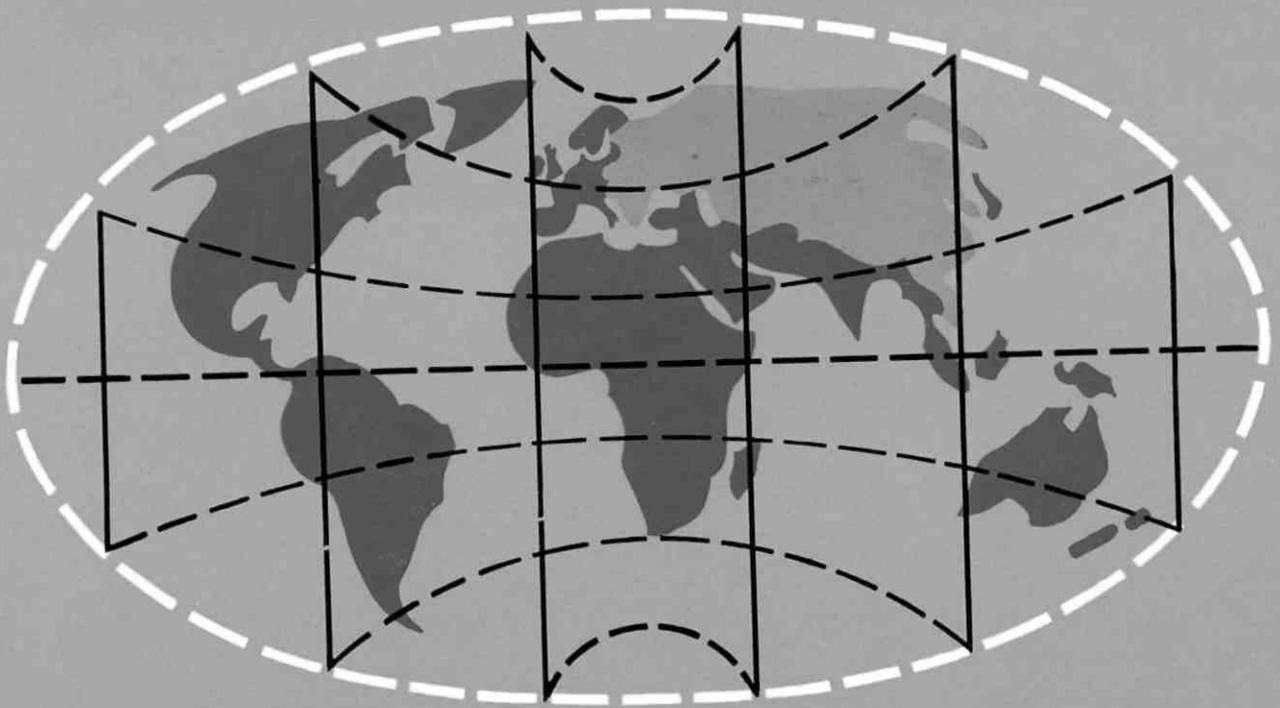


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Forthcoming Meetings:

London 16-24 July Twenty-third Biennial Congress



Brother Omer Becu addressing a session of the Tripartite Sub committee of the ILO Joint maritime Commission in Geneva

Change of course in the short sea trades of North-West Europe

by Omer Becu, General Secretary

AT THE MEETING of the Tripartite Subcommittee of the Joint Maritime Commission of the International Labour Office, which took place in Geneva at the beginning of April, a new approach was made to the problem of the competition in the short sea trades of North-West Europe.

The seafarers' representatives, at whose initiative the Subcommittee had been appointed, had tabled a proposal for convening a Regional Maritime Labour Conference of the ILO whose task would have been to formulate minimum social standards for the crews of ships trading with the NW European region. Actually only a regulation of working hours and manning was envisaged. The purpose of the proposal was to prevent, or at least limit, competition in these trades being carried on at the expense of seafarers.

Breaking a deadlock

The proposal had already been before the Joint Maritime Commission itself, but on this bipartite body a complete deadlock was reached between the shipowners and the seafarers. It was hoped that by setting up a Subcommittee on a regional and tripartite basis, i.e. with participation of government, shipowners' and seafarers' representatives from the countries concerned, the deadlock could be broken.

Some of the government representatives would no doubt have supported the course proposed by the seafarers, and a majority might have been obtained, but others would have opposed it, and the majority would in all probability have been a narrow one. Now seafarers know from experience that unless there is something approximating unanimity when making international decisions there is little likelihood of effective implementation. In these circumstances the seafarers' representatives on the

Tripartite Subcommittee thought it wise to accept a compromise which at first sight perhaps looked like a rejection of their own proposal, but does in fact open the way towards the objective they have in view.

The shipowners' objections to any attempt to regulate seafarers' conditions on a regional basis are well known. As regards the governments, we have already said that some of them were not favourably disposed towards the idea of a regional maritime labour conference. Thus they shared the apprehension of the shipowners that seafarers' conditions could not be dealt with in one region of the world separately from others, as ships come and go from many other regions; especially they feared that action of such a kind in one region might establish a precedent and bring about similar action elsewhere.

As far as these particular arguments are concerned, the seafarers' representatives felt that they were far from being

conclusive. They held that an agreement could very well be limited geographically and yet apply to all participating flags; they did not see why the precedent of an agreement for one region should necessarily be a bad one, or why similar agreements should not be established wherever a serious regional problem was admitted to exist. The seafarers' representatives also had good answers to the other arguments advanced against their proposal. The shipowners, for instance, thought it was useless to eliminate differences in social conditions as a factor in competition, since there would still be differences in the many other factors that enter into the operation of ships. The seafarers' answer is that these other interests can get together to eliminate undesirable competition if they want to, that competition at the seafarers' expense is socially undesirable and that its elimination is at least one big step towards placing competition on a healthy basis. But since in this article we want to deal primarily with the compromise which was reached in Geneva we will not pursue the argument any further here.

Agreed to new approach

In the interests of unanimity, at least with the government representatives, the seafarers agreed to a new approach to the question under discussion. The fact that this approach also secured the support of the shipowners meant that it was one which could reasonably be expected to lead rapidly to its stated purpose.

Briefly, the idea of the new approach is that, instead of a regional agreement confined to North-West Europe, there is now envisaged a widening of the ILO Convention No. 93 concerning Wages, Hours and Manning on Board Ships, so as to include within its scope ships of less than 500 gross tons, coupled with a revision of the Convention which will make it ratifiable by the major maritime countries.

There are obviously dangers as well as possibilities in such a course. There is the danger that, if the Convention is made even more comprehensive than it is, it will become still less ratifiable, and consequently useless as a solution of the problem of the small ships, to say nothing of the bigger ones. The second danger is that the whole process of widening and revising the Convention might take such a long time that it would again be

useless as a solution to the urgent problem of North-West Europe.

On the other hand, it is clear that if the Convention can be revised in such a way as to retain its value for seafarers and to apply to ships of virtually all tonnages, and if then the Convention is widely implemented within a comparatively short period of time, it would not only be an important contribution to solving the regional problem we have been considering, but would also mean the fulfilment of hopes entertained since the ILO Seattle Conference in 1946.

At the meeting in Geneva the seafarers' representatives, whilst appreciating that the matter still had to go to the Governing Body of the ILO, made it clear that these were the terms they were thinking in.

With regard to the contents of the envisaged Convention, as far as the smaller ships are concerned it may not be possible to insist on an integral application of the three-watch system, but the principle of the eight-hour day and 48-hour week must be upheld. The day is surely past when the 48-hour week in small ships can be opposed on economic grounds. For today it is precisely the small ship which is a competitor of the big ship. The exigencies of shipping, where they necessitate a longer working week at sea, should be met without penalizing the seafarers, by means of compensatory time off in port.

No economic excuses

The great principle, then, which must be laid down in the new Convention, is the eight-hour day and 48-hour week for all seafarers and all ships, in the same way as it is laid down for shore workers. Seafarers can no longer accept any excuses based on economics. They appreciate that their working conditions, including the length of the working day, depend upon the prosperity of the industry. They also appreciate that this largely depends upon the level of freight rates, which in turn is a function of the supply of tonnage in relation to the volume of trade. That is why they have been asking the ILO, through its maritime agencies, to draw attention to the need for concerted action on the economic as well as the social problems of the shipping industry. In view of the opposition encountered, not only from shipowners but also from government representatives on the JMC Subcommittee, it seemed better to drop the suggestion. Since

the ILO has after all a social function this is perhaps just as well. It does not preclude the seafarers from taking the economic question further with the agencies competent to deal with it.

All important of course is the time factor. This was particularly stressed by the seafarers' representatives when they accepted the government representatives' compromise. No formal undertakings were given, but both the government and the shipowners' spokesmen left no doubt that they were as serious in their intentions as the seafarers.

The resolution which was unanimously adopted by the Tripartite Subcommittee stated that an International Maritime Labour Conference should be held as soon as practicable. The necessary preliminary of a JMC session is being asked for 1955, to be followed by a tripartite meeting of that body, enlarged by the participation of a government group, as soon as the ILO has been able to complete the preparatory studies it has been asked to make into seafarers' conditions in smaller ships and into other matters bearing on the revision of the Convention. The seafarers hope that the preparatory stages will be completed in the shortest possible time. The assurances given by the shipowners' and government spokesmen on the Tripartite Subcommittee justify confidence in this respect.

Better and speedier results

There are therefore good grounds for thinking that the new course set in Geneva will lead to better and speedier results on the problem of the NW European short sea trades than could be expected from the regional approach. There is also an important additional advantage: a regional conference would in all probability have meant the holding of a full maritime conference of the ILO at a much later date. As there are other important questions besides the NW European one requiring action at the level of an ILO Conference, it is all to the good that the various objectives can now be pursued simultaneously.

