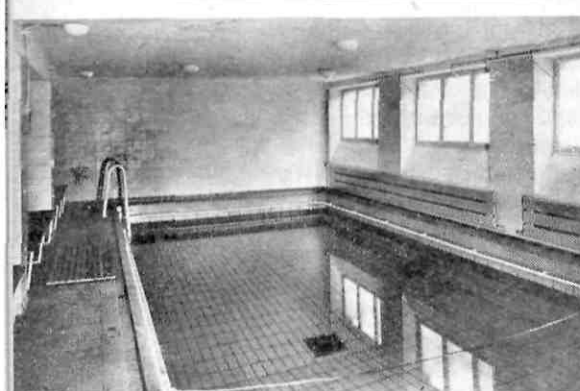
To a world fed on Metro-Goldwyn Mayer superlatives, what I have said may sound hyperbolic. Suffice it then

to say that I echo the sentiments at least of my British colleagues when I state that it was the finest summer school which I have attended. Fifty students from nine European nations, representing the trade unions of Germany, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Britain, Holland, Italy, France, and Switzerland, had an opportunity of understanding not only the German movement, but also that of the other countries. Language barriers were easily overcome and a spirit of honhomie prevailed throughout the course.

The course itself was a hectic one; towards the end it began to tell on some of the older students. Every day we were occupied; if not with lectures and discussions, then with excursions, and the days on which the latter fell were usually more strenuous.

The excursions were both educational and recreational. On two visits to Stuttgart we were conducted, firstly, round the Stuttgart Municipal Technical Works, responsible for the supply of gas, water and electricity, and on the second visit, round the Stuttgart Tramway Repair Sheds. The opportunity was also taken to visit the Trade Union





Top: The participants in this year's International Summer School at Mosbach. In centre (with arms folded) can be seen Brother Paul Tofahrn, the ITF's Assistant General Secretary

Centre: When lectures are over for the day, students can relax in the recreation rooms, which, as can be seen from this photograph, combine modernity of design with a high degree of comfort

Bottom: The Michael Rott School possesses all the amenities necessary for combining study with pleasure. Among the recreational facilities available is the swimming bath shown above

House, where we were welcomed by the öTV Secretary, and also the Stuttgart Tramways' Holiday Home, where we met and were royally entertained by local öTV members.

A visit to Mannheim was the occasion of a river trip round the port, the second largest inland port in Europe, and a visit to the Mannheim Trade Union House.

Excursions of a less technical nature were to the ancient university town of Heidelberg, a trip through the Odenwald and down the Neckar valley and a visit to the öTV Holiday Centre - 'The Muntner-Schuman-Heim' - in Bad Sulzbach, beautifully situated in the heart of the Black Forest, an ideal place for tired and undernourished trade unionists to spend their holidays.

Then, of course, there were the lectures. Here again, good value was given, quantity as well as quality, most of the lectures by far exceeding their allotted time. The first two lectures dealt with the international aspect of trade unionism, and the others with various facets of the German movement.

Martin Bolle, General Secretary of the International Federation of Public Servants, introduced us to 'The Problems of the International Trade Secretariats', and Paul Tofahrn, of the ITF, gave an exhaustive talk on the wider subjects of 'The International Tasks of the Trade Unions'.

From the other lecturers, we received an all-round picture of the German movement. The Vice-President of the German Trade Union Federation (DGB), Georg Reuter, spoke on 'The Aims and Methods of the German Trade Unions', in which he dealt with the history of the movement, its present industrial structure, its unity, and its political outlook. Dr. Hans Korsch, who had been legal adviser to the Management Committee of the Federation and was now commercial director in a Ruhr iron foundry, explained the Co-determination laws, and outlined the history of the struggle for them.

Oskar George, the Education Secretary of the öTV, gave a very informative outline of the educational work of the DGB and the öTV, and Hans Faltermeier, National Secretary of the öTV Youth Section, outlined their youth programme. Owing to the indisposition of the scheduled speaker, two students, Margarete Tobin and Annemie Keller, opened what turned out to be a lively discussion on 'The Legal Position of Women in the Federal Republic of Germany'.

In addition to these lectures, a session was devoted to reports from representatives of each nationality on their respective national movements. This included a separate report from the Berlin contingent, who were naturally extremely eager to put their case before

the trade unionists of Western Europe.

Throughout the whole of the course, discussion was lively and the chairmen - a different chairman each day - had difficulty in keeping to the timetable. Three hours in the morning and two in the afternoon as scheduled were nearly always extended to 3¼ or 3½ hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon.

It would be difficult for me to pick out the highlights of the lectures and discussions. I need only say that our German colleagues have reason to be proud of the way in which they have built up the movement since the end of the war. The sound structure, the united basis, the youth and educational programmes and their co-determination law achievements, are witness to hard work combined with sound thinking. And if all their work is done with the same thoroughness as was the school at Mosbach, then there need be no fears for German trade unionism.

