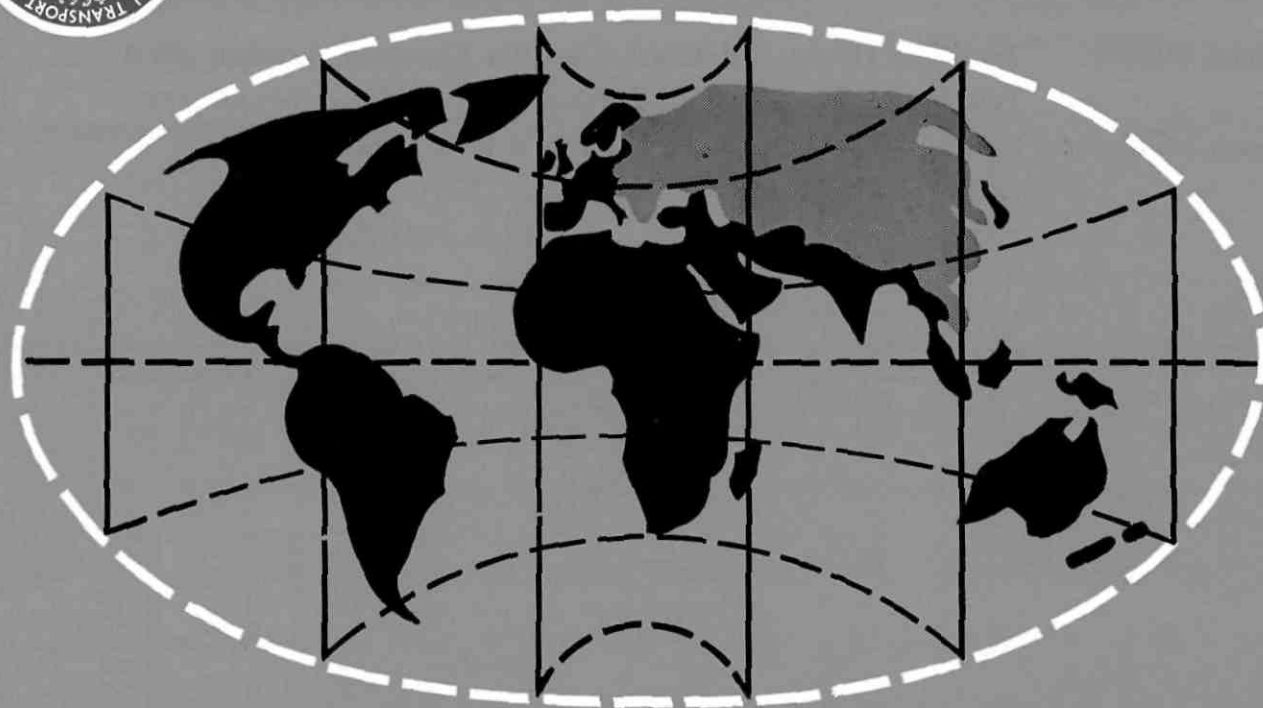




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ITF

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Forthcoming Meetings:

London 16-24 July Twenty-third Biennial Congress

Our Sixth London Congress

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

The County Hall, Westminster, seen across Westminster Bridge from the Houses of Parliament. Headquarters of the London County Council, it will be the scene this month of the ITF's 23rd Biennial Congress



ALTHOUGH IT IS NOW TWENTY-FOUR YEARS since our Federation held its last Congress in London, this city has seen more ITF Congresses than any other.*) This is not to be wondered at, since it was in London that our International first saw the light, in February 1897, under the name of *International Federation of Ship, Dock and River Workers*, and its foundation was due in no small measure to the initiative of four British transport workers' organizations – the *National Sailors' and Firemen's Union*, the *National Union of Dock Labourers*, the *Cardiff Coal Trimmers' Union*, and the *Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Workers' Union* – which formed a provisional committee of which Ben Tillett was Secretary.

At this 1897 Congress, two Englishmen, Tom Mann and Tom Chambers, were chosen as President and Secretary respectively. Upon them rested the responsibility of teaching the newly-established International its first steps.

A significant decision

The next Congress of the ITF to take place in London – that held from 14 to 16 June 1898 – was to have considerable significance for the future development of our Federation. It was, in fact, at this gathering that its transformation from an International based exclusively on

*) Five altogether if one counts the Conference of dockers and seamen, held on 30 July 1896 on the occasion of a Congress of the old Socialist International, at which it was first conceived.



One of the many quiet backwaters to be found in the heart of London. Shepherd Market, not very far from Piccadilly, is a wellknown shopping centre for anything from antiques to cabbages, with a morning coffee or a pint of beer thrown in

the maritime trades into one to which all transport workers from all countries of the world could belong was successfully proposed. This plan for an all-embracing international organization of transport workers was really the beginning of the ITF in its present-day form and it enabled the young Federation to escape the fate of numerous smaller international groupings which in the past have tried to represent the interests of one or two particular categories of workers, both in our industry and in others.

These facts alone show what an important part the British unions and their leaders have played in our movement, and what memories our 1954 Congress in London awakens.

In many ways the London Congresses of the ITF have been landmarks in its history. When our Federation was meeting for the fourth time in London, in 1913, it was pointed out that our International had become the greatest and strongest of the international trade secretariats, a fact which was undoubtedly a factor in its prompt reconstruction in 1919, immediately after the First World War.

Bridged the gulf between East and West

The 1930 London Congress also saw a significant event. For the first time it was possible to announce that delegates from the Far East were taking part, living witnesses of the fact that the ITF had succeeded in bridging the gulf artificially created between the workers of the East and West. Reference was made to the extraordinary growth and development of the ITF during the two previous years, as a result of the affiliation of organizations in non-European countries. Greater efforts had been made for the benefit of workers in underdeveloped countries, and regional activities



An institution which typifies the British Democracy at work – Orators' Corner, Hyde Park. Here anyone who feels like it can get up on his 'soap box' and hold forth to the crowd which inevitably gathers on any conceivable subject



One of London's most famous landmarks – St. Paul's Cathedral. Built after the Great Fire of London had destroyed its predecessor, Old St. Pauls, it was successfully to survive its own ordeal by fire during the Nazi air raids in the Second World War

had been started. The number of affiliated extra-European organizations had grown from ten to twenty in the course of the two years preceding the Congress. With justifiable pride it was pointed out that the ITF was the first and only international trade secretariat that had succeeded in gaining the confidence of workers not belonging to the white races, and that it already had within its ranks something like 200,000 seamen, dockers, railwaymen, motor drivers, etc., of other races.

British unions' generous support

But it is not only the fact that our constituent Congress was held here, and that many others succeeded it – to say nothing of innumerable sectional conferences and meetings of its governing bodies – that makes London a historical city for our International. We shall

never forget, but always remember with thankfulness, the way in which our British affiliated organizations gave practical proof of their feelings of international solidarity when the ITF transferred its headquarters to London, on the eve of the Second World War.

This is not the first time it has been referred to, and our British friends have already been given the praise they have earned so well, but there is certainly occasion to point out once more that it was thanks to their hospitality and generous support that the ITF was enabled to continue its work in so large a measure during the war and the years which immediately followed it.

Engraved on our memories

During these tragic years many of us set up our homes here in London. We were able to do our work in complete

freedom, were privileged to follow from close by the struggle of the British people in defence of democracy and the rule of law. The experience was such that it cannot but have remained indelibly engraved upon our memories. By the time the war came to an end confidence that it would be followed by a durable peace had returned to the minds of the workers of the world.

Since then, close on ten years have passed by. The ITF is stronger than it ever was. The progress that we have made, and the services we have been able to render to the transport workers of the world, are rightly a source of great satisfaction to us, and they will no doubt be regarded by our coming Congress as a warranty for the future of our movement. But we should be more inclined to give full rein to our satisfac-

(continued on the next page)

Social Security - the British way

IN GREAT BRITAIN TODAY, the State is directly responsible, through either central or local government authorities, for a range of services covering subsistence for the needy, education and health services for all, housing, employment or maintenance, the care of the aged and the handicapped, and the nutrition of mothers and children, besides sickness and industrial injury benefits, widows' and retirement pensions and children's allowances. Public authorities in Great Britain are spending some £2,000 million a year on social services, whilst the Exchequer expenditure in this field amounts to over a quarter of the central government expenditure.

The 1954-55 Civil Estimates for Pensions, National Insurance and National Assistance provide for expenditure of more than £412 million.

How it began

The present system of social security in Great Britain can be said to have been foreshadowed in 1601 by the passing of the Poor Law - a measure for the relief of destitution in old age. It was not until 1897 however that the first real step was taken, in the form of the Workmen's Compensation Act, towards recognition by the State that the family is the rudimentary unit of social need. An earlier Act - the Fatal Accidents Act of 1846 - had already made a slight inroad into the nineteenth century doctrine that the wage-earner's rights, his earning power and continued existence were no concern of the community. The Workmen's Compensation Act, however, was the first legislation in which an explicit acknowledgement of family needs was made in the legislation of Great Britain.

(continued from page 91)

tion were it not that our hopes of a durable peace have been severely shaken by the war operations in the Far East and the renewed competition in armaments, with all the dangers they imply for the peace of the world.

Indeed, nobody can deny that the danger of a new world conflagration will be with us so long as totalitarian governments are able to continue on their dictatorial course, and rob the workers of their elementary rights and freedoms.

Present tasks of the ITF

The struggle for social justice which we have carried on for so many years must therefore be coupled with the greatest possible effort to win freedom for all peoples, and to emancipate the workers

The Act laid down that, where a workman was killed when at work, or died as a consequence of an industrial accident or disease, all the members of his family who were wholly or in part dependent on his earnings could claim compensation; and that where young children were left, the amount of compensation should vary in accordance with the period during which they were presumed to remain dependent. Practically all subsequent legislation in the field of social security has recognized this principle of family responsibility.

Old age and health

The next step of any consequence after the establishment of workmen's compensation was the introduction of non-contributory old age pensions in 1908. Hitherto, the only public provision for the relief of destitution had been the Poor Law. Now, for the first time in the

from the heavy yoke of the dictatorial governments. Never has our duty towards the weak and the oppressed been so evident. The critical circumstances in which we live call more than ever for effective action. And as a vitally important section of the international working class movement the responsibility of the ITF cannot be exaggerated.

Of one thing we feel sure, and that is that the sixth Congress of the ITF to be held in London will, in its discussions and by its decisions, prove that it is alive to the seriousness of the times through which the working class, and its free trade union movement, are passing.

May our Congress stand out as a beacon in the fight for a better world, a world in which peace, justice and democracy prevail.

history of Great Britain, a system was introduced whereby a fixed sum of money was paid each week to persons of either sex on reaching the age of seventy. The pension was very small, it is true, but at least the recipient was entitled to the payment as of right and was not dependent on the generosity of a relieving officer. The scheme was thus freed from the eleemosynary taint of the Poor Law.

The Old Age Pensions Act of 1908 was closely followed by the National Health Insurance Act (1911). As consolidated in 1936, the Act provided compulsory health insurance for all manual workers, and for all non-manual workers earning up to £ 420 a year. The scheme was financed by equal contributions from employer and employee together with a grant of varying proportions from the State.