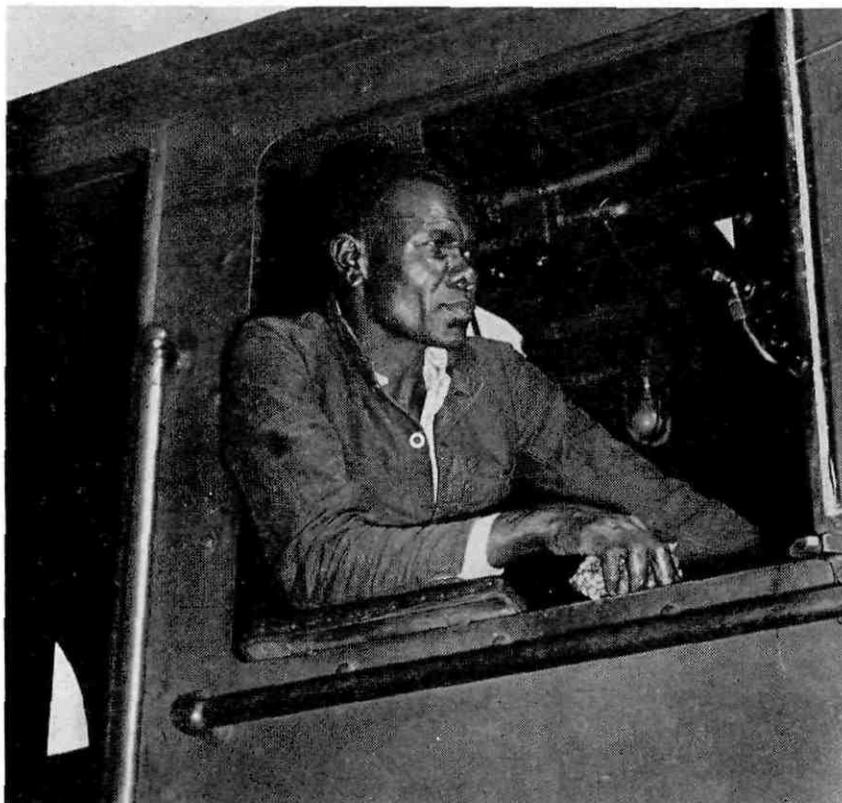
The fundamental position of the seafarers on the problem of competition remains unchanged: whilst conceding that competition is not necessarily harmful, and that in certain circumstances it may even be salutary, they hold that competition based on differences in social standards is pernicious, and that it is

(continued on page 75)

My mission to Africa

by Martin Pounder,

ex-Senior Assistant General Secretary, British National Union of Railwaymen



The following article has been written by Brother Martin Pounder, ex-Senior Assistant General Secretary of the ITF-affiliated National Union of Railwaymen, who last year visited transport workers' unions in Rhodesia and Kenya on behalf of the ITF and the NUR. The original reason for Brother Pounder's mission was a request received from the Rhodesia Railway African Employees' Association in Bulawayo that a railway trade unionist from overseas should be sent to assist the Association in the preparation of a forthcoming wage claim. Although the Association offered to pay all expenses involved, it was considered that this would place too heavy a burden upon it, and the ITF and the NUR therefore decided to finance the project jointly. At the same time, the scope of the mission was widened to take in other groups of transport workers in both Rhodesia and Kenya.

WHEN ASKED TO VISIT THE RHODESIAS to advise, consult and assist the Rhodesia African Railway Unions on organization, administration and wage structure, I was well aware of the varied and interesting aspects of such a mission.

The request for an experienced trade union official who had gone through every phase of trade union activity had come to the International Transport

Workers' Federation and the NUR from the Southern Rhodesian African Railway Workers' Organization. The ITF and the NUR readily responded to an appeal, which we recall was made long ago, to 'come over and help us'.

It was at first intended that I should proceed by air to Livingstone, a central airfield for both Northern and Southern Rhodesia, but before my departure an-

other call for assistance had come to the ITF from Kenya. The trade unions were in difficulty there because of the Mau Mau fighting, and officers could not travel outside Nairobi or Mombasa to branch meetings. One message stated, 'our Union is in danger of collapsing.' In view of this it was arranged that I should go to Nairobi, investigate the position, and endeavour to ease the situation for the Kenya African trade unions prior to going south to Rhodesia.

I left London Airport on 6th September 1953, at 10.45 a.m. and arrived in Nairobi on 7th September, 1953, at 3 p.m.

Having contacted the Chief Labour Commissioner, Mr F. C. Carpenter and Mr J. Patrick, TU Officer from Britain, who had been an active member in the Scottish Area for the TSSA before going to Kenya, I requested them to make contact with all the African trade union representatives and arrange for them to meet me at a conference on 8th September. The assistance rendered by these gentlemen during my stay was appreciated. A full conference of Presidents and General Secretaries of the various African trade unions, some 20 in all, assembled in the Labour Conference Room, to which, in opening the meeting, I extended fraternal greetings and good wishes from the British Trade Union Movement. Having urged them to speak out frankly, I then heard from the delegates the difficulties they had in carrying on the various organizations. These largely could be summarized under two heads: -

1) Many of the African TU leaders had been arrested and detained without trial.

Names were cited of leaders arrested and detained, some for months, without trial. It was stated that the Transport and Allied Workers' Union had the General Secretary, President and Treasurer all detained without trial for alleged incitement. Requests had been made for them to be put on trial in a public court, without success. The effect of this was that active members of these

unions were afraid and those who had taken over the official positions were not well trained to carry on. The fact that there had not been a trial of these TU leaders, arrested and detained over a long period, has left a mountain of suspicion and mistrust in the minds of many Africans and some of these TU leaders said without hesitation that they were of the opinion that the Kenya Government was opposed to African Trade Unions.

2) Movement was restricted owing to the Emergency and the Mau Mau fighting.

Having heard their complaint on this

casualty is truth.' In Kenya it is crystal clear that 'progress' is the casualty. The building up of an independent and democratic trade union movement is being hampered because of the Mau Mau trouble. I advised the African trade unionists to refrain from being involved in acts of violence or fighting taking place at present, and to maintain their organizations for bona-fide trade union purposes. To this they wholeheartedly responded. I believe that the British Colonial Office and the Kenya Government can make a big contribution to ending the bloodshed in Kenya by taking the African trade union movement into their confidence.

cannot expect to build up goodwill, co-operation or respect for democratic institutions on conditions such as these, and the British Colonial Secretary, Mr Lyttelton, should address himself to some of these problems immediately. It is said that the African worker is inefficient, unskilled and semi-migratory. Some of these charges are true in certain cases, but education in hygiene, living standards, better housing, nourishment and training will help.

Trade Union Organization

A strong, well organized trade union movement is vitally necessary in Kenya today and any political interference to restrict or make more difficult the building up of such a trade union movement must be resisted. 'Am I my brother's keeper?' In respect to Colonial Territories we certainly are, and we must assist the African trade unions in every way to become firmly established. Let me here turn aside to pay tribute to work that is being done to assist our African brethren, teaching them not only the work of organizing their movement but also the administrative side. Sending representatives to Britain who have visited our TUC and separate organizations has assisted towards that end. The ITF, with close contacts and advice, has made a great contribution to the building up of the various transport unions. Further, the ICFTU, which already had a centre and an officer at Accra on the West Coast of Africa, has recently sent out an officer to establish a centre at Nairobi for the Kenya unions. This should be of great assistance, for what these African unions require most of all is someone from our trade union movement on the spot for a period (not a flying visit of 2-4 weeks) to meet, consult and advise them on organization, administration and negotiations; on wages structure and conditions. In this respect the ICFTU has made a good start.

In September, 1953, in Kenya some 18 unions were registered, with 45,000 recorded membership claimed. However, as many of these African workers have not yet realized the necessity of stable membership of a trade union, it was clear to me that paid-up membership was in the region of some 25,000 members, this covering organizations known as Staff Associations and not yet registered as trade unions. They also have a Kenya Federation of Trade Unions.



An African constable of the Kenya Police Force on traffic control duty in Government Road, Nairobi. Nairobi, the capital of Kenya Colony and the biggest town in East Africa, owes its existence to the Uganda Railway which was built in the years between 1896-1903 and which links the seaport of Mombasa with Lake Victoria.

matter I saw the Chief Labour Commissioner and was informed that owing to the Mau Mau fighting it was true that difficulty arises in regard to movement, but he agreed that when it was possible to give permits for bona-fide TU meetings this was being done and would continue, but the circumstances at the moment limited the scope for the authorization of permits as no public meeting must be held.

Someone truly said that 'in war the first

Wages and Conditions

Something more, however, needs to be done for the African worker in Kenya who, in the main, is badly paid. Cash payments are from 25s. to 50s. per month, and with the payment in kind of rations, medical attention and housing, valued at another 25s. per month, added, we find that a total meagre payment of 50s. per month is the lot of the Kenya African workers generally. We



In this kind of country you carry your petrol with you and siphon it as required. No petrol pumps are to be found in Wamba High Street or in the neighbourhood.

I suggested at a Federation Conference that they should form a Trade Union Congress in Southern Rhodesia and later extend that Congress to cover both Northern and Southern Rhodesia. In view of the established Central African Federation it might then become possible to unify the trade union movement in Central Africa. They have made a start in that direction recently by creating a Trade Union Congress for Southern Rhodesia.

Generally, the African trade unions in Southern Rhodesia are still in process of building up organizations not yet officially recognized or registered. They are hoping to secure both from employers and Government of the Central African Territories as their organizations grow and become stabilized, and changes are made in trade union law. In this respect it is noted that the new Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, Mr Garfield Todd, has stated recently:

'A new approach to the question of representation of native labour interests is

Here, as in the other African territories, it will take some time to educate and build up responsible trade unions but with our assistance and with patience I am certain that will finally be accomplished. My contacts with them revealed the great respect they have for the British trade union movement. They listen with rapt attention at meetings to the story of our years of struggle to build the trade union and Labour movements in Britain. They realise they have much to learn from us and have great faith in our advice and counsel. On leaving Nairobi I felt that in Kenya a trade union movement was being built up which would improve the lot of the African workers and that the trade union movement elsewhere must not fail them.

From Kenya I proceeded South to Bulawayo, which is the chief industrial town of Southern Rhodesia and the headquarters of the Rhodesia Railways.

The African trade unions in Southern Rhodesia have been trying to build up their organizations over the last five years with varying degrees of success and failure. If a movement for improvements in wages and conditions is in progress then numbers of African workers join up and pay contributions for a few months. Afterwards there is a fall in membership. This applies to fifty per cent of the African workers at this present stage of trade union development. Education in the need for stable trade unions will no doubt change things for the better.

In Southern Rhodesia they had some ten unions covering various industries, with claimed membership of some 25,000 members. On the basis of paid up membership it appeared that 15,000 organized African workers would be nearer the total. Again there was enthusiasm to build their movement on the lines of the British trade unions. In Southern Rhodesia they were seeking to get some measure of united trade union purpose and had formed a Federation of African Trade Unions in Bulawayo.



Their shopping done, their bananas and vegetables secured on top of the bus, these Africans are ready to set out on a 170-mile journey to Arusha in N. Tanganyika.



One hundred and forty African drivers, an equal number of conductors, and 14 Sudanese ticket examiners operate the Nairobi buses of the Kenya Bus Services.

results in Northern Rhodesia. The African Mineworkers' Union was well organized with a membership of some 30,000 African mineworkers engaged in the various mines on the Copper Belt, with full negotiating rights as a union.