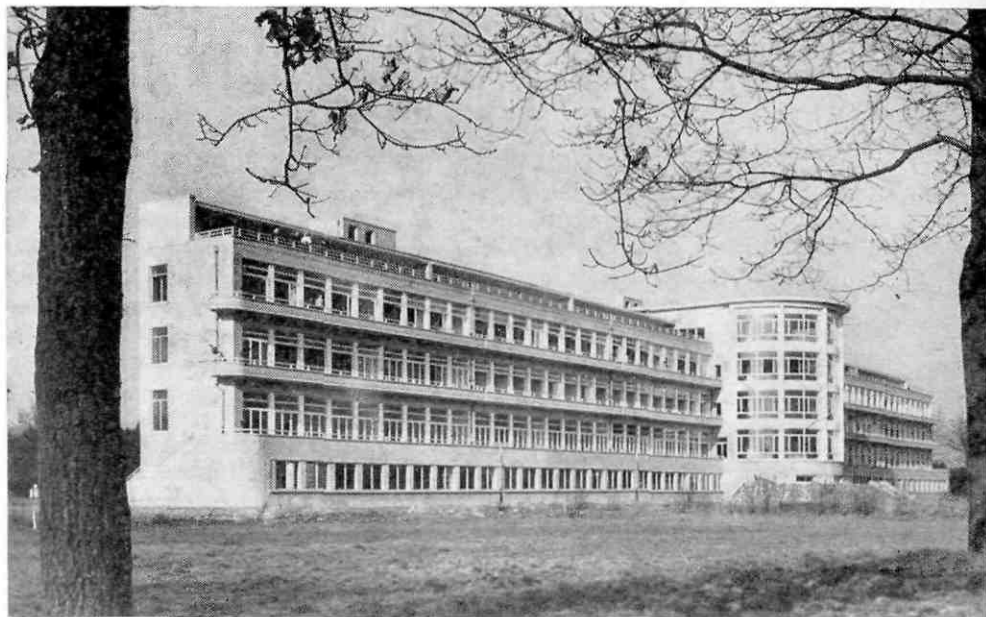
On the Friday before departure, a farewell party was held and each national group paid due tribute to the organizers of the course. Throughout the following morning, the öTV shooting-brake was busily occupied in taking students down to the station to catch their respective trains. Each bus load was sent off by a waving of handkerchieves, blankets and tablecloths.

'Auf Wiedersehn, bleibt nicht so lang...'



Not all the teaching at Mosbach is done inside the classroom. Advantage is taken of fine weather to hold open-air classes in the grounds attached to the school

Out of the ashes



SUNDAY, 11 OCTOBER, was a memorable day for the Belgian Transport Workers' Union. On that day, before a large gathering of trade-union and other personalities, the large sanatorium, known as 'de Mick', situated some five miles outside Antwerp, was ceremonially opened. Thus, a new and bigger sanatorium now stands where, almost nine years ago to the day, the ravages of war had left the earlier result of patient planning and sacrifices by the Belgian dock workers a mass of tumbled masonry and twisted girders.

The story of this sanatorium for tubercular patients goes back much farther than the last war, however – as far back in fact as 31 December 1919. On that day, the mutual aid society founded by the Antwerp dock workers received legal recognition. Its beginnings were modest, being largely confined to the payment of sick benefits for a limited number of weeks to those of its members who fell ill. It soon extended the range of its activities, however, and in 1921 a health insurance fund was instituted ensuring benefits over longer periods of illness. Other improvements followed, including assistance to sufferers from tuberculosis.

This scourge was taking a heavy toll of dock workers the nature of whose work makes them particularly susceptible to the disease. In addition, the malnutrition during the first world war had left its mark. Dock workers suffering from TB had previously been sent to a private sanatorium at their own expense. In many cases, however, they had to wait a considerable time before a bed became available. At the end of the year 1922, a number of Belgian dock workers took the momentous step of founding their own aid society which they called 'Heropbeuring' – restoration

to health. The object of this benevolent society was laid down as 'to assist dock workers suffering from tuberculosis by the provision of clothing to patients in sanatoria, and of help in kind to their households, and to employ all possible means in the fight against the misery caused by tuberculosis as well as to aid the sufferers and restore them to health'.

In pursuit of their object, the Belgian dock workers acquired a small piece of land at Brasschaat some five miles north-east of Antwerp. On this they built a rest-house. They were not content, however, until they had their own sanatorium – a sanatorium which was to be more of a home than a hospital. In 1927 their dream was realized and the 'de Mick' sanatorium, named after the farmhouse on the property, was opened. It was a modest beginning with room for twenty-four patients, subsequently increased to thirty-one. But the demand exceeded the space available and it was soon evident that 'de Mick' would have to expand. The dock workers again applied themselves to the new task, with the result that by 1934 extensions to the existing building enabled fifty-four patients to be accommodated. It was this sanatorium which was almost completely destroyed during the last war.

Although the Belgian dock workers found their sanatorium a heap of ruins at the end of the war, the spirit which had helped to create it was still alive, and they again turned to the work of building a bigger and better 'de Mick'. They had set themselves a mighty task, but appeals for aid did not go unanswered. The ITF responded immediately, the Antwerp Dock Employers' Association also donated generously, whilst the provincial authorities of Antwerp voted a large sum towards the cost of a new sanatorium. The work of reconstruction was begun in November 1949. Today, in the pine-scented parkland of La Campine stands the most modern sanatorium in Europe with accommodation for 150 patients in a magnificent five-storeyed building providing the best of medical care combined with the comforts of home treatment. The Belgian dock workers can look with pride on the results of their hard fight against the ravages of the terrible social scourge of tuberculosis.