National Health Insurance was administered by a large number of insurance companies - the so-called Approved Societies. These bodies, operated as separate sections by a number of organizations such as friendly societies, trade unions, commercial insurance companies, etc. comprised a great variety of institutions, with membership varying from 100 to 1,000,000. In all there were more than 7,000 of these societies and branches in existence. The only condition they were required to fulfil in order to become approved was that they should not be run for profit and that they should be under the exclusive control of their members. All were required to pay the benefits provided by the Act and to submit to Government audit. They had powers, however, to reject any person they considered a bad insurance risk - i.e. the very people most in need of a scheme of social security. Such persons became 'deposit contributors' under the Ministry of Health and received benefits only in proportion to their own contributions.

Barely adequate

The health insurance scheme provided three types of benefit: cash, medical and maternity. Sickness benefits were payable for twenty-six weeks. If the illness lasted longer, these were replaced by



The Houses of Parliament seen across the river from Lambeth Bridge House. Although the Parliament at Westminster has no rival there are other British Parliaments, e.g. those in the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, which legislate on domestic matters

disablement benefits at a lower rate which continued indefinitely. Medical facilities entitled the insured person to free medical treatment, but not to hospital or specialist treatment. Dental and optical treatment were also excluded. Maternity benefit amounted to a grant of £2 on confinement (doubled if the wife was herself a contributor), but no allowance was made to meet the charges for the services of a doctor or midwife. All these benefits were subject to a qualifying period during which the insured person had to have made a certain number of contributions.

All in all, the scheme cannot be described as other than barely adequate. It did not, for example, include the wife, children or other dependants of the contributor to the scheme – a serious defect from the standpoint of social security. The inadequacy of the cover provided may be gauged from the fact that in 1938 there were some thirty-five million people in families where the chief wage-earner was getting £5 a week or less, yet

there were only seventeen million insured persons in National Health Insurance. Also significant during this period was the vast growth of the Hospital Savings Association, a voluntary organization with several million members who thus sought to supplement the meagre benefits allowed them under the national health insurance scheme.

Widows' and orphans' pensions

In 1925 there was passed the first of the Acts to provide pensions for widows, their dependent children, orphans, and old persons between sixty-five and seventy. (At seventy, both widows' and contributory old age pensions were automatically succeeded by old age pensions at the full rate). Here again the contributory principle was adopted and the new pensions grafted into the arrangements already in existence under the National Health Insurance Act. Thus for the first time provision was made, by means of compulsory State organization and subsidization from the National

Exchequer, for the wives and children of men whose death had deprived the household of its main source of income. This legislation is of special significance as marking the final abandonment of the idea that the wage-earner can properly be expected to make provision, by his own unaided efforts and habits of thrift, to meet the major contingencies of life caused by death, old age, sickness and unemployment.

Aid for the unemployed

The outstanding economic and social problem which Great Britain had to face during the first part of the twentieth century was unemployment. In 1911 Parliament passed an Act designed to mitigate the worst aspects of this evil. The unemployment insurance scheme established under the Act, which came into force in 1912, was at first limited in scope. Railwaymen for example were amongst those excluded from its provisions on the grounds that their employment was of a permanent character.

Later however the scheme was extended to include the majority of employed persons, so that in 1942 some 15,000,000 contributors were entitled to draw benefits in the event of unemployment as against 2 millions when the scheme was first started.

As with the health scheme, unemployment insurance was financed by contributions from employers and employees, supplemented by a grant from the State. Women paid less and consequently received less in the way of benefit. There was also a separate scheme for agricultural and forestry workers. Benefits were small and conditional on the claimant having sufficient 'credits' in the form of weekly contribution stamps.

Furthermore, a person's claim was deemed exhausted if a certain number of benefits had been drawn in any one benefit year (180 days originally, but reduced to 156 in 1933 during the period of the slump). Payments were made through Labour Exchanges but arrangements were made whereby those trade unions making payments to their unemployed members could pay the State benefit along with their own. The British trade unions naturally appreciated this as a means of keeping in

touch with their unemployed members.

The relief of destitution

It is clear that the statutory relief afforded in the way of pensions, health and unemployment insurance benefits, etc., did no more than lighten the burden of poverty or act as a temporary stopgap. There were still many people who, for one reason or another, were in need. Such persons – those whose pensions were insufficient to assure them a minimum standard of living, or the unemployed who had either run out of benefit or whose entitlement did not cover their modest needs – were obliged to turn to public assistance for relief. This was provided, both in cash or in kind, by the local authorities charged with the administration of the Poor Law, or Public Assistance as it came to be called. The relief thus given had one outstanding merit – there was no question of attempting to apply 'insurance principles' and assistance was consequently related to need.

With the increase of social legislation, the extent to which the needy fell a direct burden on the local rates was diminished. During the worst years of the economic depression of the 1930s, for

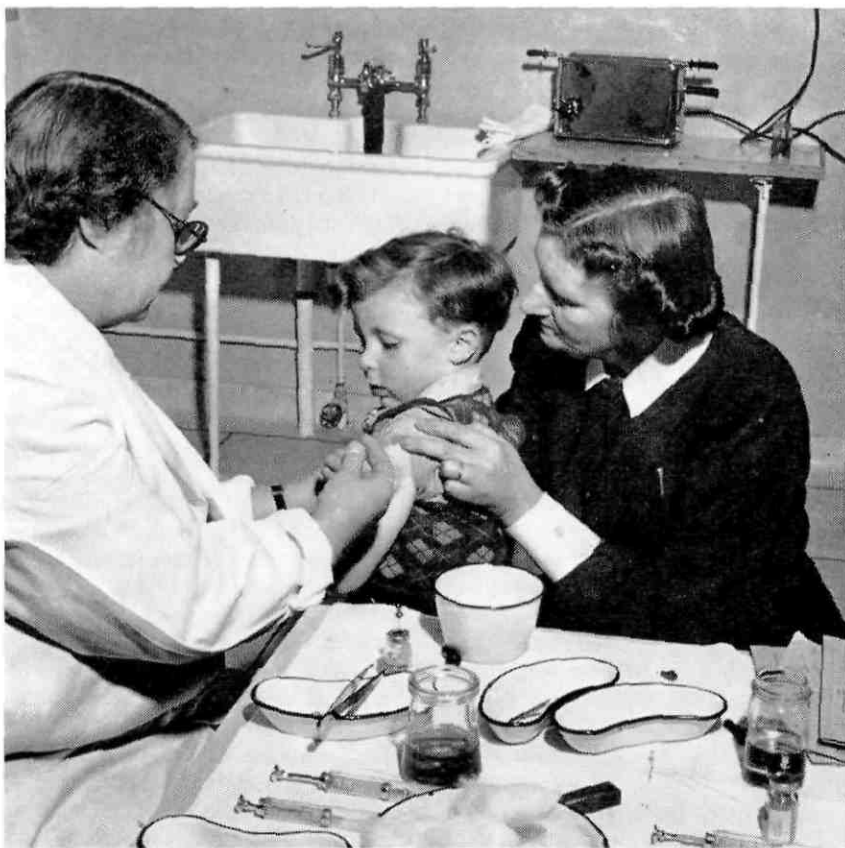
example, the problem of long-term unemployment grew to such proportions that a special board, the Unemployment Assistance Board, was established in 1934 to administer relief to the unemployed workers who were on the borderline of destitution. Later, the Board took over other categories including the aged, and, re-named the Assistance Board, developed into a nation-wide relief agency administering needs payments according to uniform scales.

Present social welfare system

The foregoing gives a general picture of the state of social security in Great Britain before the outbreak of the Second World War. The system was full of anomalies and inconsistencies and was badly in need of unification. The opportunity came during the war itself. Under the impact of war, it seemed that the whole country had become 'social security minded' – perhaps turning to this field as a relief from the uncertainties of the war and the dawning atomic age. In this field at least human endeavour held out a promise of results both positive and beneficial.

Thus, while the war was actually in progress – and its outcome still uncertain – plans were formulated for post-war reconstruction. These included a review of the country's social insurance system. The Committee entrusted with this task published its report (the Beveridge Report) in 1942. It recommended the creation of a comprehensive and unified system of social insurance, and the present social security structure of Great Britain is based almost entirely on the Committee's recommendations.

The family allowances scheme was the first part of the new system to be introduced. It started in August 1946 and provided an allowance of 5s. a week (subsequently raised to 8s.) for every child after the first until school-leaving age (fifteen). At the beginning of 1953, some 4,800,000 family allowances were being paid to more than three million families in Great Britain.



Preventive medicine is one of the most important aspects of the health insurance scheme. At this immunization clinic babies are immunized against diphtheria and whooping cough and given vaccinations against smallpox. Photo reproduced by kind permission of the British Central Office of Information

National Insurance Scheme

The new national insurance scheme, which came into full operation in July 1948, provides a wide range of benefits: sickness, unemployment, maternity and widows' benefits, guardian's allowance, retirement pension and death grant. Industrial injuries benefits, however, formed the subject of separate legislation.

All persons over school-leaving age living in Great Britain are covered by the scheme which, for contribution purposes, divides the employable population into three classes.

Class 1 – by far the greater number, amounting to 21½ millions – consists of those who work for an employer. Class 2 includes selfemployed persons, i.e. those in business on their own account (about 1½ millions), whilst Class 3 covers non-employed persons, numbering about half a million. Married women who are engaged in household duties only are covered by their husbands' insurance.

Contributions in the case of employed persons are paid weekly and amount to 10s. 9d., of which the employer pays 5s. The rates for women and boys and girls are lower. Self-employed persons pay 7s. 5d. and non-employed persons 5s. 7d. Only employed persons are covered by the full range of benefits. Those in the other two classes are entitled to only a limited range.

Benefits provided

The standard weekly rate for sickness benefit for a man or woman over eighteen (except a married woman) is 32s. 6d. with an increase of 21s. 5d. for an adult dependant and 10s. 6d. a week for the first child under school-leaving age, with 2s. 6d., in addition to any family allowance payable, for each other child. The rate for a married woman is 22s., but she is entitled to 32s. 6d. if she is maintaining an invalid husband or is separated from her husband and not receiving financial support from him. The benefit is payable for one year, but continues as long as sickness lasts if 156 contributions have been paid.

The rate of unemployment benefit is the same as for sickness except that insured married women get 26s. instead of 22s. It is paid in the first place for 180 working days, but may be continued up to a maximum of nineteen months if the insured person has a good record of contributions as against benefits drawn.



Better family health services This health centre is also the headquarters of the town's child welfare service. Any mother of young children such as those shown here can attend the centre for guidance, advice and special foods. Such centres are to be found in communities of all sizes throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain

Maternity benefits consist of a maternity grant of £9 for all confinements and a maternity allowance of 32s. 6d. a week for eighteen weeks. A home confinement grant of £3 is paid where the mother is not confined in free accommodation under the National Health Service. To draw the maternity allowance, working women must satisfy

certain contribution conditions.