In Southern and Northern Rhodesia the European railwaymen have one all-grades union, well organized and with efficient administrative officers. They have, in consequence, negotiated some first-class agreements on wage and salary structure and conditions of service. In the Copper Belt we find a similar position, the European Mineworkers' Union being well organized and with good agreements. Further, the African Mineworkers' Union in Northern Rhodesia hold the best wages and conditions of service agreements that came to my notice during my tour for any section of African employees. They have also very good housing and welfare amenities. *The Mine Management in the Copper Belt* claim, with some justification, to be good employers of both European and African staffs. Recently the African Mineworkers' Union in the Copper Belt have negotiated a pension scheme and in addition have an arrangement regarding some form of copper bonus which was previously only applied to the European employees of the Copper Mines Corporation.

Strange to relate we find that it is legally possible for the European Railway Union to have one registered union for members in both Southern and Northern Rhodesia but for the African employees that was not legal owing to varying law concerning African workers in Southern and Northern Rhodesia. What makes this position more farcical is that there is one nationalized railway covering both Southern and Northern Rhodesia. I advised the African members of both the Southern and Northern Rhodesia African Railway Unions to draw up a constitution to amalgamate the two organizations, to which they agreed. When at Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia, I had an interview with Mr Cousins, Labour Commissioner, Colonial Office, and requested him to assist in clearing the way legally for this to be accomplished. He promised to help towards that end. Fusion of both African unions

required. The present system of determining wages by a native Labour Board of laymen calls for a great deal of improvement and is in fact quite inadequate.'

This, of course, is apparent to experienced trade union officers when undertaking such a mission as I was engaged upon. Recognition should immediately be given to these African unions by the employers, but this obtains at present in very few cases. The Government of Southern Rhodesia should also give registration to these African organizations

of workers and create and legalize official and responsible trade unions in the place of what at the moment can only be termed staff associations.

The Copper Belt

Here, let me say, that when I visited Northern Rhodesia and the Copper Belt I learnt that the policy of recognizing and even encouraging African trade unions was embarked upon during the Labour Government in Britain and this policy had given favourable

would not only assist the Rhodesia African Railway Workers to unite and consolidate their forces but would make it possible for the Railway Management to deal direct in negotiations with one organization.

Wages Structure

My mission for the ITF was chiefly concerned with the Rhodesia Railways African Workers' organization. Through the good offices of the General Manager and other chief officers, I was given facilities to tour the Rhodesia Railways, both Northern and Southern Sections. This gave me a valuable insight into the type of work performed by the African staffs on these railways.

An agreement existed for a grading system which gave some 6,000 out of a total 19,000 African railway employees a slightly higher rate than the basic monthly cash payment of 37s.6d. This was assessed according to designation or grading and ran up on a basis of five points to a maximum rating which gave 77s.6d. cash payment per month. In addition there is payment in kind consisting of rations of meat, vegetables and other food of a sufficient calorific value, assessed at 40s. a month, for man, wife and children. Then in addition they have a small house and fuel allowance. Taking payments in cash and kind together the total would come to an average of some £5 minimum per month and a maximum on grading increases to a few in the higher ratings of £7 10. 0d. per month. We can well see that there is room for improvement here.

I was informed that the railways had until recently the best wages structure and conditions for African workers. During my visit, however, the Native Wages Labour Board issued an award which gave a minimum cash monthly payment of £2 10s. 0d., and this, together with payment in kind of rations, fuel and housing, would improve the wage position of many African workers in the various industries. The award apparently was held up because of opposition by some Local Councils and was therefore not applied up to the time of my departure.

The African Railways' Union had an agreement on wages negotiated in 1951 and terminated as at December 1953. They were therefore in the process of making submissions for a new agreement, seeking as their chief claim to secure increase in the cash monthly pay-

ments and consequently a higher standard of living. These negotiations are still in progress, as offers made by the management side of the Joint Industrial Council for Railways have not been accepted as satisfactory by the African Railway trade union representatives of Northern and Southern Rhodesia. During my tour I talked with their local African members on organization, wage structure and conditions, when I stressed the necessity of steady, continuous membership to them, with good effect.

Great Assistance to them

I had the time at my disposal to consider their organization, administration and whole set-up. This was of great assistance to them in every phase of their union activities.

The membership of both Northern and Southern African Railway Unions was some 4,000 members strong when I arrived in Rhodesia, out of a total of some 19,000 employees. The membership steadily improved until it reached some 12,000, which could now be looked upon as representative and had placed them on the road to a sound, stable organization. This proves conclusively that, given the proper advice, assistance and guidance, the African in many areas is capable of running a trade union efficiently and with a full sense of his responsibilities.

Having considered fully their wages agreements, conditions and grading systems, I was able to advise them with regard to their negotiations for a new agreement.

The African in industry

I found in the course of my tour much criticism by Europeans of the African employee's lack of responsibility and his inability to perform certain work. Some of this criticism is no doubt true, but training and education will fit the African for work of higher skill and responsibility. The East African Railways in Kenya are training African staff for semi-skilled and some skilled work.

In the Gold Coast a similar position exists and, I was informed, has also succeeded in the Belgian Congo for some years now.

In both Northern and Southern Rhodesia all the important positions are held by Europeans and the skilled workers are also Europeans.

The policy of the Federal Govern-

ment, as stated by Sir Godfrey Huggins during the Federal Elections, is to give the African an opportunity to advance, in all walks of life, by a process of steady development. The African workers in the Central African Federated Territories are looking forward to these promises being fulfilled in the next few years. This will end a feeling of frustration and call forth goodwill and cooperation from the African. It is of interest to note the last census recorded some 5¾ million Africans out of 6 million total population in the Federated Territories.

Welfare Services

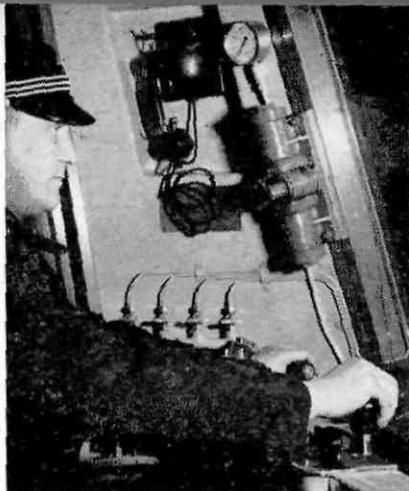
In both Northern and Southern Rhodesia I saw many examples of assistance given to Africans which reflected great credit those responsible. In welfare, clinics, hospital services, modern townships, recreation facilities, training and education a steady improvement and development was taking place.

To many European members of the population of these territories, a word of praise is due despite the criticism we offer in other directions, and often their work is carried out under difficult conditions. Much has and is being done at the moment but more remains to be accomplished. It is a colossal task, covering millions of people, to rebuild housing townships where the conditions were shocking, to put it mildly. We must remember that here in the vast continent of Africa in its various territories, we have in the main a native population which is slowly taking hold of our way of life.

With patience and effort the advance of the African workers is possible and the building up of a strong trade union movement will I am certain, make the greatest contribution towards a fuller, freer and happier life.

(continued from page 70)

competition of the latter kind which exists in the North-west European short sea trades and which must therefore be stopped. They appreciate that various other factors enter into competition, besides social conditions, such as differences in taxation, insurance, replacement costs, etc., but contend that it is for the interests concerned to ensure fair practices. The immediate concern of the seafarers is to safeguard the social position, and as shown above, they have good hopes that they are now on the right road towards that objective.



Railway Trade Unionism in Sweden

by Henry Kjellvard, Editor of 'Signalen'

THE SWEDISH RAILWAYMEN'S UNION is one of the 'big five' of the Swedish trade union movement and at present has approximately 70,000 members. Measured by American, German, or British standards, this figure perhaps does not seem very impressive, but it should be remembered that Sweden has only about 7,000,000 inhabitants and that the country's railwaymen number no more than 74,000. The 4,000 railwaymen who are outside the Railwaymen's Union are not unorganized – for unorganized workers have practically ceased to exist in Sweden – but in general belong to certain grades which are not able to join the union. Instead, they are mostly members of a special association.

In Sweden – in contrast to Great Britain, for example – the unions are, in general, organized on so-called industrial lines. To put it briefly, this means that only one union is found in each work-place. All those who are employed by the railways, with the exception of those grades already mentioned, thus belong to the Swedish Railwaymen's Union. There is no special organization for locomotive personnel, guards, or other grades. In addition, the railway workshop personnel, who can be woodworkers, engineering workers, electricians, etc., all belong to the same organization. In Sweden, the State Railways engage to a considerable extent in road transport by lorry and bus and this means that thousands of drivers and maintenance personnel employed on railway-operated road services are also included in our union's membership. Finally, it should be mentioned that the Swedish State Railways operate a number of ferries which connect the Swedish railways with those of Denmark and the European Continent. The crews of these are treated as railway personnel and are consequently not organized by the Swedish Seamen's Union.

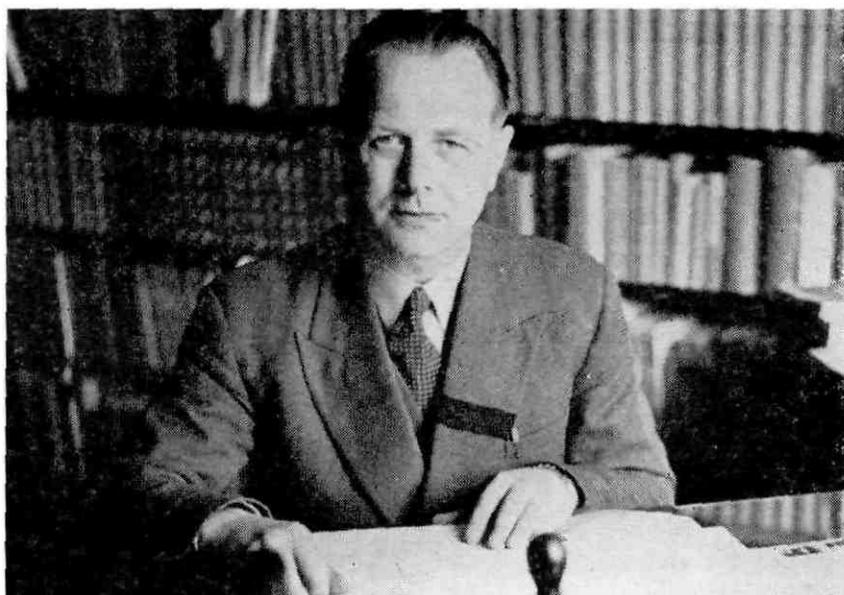
The work of the union is directed by an Executive Committee of ten members,

chosen by Congress, which meets every four years. Four members of the Executive Committee are full-time officials of the union, whilst the remaining six are active railwaymen. In addition to the Executive Committee there is also a union Council, consisting of thirty members, which meets two or three times a year. As already mentioned above, the supreme authority of the union – the Congress – is held every fourth year.