(continued from page 182)

better living conditions. They feel a need for friendly and sympathetic support in this work; a lively and powerful urge to make contacts with people and organizations in other part of the world. We shall have to bring about broader spiritual relations between the trade unions of Asia and those of the democratic world. This aspect of affairs give the programme of the Railwaymen's Section of the ITF for the immediate future a new content and a new inspiration.

Norwegian aid to Indian fishermen

The Editor wishes to express his indebtedness to Professor H. U. Sverdrup, a member of the Norwegian delegation which visited India in connection with the aid programme in October 1952, and upon whose article on this subject in 'The Norseman' the following is largely based.

Thanks are also due to the Press and Information Office of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in London and the Public Relations Department of the Office of the High Commissioner of India in London for their advice and assistance.

AT THE BEGINNING OF AUGUST, the motorship 'Nordvard' left Norway for Travancore-Cochin State in India. Her cargo consisted of 270 tons of equipment and materials together with two Indian fishing boats which had been altered and fitted with engines at a Norwegian shipyard. A not unusual cargo, and certainly hardly worthy of recording, one might think, yet behind this modest shipment lies a story of selfless international aid, of the people of one nation generously extending a helping hand to those of another, which well merits recognition beyond the immediate circle of givers and receivers.

In June 1952, the Norwegian Parliament adopted an aid programme for peoples of economically underdeveloped countries, voting a credit of ten million crowns (about £ 500,000) for the purpose. The financing of an aid programme did not stop at the governmental level, however. In March and May of this year, a subscription drive was opened with the result that large sections of the population now feel directly interested in the aid programme as something to which they have made a personal contribution.

Norway's contribution different

To some extent, the Norwegian aid pro-

gramme falls within the scope of the United Nations' technical and economic assistance to underdeveloped countries. As early as the spring of 1952, it had been decided that the Norwegian contribution should be applied to a project to be proposed by the Government of India and in accordance with the principles laid down by the UN in connection with that body's aid programmes. On 17 October 1952, a trilateral agreement fixing the terms of Norway's assistance was signed by the United Nations and the Governments of Norway and India whereby the Indian Government agreed to contribute to the implementation of the programme and the United Nations

to take part within the limits of its technical assistance programme.

While adhering to the rules governing UN assistance to economically underdeveloped countries, the Norwegian contribution is nevertheless taking a different form. Under the extended programme of technical assistance which has been developed by the United Nations, technical experts are sent to the countries which request such experts, but equipment is supplied only to the extent to which it is needed for purposes of demonstration. Norway contributes its regular share to the programme of the United Nations, but the special funds which have been allocated are being used not only for providing technical experts and other persons needed for the training of Indian personnel, but also for procuring and sending to India equipment obtainable in Norway.

A visit to India

The decision to concentrate Norwegian aid on a section of the coast of the State of Travancore-Cochin was made following a visit to India by a Norwegian delegation of three which left Norway at the beginning of October 1952. En route the delegation visited the headquarters of the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organization in Geneva, and that of the Food and Agricultural Organization in Rome. Arriving in New Delhi the delegation learned that considerable preparations had been made by the Planning Commission, which, besides some suggestions for technical advice in certain matters, had selected two areas within which it was considered that Norwegian aid might be of benefit, one in the mountain valleys to the north of Simla, and one in the state of Travancore-Cochin, in the extreme southwestern part of India.

The delegation first visited the Kulu valley to the north, but found to its great regret that it would not be possible to start work there. The principal reason was that the first need in this remote district was an improvement of com-



Fisher folk from Cochin put to sea in one of the long rowing boats which are peculiar to the region. Fishing is carried out with shore seines, gill nets and long lines

munications, in particular the building of roads, and since this work would principally entail local labour, Norway's contribution would be relatively very small. Technical development in the valleys would be premature before communications had been provided.

In Travancore-Cochin conditions appeared to be quite different. It had been suggested that the Norwegian aid should be applied to the development of the already extensive coastal fisheries of the area and the delegation arrived at the conclusion that great possibilities presented themselves not only for the development of the fisheries, but also for the general improvement of the living conditions of the fishing population.

A densely populated country

Travancore-Cochin is in many respects one of the best developed regions of India. It has a varied industry, and, in several places, a sufficient supply of electric power. Literacy is the highest in India, about sixty per cent of the population being able to read and write. However, the country is very densely populated, with on an average more than 1,000 persons per square mile, and in the flat coastal area the density is much higher than the average. Of the population groups the fishermen are economically and socially worse off than others, partly because they have to derive their entire livelihood from their fishing efforts. This group is quite a large one. In 1951 the total population of Travancore-Cochin was about 9,265,000, and of this number about 750,000 were entirely dependent upon fishing. The intensity of fishing operations is also evident from the fact that there are between 12,000 and 14,000 fishing boats in use along 125 miles of coast between the cities of Trivandrum and Cochin.

Fishing highly developed

Considering the limitations imposed by the use of nothing but manual labour, the fishing, which is based on many centuries' tradition, is developed to perfection. Harbours exist only at Trivandrum and Cochin. The fishing boats are therefore adapted for hauling up on the sandy beach. The largest boats, which are sturdy and well built, are thirty-eight feet long and four feet wide. Fishing is carried out with shore seines, gill-nets and long lines, and the fishing gear is well made and handled in an expert manner. The actual fishing is confined

to a distance of four to five miles from the coast, because the boats have to be rowed or sailed out and in, and the fishermen are unable to preserve their catch for any length of time. The sea is shallow to a distance of twenty-five or thirty miles from the coast, however, and according to all reports fish is abundant beyond the narrow coastal belt to which operations are at present confined.