Widow's benefit is payable on the deceased husband's insurance. There are three kinds of benefit. A Widow's Allowance of 42s. 6d. a week is paid for thirteen weeks together with 10s. 6d. a week for the first child and 2s. 6d. a week for any other child under school-leaving age (in addition to family allow-



The majority of the pensions and allowances payable under the social insurance schemes are paid out across the counter of the Post Office. 'Pensions day' means a busy time for all post office staff

6d. for the first child under school-leaving age and 2s. 6d. for any other child in addition to the family allowance. Additional benefits conferred under the National Insurance Act are a Guardian's Allowance of 15s. a week paid to any person having the care of an orphaned child, and a Death Grant of up to £20 towards the funeral expenses of an adult. A somewhat smaller sum is payable in the case of a child.

Industrial Injuries

The Workmen's Compensation scheme was replaced by the Industrial Injuries scheme in July 1948. Injury, disablement and death benefits are paid, the latter, payable to the dependants, varying with the degree of relationship and the extent of maintenance during lifetime. A widow receives a pension of 42s. 6d. a week for the first thirteen

weeks. Thereafter she gets a pension of 37s. a week if she is over fifty or incapable of self-support or if there is a child to be looked after. In other cases the pension is 20s. a week. In addition, an allowance of 10s. 6d. is paid for the first child and 2s. 6d. for any other child.

In the event of death resulting from industrial injury, certain other dependants, such as parents, are also entitled to pensions, allowances or gratuities. The amounts vary according to the closeness of the relationship and the extent to which the deceased contributed to their maintenance.

If an insured person is incapable of work as a result of an industrial accident or disease, he receives an injury benefit of 55s. a week for a maximum of twenty-six weeks. In addition, he gets 21s. 6d. for an adult dependant, 10s. 6d. for a first child and 2s. 6d. for any other child (over and above family allowances payable). After this period, the injured person is assessed on the degree of disablement, the benefit payable varying from 55s. a week for full disablement to 11s. a week for twenty per cent disablement. If disablement is less than twenty

ances). This is followed by a Widowed Mother's Allowance of 43s. a week in the case of a widow who has a child. She also receives 2s. 6d. a week, in addition to any family allowance, for each child after the first. A woman who is over fifty at the time of her husband's death, draws a Widow's Pension of 32s. 6d. a week provided she has been married ten years. The same pension is paid to a widow who is incapable of self-support.

Today, in Great Britain, men and women are encouraged not to retire at minimum pension age, but to continue at work. By doing so, they can earn a larger retirement pension. The standard pension, payable at sixty-five for men and sixty for women, is 32s. 6d. a week (21s. 6d. a week in the case of a married woman qualifying on her husband's insurance). This is increased by 1s. 6d. a week for every six months a man or woman stays at work between sixty-five and seventy (for men) or sixty and sixty-five (for women). A retirement pensioner may also be entitled to an increase of 21s. 6d. a week for his wife while she is under sixty, and to 10s.

Mothers who go out to work can safely leave their children at such a nursery as this, secure in the knowledge that they are in expert hands. Playtime is over for the moment, and the children are now being got ready for taking home



per cent, a gratuity is paid ranging up to £185. This benefit may be increased in certain circumstances, e.g. if the injured person is unfit to return to his former job or work of a similar standard.

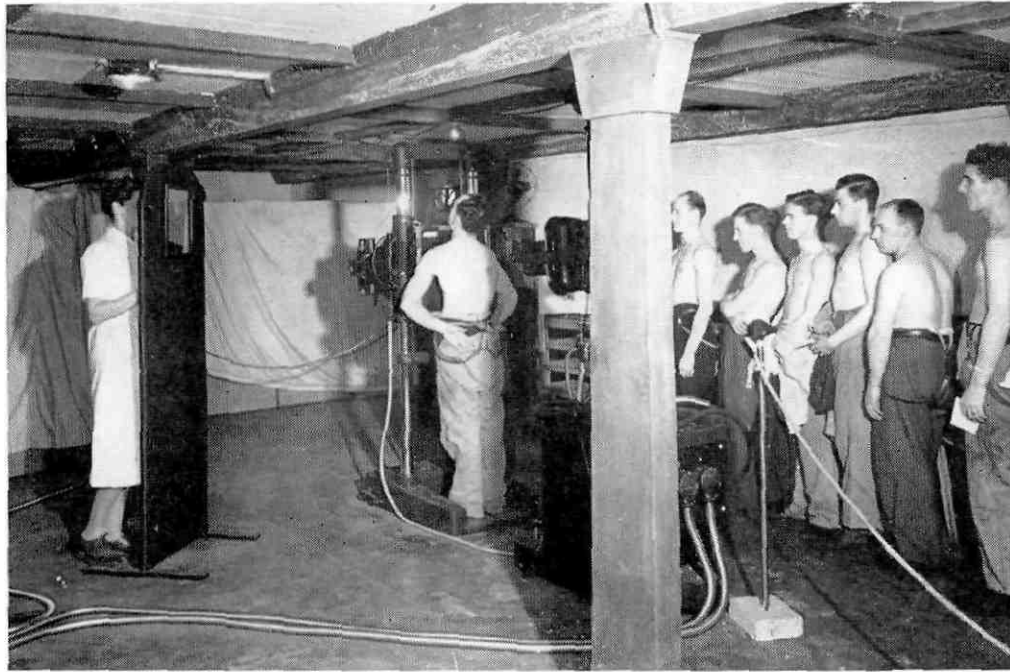
The National Health Service

The new health service also came into force at the same time (July 1948). It provides free medical service over a wide range and is available to all. A few charges were subsequently introduced, without however altering the basically free character of the services provided. These include general medical as well as hospital and specialist services, dental and ophthalmic treatment, maternity and child welfare, health visiting and after-care of the sick.

The hospital and specialist services include tuberculosis sanatoria, convalescent homes, rehabilitation centres and all forms of specialized treatment. At the end of 1952, there were in the Service in England and Wales, some 2,688 hospitals with 468,255 beds and a nursing and midwifery staff of 140,964 full-time and 26,642 part-time nurses. A small number of hospitals remain outside the Service. These are mostly run by religious orders. In addition, there are today in Great Britain, some 5,400 child welfare centres, 1,890 ante-natal and 350 post-natal clinics. Post-natal facilities include the provision of health visitors who give expert advice on such matters as feeding and the general care of the baby. A free service of vaccination against smallpox and immunization against diphtheria is also provided. The success of the latter campaign has been very marked. In 1952 there were only thirty-nine deaths from diphtheria compared with 3,159 in 1941.

National assistance

Although a wide range of benefits is provided under the present social welfare schemes in Great Britain, there is still a large number of people whose resources are insufficient to assure them a minimum standard of living. Such persons are assisted by the National Assistance Board in accordance with fixed scales laid down in 1948 when the new Act came into force. Thus, ignoring rent, a married couple is entitled to financial assistance to the amount which would bring their income up to 59s. a week, whilst, on the same basis, the rate for a single householder is 35s. Other rates range from 31s. for a person over twenty-



A mass radiography unit at work. In addition to its permanent centres, the radiography service also operates a number of mobile units. The one shown here is visiting a factory in the Sheffield district. (Central Office of Information photograph)

one to 11s. for a child under five. The rent paid is then added to this. Thus a married couple with two children and paying a rent of 20s. should have an income of 111s. a week according to the national assistance scales, and financial assistance would be given to the extent that the effective income (including any social welfare benefits being drawn) fell below this amount.

The comprehensive nature of social welfare in Great Britain today means that such destitution as was only too common in the 'good old days' has effectively been chased from the land. It should not be overlooked however, that the country is at present enjoying a period of comparatively full employment. This happy state of affairs is not entirely dependent on an enlightened social and industrial policy being pursued by governments. In a country so highly industrialized as Great Britain, world economic factors, over which no individual national government can exercise much control, also play an important and unpredictable role in determining the standard of living. Whatever the economic uncertainties of the future may be, however, one thing is certain – that Britain's social welfare system, unchanged in its essentials, has come to stay.

An acknowledgement

THE EDITOR would like to take this opportunity of acknowledging his indebtedness to the following authorities and institutions who kindly assisted in the provision of illustrative material for this London Congress Issue:

British Overseas Airways Corporation
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Fox Photos
The Marconi International Marine Communication Company Limited
and the British transport unions affiliated with the ITF



The transport worker in USDAW

by Frank Knowles, National Officer, USDAW

THE ABSENCE OF THE WORD 'TRANSPORT' in the title of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers has on occasion caused some to ask where transport workers fit into the organization and why. The words 'distributive workers' answer this point but a brief history of the coming into existence of the USDAW will show even more clearly what an integral and important part transport workers are of the organization and, in consequence, the services the organization has been able to give to transport workers.

The USDAW is the result of a number of amalgamations designed to bring into one union the workers employed in the retail and wholesale food and dry goods trades, and the manufacturing industries making consumer goods, particularly food commodities, and trades ancillary to such industries.

The main tributary of the present Union was the old Amalgamated Union of Co-operative Employees, an Association which wholly concentrated on the organization of workers in the retail and wholesale sections of the Co-operative Movement. The Co-operative Movement operated their own transport units and, therefore, the needs of these workers were of paramount importance and their numerical strength played a vital and effective role in the securing of agreements covering wage rates and conditions of employment. The joining of the AUCE and the Warehouse Workers' Union in 1921 increased the number and influence of the transport section of the combined Union known as the NUDAW (National Union of Distributive and Al-

Where transport workers and shop workers overlap. An up-to-date mobile shop brings the goods to residents in outlying districts. The salesman is also the driver of the vehicle. Many members of USDAW combine these two functions



lied Workers).

The taking over of the Journeymen Butchers and finally the amalgamation in 1947 of the NUDAW with the National Union of Shop Assistants brought into existence the USDAW, now the sixth largest Union in Great Britain.

The USDAW membership totals some 350,000 workers employed in the various sections of the retail trades and food manufacturing, and transport workers connected with the foregoing trades and industries. It will be recognized that a very large number of transport workers are engaged in these industries and the recruitment of transport workers is confined to these indus-

The solidarity and trade union spirit of the transport workers, backed by the combined resources of the total membership, have been able to secure agreements on wages and working conditions from the various groups of employers. All these agreements lay down weekly wage rates, hours of work, holidays, etc. and the majority of them also include provisions for the payment of wages during sickness. The Union has for many years considered that after a worker has given almost a lifetime of service to an employer, he should be entitled to retire from work at least at sixty-five years of age and receive a reasonable pension. Efforts to that end have been

breach of some part of the law quite unintentionally and unwittingly.

It is interesting to point out some of what might appear to be minor matters which are considered offences in Great Britain if committed by the transport worker. Whilst it would be impossible in a short article of this character to set out all the items under this heading, the following are worthy of note -.

To create excessive noise.

To leave a stationary vehicle with the engine running.

To leave a stationary vehicle with headlights on or parked on the wrong side of the road during hours of darkness.



Part of a fleet of modern tankers used for the bulk transport of milk. USDAW organizes only those transport workers employed by firms which operate their own fleet of vehicles to transport the goods in which they deal - the so-called 'C' licence vehicles

tries, which are known in Great Britain as 'C' licence operators.