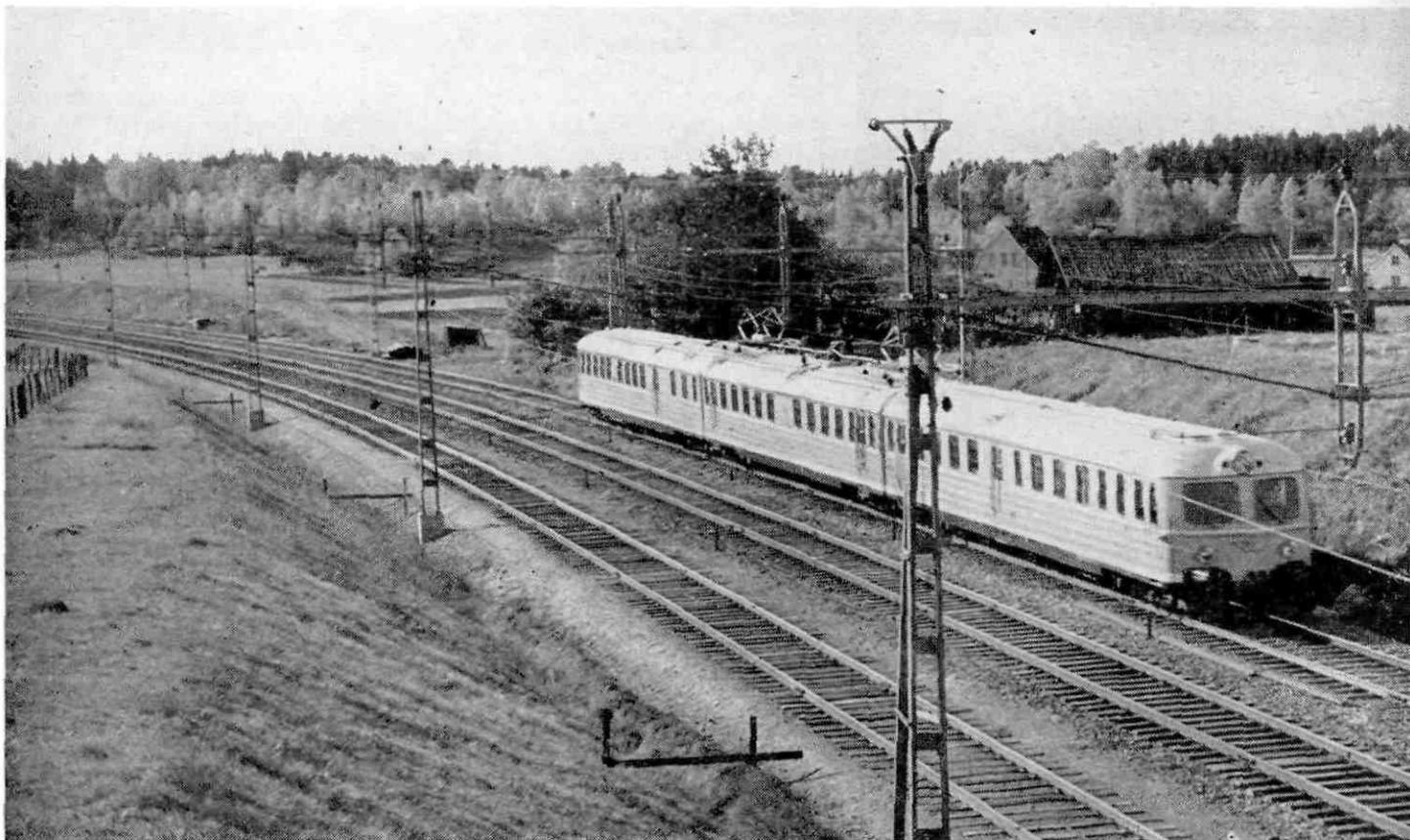
In Sweden we have both State-owned and private railways. The latter have been taken over by the State to such a

large extent that the few remaining privately owned railways now only employ about 2,500 workers. The principal employer with whom the Railwaymen's Union negotiates is thus the Swedish State and the management of the State-owned Railways.

Wages, pensions, and other emoluments are regulated by negotiations between the Government on the one hand and the organizations of State employees on the other. During such negotiations, wages, etc. for all employees of the State, i.e. railway, post and telegraph workers, are fixed at one and the same time. It is perhaps worth mentioning here that the Minister with whom we negotiate about wages and pensions, etc. is a former President of the Railwaymen's Union. The agreements arrived at between the Government and its employees have afterwards to be approved by Parliament. Questions affecting engagement and other service conditions



Herman Blomgren, President of the ITF-affiliated Swedish Railwaymen's Union.



Approximately ninety per cent of Sweden's railway traffic is carried on over electrified lines. Our photograph shows one of Sweden's modern electric trains - 'Göteborgaren', or the Gothenburg Express - in a typical South Swedish setting

are the subject of negotiations with the management of the State Railways and these negotiations continue practically throughout the year.

Members pay a contribution of 5 kr.*) per month to the union and, in addition, one of between 2 and 3 kr. to their local section, of which there are approximately 300 scattered throughout the whole of Sweden. A number of these local sections cater only for individual categories of railwaymen, for example, foot-plate staff, guards, or certain types of office staff. The majority of them, however, are so-called mixed sections with the membership made up of various grades.

The principal task of the Railwaymen's Union is, of course, to defend its members' wage and working conditions but, in addition, it provides a number of specialized services for its members. It has, for instance, its own Legal Department, which provides members with free legal assistance in court cases arising out of their railway service, e.g., those

concerned with accidents, collisions, and similar occurrences. Every member has, in addition, the right to obtain the assistance of union officials when appearing before the special tribunals which are provided for by our disciplinary regulations.

The union organizes a very comprehensive educational programme on a voluntary basis. Members receive grants to take part in various courses - which, however, do not cover railway vocational training, study groups, etc. The union itself also arranges annual residential courses lasting two weeks.

All railwaymen who are members of the union are collectively insured against accidents occurring both at and away from their place of work. In case of incapacity, they receive an annual amount, over and above the pensions prescribed by law or railway service regulations, from the union's own insurance fund. In case of death, a lump sum payment is made to the deceased's dependents. Finally, it should be mentioned here that railwaymen in Sweden possess their own hospital where courses of treatment

are given at a very low cost.

In the Swedish Labour Movement, there exists a tradition of close collaboration between the trade unions and the Social Democratic Party. In company with other organizations, the Railwaymen's Union regularly plays an important part in the Social Democratic Party's election campaigns and other activities.

Prior to the formation of the Railwaymen's Union in 1919, there existed in Sweden a number of small sectional organizations catering for various groups of railwaymen. The locomotivemen, for example, had their own associations as did also the guards, level-crossing keepers, etc. But that was not all. At that time, the network operated by the private railways was very much larger than that of the State Railways. This, again, meant duplication, with organizations of private and State railwaymen existing side by side. It thus became one of the Railwaymen's Union's principal tasks to gather together all railway personnel in a single union. In this it was extremely successful and, as time went by, more and more of the sectional as-

*) 14.50 Sw.kr. equal £1

sociations amalgamated with our union. The last fusion of any importance took place on 1 January 1941, when personnel of the locomotive grades wound up their own union and became part of the Railwaymen's Union.

With that regrouping, the organizational work of the union was more or less completed, and all railway personnel who are entitled to be are now members of their national organization.

During its first years, the union made little progress but a turning point was reached in 1906, when the union, as a result of a partial but very effective strike on a south Swedish railway, coupled with important gains for other railwaymen resulting from negotiations, managed to treble its membership in one year. That meant that the ice had been broken and, since then, the union has continued to increase its membership. At present a slight downward tendency can be noted, but this is mainly due to the fact that the building of new railways is now virtually at an end in Sweden and that a thoroughgoing programme of rationalization is being carried through on the existing network.

In the early days, it was common for union organizers to travel round on foot to make contacts with railwaymen. Now, union membership is taken for granted.

In contrast to many other railwaymen's organizations, the Swedish Railwaymen's Union has up to now consisted exclusively of members in active railway service. Until recently, all railwaymen reaching the pensionable age of 60 were only entitled to remain in the union for a period of six months following their retirement from active service. This stipulation, however, has now been altered and pensioners may, by paying a contribution of 2.50 kr. per annum, remain in their union for an indefinite period. They have a special status, the so-called 'B' Class membership, which entitles them to attend union meetings, at which they have the right to take part in discussions and make proposals but are not allowed to vote. In addition, 'B' Class members receive the union's weekly journal 'Signalen'. In general, these pensioners seek employment in other spheres for at least a few years after their retirement (Sweden has for many years suffered from an acute shortage of labour), but this does not mean that they have to become members of any other union. As a result of a special agreement, their membership of the

Railwaymen's Union is recognized by other organizations.

So far as the union's history in general is concerned it seems only necessary to add that the conditions of railway workers have been continuously improved as a result of their organization's efforts. The great problem in the future will be not only to continue to defend the interests of the railwaymen but also to further those of the Swedish railway industry itself.

In Sweden, as in other countries, there is strong competition between rail and road. At the moment Sweden has, in addition to motor cycles and similar small vehicles, 430,000 passenger vehicles, 105,000 lorries and a large fleet of buses. The expansion of road transport is in fact occurring at an unprecedented pace. During 1954, for instance, it is calculated that about 100,000 new motor vehicles will come on to the roads, and that will mean that this year there will already be one road vehicle for every ten Swedes.