Although fishing methods have reached perfection, the handling of the catch leaves much to be desired. The greater part of the catch is disposed of as fresh fish, but it has to be distributed rapidly because no facilities exist for cooling or freezing. When the fishing boats reach shore, the fish is dumped on the sandy beach and is transferred into baskets which women carry on their heads to the nearest market place, or which men carry on bicycles to places farther afield. In some localities the fish is salted or dried by primitive methods, but in all instances very considerable amounts go to waste. Health and sanitary conditions can be greatly improved. The drinking water is very poor, being obtained from shallow wells and contaminated by seawater that seeps in through the sand. It is further contaminated owing to the lack of the simplest means for disposing of waste and sewage.

A four-point programme

The fisheries community development scheme in Travancore-Cochin, upon which the Norwegian Government decided to embark following recommendations made by the delegation on its return to Norway, envisages a four-point programme in the selected area. Measures will be taken not only to increase the yield of the fisheries, but also to ensure more effective preservation and distribution of the catch. Other efforts will be directed towards improving the health and sanitary conditions of the fishing population and raising the general living standards among the inhabitants of the area.

Under the project, fishing boats at present in use are to be provided with suitable small engines enabling them to increase their range. It will thus be possible for fishing operations to be extended to coastal waters formerly unexploited. Repair facilities for the boats will be provided at the same time. Meanwhile possibilities are being examined of introducing other types of boats and



Indian fishermen spinning cotton for their nets. The fisherman who sails and fishes the sea also spins the cotton for the nets which he both makes and mends

nets – probably small purse seines which can be used with advantage from small motorized craft.

In order to provide for a wider distribution of fresh fish, a plant for producing ice will be built, and insulated sheds constructed at places where the fish is landed, in order to have ice available when the catch is brought in. For transportation, insulated vans will be introduced or motor boats which can be used on the lagoon sand on the inland waterways. It is intended to organize distribution of the fish on cooperative lines. According to local information, there is a practically unlimited market for fresh fish, which is considered a pleasant change from the otherwise somewhat monotonous diet of tapioca and rice. In order to obtain a supply of good drinking water, several tube-wells are to be sunk, whilst plans have been worked out for bringing fresh water to the coastal district from a large lake lying about ten miles inland. To safeguard the health of the population and improve sanitary conditions, a small health centre is to be established, run by a Norwegian doctor and nurse.

Fishermen's training school

The Norwegian aid programme is now well under way. A number of the tradi-



Fishermen from Cochin are here seen repairing one of their craft. The Norwegian aid team found that fishing boats in this region are both sturdy and well-built

tional fishing boats used by the Travancore-Cochin fishermen have been altered and fitted out with engines at a Norwegian shipyard. The boats are not regarded as suitable for motorization, however, and work is going ahead with

designing a new type of boat. A 20-foot prototype vessel is under construction and will be sent out as soon as it is ready. Meanwhile, the work of fitting out further traditional-type boats is being carried out at the workshop and boatyard

erected on the spot. Other recent shipments to India include fishing gear and building materials, the latter for eleven buildings to serve as offices and homes for the Norwegian technical team. These will later be handed over to the Indian authorities and used as a training school for fishermen.

The aid offered by the Norwegian people to the peoples of economically undeveloped areas is directed by a special committee consisting of forty members taken from all sectors of the population. The project is at present confined to two fishing villages in the vicinity of Quilon, but will be extended to a wider area as experience is gained. It is a far cry from the grim fjords of Norway to the tropical, sandy beaches of Travancore-Cochin, and in many respects conditions in the two countries could not differ more widely. Nevertheless, it is felt that the project lends itself well to Norwegian initiative. The technical, social and human problems encountered when dealing with these fishing communities are in essence the same as those which have been dealt with in Norway.

Overfishing problems discussed in London

THE PERMANENT COMMISSION, set up under the International Fisheries Convention of 1946 to study the problem of overfishing, held its second meeting in London last month.

The meeting was attended by delegates from eleven of the member governments: Belgium, Denmark, France, Iceland, the Irish Republic, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Poland, the remaining member country was represented by an observer. The Federal German Republic, which is expected to accede to the Convention and join the Commission early in 1954, was also represented by observers at the invitation of the Commission.

A number of proposals were put forward for the alteration of the provisions of the Convention which are due to come into force on 5 April 1954. These concerned the size of meshes of nets, the size-limits of fish to be retained on

board vessels for landing and sale, and the extent of the waters at present covered by the Convention.

It was unanimously agreed that, for a transitional period of two years beginning 5 April 1954, the minimum size of mesh should be 75 mm. in the area for which the Convention prescribes 80 mm. With regard to the difference in selectivity between seine and trawl nets, all delegates, other than the Norwegian, who wished to give the matter further consideration, agreed that, from 5 April 1954, the minimum mesh for seine nets should be 70 mm. where the Convention at present prescribes 80 mm., and 100 mm. in those areas for which a 110 mm. mesh is laid down.

Regarding the extension of the fishing area covered by the Convention southwards from 48 degrees North to include the waters off the Atlantic coast of France, Spain, and Portugal, these countries agreed to consider the matter further among themselves and submit definite proposals to the Commission.