It might be useful to state that in Great Britain the law lays down three categories of licences - 'A' 'B' and 'C'. 'A' licence holders are entitled to use their vehicles for the carriage of goods for hire or reward; 'B' licence holders are entitled to use vehicles either for the carriage of goods in connection with any trade or business carried on by them or can, subject to certain conditions, carry goods for hire or reward; 'C' licence holders can only use their vehicles for the carriage of goods in connection with any trade or business carried on by them. The Union does not recruit workers in the 'A' and 'B' licence group.

made and negotiations have secured the introduction of pension schemes which cover a large part of the union's transport membership.

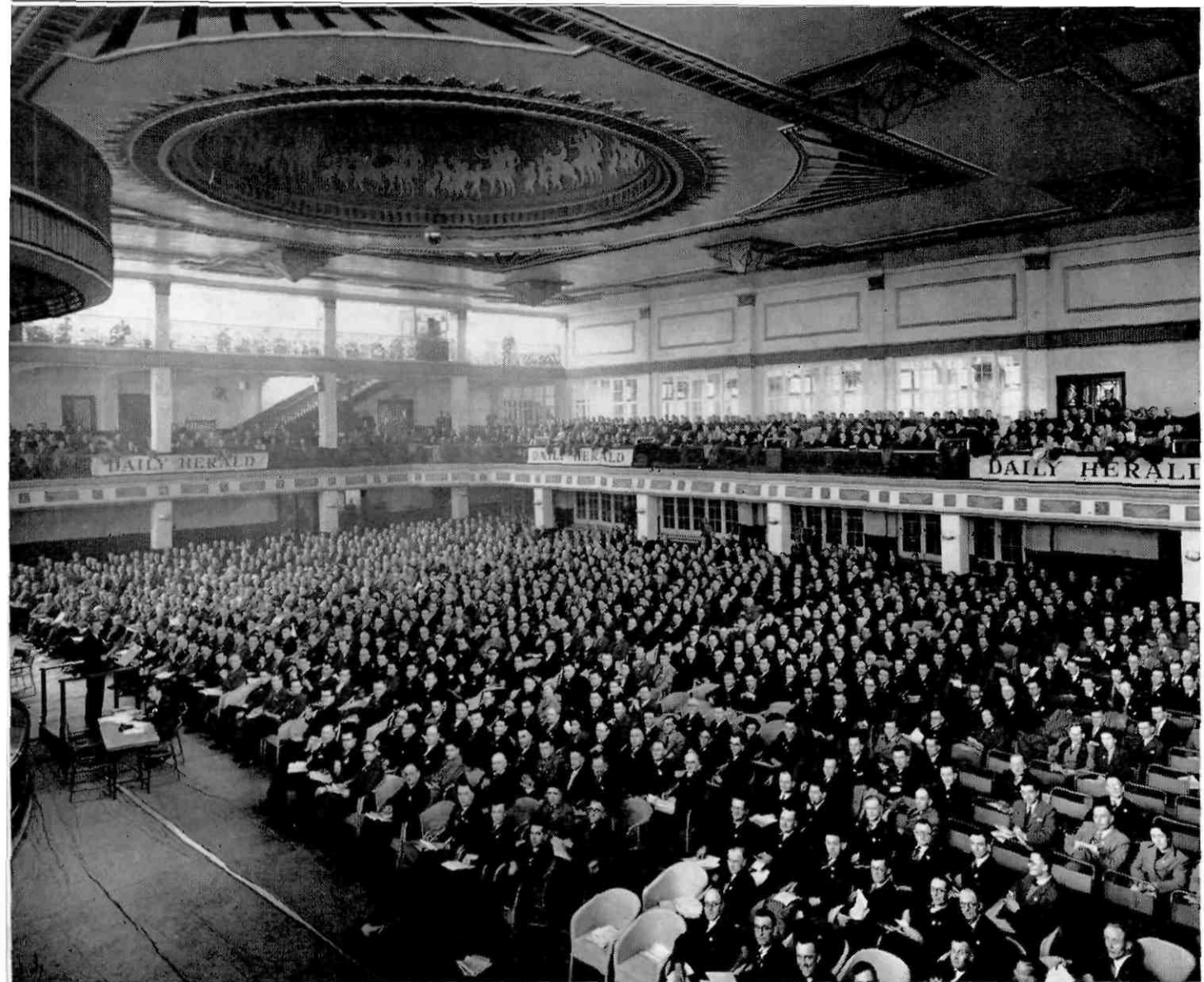
Besides the basic function of protecting and improving the living standards of the workers, the organization has a Legal Department whose services are at the disposal of the transport worker. This department has been of exceptional service to this group of our membership because it is well known by anyone connected with transport that, in addition to the normal difficulties which all workers encounter in their work-a-day life, a transport worker is faced with the intricate and complicated provisions of the law and it is so easy to commit a

To park a vehicle that might cause unnecessary obstruction.

To leave the vehicle without setting the handbrakes securely.

To sound a motor horn when a vehicle is stationary or between the hours of 11.30 p.m. and 7 a.m. where street lighting exists or in a built-up area.

The defence in the Courts is undertaken of members committing any of these and other offences or as a result of being involved in accidents. Where the offences or accidents arise and the driver can be said to be mainly responsible, due to recklessness or gross carelessness, the question of defence is examined in each case, having regard to the circumstances surrounding the particular inci-



A section of the delegates assembled at the union's annual Parliament. USDAW, the sixth largest union in Great Britain, has a membership of approximately 350,000 and a proud record of successful negotiation, including the introduction of a pension scheme

dent. It can be said with confidence that the protection given by the Trade Union in this matter of the law and accidents has been of immeasurable value. It should be stated that the Union has never indulged in paying the fines of its members who have been prosecuted and convicted. The transport workers themselves consider this to be a very correct policy.

The past record of the work done on behalf of transport workers is such that they are rightly proud of the achievements but there is still much work to be done and changing circumstances, both in respect of the character of employment and of changes in the law, present problems that have got to be overcome.

The introduction into retail trading of

the mobile or travelling shop has brought very significant and difficult problems. The workers in charge of these vehicles have to perform the combined duties and responsibilities of a transport driver and a salesman. This form of trade appeared before the war but has grown rapidly since 1946. Indeed a recent survey revealed that, at the end of 1953, the Co-operative Movement alone was operating over 2,500 of these mobile shops whereas in 1946 the number was only about 750.

The Union has naturally given particular attention to this matter and the need to provide wage rates and working conditions commensurate with the additional responsibilities involved and, in so doing, the safeguarding of the al-

ready established standards of the Shop Managers and shop assistants in the other type of shop has been required and very lengthy discussions and negotiations have had to be conducted in obtaining the agreements that now protect the members who undertake this employment.

In order that appropriate machinery should exist to serve adequately the various occupational needs, as well as the general interests of the members, the structure of the organization has been carefully designed, and what is termed 'trade machinery' operates, whereby National Trade Conferences are held for each trade and occupational group. The function of this machinery is to ensure

(continued on page 104)

The Transport Salaried Staff's Association

by **W. J. P. Webber**, General Secretary, TSSA

FIFTY YEARS AND MORE AGO wages and other conditions of employment on the Railways of Great Britain were appallingly bad for all grades of workers – operative, clerical, administrative and supervisory. Rates of pay were wretchedly low and bore little or no relation to the value of the duties performed and the responsibilities carried. They differed widely as between railway company and railway company – there were over 120 of them – and between office and office for comparable work. Upon the goodwill or the petty spite of little chiefs depended largely the granting or refusal of meagre increases in pay.

Hours of duty were virtually unlimited – a twelve-hour day was quite usual, except in headquarters' offices – and there was no additional payment for overtime or Sunday duty. Annual leave often did not exceed a week or ten days, frequently had to be taken in the winter months, and was sometimes withheld altogether. Other conditions were just as bad, and office accommodation at depots and stations was inadequate and dirty, and ventilation and lighting so poor that tuberculosis and eye troubles were rampant among railway clerks.

Yet in spite of these conditions the great majority of the Salaried Staff were opposed to the idea of trade unionism. They felt that they were too respectable to follow the example of the manual workers on the Railways who had begun to form trade unions from 1865 onwards, and it was not until May, 1897 that a few clerks met in Sheffield to form what they bravely called 'The Pioneer Lodge' of the 'National Association of General Railway Clerks', a title which was changed the following year to the 'Railway Clerks' Association' (RCA).

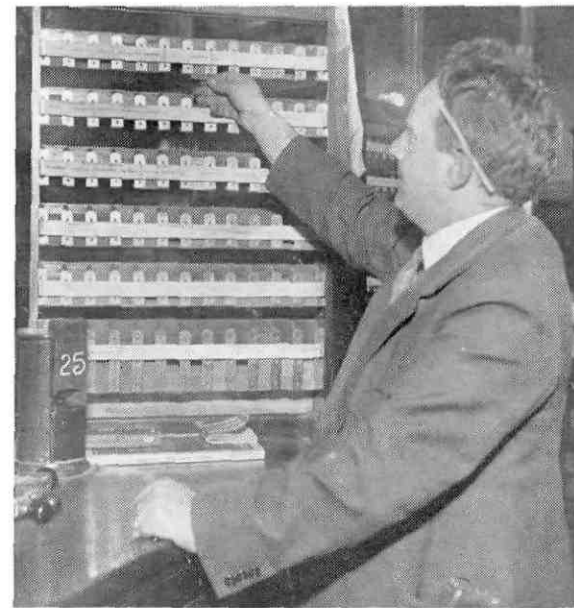
Opposition on two fronts

The early pioneers had to fight the opposition not only of the employing railway companies but of their colleagues, whom they were trying to help. Membership grew very slowly, and more than ten years had elapsed before it reached ten thousand, only to fall below that figure for another four years. It was not until the middle of World War I that the

Association could claim to have organized fifty per cent of the 100,000 eligible for membership.

But although the RCA was so small in numbers in the early years of this century, it was big in outlook and endeavour. That the pioneers of the Association were progressive in outlook is demonstrated by the fact that as early as 1903 they affiliated the Association to the Trades Union Congress and in 1909 to the Labour Party. They realized that to achieve its aims the Association must take its stand alongside the organized workers by hand and brain, and that it would have to fight battles on the political as well as the industrial field. Those affiliations paid handsome dividends, for the TUC and the Labour Party gave valuable assistance to the RCA in its struggle for existence against the intimidation practised by the Railway Managements. For example, one Railway Company forbade its Headquarters' clerks to become trade unionists and banished those who defied the ban to small country stations. When that Company submitted a Bill to Parliament seeking additional powers, the RCA asked the Labour Party to block the Bill in order to provide an opportunity for public discussion on this ban on trade union membership. Victory was achieved and the right of all staff, irrespective of their position, to join a trade union was established.