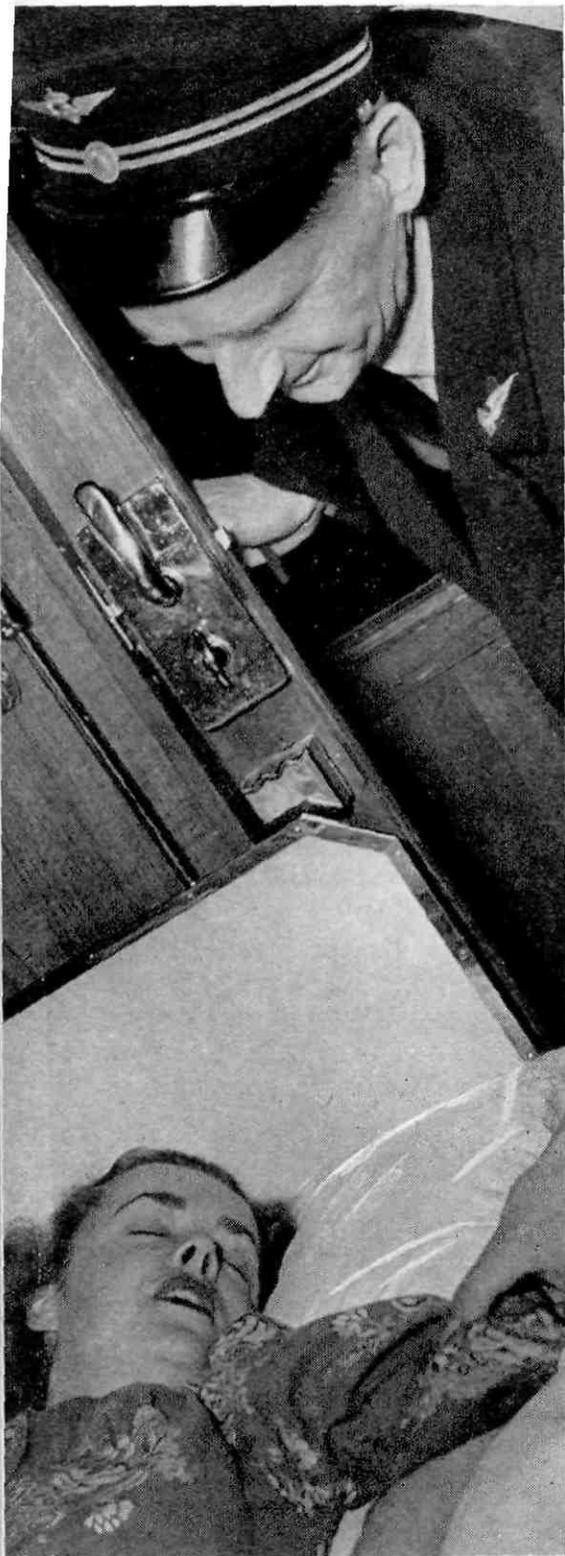
In view of this development, the Swedish Government set up a special committee last year to enquire into the question of the country's future transport policy. The Swedish Railwaymen's Union is, of course, closely following the work of this committee and is very much interested in the results of its inquiry.

Full crew law on US railways

THE POWERS OF INDEPENDENT ACTION possessed by the individual states of the United States of America has resulted in considerable variations in the laws laid down by each state governing railway operation methods.

In 1913 the New York State legislature enacted what has become known as the 'full-crew law'. It requires that every freight train of more than 25 bogie wagons must carry a third brakeman; that there must be a minimum of five men in all shunting operations; and that three men are necessary for all light locomotive movements. The same law also lays down that baggagemen must be provided in addition to brakemen on all trains carrying baggage.

As the laws of neighbouring states are not so strict in this matter, the railways of the New York state are joining forces to seek the repeal of this statute which they contend does not operate towards increased safety or efficiency.



A representative of the many groups of railway personnel organized in the Swedish Railwaymen's Union - a sleeping car conductor. Over a million persons use State Railway sleeping cars every year. Photograph by BM bild A|B, Stockholm



One of the harder ways to earn a living

by Sid Simpson, Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees
and Other Transport Workers

'SURE IT'S A TOUGH RACKET, one of the harder ways of earning a living', he paused to light a cigarette and take a good swig of the coffee that has made this a favourite stopping place for truck drivers, 'but, I suppose it's like any other trade, business or profession, the longer you're in it the more it gets you'.

Remembering a remark of a seasoned highway traveller that 'where you find the truckers stopped, there you will find a good place to eat', we had pulled in to a roadside diner on the Trans-Canada Highway. In the parkway there were about eight huge highway transports, semi-trailers, as they are known to the Knights of The Road.

Getting a seat at the horseshoe counter, next to a middle-aged man of generous physical proportions, we soon learned from the general conversation and the salutations accorded him, in a rough, jocular way, that he was a veteran transport driver, that his name was Joe and we promptly sized him up as a typical representative of what the railway membership of our Brotherhood calls 'Other Transport Workers'. Sensing a story, we encouraged Joe to tell us something of his job and his life. He continued: 'Me, I've been riding trucks for over thirty

years, ever since my dad tried to earn a living for seven of us with an old second-hand Reo after the first war. There's not many can stand it that long, nerves get shot, or more likely their backs give out but even after they quit many of them tell me how they long to get behind a wheel again and back on the highway.

'Guess driving's in my blood. Dad drove one of those famous London double-decker buses up to 1914 and then got himself pretty badly shot up doing the same thing at Vimy in '17. He was not really fit for hard work when he

came to Canada after the war but he didn't know much else than driving and started a draying business with the old Reo. I had to help out after school and on Saturdays. Before my legs were long enough to reach the foot brake and the accelerator Dad put blocks on them, I mean he put the blocks on the car, not on me.

'I was fifteen when he died and Ma had to sell the Reo with everything else to pay funeral expenses. I just had to get a job, being the oldest of five kids. Jobs were not too plentiful in those days and my age was against me so I gypsied around the country for a few years, wherever wages were best: hauling gravel for this new Trans-Canada highway, cattle trucking for livestock dealers, hauling grain for farmers at harvest time and draying or delivering coal in the winter.

'Things got pretty tough in the hungry thirties but I guess I did as well as the

average unskilled worker.' Hesitating a moment, he questioned his own remark: 'You know, I can't figure why this driving business is classified as unskilled.

'Cripes!' he exploded, with a nod toward the line of parked transports, 'if you don't need skill to wheel one of those babies round the country, then I don't know what the word means.

'Anyway, I'd got married in the meantime and began to realize that I had to have a steady job all year round if I was going to get a home of my own and raise a family like I should.

'About that time, a few far-sighted people saw the possibilities of highway transport in Canada and began to challenge the railways for the long haul traffic. That's when I started with this outfit. Our Company was one of the first to get an inter-provincial franchise and I think I pulled one of the first cargoes over the road from Winnipeg to Regina. Boy! was that over a tough grind? 400 miles of mud when it was wet, most of it not even graded, only short stretches of it gravelled and no pavement outside the cities.

'I still shiver when I recall some of those trips. In winter it took twenty-four to forty hours in thirty and forty below zero weather, no cab heaters and no cabs as we know them now, just leather side curtains with the little mica windows, generally cracked and torn. You'd be stuck in a snowdrift out on the bald prairie for hours at a time. Ugh! How those winds could blow. He smiled, finished his coffee and said, 'We do that trip in less than ten hours now'.

The clientele of the diner was continually changing. Those that had their break left with a cheery 'So-long Joe', and the newcomers hailed him with such good-natured kidding as 'Hi, Joe, camping here tonight?' or 'Hello, oldtimer, broke down again?'

Overhearing a whispered, 'Naw, he's just getting wound up,' we quickly ordered more coffee, for Joe had assured us he was in no hurry, because he was 'backhauling a dead one', which we understood to mean a non-revenue cargo.

'Yes sir, things are different now and these young punks don't seem to realize that this highway transport industry is still an overgrown infant, struggling to find its proper place in the overall transportation picture of a growing country. But, whether the railways like it or not, we're here to stay, what we need now though is some kind of control or regu-

lation that will protect the reliable companies from the "gypsies".

'Guess likely you've heard of the "schmozzle" that's going on in the courts about who has the authority to control highway traffic, eh! You haven't? Well, it seems the Fathers of Confederation, that's those political jokers who drafted our Constitution, put railways and waterways under federal jurisdiction. Maybe because roads didn't amount to much at that time they forgot to mention the highways and, like everything else that wasn't specifically mentioned in the British North America Act, they were left to the provinces. That was O.K. until recent years when improved roads, bigger units and refrigerator vans made inter-provincial and trans-continental trucking possible. Anyway, it appears some big American outfit started hauling from Boston to Nova Scotia and they had to go through part of New Brunswick. New Brunswick refused to let them pick up or deliver in the province, so the company went to the courts about it on the grounds that the province had no jurisdiction.

'Well, I suppose the lawyers are having a field day with that one. The Supreme Court of Canada upheld the company, ruling that inter-provincial traffic is Ottawa's baby. The provinces don't like that, so they've taken the matter to the Privy Council in England and, from all I hear, the highway transport industry is more or less satisfied they will be under federal jurisdiction in the near future.

'Isn't the Privy Council out of business now with the Supreme Court of Canada the last court of appeal?' we asked, trying to trip our new-found friend, but he was quick with the reply that any action started before December 23, 1949, could still go to the Privy Council and there are many like the highway case still waiting for a decision.

Astounded by this display of forensic knowledge, we sought to cover our ignorance by asking Joe what was so different between trucking today and that of the old days and what brought about the change?

'Perhaps some of the improvements can't be seen by outsiders,' continued Joe, as he fingered the union button stuck in his cap-band. 'Except for improvements that everybody enjoys, like good roads, such places as this where you can get a good meal cheap, comfortable vehicles and quicker trips, I guess

it's only the organized drivers that know about the real differences. Unfortunately, there's only a small percentage of us organized and enjoying the benefits of a union with seniority, paid vacations and holidays, grievance procedure, regular hours and established rates of pay, scheduled runs and safe driving bonus.

'Why, before we got our collective agreement we never had any regular hours or runs, just worked where and as long as the foreman told us to. If there was a slack period anybody could be laid off regardless of his length of service and, believe me, favouritism was a common practice. We did most of our own repairs, greasing, oiling and washing of our trucks during our off time and got no pay for it. Overtime! There was no such thing and if anyone dared to complain, he was likely to be fired on the spot, and no comeback. If you got your wages up to date you were lucky and more than one of our boys had to go to court to get his dough.

'Wages!' he fairly spat the word out, generating more heat as he continued. 'Maybe they're no great shucks yet, compared to some industries, and I don't expect they will be as long as the "gypsy" and "fly-by-night" operators remain unorganized and are allowed to get away with what they do. Mine are a lot better than they used to be. At least I know how much I'm going to get come pay-day and it is the same rate for everybody doing the same job. What's more, I know that if I drive over a certain number of miles in a given time, or work more than a certain number of hours in a week, that I'll be paid one and a half times my regular rate. You know, I think overtime is a penalty on the employer, to prevent excessive hours of work. It's surprising how little overtime we have to work now, since the boss has to pay extra for it. They don't double us out like they did before we got an agreement.

'Oh, there's lots of little benefits we enjoy now that we never had before, like board and a decent place to sleep when we're away from home terminal, meal allowances on the road, terminal and unavoidable road-delay time, but best of all, in my book at least, is the obligation on the company to keep our vehicles in first-class running order and to provide us with all the necessary equipment to comply with traffic regulations and to meet any road emergency. I mean

(continued on page 88)

The taxi-cab trade in the Netherlands

by **H. W. Koppens**, Secretary of the Dutch Transport Workers' Federation and President of the Dutch Road Transport Workers Union

ALTHOUGH THE WORD 'TAXI' IS COMMONLY USED INDISCRIMINATELY in the Netherlands, it is worth pointing out that a distinction should be made between vehicles plying for hire and those belonging to a car-hire service. Put simply, the hired car operates from a garage and the taxi proper from a taxi-cab rank. Popular usage, however, makes no distinction and refers to ordering or taking a 'taxi'. In this context, on the other hand, the 'hired car' does not include self-drive car hire. The operators of self-drive hire services do not properly fall within the purview of the taxi-cab trade.