Agreement was also reached on a

point raised by Denmark concerning the problem of catching immature fish for industrial purposes of a species protected under the Convention. It was suggested as a temporary measure that Denmark should make suitable arrangements for the proper regulation of this type of fishing.

Meanwhile the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea would be approached for advice on the extent to which such fisheries could be permitted without harm to the conservation of the particular species.

Reviewing the scope of its powers, the Commission took note of the intention of the United Kingdom to lay before all other signatory Governments proposals for a revised Convention which would resolve the differences of interpretation and make it clear that the powers of the Commission were not necessarily restricted to fixing the size of the mesh of nets and the size-limits of fish.

The next meeting of the Permanent Commission on Overfishing will be held in Copenhagen in May of next year.

A Norwegian seaman looks at a 'People's democracy'

ACCOUNTS OF FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCES of foreign countries are always of interest, particularly when they concern the so-called 'People's Democracies' which, if we are to believe Communist propaganda are a sort of paradise on earth for the workers. Judging by the letter he wrote concerning his first encounter with countries behind the 'Iron Curtain', however, a young Norwegian seaman who recently visited Stettin and Gdynia with his ship found things there somewhat different from his conception of a paradise. We quote his letter:

'I wanted to write to you direct from Poland, but in that case I should have had to be most careful about what I said, as letters have to be mailed in open envelopes for censoring.

Well, I am jolly glad I am living outside and not inside the 'Iron Curtain' where things are as bad as, if not worse than, in Norway during the German occupation. When we arrived at Stettin, a lot of military came aboard to search the ship. The job took them four hours, during which time we had to stay in our cabin. The same thing happened at Gdynia, although this was still in Poland, and our ship was searched again before we left.

Soldiers with machine-guns and rifles with fixed bayonets guarded the ship all the time, but I got the shock of my life when, on going ashore to visit the church, I was suddenly confronted by quite a nice young girl who, thrusting her rifle at me, demanded to see my passport. And her gun was no toy, mind!

Everything was frightfully expensive. For a bottle of vodka they charged about sixty to seventy zloties, which is what they call their peculiar money. A zloty is about two Norwegian kroner (two shillings in British money. Ed.). A single razor blade, which can be used on one side only, costs you five zloties, so just how far would a wage of 1,000 zloties a month go, do you think?

The Poles have to do three years' military service, and before that they have four years of labour service, which means they get old before they are free. Come to that, they are never really free, because they don't dare to talk or discuss things among themselves - they simply do not trust anybody. A Pole in

possession of one dollar would be condemned to death! A Swede was imprisoned for two years because he took twenty Swedish kronor ashore. We are not allowed to take any money off the

ship with us....'

So much for the so-called workers' paradise behind the 'Iron Curtain', and the welcome awaiting visiting seafarers.

Just one more Communist fairy-tale.

Permanent Conference of European Ministers of Transport

THE MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT of seventeen European countries met in Brussels from 12 to 17 October to set up a permanent conference of European Transport Ministers. The meeting was attended by delegates from all the OEEC States, with the exception of Ireland and Iceland, whilst the United States and Canada sent observers.

Under the terms of its Statutes, the main task of the Conference will be 'to take appropriate steps to ensure the best use and the most rational development of European internal transport of international significance, at the national as well as the general or regional level, and to coordinate the work of the international bodies concerned with these activities'. Shipping and air navigation were regarded as of a more intercontinental character and not falling within the scope of the Conference. Permanent seat of the Conference will be in Paris.

The Conference will consist of a Council of Ministers meeting at least once a year, a Committee of Deputies whose task it will be to carry out the preparatory work for the meetings of the Ministers and who will meet whenever necessary, together with a Secretariat. The administrative and secretarial work in connection with the Conference will be performed by the OEEC, with which body the Conference will work in close co-operation. Provision has been made for the creation of restricted groups to discuss matters of limited or regional interest, as well as for countries to become associated members sending observers to the conferences.

The Conference passed a number of resolutions on railway, road, and inland waterway transport as well as on technical and financial matters. One of the most important resolutions concerned the extension of the European wagon pool which has been in operation among eight countries since January 1953. Henceforth some sixteen countries will

participate in the pooling arrangements. Other proposals in the field of railway transport envisage a more economic routing of international transport; unified rates for all types of goods; and the extension and improved integration of electrified networks.

In the purely financial field, it is proposed to study a scheme whereby member countries could acquire railway equipment without actually becoming the owners. The scheme would be financed by an international loan, member countries making use of the facility having to bear only the interest and redemption charges.

On the subject of road transport, a plan was approved to integrate the national main autoroad networks on an international basis. At present these roads usually stop short at frontiers. The adoption of a uniform system of road signs was also recommended as well as the introduction of uniform regulations governing the weight and dimensions of lorries. Other proposals, designed to ensure smoother working of the customs control at frontiers, included the standardization and simplification of customs documents.

Similar recommendations to facilitate passage through frontier controls were made in the case of inland waterway traffic. The Conference also established a list of those inland waterways, work on which was considered to be of international importance.

The creation of a permanent conference of European Ministers of Transport charged with the task of coordinating the labours of the various supranational, intergovernmental, and non-governmental organizations results from recommendations submitted by the Transport Conference which met at the headquarters of the OEEC in Paris on 18 March last and concluded its work on 17 June. It marks a further step forward in the field of European cooperation.