During these early years, too, successful action was taken by the Association, by all means open to it, to secure im-



proved rates of pay, better working conditions, payments for overtime and Sunday duty, and other improvements. Deputations to Boards of Directors were carefully briefed by the handful of RCA full time officials, led by that great architect of the Association, the late A.G. (later Lord) Walkden, who also laid the foundations for the greatly improved Superannuation Funds of today by evidence he gave before Government Committees, and for the provision in all subsequent transport legislation of protection and compensation for staff dismissed or otherwise adversely affected as a result of amalgamations or, finally, nationalization.

Refused to recognize Association

It should be understood that, so opposed were the Railway Managements to trade unionism amongst their clerical and supervisory staffs, they declined to recognize the Association or to meet its representatives, even at the end of World War I when membership had reached 71,000 and was still growing rapidly. At the beginning of 1919 therefore the RCA demanded full recognition and discussion of its programme for improved and standard rates of pay and conditions of service, and fixed a time limit after which its members would cease work unless recognition had been accorded. It was not until within a few minutes of the time limit being reached that the employers gave way, and indeed, in many places members had already come out on strike before the news of the



The modern ticket office in the Eastern Section Booking Hall at London's Victoria Station. Badly damaged during the Blitz and now entirely rebuilt, it is equipped with 'Bellmatic' ticket machines and provides six windows for obtaining tickets

settlement reached them. Strike action had again to be threatened before satisfactory settlements were reached covering the rates of pay and conditions of service of the Railway Salaried Staff.

With the passing of the 1921 Act amalgamating some 123 railway companies into four, the RCA was brought into the machinery of negotiation which was then established, and it has played its full part on behalf of its members in the operation of that machinery throughout the ensuing thirty-three years. Between the two World Wars the RCA, like all other unions, was forced on the defensive during the years of depression, but it succeeded in maintaining intact the salary scales and main conditions of service negotiated during 1919 and 1930.

In 1926 the Association took part in the General Strike called in defence of the miners against their employers' attacks on their wages and hours, and again in common with the other participating unions the RCA suffered its casualties and loss of membership, which it did not fully regain until the eve of the second World War. Since then the Association has gone on from strength to strength and its membership has now reached an all time record of over 92,500, including some 20,000 women.

No full-time organizers

The membership has been built up to this high figure entirely by the self-sacrificing and voluntary efforts of Divisional Council and Branch Officers and ac-



A resplendent figure in his top hat, morning suit, and white gloves is Mr Chapman, Stationmaster at Victoria Station

tive members, for the Association does not employ full time paid organizers but relies upon the enthusiasm of the members themselves to organize non-unionists into the Association. As the older members relinquish office or go into retirement, younger men and women come forward to fill the gaps and carry on the good work. To help them to be better and more efficient trade unionists the Association provides educational facilities through the Workers' Educational Association, the Workers' Educational Trade Union Committee and the National Council of Labour Colleges, arranges annually a Residential Summer School lasting a full week for fifty students, most of them usually under thirty years of age, and encourages Di-

visional Councils to hold Weekend Schools in their respective areas for the purpose of inspiring and training the younger members in particular as potential Branch and Council officers.

The Association's monthly Journal, the 'Transport Salaried Staff Journal', which has just celebrated its golden jubilee, has during the last fifty years played its full part in educating the membership and keeping them informed on current activities, and is a useful propaganda medium. It does not confine itself to purely domestic affairs but throws its columns open to national and international matters, as a contribution towards the wider workers' movements in this country and abroad.

Extended its activities

From its earliest days the Association campaigned for nationalization of railways, and with the advent of road transport advocated the policy of nationalization of all forms of inland transport in the public interest. Indeed, alone of all transport unions, it produced a detailed blue-print of a form of nationalized transport, and the Labour Government's Act of 1947 bears in many respects a close resemblance to the scheme hammered out by the R.C.A. With the coming of nationalization the Association, in fraternal agreement with the Transport and General Workers' Union, extended its activities to cover the Salaried Staff of the newly nationalized road haulage industry, and this expansion brought into active consideration the continued suitability of the name 'Railway Clerks' Association'. The Association now catered for Road Haulage, Docks and Hotels Salaried Staff, so that the word 'Railway' was too narrow. It had in membership not only clerks, but station-masters, goods agents, supervisors – and the professional and technical grades for whom it had won recognition and national agreements in 1944 – and also a substantial number of Railway officers, so that the word 'Clerks' had become quite inappropriate. It is not surprising, therefore, that the decision was eventually reached, though not without a great deal of nostalgic reluctance, to relinquish a title which had

In the control room, experienced traffic controllers keep in touch with events on their section of the railway network, make decisions which minimize delays to trains. They are members of the TSSA

gained such prestige and honour in the trade union and political movements, to change the Association's name to that which it now bears: 'The Transport Salaried Staffs' Association'.

The TSSA is, of course, fully recognized by the British Transport Commission and its component parts, is party to all schemes of negotiating machinery covering Salaried Staff, and is represented on the BTC Joint Consultative Committee, the Joint Consultative Committee, the Joint Advisory Councils for Welfare, and the Joint Training and Education Advisory Councils set up by British Railways and some of the other BTC undertakings.

Broadest democratic principles

It is hardly necessary to say that the TSSA is based on the broadest democratic principles. Its members are grouped in some 434 branches, each one of which is entitled to send one to three delegates, according to branch membership, to the Association's supreme authority – the annual Conference, which decides policy and lays down the programme of activities to be carried out during the ensuing twelve months.

Between annual Conferences the affairs of the Association are managed by an Executive Committee of thirty members, including the President and Treasurer, who are both elected annually by Conference. The Branches of the Association are grouped into twenty Divisional Councils on a geographical basis

(two in Ireland), plus a Divisional Council covering the members employed by London Transport. Each Divisional Council forms an electoral district which elects, by individual vote of the membership in that area, a member to the Executive Committee for a period of three years. E.C. members are eligible for re-election for a further period of three years, but are not then eligible for re-election until a further period of three years has elapsed.

The remaining seven members of the Executive Committee are – as to one a Stationmaster, Agent, Railway Supervisor or Inspector; as to one a Workshop Supervisor; as to one a Woman or Girl Clerk; as to one a member of the Professional and Technical Staffs; as to one a member of the Docks Staffs; as to one a member of the Hotels Staffs; and as to one a member of the Road Haulage Staffs. They, too, are elected for a period of three years, with right to re-election as indicated above, but they are elected by vote of all Branches of the Association.

It will be seen, therefore, that the Executive Committee is not only democratically elected but is representative of all sections of the membership. All members of the permanent staff of the Association are appointed by the Executive Committee, with the exception of the General Secretary, who is elected by Annual Conference and remains in office until he reaches retiring age, resigns, or is removed from office





Moving the cursors with practised hands, a woman weigh clerk quickly checks the weight of a lorry and its load. She too is one of those organized in the British Transport Salaried Staffs' Association

by the Executive Committee or Annual Conference.

For 100 per cent trade unionism

The Transport Salaried Staffs' Association stands for 100 per cent trade unionism in the transport industry, but it does not subscribe to the policy of compulsory trade unionism through the 'closed shop'. Its Annual Conference

has consistently decided against 'industrial unionism' and as consistently has called for and supported close and harmonious relationships between the unions officially recognized as catering for those employed in the Railway and allied services. It takes the view that past experience does not encourage the belief that a predominantly manual workers' union is either prepared or fitted to support and advance the claims of the clerical, administrative, supervisory and professional and technical staffs, and that the best method of organization under existing conditions is a federation of autonomous unions, each working within mutually agreed 'spheres of influence', and amicably seeking the greatest measure of agreement upon common problems. During World War II, on the initiative of the Association, a National Joint Council of the three Railway Unions was established and functioned with a fair measure of success for some years before ceasing to exist after the end of the War.

Politically the TSSA has been and is

in the very van of progress, and compares favourably with any other black-coated or manual workers' union. More than ninety per cent of its members pay the political levy, and hundreds of them serve as Labour Party representatives on local government authorities all over the British Isles. It has nine Members in the British House of Commons, including two who are also members of and nominated by the NUR, and two Members in the House of Lords. In the Republic of Ireland one of its members sits in the Dail. In addition to playing its part in local and national affairs, the Association takes a close and warm interest in international matters, particularly through its affiliation to the ITF, with which it was first associated over thirty years ago. It earnestly desires peace and friendship with all peoples, irrespective of colour, creed or form of democratic Government, and is at all times prepared to make its contribution to the creation and advancement of the spirit of international fellowship. To all delegates to the forthcoming Congress of the ITF in London I extend a warm welcome and the hand of fellowship on behalf of the Transport Clerical, Administrative, Supervisory and Professional and Technical staffs in Great Britain and Ireland.

(continued from page 100)

the fullest possible consultation between the Executive Council, officials and representatives on the wage negotiating bodies, and the rank-and-file membership in order that:

a) the former shall adequately understand and represent the needs of the latter, and

b) that the membership in any particular trade should be able to understand the problems to be overcome in negotiations and should have facilities for making their contributions jointly towards the solution of those problems.

Over and above this machinery is the power and influence of the national body, known as the Annual Delegate Meeting, to which all branches of the Union are entitled to send delegates. The transport members are, therefore, entitled through their particular branches, to representation at the Annual Delegate Meeting, their particular Trade Conference, and the Trade Conference for the industry (i.e. retail trade, milk, flour milling, etc.) in which they are employ-

ed. This dual representation by transport workers is considered in the best interests of the transport worker because, in many instances, the general developments in a particular trade have a considerable bearing on the conditions of employment of all workers within the industry.

The Annual Delegate Meeting is, of course, the supreme authority of the Union. These Delegate Meetings review the work of the preceding twelve months and formulate the policy, industrial and political, for the ensuing year.

The attendance at the Meetings, which includes guests from Unions in other parts of the world, totals well over 1,000. To give exact figures, at the 1953 Meeting 1,152 delegates and officials attended plus 535 visitors.

For the general administration and government of the Union in the interval between the ADMS an Executive Council is established which is made up of a President, General Secretary and sixteen Members.

The term of office of the President

and Executive Members is two years. The election of the President is by national vote of the branches and the other sixteen members are elected by vote of branches in the territorial divisions of the Union.

The General Secretaryship is a permanent position. Once elected by national vote he remains in office subject only to the will and pleasure of the members and his power and authority include the superintending and direction of the work of all the full time officials and employees of the Union.

Alongside the normal Trade Union activities, the Union organizes a comprehensive Educational Scheme which enables members to take advantage of the Union's Weekend and Residential Courses and gives facilities for correspondence courses. In addition, full time residential courses are provided at Ruskin College, Oxford and financial assistance is rendered to members for full time courses at Newbattle Abbey, Scotland; Harlech, Wales; and Hillcroft College, Surbiton, Surrey.



Meet the Transport and General Workers

by the Rt. Hon. Arthur Deakin, General Secretary, TGWU

WHEN, A LITTLE OVER THIRTY YEARS AGO, the first Conference of the infant Transport and General Workers' Union was held, there were some people inside the trade union movement, and many more outside it, who prophesied disaster. It was too big, they said (the first membership figure stood at 297,460): the amalgamation of more than a dozen unions was bound to strain personal relations and organizational plans to breaking point: and the varied occupations of the members would make it impossible to do really specialized trade union work.