Special conditions prevail in a number of Dutch towns (mention will be made at the end of this article of the situation in Amsterdam) but it is proposed first of all to give a general picture of conditions prevailing throughout the country. On 1 June 1953, the number of concerns operating taxi or car-hire services, classified according to the number of vehicles owned, was as follows:

Concerns with	1	vehicle	2,693
"	"	2	vehicles 878
"	"	3	" 317
"	"	4	" 115
"	"	5-6	" 75
"	"	7-8	" 32
"	"	9-10	" 16
"	"	11 or more	" 27

There was thus a total of 4,153 concerns operating 7,779 vehicles.

On the whole, the Dutchman is an individualist, and one of his ideals is 'to start up on his own' - to become his own boss. As can be seen from the figures shown above, there are many small concerns of which the majority do not have any wage-earners on their books. Estimates put the number of actual employees in the taxi-cab trade at about 5,000 persons.

No 48-hour week

In the large towns, where business by taxi is brisker, 'doubling up' is the common practice, so that the vehicle is in

use round the clock. The large concerns operate on the basis of a six-day week, so that the employee gets seven days off in a period of six calendar weeks. Other firms, not 'doubling up', observe the normal system of one day off a week. A fifty-five-hour week is worked, as laid down by law. In the Netherlands, the forty-eight-hour week is the rule, but there are a number of exceptions to the general practice, of which the taxi-cab trade is an example.

Naturally, with so many small concerns in the business, the trade cannot be said to be operated on economic lines. This branch of the transport industry is far from being in a flourishing

state, and is constantly running into difficulties. These have recently resulted in a number of major concerns having to close down.

In the Netherlands, a system of wage controls is operated. Wages and prices are compared at fixed intervals on the basis of data supplied by the Central Office of Statistics. If the balance has been destroyed and wages are found to be too low (we have yet to experience the opposite), a general wage increase is ordered by the Government. It is difficult to put these increases into effect in the taxi-cab business, however, and on one of the four occasions when such increases should have been made, the owners succeeded in obtaining a dispensation whilst on other occasions they endeavoured to do so, but without success.

Unsatisfactory conditions

The Dutch trade-union movement has repeatedly drawn attention to the unsatisfactory conditions prevailing in the



The last horse-drawn cab to be seen in the streets of Rotterdam. This pleasant reminder of a more leisurely past now gone for ever has been retained solely for the benefit of visitors from abroad



Taxis and hire-car vehicles are often called upon to perform a number of services outside their normal duties. This car, for instance, has been booked to convey a patient to the local hospital.

taxi-cab trade and emphasized the need for a reduction in the number of operators. The Road Transport Committee, a Government advisory body on which both owners and employees are represented, has also drawn up a number of regulations which could serve as a model to ensure economic methods of operation. One such regulation, for example, is that of a municipal authority concerning the local taxi-cab services. This provides that, before anyone can operate a taxi-cab business, he must first obtain a licence from the local authorities. In this way, unlimited expansion is prevented.

By means of bye-laws, certain authorities lay down definite standards governing the grant of a licence. It should not be inferred, however, that the existence of these regulations creates the state of affairs our Union would like to see obtaining in the taxi-cab branch of the transport industry. Quite a number of them fail to provide the desired standards. As a consequence, all possible efforts are being made to secure the introduction of regulations along the lines of the model regulations drawn up by the Road Transport Committee.

Fares are also fixed by the local authority. The existence of a uniform scale of charges in any given locality means that price-cutting is impossible. Competition then expresses itself in the shape of improved service to attract as many customers as possible, the provision of more attractive-looking vehicles, etc.

A fixed basic wage

A taxi-driver's wages are not determined by the amount of business he does. He gets a fixed basic wage of 27.75 guilders a week (a guilder is about two shillings in British money), a percentage of the fares clocked-up (ten per cent in Amsterdam and seven per cent in the rest of the country) and retains the tips. The wages of car-hire drivers are calculated on a different basis. These drivers get a fixed basic wage of 40.75 guilders a week plus tips. The wages and working conditions of drivers are laid down on a national basis covering both taxi and car-hire drivers. The agreements make mention of a fixed rate of tipping equal to ten per cent of the fare. In practice, however, taxi-drivers' tips amount to an average of fifteen per cent. Tips must therefore be considered as part of the taxi-driver's wages.

Whereas the taxi-driver operates independently, the driver of a vehicle owned by a car-hire firm is placed in a somewhat different position in that persons requiring his services contact the garage. Such drivers are not allowed to pick up passengers en route. This is the preserve of the taxis plying for hire - distinguished by a chequered band round the body of the car.

Effectively, both types of driver perform the same kind of work, except that, in the case of taxi-drivers, there is room for the display of initiative in finding customers, seeking out profitable

taxi-cab ranks, etc. The first-mentioned activity is by no means of negligible importance. Local knowledge, the art of getting on with the general public, and, in many cases, a knowledge of foreign languages, all these requirements must be satisfied by a good taxi-driver. This is particularly true of ports and towns with a considerable amount of foreign traffic. The extent to which certain drivers are familiar with the times of operation of international connections, both by sea and land, and adjust their movements accordingly, is really surprising.

Automatic devices, however, are being increasingly introduced, even in the taxi-cab business. The car-hire system has been considerably improved by the use of the portable radio-telephone set, enabling empty running to be reduced to a minimum and allowing for a more intensive exploitation of the vehicles.

In the Netherlands, taxis are frequently called upon to perform runs taking them beyond the boundaries of their own local authority, and sometimes even across the national frontier. Other special tasks include wedding and funeral services in some, but not all, localities. In a number of firms, the hire-service cars are also used for private transport purposes, returning to their normal function for the rest of the time.

Quarterly inspection

The specialized calling of taxi-driver cannot be exercised by anyone. The Law on the Carriage of Persons for Hire lays down that the driver must be at least twenty-one years of age. Furthermore, a certificate of good health has to be produced.

Every driver in the Netherlands has to have a driving licence - including of course taxi-drivers. As already mentioned, hours of work and rest periods of taxi-drivers are governed by law. Every taxi-driver by profession must carry a log-book in which he must enter daily the number of hours he has worked and the rest periods taken. The maximum number of hours he is allowed to work in a week is fifty-five. Another prescribed document, actually pertaining to the vehicle itself, is the vehicle licence, issued

by the local authority. In addition to this, a certificate attesting that the vehicle has undergone its regular quarterly inspection must be carried.

Practically every vehicle is insured although there are differences in the insurance conditions. Insurance against third party claims is compulsory. Insurance companies refund a percentage (in the region of ten per cent), if no claims arise in the course of a year. A number of firms pass a part of this on to their drivers.

Every person drawing wages as a driver is insured against sickness (medical attendance and sick pay), accident, disablement, and unemployment. Both employer and employee contribute to this insurance and in some cases the employer's contribution is greater than that of the employee.

The situation in Amsterdam

In view of the particular difficulties with which the taxi-cab trade is faced in Amsterdam, it is worth while devoting a few words to conditions in that city.

Wage negotiations have always been particularly difficult in the case of Amsterdam. Fares shown on the clock were low and complaints that the trade was not making a decent return were not without good foundation.

Up to November 1953, one very large private concern (with 150 licenced vehicles) and a number of smaller concerns were operating. The small concerns included a number of owner-drivers together with several combines of very small operators (so-called one-man businesses).

The largest concern, the 'Atax' company had been running at a loss for some time. Several attempts were made at retrenchment on a voluntary basis, but the Dutch Transport Workers' Union could not see its way to agree with the proposals made. The opinion of the employees was that the business was badly run, and that an improvement was possible by ensuring a more efficient conduct of the company's affairs and not by cutting down the staff and consequently the number of vehicles operated.

An inquiry is made

There was thus a considerable difference of opinion between employer and employees. The latter then got into touch with Professor Haccoû, lecturer at the Economic Faculty of the University of Amsterdam, with a view to discussing

with this eminent economist the problems of the Amsterdam taxi-cab trade. (Professor Haccoû is also principal of the Foundation for Research in Economic Statistics).

Following a series of discussions, it was decided to carry out an investigation. This was done on a large scale, some 300 drivers completing a record card at the end of each journey. Some thirty persons with administrative experience assisted in this task together with the personnel of the Foundation mentioned above. Their report was published in 1952.

Prepared to take over

It is not proposed here to set out details of this report. Suffice to say that it tend-

The 'Atax' company decided to go into liquidation in the summer of 1953 and in view of the fact that this concern was approximately of the optimum size advocated by Prof. Haccoû, it appeared that here was a good opportunity of starting a business on the lines recommended. The drivers could become shareholders and the whole business be run on a co-operative basis. No take-over arrangements could be made with the directors of the undertaking, however, with the result that it went out of business on 7 November last, throwing some 300 employees out of work.

A unique venture

Innumerable talks followed in an effort to raise the purchase price and these ef-



Dutch taxis waiting for fares at a taxi-rank outside the railway station in Amsterdam. The characteristic chequered band running round the taxi is clearly visible.

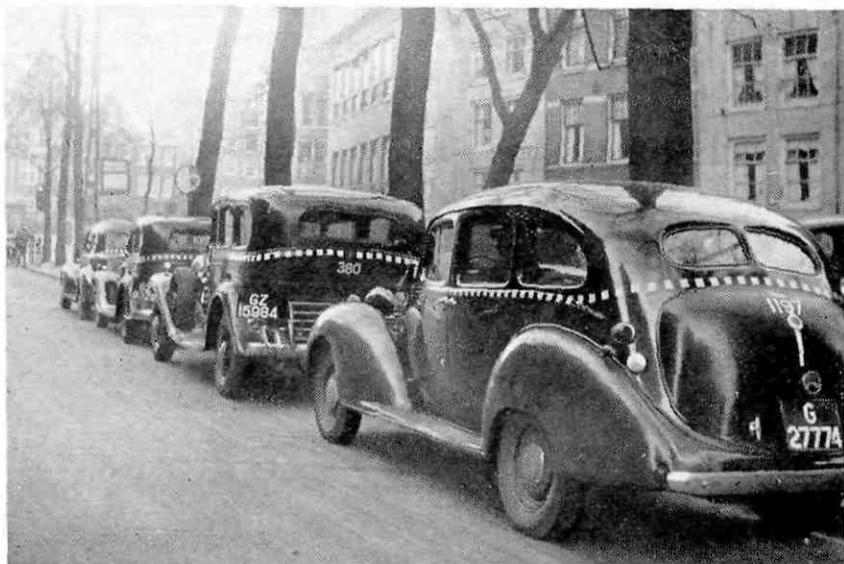
ed to the general conclusion that a taxi-cab business could be run on profitable lines, providing certain conditions were fulfilled. One of these conditions was that the size of the undertaking should be in the region of 150 vehicles. The Union then endeavoured to open up discussions with the employers on the subject of the report. These efforts met with only limited success, however, and no practical results were achieved.

forts were finally crowned with success. A new concern, the AAAC, was founded on 18 December. It started business with something like seventy taxis, and now has about 100 vehicles on the road.