The German railwayman in the Soviet Zone

THE FOLLOWING DESCRIPTION of conditions on the railways in the Soviet Zone of Germany has been given by a railwayman who recently made his way to Western Germany after seven years service on the Soviet-controlled railway network of the Eastern Zone.

One of the first things the Russians did when their army marched into Eastern Germany was to repeal the law regulating the status of those employed in the public services. This meant the abolition of all distinctions and rights in the matter of security of tenure, pensions, etc, and that all those railwaymen who had acquired the status of permanent state employees were reduced to the level of temporary weekly or hourly paid employees. For years after 1945, no contractual regulations governing the status of railwaymen existed, and in such matters as promotion, wage classification by length of service, and examinations, the procedure followed was that laid down in earlier regulations.

The year 1950 saw the beginning of a number of changes. All railwaymen were divided into two groups: 'workmen' (i.e. those paid on a weekly wage basis), and 'salaried staff' (i.e. monthly paid employees). The word 'Beamter', designating the established State employee, disappeared and with it all its connotations. All references to established employees were expunged from official documents. Titles were amended accordingly. The intention was clear - to abolish the entire concept of the established State employee on the railways.

Almost the only difference between the two groups created is that the one is paid weekly and the other monthly. Reclassification by seniority, promotion, and retirement on pension now belong to the past. The managing director is just a 'railway employee' and consequently on the same footing as a level-crossing keeper. The only difference is that one gets more pay than the other. Weekly wage earners are divided into wage groups, whilst salaried staff are classified in salary groups. Pay is no longer decided by the grade held, but by the particular job being done. There is therefore no such thing as a starting wage or a maximum that can be reached after a number of years' service. Consequently, a youth of eighteen performing the duties of a train dispatcher gets the same pay as a sixty-year old railwayman doing the same work. Provided neither changes his job, they will both continue to draw the same salary. The only chance of a rise would be for them to get themselves transferred from, for example, a class III to a class II station. In that event, since the work at a class II station is considered more responsible,

they would be placed in the next-highest salary group.

This process also works in reverse, to the serious disadvantage of the railwaymen. For reasons over which he has no control, an engine-driver might find, for example, that the fast run on which he has been working has been suppressed for economy reasons and that he has now been put on an ordinary passenger or freight service. His pay will then drop to that applicable to the new job.

Actual gross earnings do not differ to any great extent from those in the Western Zone, that is if one ignores the differences in purchasing power. Income tax, however, is much higher than in Western Germany, and a further deduction of ten per cent on gross earnings is made for social insurance contributions. There is no such thing as a pension in the old sense of the word. Railway employees reaching the age of 65 are 'invalided' out of the service. They then receive regular payments from the State social insurance funds. Their widows draw the same kind of 'pension'.

If a railway employee falls sick, he also draws sick benefit from the same source. The railway makes this up to his average earnings, but only for a limited period (twelve to fourteen weeks). If he is ill for a longer period, he is invalided out of the service and then receives assistance from the State sickness insurance funds. The sickness insurance scheme run by the railwaymen themselves has ceased to exist. An elderly railway employee who is absent from work for more than 12 weeks owing to sickness or for more than 16 weeks as the result of an accident is automatically dismissed and has no further claim on

the railways, even though he may have given some thirty to forty years, service.

The only time length of service is taken into account is when weekly paid staff are dismissed. They then receive notice of one day, a week or a fortnight, according to how long they have been with the railways.

All railway employees in the Eastern Zone must wear uniform, whether they are booking clerks, office or traffic staff, or the managing director himself. They all receive the new Russian-style uniforms - trousers, a military-style tunic and a peaked cap for the men and a skirt or slacks, tunic and a beret for the women. The various branches of the service are distinguished by different colours: red piping for traffic and operations, blue for maintenance, green for engineering, orange for administration, and white for managerial staff. This colourful splendour is further enhanced by wide, genuine Russian epaulettes. Their width, number of stars and display of colour increase as one goes up the wage-group ladder. Members of the higher grades, for example, have epaulettes so wide that they are referred to as 'breakfast platters'. Just what a scene of 'technicolor' splendour the Head Office presents can well be imagined.

Railway operations in the Eastern Zone are divided into several departments such as maintenance, movements, etc, each of which is regarded as a separate economic entity. Each department has its separate budget and keeps its own accounts. Funds are allocated to the individual departments to cover services performed, in accordance with certain clearly defined principles. Major stations are separate departments in this sense and have an accountant responsible for keeping track of all expenditure. He will, for example, book receipt of a shunting-engine from the works, keep account of wages, record charges for light and water, office material, etc, etc. All these items then constitute the expenditure of this 'department'.

The regional or headquarters accounts department set these figures against the receipts. Every kind of service performed counts as a receipt: the number of tickets sold; the weight of luggage handled and ordinary or express freight

dispatched; the number of wagons shunted in the making up of trains; the number of passenger and goods trains handled; locomotive mileage and ton/kilometre performance. Every station ranking as an 'economic department', and every workshop, has to make a return of this kind, showing credits or deficits. As a consequence, the administrative machinery has swollen to an excessive degree, and the career of book-keeper has become one of the most promising on the railways of the Eastern Zone of Germany.

All railway receipts are paid into the Central Accounts Office, by which, in turn, they are credited to the funds of the General Transport Office. The railways therefore have no say in the disposal of their own receipts. They merely receive allocations sufficient to pay the wages of the staff and to meet bills for repairs or the construction of new railway buildings.