Gloomy prophecies confounded

These gloomy prophecies were all confounded. The new union held together, its constitution proved perfectly able to cope with the problems which arose, and the carefully devised trade group machinery soon shewed itself more than able to give specialized service. Today, more than sixty unions have joined our amalgamation, and our membership stands at over a million and a quarter, with accumulated funds totalling eight million pounds. During the first thirty years of its existence, our union returned nearly ten million pounds to its mem-

bers in the form of cash benefits, and recovered a similar sum by way of compensation and damages for injuries.

But these are only bare bones, and tell us little except that those who have faith in the power of workers to build their own enduring organizations are never disappointed. Let us try to put flesh and blood on these bones, and see the Union's activities reflected in the lives of the men and women who built and maintain it.

A seemingly hopeless task

Look first at the dockers. The hard and often brutalizing nature of their work,

and above all its casual employment, made the task of organizing them so hard that at times it seemed ridiculous as well as hopeless. Ben Tillet records that, when in the eighties he circulated among his dockworker members a petition asking for paid holidays, the men tore it up and threw it on the fire, saying it was silly for them even to think of such a thing. When Ernest Bevin gave evidence before the Shaw Committee of Enquiry in 1920, his revelations of the conditions under which dockers and their families lived and worked shocked the public conscience. Even at that time the unions knew that the real cause of the dockers' wretched situation was the system of casual labour. Therefore, alongside demands for improved wages, they pressed for decasualization, a bitter struggle which ended with the making of the Dock Workers (Regulation of Employment) Order in June, 1947.

Similarly, the appalling wastage of



the London taxi cab driver

Although this article by Brother Arthur Deakin deals primarily with dock, road haulage, and bus and tram workers, the TGWU also organizes many other groups employed in the transport industry. Some typical representatives of this membership are shown in these photographs:



the stewards and stewardesses of Britain's nationalized air lines



the loaders and other ground staff employed in civil aviation

the workers on Britain's canals



and the men who catch her fish

life and limb caused by dockside accidents was reduced when, as the result of heavy pressure by the unions, the Government in 1934 ratified the International Labour Organization Convention dealing with safety devices and precautions in docks, wharves, and ships. Today, dockers have reasonable wages and working conditions, regularity of employment, and amenities at their work and in their homes of a standard equal to that of other workers. There is still, of necessity, a hard and dangerous job, and some problems – like pensions – have yet to be solved. Nevertheless, they have, by their own organization, raised their standards and achieved a status in the community, and the way is clear before them.

Another group of our members – road hauliers – has almost as great a contrast to show between pre-Union conditions and those obtaining today. When our union first began to operate, their wagons were horsedrawn, and it was truly said that the horses fared better than their drivers in terms of food, rest, and housing. When, after the first World War, the motor-driven lorry began to play an important part, the conditions of drivers became even worse. Many of the lorries were ex-Army vehicles, purchased by servicemen out of their gratuities, and a condition of cut-throat competition grew up, in which driving hours were completely unlimited since, unlike horses, vehicles didn't have to be fed or rested. The health and family life of the men who drove, and the safety of other road users, were alike sacrificed to the desperate battle for freights.

'Asleep at the wheel'

As the post-war depression got under way, it became even more difficult for the union to regularize the position, and the familiar and terrifying phrase 'asleep at the wheel' became at once an epitaph on road victims and an indictment of drivers' conditions. The union's struggle to improve these things by agreement was made more acute because the employers, on their side, were almost wholly unorganized, and efforts to get the thou-

One of London's world-famous red doubledecker buses seen near St. Paul's Cathedral. Bus workers, both in London and the provinces, form a large and important section of the Transport and General Workers' Union's membership

sands of small concerns to come together and meet the unions were for a long time unavailing. Clearly, it was a case for legislation, and the unions pressed for speed control, restriction of new entrance into the industry, for the regulation of driving and working hours, and for statutory assistance in fixing minimum wages.

Legislation on these lines began in 1930, and just before the outbreak of war the Road Haulage Wages Act of 1938 marked the completion of an important phase in the history of the industry. But decent wages and fair working hours are not the only factors, particularly for the long distance drivers who must often eat and sleep away from home. Rest houses, decent road-side cafés and proper washing and bathing facilities, have all been the subject of patient and determined negotiation by the unions. When the Labour Government placed its Transport Act upon the Statute Book, provision was made for these things, as well as for Joint Consultation and technical education.

Passenger transport problems

Road passenger workers, too, have had a hard struggle. In many respects – the change-over from horse-drawn to me-

chanically-driven transport, cut throat competition in the 1920s, and unlimited hours of work – their experiences were very similar to those of the road haulage workers. In addition, they had two intractable problems of their own. One was the 'spread-over' system, under which a man might work and be paid only six or eight hours a day, but might find this spread over ten or twelve hours, during the whole of which he would be away from home. Equally tough to solve was the problem of the 'spare man' – in essence a kind of casual labour. Here a man would not be employed by the week, but would have to present himself afresh every morning, in the hope of getting work for a day or part of a day.

These two problems arose from the 'peaks' in passenger carrying, which required every available vehicle to be fully manned at the beginning and end of the working day, but made it uneconomic to keep them on the roads at other periods, or at week-ends. The union had to tackle them, in the first case by trying to reduce spread-overs, and persuading the bus operators to offer cheap fares and other inducement for off-peak travel and, in the second case, by first establishing and then seeking to extend a guaranteed minimum number of hours





Older road haulage drivers remember the days of cut-throat competition when driving hours were completely unlimited and the familiar phrase 'asleep at the wheel' became an indictment of the conditions under which they then worked

for which 'spare' men should work and be paid in any week. In this industry, too, the proper provision of canteens and other amenities has been the concern of the union.

The backbone of our union

I have chosen to write at some length about these three occupations because the workers in them are, and have always been, the backbone of our union. Their progress from underpaid, exploited, casually employed 'unskilled labourers' to key workers whose importance in the country's industry and in the society in which they live is now securely admitted, is a true reflection of our union's growth from the dream at which the 'sensible' men once sneered to the solid, powerful, responsible organization of today.

But of course, it is not only dockers and road transport workers who have found within our ranks that unity is indeed strength. Turning over the pages of our Annual Report, we see the record of victories achieved for men and women employed in building, quarrying brickmaking, cement and plaster, waterways, tinsplate and galvanising, motor car, radio and general engineering, drug and heavy chemicals, agriculture, flour

milling, food packing and preserving, gas, water, electricity supply, manual workers employed by the government and municipalities, and clerical workers in a number of industries, to name only a few. In all these occupations, wages, conditions, opportunities for education and promotion, and machinery for joint consultation have improved steadily as a result of union pressure.

Not the whole story

But we are concerned with other things besides wages and working conditions, important as these are. Throughout our thirty years of life, we have joined with other unions in the TUC, and with the Labour Party, in pressing for better standards in health, housing, education and social services and insurance, not only for our own members, but for the community as a whole, and we have never failed to face the need to play our part in the international side of our movement's work.

Nor have we overlooked the need to ensure that the organization our founders built from their dreams should be understood by its members, and that it should have a steady supply of young people ready and able to continue and develop its work. Time, thought, and money is increasingly spent on the education of our members in the principles for which our union stands, and the



Almost as familiar to the foreign visitor as the British 'Bobby' is the London bus-driver. London's traffic jams and its fog are part of his life. The excellent safety record of London Transport is a tribute to his never-failing skill and efficiency

methods by which it operates. This job needs patience, enthusiasm, and a constant willingness to try out new ideas, but it is a richly rewarding one.

Finally, we are deeply concerned with the personal well-being of our members, particularly those who are ill or in other difficulties. Our Legal Advice Service, and our two private Convalescent Homes, have oftentimes been the means of restoring to health and happiness those who have suffered grievous blows.

The successful fight for decent wages and fair working hours has brought about a minor revolution in the lives of Britain's road haulage workers. In addition, the provision of rest houses, decent road-side cafés, and proper washing and bathing facilities have all been the subject of patient and determined negotiation by their union



ASLEF - the locomotive staff's organization

by **J. G. Baty**, General Secretary, Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen

THE ASSOCIATED SOCIETY OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND FIREMEN, founded in the year 1880, is the oldest of the British railway trade unions. As its title implies, it caters for staff employed at 'the front end' of the train or in the line of promotion to such employment, viz., locomotive drivers, electric train drivers, firemen, and engine cleaners; with a membership of 70,000, it numbers within its ranks the great majority of these grades.

The Society has its headquarters in London and has 450 branches, organized on a depot basis, throughout British Railways and the railways of Ireland and of the London Transport Executive.

A craft organization

From the nature of its membership as above indicated, it will be appreciated that the ASLE & F is essentially a craft organization. Its governing body is the Annual Assembly of Delegates, composed of sixty working locomotivemen and motormen, elected from the same number of geographical districts throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland. The Assembly, meeting in May of each year, reviews in detail the activities of the organisation during the preceding twelve months, and lays down lines of policy for the guidance of the Executive Committee during the period ahead. The Executive Committee which controls the affairs of the Society between Annual Assemblies, consists of ten members, again elected upon a geographical basis, who themselves elect their own President annually.

The Society is a party to the Scheme of Negotiation for Railway Staff, which in respect of men employed on British Railways makes comprehensive provision for joint discussion with the management, at appropriate levels, of all matters relating to the rates of pay and conditions of service of such staff. An interesting and notable provision of the machinery of negotiation is that relating to Sectional Councils, which are set up within the respective Regions of British Railways in order to ensure correct application of agreements reached at national level. On the six Regional Sectional Councils No. 2 (covering Locomotive staff) ASLE & F representatives have been elected by their fellow-employees to fifty-one out of fifty-three seats, with one election pending at the

time these notes are being written.

General objects of ASLE & F

As a matter of interest to readers, the following formal statement of the So-

ciety's Objects is reproduced:

To represent the footplate grades and motormen at all stages of the Machinery of Negotiation for Railway Staff, and to ensure the maximum benefit to those whom it represents from the operation of such Machinery.

To safeguard the position of its constituent grades in regard to all legislative proposals likely to affect their interests as Railway Servants.

To ensure expert representation of its members at Disciplinary Inquiries, and to protect them against unjust punish-



ment.

To protect and promote the interests of Railway Engine Drivers and Firemen, Engine Cleaners and Electric Motormen, in all matters connected with

To give expert advice and practical help in connection with claims arising from fatal or other injuries to members.

To furnish legal assistance to mem-



Cleaning engines at King's Cross Station. British Railways has made good progress with the introduction of standard locomotives which can run on all main lines. About 12 types will eventually replace the 400 in service in 1938. Photograph by Keystone Press

bers, both in matters arising from their employment, and in certain other respects.

To provide cash benefits to members in respect of sickness, disablement, incapacitation, unemployment, suspension from duty, victimization, retirement and superannuation, death.

To provide a fund for the assistance of dependants of deceased members.

To maintain effective relations with the general Trade Union Movement, in particular with Railway Workers' Organizations in Britain and overseas.