This experimental venture is of exceptional importance to the entire taxi-cab trade of the Netherlands in that it is giving the drivers themselves a chance to prove that it is possible to run the business on sound and profitable lines.

A slack period at one of the twenty-six taxi-cab ranks in Amsterdam. Such periods are fairly frequent in this town where the trade is meeting with difficulties.

The Dutch transport workers' unions have the fullest confidence in the ultimate success of this venture. It will take at least a year before a true picture can be obtained of the results of the AAAC's activities. Meanwhile, it need hardly be said that the transport workers' unions wish the enterprise every success. It may be that an opportunity will be offered after the lapse of a year to revert in these columns to what may well be described as a unique venture—the Amsterdam Taxi-Drivers' Co-operative Enterprise (Algemene Amsterdamse Aandeelhouders-chauffeurs Combinatie).



Travel aid for Norwegian seamen's families

THE NORWEGIAN STATE WELFARE OFFICE for the Merchant Navy recently introduced a new plan to help families of Norwegian seamen to see their husbands more frequently.

The wives and children of seamen who have been away from home for 12 months or more will, on application to the office, obtain a contribution towards the ticket to the port where the vessel in question is lying. The maximum contribution for a journey either by boat or air to European and Norwegian ports is 250 kr. for each adult and 100 kr. for each child (about £12 10s. and £5 respectively).

As children over 12 years are considered adults, when travelling by air, children between this age and 16 will receive the same amount as adults, while children over 16 years of age will not receive anything.

More freedom for Danube shipping

FROM THE AUSTRIAN POINT OF VIEW, shipping on the Danube will now become a little easier following agreement reached with the Hungarian authorities on the operation of Austrian vessels as far as Budapest. This facility is the result of long conversations between the Austrian Danube Steamship Company (DDSG) and the Soviet-Hungarian shipping Company 'Meszhart' during November and December of last

year. Under the agreement, the two companies undertake to resume traffic between Vienna and Budapest. Each company will arrange for freight loads for the other's account, make towing vessels available and provide assistance in the case of accidents or damage to their vessels.

Although each company has agreed to act as general agent for the other, the Austrian shipping concern has not been successful in obtaining permission to set up its own office in Budapest.

'Meszhart', the Hungarian shipping company, on the other hand, has offices in Vienna, and the DDSG will continue to press for the same facility as regards the Hungarian capital. In any case, Austrian vessels can now operate unhindered to Hungary and from there to Yugoslavia, and it is hoped that similar agreements will shortly be concluded with Bulgaria and Roumania.

Expansion of Pakistan fishing industry

ACCORDING TO A TWO-YEAR SURVEY completed by the Central Fisheries Department of Pakistan, the country's potential sales of fish in an international market are 300 times greater than the present annual haul which amounts to 365,000,000 pounds.

Officials in Karachi state that the expansion of Pakistan's fish export beyond its present market will greatly assist the country's change from an all-agrarian to a semi-industrial and fishing economy. The survey shows, for example, that

considerable gains await the industry by a fuller exploitation of shark fishing. It is estimated that the vitamin oil obtained from sharks could bring in \$300,000 a year. Further good money makers are fish fertiliser and fish meals for poultry which are already being exported to several countries.

Meanwhile, the Pakistan government's monopoly in oyster-growing, begun six years ago as a means of developing this resource for the future, has proved successful and Pakistan oysters are finding a ready market throughout Western Europe, especially in Italy. The country's most lucrative catch at present, however, is shrimps for which there is a good market in both the United States and Europe.

The Pakistan government's fisheries development programme in Karachi is being helped by a grant of \$750,000 from the United States Technical Co-operation Administration. This is being put into harbour expansion schemes which include facilities to handle some 300 landings a day, refrigeration and storage plants, a fish meal processing plant, fertiliser machinery and equipment for the production of fish liver oil. Fishing villages in the vicinity of Karachi are stated to be already feeling the benefits of this development.

Within her territorial limits, Pakistan has a fishing area of 35,000 square miles. Edible fish swarm in the coastal waters of the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, and in the Ganges and large sections of the Indus river.

Driving a bus in New York.

by **Otto Leichter**, New York

A GIANT WINDING HIS WAY CAREFULLY through a narrow gorge — that is the impression one gets when one watches the big, clumsy-looking New York buses as they steer a path through a confusion of cars, taxis, heavy lorries, plus an army of impatient pedestrians. A few inches to the right or to the left or an unexpected hesitation — and a collision would be unavoidable . . . Or half a minute's delay at a bus stop may mean that the traffic lights change to red and forward progress is checked. Behind the bus, traffic piles up; motorists, anxious to get on, begin to sound their horns impatiently.

And in the midst of this chaos, which could certainly inspire a modern Dante to write a far more effective description of Hell than would have been possible for his mediaeval predecessor, sits the bus driver on his uneasy throne — seeing to it that his passengers pay their fares, that they get the right change, information when they need it, or transfer tickets if they want to change buses during their journey. How, you may well ask, is it possible for one man to attend to all these details and still keep calm?

One-man operation the rule

And it is only *one* man who is responsible for carrying out these multiple duties, for in New York one-man operation is the rule on buses. Yes, one man does all this, at the same time making sure (a) that he keeps within the city speed limit and (b) that he sticks to the scheduled running times — not merely because they are printed in the timetable, but because late running usually means that the driver loses the few minutes rest and the chance to smoke a cigarette or drink a cup of coffee which he should get at the terminus before starting out on his next scheduled run.

The 40-hour week

Towards the end of last year, drivers on New York's private bus lines won the forty-hour week as the result of an arbitration award which had its origins in a three-week strike for reduced working hours and better pay called in January 1953. That men should not be required to work for more than forty hours a week in such an exacting occupation, particularly when it involves accepting responsibility for the life and limb of their fellow human beings, seems obvious enough. Nevertheless, it took

quite a struggle to obtain the shorter working week, despite the fact that drivers of city-owned buses had already enjoyed it for some two years past. The arbitration award, in fact, represents a big step forward in the establishment of tolerable working conditions on the overcrowded streets of the metropolis.

Even so, the life of the New York bus driver is difficult and worrying enough, particularly on the private lines. In this sprawling city, bus routes tend to cover great distances. The Fifth Avenue Coach Company, for instance, which operates in the most crowded sections — partly along famous Fifth Avenue, one of the city's busiest traffic arteries — has a route which extends from the southernmost limits of New York right up into the northern suburbs, a distance of some twenty-six miles.

On this route, it needs real ingenuity to ensure that the drivers get even a few minutes rest and to organize schedules in such a way that, on the one hand, there is no interruption in service and, on the other, that the work-load is not too heavy. On some runs a shift of eight consecutive hours is worked. The driver gets only a few minutes break at the terminus — that is providing he is not running late. That, incidentally, is why strict adherence to schedules is so important to the drivers and why they get so impatient when they are held up in a traffic jam.

The bus driver's day

'When does a driver eat?' 'When does he attend to his physical needs?' 'When can he smoke a cigarette?' — these are some of the questions which I, as a New York bus passenger (often a critical one!) of some years' standing, put to a trade union official in the industry.



The scene on New York's famous Fifth Avenue near the equally well-known 42nd Street. Part of the 26-mile run operated by the Fifth Avenue Coach Company.



The rush to catch the bus in crowded New York. On this type of bus the driver must also collect the fares — no easy task, especially on a hot summer day.



A new-type bus which may now be seen threading its way through the congested streets of America's principal city

'You see', he replied, 'A bus driver never knows in the morning what he'll have to face during the day. Let's suppose that he begins his shift in the best of moods - he's had a good night's sleep, everything at home is fine, and he promises himself that he'll get through the day as calmly as possible and be as pleasant and polite as he can. And then suddenly he turns a corner and can't move any further. In front of him he finds a tightly jammed mass of taxis, buses, and lorries. A street accident. It's not his fault and he can't do anything about it, but it not only upsets the timetable but the rest of his day's duty...'

'Or perhaps everything seems to be going smoothly when all at once passenger after passenger boards the bus and wants to change dollar notes. The driver begins to worry: what'll he do when his supply of change runs out? And all the time he's worrying, he's supposed to be concentrating on the traffic.'

'Or again, suppose that one of the passengers is abnormally short-tempered. In New York buses, the passenger has to give the driver the signal to stop by pulling a cord, which either rings a bell or operates a light signal. However, it's not at all unusual for the latter to be out of order. As a result, the driver doesn't realize that some impatient passenger is waiting to get off. He just carries on past the stop - and then all hell breaks loose... Or perhaps a drunk boards the bus and starts an argument with the driver, who has to pretend that he's not there...'

Yes, what a lot can happen - especially in a city where either the driver or the

passenger may be a Negro and where racial questions may be argued on a bus. And you have to remember that all these are just additional worries. After all, the most important thing - and the most difficult - is to pilot an outsize bus through a street in which there is not an inch to spare.

Sickness and pensions

Bus drivers in a city like New York work under a great strain. How long can they stand up to it? Of course, we are told, the continual pressure on the men results in a lot of illness. There are many cases of stomach ulcers, which can usu-

ally be traced back to nervous strain.

Nevertheless, there are many who stand up reasonably well to their arduous duties and steer their way through New York's seething traffic for years without any ill-effects on their health. If these lucky ones want to retire on a pension, then they must work up to age sixty-five. On many lines, drivers who have not yet a sufficient number of contributions to their credit try to keep on working longer. However, since the introduction of one-man operation in 1947 they are finding it increasingly difficult to stay the pace.

The trade union position

Up to now, the men's union - the ITF-affiliated Transport Workers' Union - has concentrated on increasing wages and improving general conditions of work. Before the organization began its activities sixteen years ago, the hourly rate of a bus driver was sixty-seven cents. Today a rate of \$ 2 an hour is paid to employees of the New York City Omnibus Corporation and the Fifth Avenue Coach Company, whilst on other pri-



Striking employees of New York's private bus operators were demanding a forty-hour week with no reduction in pay

vately-operated lines the hourly rate is \$ 1.925. Even when one takes into account the fall in the value of money which has taken place in the meantime, this still represents a considerable increase in real wages – not to speak of the improvements in working conditions and trade union protection which have been won by the bus drivers' organization. Employers are, of course, free to engage whom they like as bus drivers or maintenance personnel, but the latter must become members of the union once their thirty-day probationary period is over. In many companies, this stipulation also applies to office personnel and certain supervisory staff.