The difficulties under which the railways of the Soviet-controlled Zone of Germany are operating are particularly noticeable in the case of locomotives. Urgently needed replacement parts such as boiler tubes, pumps, etc. are taken from damaged engines, with the result that the number of serviceable locomotives is being constantly reduced. With few exceptions, the railways are now single-track lines, the second track having been dismantled and removed. Steam locomotives now operate over lines which were once electrified. Many lines have been entirely closed to traffic by the removal of rails and installations. Railway safety has particularly suffered. Installations and equipment necessary to safe running are kept in make-shift order only by scraping together all sorts of spare parts from every conceivable source.

All these difficulties are having a serious effect on safety and punctuality. Single-track running on busy main lines, locomotive breakdowns, defects on the permanent way and faulty signalling installations — these are but a few of the problems which are making life difficult for the railwaymen in the Soviet Zone of Germany.

German goods traffic approaching pre-war level

THE VOLUME OF GOODS TRAFFIC ON the inland waterways of the German

Federal Republic continues to show a steady increase. According to the latest figures available (those for 1952), it has now reached ninety-five per cent of the pre-war total at 95,242,000 tons. About two-thirds of this tonnage was carried in German vessels, while a little more than a fifth was transported in Dutch boats. The remainder was largely carried in Belgian, French or Swiss vessels.

A similar increase in the carriage of goods is also noticeable in the case of the Federal Railways which, in the year 1952, transported a tonnage equal to ninety-five per cent of their pre-war (1936) traffic. In terms of ton/kilometres however, the Federal Railways have surpassed their pre-war performance by eleven per cent owing to a marked increase in the length of haulage.

On both waterways and railways, however, the tempo of increase is show-

ing signs of slowing down. On the railways, for example, the 263.5 million tons carried in 1952 was only 3.3 per cent more than in 1951. The corresponding increase on the inland waterways was eight per cent as against a yearly increase of about twenty-five per cent during the period 1949 to 1951. On the inland waterways the falling off in the yearly rate of increase when expressed in ton/kilometres is very noticeable. Whereas from 1949 to 1951 the increase amounted to some twenty to thirty per cent, it fell to six per cent during the period 1951 to 1952.

Turning to sea-borne traffic, we find that the levelling-off is much less marked, 1952 showing an increase of thirteen per cent over the previous year. The total volume of goods carried overseas, however, is still only nine-tenths of the 1936 figure.

Maritime nations call for establishment of IMCO

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE 14 GOVERNMENTS which have adhered to the Convention for the establishment of the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization have met in London and discussed what measures they might take to hasten the bringing into being of IMCO. They had been invited by a recent resolution of the United Nations Economic and Social Council to consider this question, and the meeting was arranged on the initiative of the British Government. Agreement was reached on a report to be made to the Council, and on action which the representatives would urge their governments to take.

The fourteen governments joined in expressing their concern at the delay in bringing IMCO into being, and unanimously expressed the view that this 'consultative and advisory' organization is urgently required as a United Nations specialized agency in the maritime field.

It was noted that the Convention had been ratified by governments of countries which were widespread geographically, and reflected a variety of interest both as users and providers of shipping. The meeting therefore wholeheartedly recommended the Convention to other eligible governments.

The governments represented were convinced that an organization with the expert qualifications and continuity of IMCO would be able to solve inter-

governmental shipping problems more effectively and with less expenditure of time and effort than other bodies or *ad hoc* meetings to which these matters would otherwise fall.

With this aim, those present at the meeting resolved to recommend to their governments that their efforts to influence world opinion should be continued, and stepped up in mutual consultation, with a view to securing further acceptances of the Convention and thus bringing IMCO into being without delay.

Driving round the clock in Poland

WHEN DOES A LORRY DRIVER REST when he works over 19½ hours a day for a month on end? At his depot — when his depot provides neither washing facilities, bedrooms, canteen, nor rest room?

The driver in question is Henryk Ostapowicz, and his depot is the Central Meat Transport Depot in Warsaw itself! Ostapowicz worked 606 hours during July — 406 hours above the drivers' 'norm'.

The authority for this information is 'Glos Pracy', official organ of the Communist Polish Trade Union Council. 'Glos Pracy' suggests that Ostapowicz and his colleagues must have slept during breaks for loading or while their vehicles were being washed. 'Drivers', it says, 'are on the road from 18 to 24 hours per day'.

How many road vehicles are unsafe?

IN 1952, there were 950,000 goods vehicles on the roads of Great Britain, not counting those operated by the British Transport Commission.

The licensing authorities exercise technical supervision. During the period 1951-2, vehicle examinations by Certifying Officers and their Examiners totalled 132,771, and in 21,189 instances defects were disclosed which were of a sufficiently serious nature to warrant the issue of a Prohibition Notice being served on the vehicle owners. This notice forbids the use of the vehicle or sets a time limit on its further use, until the defects have been rectified.

In addition, close liaison was maintained between the police and the Certifying Officers and a number of special road checks were undertaken in various parts of the country. In all, 6,211 vehicles were examined during these special checks and Prohibition Notices relating to 1,345 vehicles were issued.

If in Great Britain the proportion of unsafe road vehicles is between 15% and 20%, how high is it in countries where supervision is less extensive and less strict?