It will thus be seen that, not only with respect to its basic responsibilities in the sphere of negotiations on wages and conditions, the ASLE & F affords a wide variety of most important services and benefits to its members. In addition to the provisions above indicated, it also makes available each year scholarships

to enable a number of promising members to attend the annual summer schools organized respectively by the Trades Union Congress, the Labour Party, and the National Council of Labour Colleges. Further, through its affiliation with the last-named body, the whole range of NCLC (National Council of Labour Colleges) postal courses is made available to the membership – a facility much appreciated and considerably utilized.

The Society's official organ, 'The Locomotive Journal', published monthly, has a wide circulation among the locomotive grades.

Officers and staff

The Society's permanent officials at Head Office consist of the General and Assistant General Secretaries and an Organizing Secretary. Office Staff num-

ber thirty; these are all employed at headquarters. An Irish Officer (full-time) is resident in Dublin with responsibilities covering both the Republic and Northern Ireland; whilst seven fulltime Organizing Secretaries, who are also permanent officials, are respectively stationed in each of seven geographical Organizing Districts covering England, Scotland and Wales.

Finance and administration

The amount standing to the credit of the Society's funds (inclusive of benefit funds) at the end of 1953 exceeded £ 1,350,000. Well over two and a half million pounds have been disbursed in benefits to members since the inception of the organization.

The basic ('trade protection') contribution is 8d. per week; full benefit contributions are at the rate of 1s. 4d. – 1s.

6d. per week, and cover certain additional benefits such as sick pay, superannuation allowances and payments on decease of members.

The Society's Rules provide for the functioning of District Councils in order to assist the Executive Committee and officials in organization, propaganda and general co-ordination of activity. These Councils, however, have no responsibility for financial administration, which in the ASLE & F is centralized at Head Office; the latter receives the bulk of the moneys collected by way of contributions and is in turn responsible for the making of benefit disbursements, etc.

Rates of pay - conditions of service

It is true to say that the history of the Society's efforts down the years to improve the wages and conditions of locomotivemen is a record of struggle successfully waged against a multiplicity of adverse factors. Notably inadequate wages, incredibly long hours of continuous duty, bad conditions in general - and all too often, for active trade unionists, savage victimization posing under the guise of 'discipline' or 'the requirements of the service' - these were the traditional lot of footplatemen, both in Victorian days and during the opening decades of this century. The railway companies not only stubbornly opposed improvements in these respects, but also they fought to the last ditch against the very principle of trade union recognition. In fact, it was not until after a national railway strike in 1911 that they agreed to negotiate direct with union representatives.

The years immediately following the end of World War I form an outstanding epoch: it was during this period that national agreements of the utmost importance, covering the staff of all the main line companies, were at long last secured as the result of many years of trade union effort. These agreements, besides substantially improving the rates of pay of locomen (giving a standard maximum rate of 90s. 0d. per week for the Driver and Motorman), further made provision for new conditions of service upon which the majority of subsequent ameliorations have had their ba-

This photograph of a footplate crew at work was taken near Slough, Buckinghamshire, on the Western Region of British Railway. Also shown is one of the Region's local service rail-cars

sis. The vital principles of which concession was at this time secured included an eight-hours' day, a 'guaranteed' week, recognized intervals of rest between turns of duty, and annual leave with pay. This period involved two further national stoppages of work, viz., in October 1919, and in January 1924 (on the latter occasion an ASLE & F strike of locomen only).

In the years which have followed many further notable improvements have been effected in the working conditions of the Society's member grades; whilst since 1945 we have also engaged in negotiations which have resulted in a succession of further increases in standard rates of pay. In the course of these negotiations the Society has drawn attention, not only to the effects of the advancing cost of living, but also to the distortion of the wages structure brought about by flat-rate 'war wage' advances granted during the course of the Second World War, and later consolidated.

The question of craft differentials is in fact a major consideration in negotiations which are proceeding with British Railways at the time of writing, arising from the wages dispute and threatened strike of December, 1953.

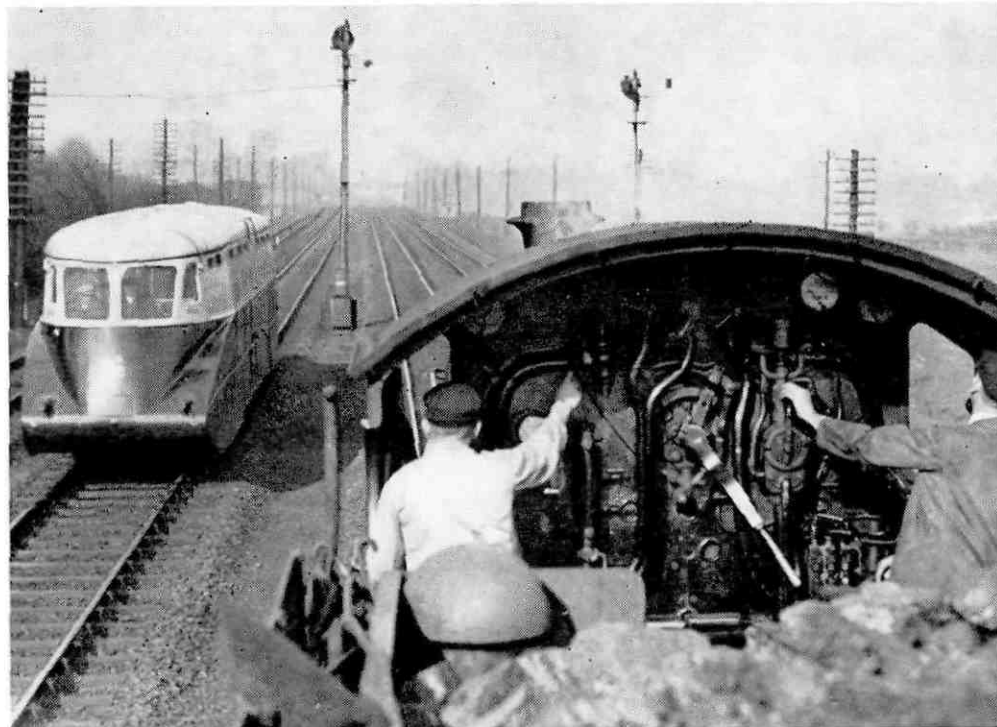
The following is a short abstract of current rates of pay, and one or two of the principal conditions of service of B.R. locomotivemen.

Standard weekly rates of pay: Engine Cleaner (until the prescribed number of firing turns have been worked representing one year), £ 6.4.6d; Engine Cleaner (after the prescribed number of firing turns have been worked representing one year), £ 6.13.6d. Fireman and Assistant Motorman, 1st year £ 6.13.6d, rising to £ 7.11.6d. in sixth year; £ 7.19.6d. after the prescribed number of driving turns have been worked representing one year. Driver and Motorman, 1st year £ 7.19.6d. rising to £ 8.18.6d. in sixth year.

Overtime: All overtime worked on weekdays is paid for at the rate of time-and-a-quarter, or, if between the hours of 10.0 p.m. and 6.0 a.m., at the rate of time-and-a-half. All time worked on Sundays is paid for at the Sunday rate (see below).

Sunday duty: Sunday turns of duty do not form part of the guaranteed week. Trainmen signing on duty for a turn commencing on a Sunday receive a minimum payment of eight hours at ordinary rate plus the Sunday enhancement of three-quarters time extra on all time actually worked up to eight hours; time worked in excess of eight hours is paid at time-and-three-quarters rate.

Night duty: All ordinary time worked between the following hours, viz: Sunday midnight to 6.0 a.m. Monday; 10.0 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thurs-



A driver at the controls of one of Britain's giant locomotives. Organized in the ITF-affiliated Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen his present maximum rate is £8 18s 6d per week

day and Friday to 6.0 a.m. on the following day; 10.0 p.m. Saturday to midnight Saturday; is paid for at the rate of time-and-a-quarter. All overtime worked between these hours is paid for at the inclusive rate of time-and-a-half.

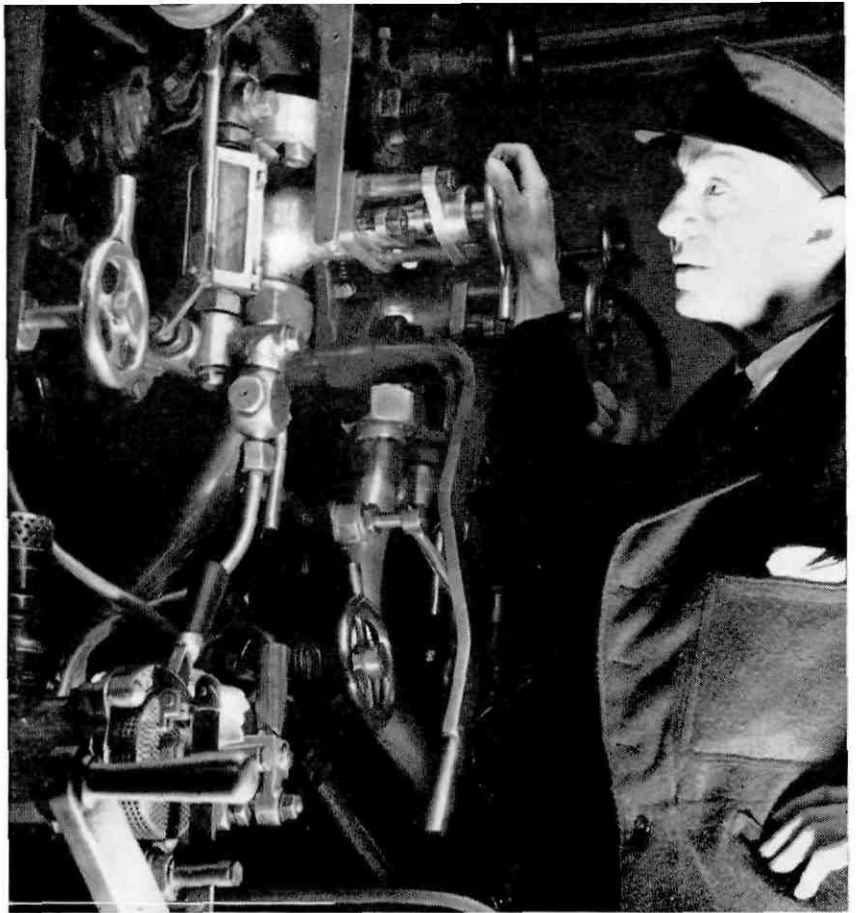
Mileage: Where the mileage during any turn of duty exceeds 140 miles, payment is made at the rate of one hour's pay for every fifteen miles of such excess.

Other enhanced payments include payment for work performed on Bank and Public Holidays and on rest days, and also (on a flat rate basis and subject to certain conditions) for Saturday p.m. working.

Guaranteed week: The standard week's wages, exclusive of any payments for overtime or Sunday duty, are guaranteed to staff who are available for duty throughout the week.

Eighty-eight-hour fortnight: Trainmen and Engine Cleaners are rostered for eleven turns of eight hours in a fortnight; the day booked off in the fortnight to be rostered in rotation as far as practicable.

Annual leave: After twelve months' service, twelve days with pay.