Making the roads safe

A meeting of the ECE Working Party on the Prevention of Road Accidents was held in Geneva from 6 to 9 April and was attended by representatives from Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Holland, Sweden, Switzerland, Great Britain, the Western Zones and the Eastern Zone of Germany.

The question of signs and signals to indicate road works was examined and amber flashing lights were recommended, red flashing lights being reserved to indicate level crossings. On the subject of rear lights, the Working Party recommended that it should be made compulsory for lorries over a certain width to carry two rear lights. Compulsory wearing of crash helmets by motorcyclists was also discussed.

During the discussion on the periodical examination of headlights, the Director of the International Office of Road Research stated that the inspection of all motor vehicles in the United Kingdom once a year at an outlay of £2½ million would result in saving £20 million in road accident damage.

Mechanizing world fishing

STRONG EFFORTS are being made by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, through its technical assistance programme, to increase fisheries production in under-developed parts of the world. This is being done through improvements in fishing craft and gear and, above all, by introducing mechanization.

Catches in the less developed countries by fishermen working from simple sailing boats have been deplorably low compared with those obtained by powered craft, and it is the belief of the

FAO, tested and proved valid several times, that mechanization is 'much of the answer' in many cases. In the opinion of the FAO, the argument that fishermen in under-developed countries could not go to the expense of powered craft is fallacious. It would be nearer the truth to say that they could not afford to be without the help of the engine. The poorer the fishing in an area, the greater the need for power to go further out to sea in search of fish and to move swiftly and easily with the fish when found. Engines, when installed, more than pay for themselves in increased catches.

At present, the FAO has naval architects and master fishermen working in Ceylon, Southern India, Liberia and Turkey. Marine fisheries mechanization experts have worked in Saudi Arabia, Israel and Iraq, and experts are also to be sent in the near future to advise on the development of powered marine fisheries in Chile, Brazil and Iran.

In Ceylon at the end of 1951 there was not a single motor-powered fishing boat in operation except for one steam-trawler. In April 1953, following the visit of a 'mechanization team' the FAO supplied three small marine diesel engines to some Cingalese fishermen with the advice to 'try them and see'. There was no obligation to purchase. At the end of six months, however, they all jumped at the chance of buying the motors, while other fishermen in the area clamoured for them too. On the recommendation of the FAO, therefore, a further forty diesel engines are being provided under the Colombo Plan and will be sold to the fishermen on easy terms, whilst more are to follow.

A similar tale can be told of Saudi Arabia. This country – completely unmechanized when the FAO came on the scene at the end of 1952 – was impressed by the FAO's demonstration of the value of its off-shore fisheries. A company has been formed to exploit these resources, ice-plants are to be installed, small powered boats have been ordered, and the operation of modern power trawlers is planned in the near future.

A further demonstration of the capacity of a poor fishing community to make powered fishing pay has been carried out on the Indian coast north of Bombay under the guidance of the Bombay State Directorate of Fisheries. In this area until five or six years ago, fishermen were abjectly poor and perpetually in debt to the fish merchants who advanced

them money in the lean seasons and then fixed their own price for the catches they bought when the fishing was good. In this area it was not uncommon for the son who took over his father's boat to take over his grandfather's debts as well. The Bombay government sponsored the formation of dozens of fishing co-operatives, lent them money and gave advice on the switchover to power fishing. The few years since then have worked a revolution in the lives of these fishermen.

World's shipping at record level

THE WORLD'S MERCHANT SHIPPING TONNAGE reached a record total of 93,351,800 tons last year according to the annual report of Lloyd's Register of Shipping. This was 3,171,401 tons more than in 1952.

Lloyd's annual report listed the United States, the British Commonwealth and Norway as the three greatest owners of merchant shipping.

Britain remained the world's biggest builder of merchant shipping, launching 1,157,764 tons during 1953.

Tankers, which now comprise 23½ per cent of the global merchant fleet, totalled 21,963,397 tons last year, compared with 19,988,626 tons in 1952.

The report said that although the postwar shipbuilding boom seemed to have passed its peak in Britain and the United States, output continued to grow in Europe, particularly in West Germany.

The United States percentage of world tonnage now stands at 29.18, compared with 30.21 in 1952 and 31.33 in 1951. Total United States gross tonnage now is 27,236,876.

The British Commonwealth, including Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and India, remains in second place as a mercantile power, with 24,356,306 tons. That is 23.95 per cent of the world tonnage, and compares with 24.76 in 1952 and 25.40 in 1951.

Norway, with 6,262,700 tons, is still the world's third greatest shipping power. Her fleet is 6.71 per cent of the total, compared with 6.55 in 1952 and 6.67 in 1951.

Norway, Liberia, Japan, Germany, and Sweden showed the greatest fleet growth during the year ended June 30, 1953.

Tonnage under the United States, British and Greek flags showed decreased percentages, as did the Soviet Union, which however, retains its tenth place

among global fleets, with 2,292,330 tons. That is 2.46 per cent of the total, against 2.51 in 1952 and 2.55 in 1951.

Other nations' 1953 holdings in per cent of the world total and their gross tonnages were:

	Gross Tonnage	%
Argentina	1,057,499	1.13
Brazil	882,779	0.91
Honduras	470,858	0.50
Japan	3,250,412	3.48
Panama	3,906,901	4.18

The total number of ships completed to Lloyd's Register classification in the year under review (ending 30 June 1953) was 594, aggregating 2,948,631 tons. This represented an increase over the 1952 figure of 70 ships of 425,690 tons, and was nearly sixty per cent of the total tonnage built throughout the world in the year 1953.

Some significant trends in the composition and distribution of the world's merchant tonnage are to be noted in the report. Thus a table of flag distribution of world tonnage shows that, excluding the United States, the two nations which had the biggest increases are not among the traditional maritime countries. These are Liberia with just over one and a half per cent of world tonnage compared with nil in 1939, and Panama which has increased her share from 1.05 to 4.18 per cent.

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spare tires, chains, shovel, flashlight, fire extinguisher, flares and flags and first aid kit. We carry all these things now by right of our agreement and not just some of them that we happened to "swipe" from another outfit.'

'But what about actual driving conditions,' we ventured, 'are they so very different today?'

'Well, yes and no,' drawled Joe. 'Of course a forty-five-foot tandem outfit, weighing fifteen to twenty tons, takes a bit more handling than the old three to five ton open cab, stake body job. Paved roads, more power, air brakes and all the gadgets and conveniences of modern auto engineering, plus the constant mechanical service provided at most of the terminals, have just about eliminated road breakdowns.

'While it's still unpleasant, we don't worry so much about bad weather now. Most of my route is paved and if we do get caught in a snowstorm we have

chains, shovels and power enough to get through most of it. In any case, one is never very far from a telephone nowadays, and a call to our nearest base usually brings help in a short time, especially if you have a valuable or perishable load and while you wait you've a comfortable, weatherproof cab and can catch a bit of rest.

'The big problem is the amount of traffic on the road, especially on weekends. Sometimes I wonder where they all come from, and why some of them are allowed out without a guardian. There's still the odd "slow poke" who hugs the centre of the road at about twenty miles an hour and makes you either gear down or hit the shoulder to get past him, or, as is more often the case, her.

'On one of our north runs, through the thick bush, you've still got to be on the trigger every second watching for deer or other wild life that will be attracted by your headlights, dash into the road immediately ahead of you, or just stand there bewildered by the lights.

'Oh sure, there's more accident hazards than there used to be. Believe me, it's people in private cars who cause most of the accidents. I've no particular complaint against the so-called "speed fiend", as long as he knows what he's doing and can handle his vehicle. Most of them don't and can't. I'll bet that for every average-driver that observes the road signs there's six that either don't see them or deliberately ignore them. How some of them get a license in the first place is a never-ending mystery to me.'

'Like the guy that put one of my mates in hospital last week. Saturday afternoon it was and everybody and his dog hell-bent for the lakes and beaches, or summer camps. Eastbound traffic was practically bumper to bumper when this bird-brain, in a bigger hurry than the rest, pulls out of the string not more than 500 yards ahead of Ted, and coming straight at him. He can't get back into his own lane in time and Ted has the choice of plowing into him or taking the ditch. Ted's down to about twenty when he hits the ditch and he rolls over and burns. Sure! The other guy gets off scot free but poor Ted, because he had presence of mind and the guts to take the ditch instead of killing several people for sure, will lose about six weeks' work and may yet lose the eye that was damaged when he crashed the windshield.

'Now, you'd say Ted was in the clear as far as responsibility for that particular accident was concerned and so would most observers, but that ain't the way the National Safety Council scores it. According to their rigid rules, Ted should have anticipated the result when he first saw that nit-wit coming at him, pulled right over onto the shoulder and stopped. In the Safety Council's book that was an avoidable accident for Ted, which disqualifies him for the six months' safe driving bonus he'd earned. The point is that professional drivers seldom cause accidents but they generally get blamed for them.'

Draining his coffee cup in one big gulp, Joe rose from the stool and made ready to go, obviously upset about the unfortunate plight of his pal Ted. When we sauntered out towards his unit he shook his head and summed up the situation gloomily, 'No siree! You just can't win. Our bosses load us down with regulations, rules and penalties, chambers of commerce and citizen's committees, and the unions wage continuous safety campaigns, governments spend millions every year improving the highways, eliminating bad turns and curves, building overpasses and underpasses, plaster the roadside with every possible warning and direction signs, all in the interests of safety, until you'd think a guy'd have to go hunting for trouble. I guess that's what some of them do. Yet they go on, killing each other off at the rate of about 2,000 or more a year, and injuring another forty or fifty thousand, and the property damage reaches staggering figures, not to mention the lost time, court costs, advertising expense and, of course, the mental anguish and other sufferings of the bereaved families. All for what? Nothing that makes sense when compared to the cost.

'I don't know, maybe I'm old-fashioned. Maybe there's too much money around. Dealers make it too easy for the irresponsibles to get cars and it seems any Tom, Dick or Mary can get a license to drive, regardless of physical or mental condition, such as that pin-head that put Ted in hospital.'

The starter whirred, the huge motor groaned and then accelerated to a deafening roar and, as he slowly rolled that monster out toward the shining highway, his parting words were:

'Anyway you look at it, we pay one hell of a price for all we gain. So-long, thanks for the coffee.'

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
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BOURG MEXICO THE NETHERLANDS NETHERLANDS WEST INDIES NEW ZEALAND NORWAY NYASALAND
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SWEDEN SWITZERLAND SYRIA TRIESTE TRINIDAD TUNISIA URUGUAY UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



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