An unwanted catering system

THE CATERING SYSTEM employed by the Scindia Steam Navigation Company of India differs considerably from those of other Indian shipping companies. Every year, in the month of May, the Company invites tenders for catering on board its vessels for a period of one year. A number of contractors submit their rates, which usually vary between five and six rupees (7s. 6d. to 9s.) per head per day. These are considered by the Company and vessels are then allocated to approved contractors.

Under the terms of his agreement, the contractor undertakes to provide 'good and wholesome' food to ship's officers and men. As security against any discrepancies in the ship's stores, he is also required to deposit a sum ranging from four to six thousand rupees for each vessel according to type. This security deposit is returned to him, six months after the expiry of the period of contract.

The actual messing, purchasing of stores, etc., is done by the chief steward. Although he must be a member of the Seamen's Union, which supplies chief stewards according to a proper rota

system, he is in effect a sub-contractor. On being accepted for service by the shipping company, he must present himself to the catering contractor with whom he signs a sub-contract having terms and conditions similar to the latter's contract with the company. He must provide half the security deposit and cater for the entire crew of his vessel at rates in the region of twenty per cent lower than those quoted by the contractor to the company. The latter seeks to justify this profit on the grounds that he must advance the chief steward something like four to six thousand rupees a month to enable him to carry out the messing. In addition, the chief steward has to bear a deduction of one per cent on all bills made by the company as part of its agreement with the contractor.

This method of catering for ship's crews, known as the Dubash system, has nothing to recommend it, unless one is a contractor, and cannot but have an adverse effect on the standard of messing. The Company, having engaged a chief steward and handed over the responsibility of ship's catering to the various contractors, then washes its hands of the whole business. The contractors, for their part, are merely interested in getting as big a return for their investment as possible and, having bound the chief steward by contract, can afford to sit back and leave it to him to make what profit - or loss - he can. The latter, faced with hard bargaining on the part of the contractors and competition from other stewards, as well as from other catering staff anxious for advancement, is then left the choice between quitting the service or protecting himself at the expense of the standard of catering.

In view of these highly undesirable features of the catering system employed by the Scindia Steam Navigation Company of India, the Maritime Union of India, an ITF-affiliated organization has called upon the Company to revise its attitude towards the running of the food department and to assume the responsibility of catering for its crews instead of handing it over to contractors.

Seafarers' hostel in Stockholm

THE PROVISION of reasonable and adequate accommodation for seafarers in search of work in Stockholm has long been a pressing problem. Facilities available hitherto have been far from satisfactory. In order to remedy the defi-

ciency a seafarers' hostel has been proposed with accommodation for 250 seamen, a restaurant and hiring hall, together with rest and recreational facilities. The new building will also contain offices for the various Swedish seafarers' organizations.

It will take some time, however, before this project is realized. Meanwhile, as a temporary measure, the Seafarers' Hostels Committee has decided to erect four huts to serve as a hostel to accommodate 108 guests in fifty-four double bedrooms with toilet and cooking facilities, a spacious rest room and office in each hut. Since the huts are to be built with prefabricated materials, they are expected to be ready in a short time. Seafarers will be charged 3.90 Swedish crowns (about five shillings) a day.

(continued from page 178)

larly interested in the items pointing out the necessity for:

- 1) The organization of Welfare Boards (national, regional and/or port) to deal with seafarers' welfare, including the question of raising the necessary finance;
- 2) The preparation and keeping up to date of a comprehensive review of the amenities available;
- 3) The establishment, expansion and supervision of lodging facilities;
- 4) The provision of medical facilities, especially for unemployed seafarers;
- 5) The provision of recreational facilities.

Two other resolutions were also adopted unanimously. One of them referred to the ratification and application of the international maritime conventions and recommendations adopted under the auspices of the ILO, and the Asian Maritime Conference's own resolutions; and the other to the establishment and recognition of representative organizations of seafarers and ship-owners.

Conclusions

We venture to hope that all these resolutions, especially that relating to the recruitment of seafarers, will be duly carried into effect, and that they will lead to practical results. It is now up to Asian governments, shipowners and seafarers to set their hands to the tasks which have been outlined for them. If the resolutions are sincerely and actively implemented they will constitute a new charter of rights, the Asian Seafarers' Charter, which should augur well for the future of the seamen of Asia.

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
COLOMBIA CUBA DENMARK ECUADOR EGYPT EIRE ESTONIA (EXILE) FINLAND FRANCE GERMANY
GREAT BRITAIN GREECE ICELAND INDIA ISRAEL ITALY JAMAICA JAPAN KENYA LEBANON LUXEM-
BOURG MEXICO THE NETHERLANDS NETHERLANDS WEST INDIES NEW ZEALAND NORWAY NYASALAND
PAKISTAN RHODESIA SAAR ST. LUCIA SOUTH AFRICA SPAIN (ILLEGAL UNDERGROUND MOVEMENT)
SWEDEN SWITZERLAND SYRIA TRIESTE TRINIDAD TUNISIA URUGUAY UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



EDITIONS OF JOURNAL
INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT
WORKERS' JOURNAL
INTERNATIONALE TRANSPORT-
ARBEITER-ZEITUNG
TRANSPORTE

EDITIONS OF PRESS REPORT
PRESS REPORT Two separate
editions in English issued in
London and Bombay
PRESSEBERICHT
PRESSMEDDELANDEN
COMMUNICATIONS DE PRESSE
COMUNICADO DE PRENSA