Pensions: Particularly having regard to the prominent part which for a very large number of years the Society has played in campaigning for pensions for its members, we record with special pleasure that the principles of a pension scheme covering wages staff have been agreed between the British Transport Commission and the trade unions concerned, and approved by the Minister of Transport. The scheme will be contributory in character. Final details are being worked out, and implementation in the near future is anticipated.

Nationalization

The ASLE & F cordially welcomed the nationalization of British Railways and of other sectors of transport, effective from 1 January 1948, consequent upon the Transport Act of the previous year. It is our firm belief that the ultimate integration of road and rail transport envisaged by the Act would, had it been allowed to come to fruition, have

Climbing aboard, the locomotive fireman will check steam pressure. Shed staff have lit the fire and raised a head of steam, but he will have to build it up so that there is sufficient available to take the load and get the train up to speed

proved of tremendous benefit to the travelling and trading public and to the economy as a whole.

Following a change of Government, however, further legislation has followed, viz., the Transport Act of 1953, which inter alia makes provision for the re-sale to private enterprise of the nationalized sector of road transport. Trade union opinion is by no means alone in holding that by this means ordered progress in the country's transport services has suffered a severe setback. The ASLE & F is pledged to work to the utmost for a reorientation of national transport policy upon rational, co-ordinated and constructive lines at the earliest opportunity.

A progressive organization

In concluding these notes one would make the point that the ASLE & F has always rightly prided itself upon its progressive approach. Craft pride is not synonymous with blind 'conservatism', and the ASLE & F throughout its history has played its full part in the wider movement of which it forms part.

In addition to its ITF connection, the Society is in affiliation with the British Trades Union Congress and the Scottish
(continued on the next page)



Organizing Britain's radio officers

by H. O'Neill, General Secretary, Radio Officers' Union

THE PAST 100 YEARS OR SO have seen a rapid and intensive development in all spheres of transport and communication. We live in an age whose aim seems to be to travel faster with every year that passes and to increase yet further its means of contact between nations. In this, the care of radiocommunication and radio aids to navigation must be to provide safeguards for modern forms of transport and more certain techniques for modern communication. It is with this conviction of the importance of the work of our profession that we provide a short history of marine radio and the Radio Officers' Union.

There can be no doubt that of all the benefits modern science has brought to shipping, the development of radio and its application to navigational aids are among the greatest factors influencing seaborne transport.

The opening of a new era

The sailing from Liverpool in 1901 of the *Lake Champlain*, the first British merchant vessel to be equipped with radio, marked the opening of a new era of rapid increase in the safety of ships and their personnel, and also in the overall efficiency of ship operation.

For the first time in history the in-

(continued from page 112)

fluence of the shore was able to extend far out to sea, and the absolute monarchy of the master was at an end. Before many years had passed, a ship, no mat-

and Irish TUCs respectively; also with the British Labour Party. It has three members in the House of Commons, and a very large number of its members hold civic and other public offices in all parts of the country.

Greetings and good wishes

Its General Secretary, Mr J. G. Baty, is a member of the Management Committee of the I.T.F.

On behalf of the Society's Executive Committee, Officers, and entire membership, a most cordial fraternal welcome and expression of goodwill is tendered to the delegates attending the Federation's 1954 Biennial Congress. We are proud that Britain has been chosen as the venue of Congress on this occasion. We trust that our overseas comrades will take home with them the happiest recollections of our country, of its people in general, and of its transport workers in particular. Finally, we trust and believe that the Congress itself, by its deliberations and decisions, will prove fully worthy to rank with the most memorable of its predecessors and will make a worthy contribution towards the future progress of the I.T.F.

fluence of the shore was able to extend far out to sea, and the absolute monarchy of the master was at an end. Before many years had passed, a ship, no mat-

was a state of affairs resented and feared by some of the shipmasters of the old school, but soon they too came to realize that radio brought them more benefits than penalties, and that it would make their lives safer, more comfortable and less anxious. The wireless operator, as the radio officer was called in those early days, came into his own and was accepted as a very useful and necessary member of the ship's company.

From the very first, radio began to exercise a tremendous influence on the running of ships and shipping companies. Instead of sending his ship away and waiting weeks for news of its safe



The radio officer on board a modern cargo liner adjusting his main transmitter preparatory to sending a message. Photo by Marconi Int. Marine Communication Co.

ter in what sea it was sailing, could be reached and controlled by its owners or their agents ashore, at first by telegraphy and later by radiotelephony as well. It

arrival at its port of destination, usually received by submarine cable, an owner was able to receive daily news of its progress, its welfare and that of its crew,



The scope of a modern trawler's radio aids to navigation, showing two direction-finder loop aerials and a radar scanner

and passengers it carried, and – most important from his point of view – he was now able to direct it to the port where it could best dispose of its freight or pick up a fresh cargo under the most advantageous terms. Ship operation, until then a necessarily somewhat haphazard venture, owing to the lack of long-range communications, became a clear-cut, closely-directed business, with the owner, by means of radio, moving his vessels about the oceans of the world as in a gigantic game of chess.

Already, then, the new facility of long-distance communication had done much to eliminate waste steaming time and, by enabling ships to send messages ahead concerning the discharge or loading of cargo, to cut down the time spent in port when, instead of earning money, they would otherwise be spending it in harbour dues and other costs. But radio, as it developed, was to bring other aids to efficiency. The coming of the direction-finder, and the echometer

meant safer, surer, swifter passages between port and port when weather was thick or overcast. Instead of steaming for days on end by deadreckoning and adding miles to the passage, or creeping along completely blinded by fog, ships were able to continue their voyages certain of their position even in the poorest visibility, keeping to the shortest course, with no waste of time beyond that lost when thick weather necessitated a considerable slowing down for reasons of prudence.

Today, even fog has been robbed of much of its blinding menace, and radar scans the surrounding ocean, showing the navigator whether other vessels are in the vicinity, and helping him to make his landfall or steam along in radar 'sight' of land, though still, of course, with the caution so vital in poor visibility conditions.

Made shipping industry more efficient

Altogether, therefore, radio, since its

first introduction into the shipping industry, has helped to make that industry more efficient, more certain of its results, and more economic of operation, for there is no doubt that the cost of the latest communication equipment and electronic aids to navigation operated and maintained by a specialist radio officer is much more than offset, to the shipowner, by the time they save his vessels on passage and the greatly enhanced safety with which they move.

Not only cargo and passenger ships, but trawlers, too, use marine radio, in all its forms, most extensively. Indeed, the modern trawler often carries more radio and allied equipment than most ocean-going cargo vessels, and uses it even more frequently. The trawler skipper relies on his echometers for fish indication as well as for navigational purposes, and communication, either by telegraphy or telephony, with his owners ashore keeps him constantly advised of the very latest market trends so that he

can land his catch at the port where it will fetch the best price. Radar is invaluable to the fishing fleets, who use it to help them get their catches to port when fog would otherwise bring the trawlers to a standstill – and loss of fishing time means loss of money to owner and crew.

But radio does much more than merely help the efficient operation of ships, whether ocean-going, coastal, or fishing. The seaman or fisherman of today knows that once at sea he is not cut off from the world. Wherever he sails, radiobeacons are sending out their invisible flashes of guidance for the mariner; radar and the echometer keep a truly three-dimensional watch over the ship's safety from collision or stranding; and in the event of accident a few winged words from the transmitter will bring succour from the nearest ship or by a radio-equipped lifeboat. If, at the worst, he must abandon ship, there is a self-contained, portable transmitter/receiver for use in the ship's boats.

Again, in the case of personal accident or illness, the 'Medico' service will bring the best possible medical advice – again by radio – or even, if the emergency is grave, an aircraft may arrive to take the stricken man ashore for full treatment. And when all goes well and the ship steams steadily on its way, radio brings its crew news from home and entertainment items in regular daily programmes.

There are many other inventions and discoveries of modern science – we can readily think of a few – which we could very well do without, but radio, to which we have now become so used, is not one of them. It is undoubtedly a force for good in the world, and our increasing dependence upon it consolidates the recognition of the radio officer as a vitally important member of the modern ship's crew.

The development of the union

So much for the history of the development and application of radio: it now remains to consider the growth of the Radio Officers' Union, its influence on the service and how, out of the clash of interests, it has managed to survive to face its destiny in the years that lie ahead. Before the year 1912 very few ships were fitted with radio, although the Marconi Company, which was founded to exploit the new invention, was incorporated in the year 1900. Between the years 1901 and 1912 several attempts were

made to form a union or association of Marine Wireless Operators, but the continuous existence of the present union dates from the latter year. It is not an unfair inference from this record that from the very beginning our seagoing members were of a progressive turn of mind as might be expected in any case from their association with the then new science of radio. Indeed the difficulties that confronted the pioneers were considerable and were of such a nature that only men of the highest quality and character could have overcome them.

The potential membership was seagoing; it was scattered throughout the world; time in port then, as now, was very short. There were ample opportunities for victimization since those taking an active part in the affairs of the union could be transferred overseas; but despite all these obstacles the union progressed from strength to strength until in 1920 it was able, by its wholly representative nature, to secure recognition from the employers. An authoritative history of the Radio Officers' Union has yet to be written but when that time comes, the record will bear comparison with that of any other British trade union. It is an inspiring story, one of achievement against tremendous difficulties. It will show how a small band of gallant men in the true British tradition battled against great odds and were able, by their wit and will and lion-hearted courage, to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

Encountered strong resistance

Despite its growth in strength, the union encountered the very greatest resistance in its endeavours to obtain rates of pay and conditions of service commensurate with the work performed by its members on board ship. In 1920, when its membership had reached 5,000, it was felt that the time had come to endeavour to enforce its just claims. Negotiations with the employers having failed, the union called the first strike of British Marine Wireless Operators. This commenced on 15 June 1920 and ended on 24 June 1920. Although the strike was of short duration, considerable

A Flight Radio Officer at his instruments in a Constellation aircraft. The Radio Officers' Union organizes both ground and air grades employed in civil aviation. Current annual salaries for Flight Radio Officers range from £725 to £1,140

gains in pay and allowances were obtained as a result of it. The pay increase averaged 156 per cent on the pre-1914 rates as against the 171 per cent demanded by the union. The extent of this victory may be gauged by recalling that when Marine Wireless was first fitted on ships, wireless operators (as they were called) were paid £1 per month.

The period between 1920 and 1938 was one of almost continuous struggle and vicissitude. So much so that the union was again forced to strike in 1922 and again it was victorious. It obtained a nine-year wage scale guaranteeing a maximum of £25 per month plus allowances for seagoing radio operators and a monthly maximum of £28 per month plus allowances for seagoing inspectors. The scales provided for automatic progression by annual increments to the maxima and represented a notable improvement on the previous scale.

Following an attempt by the employers in 1925 to force a reduction in rates of pay the union again called its members on strike. It commenced on 26 November 1925 and lasted for eighty-five days. The strike was settled on the basis that there should be reference to the Industrial Court whose Award, issued in 1926, provided for the abolition of the incremental scale and the introduction of the existing tonnage system of payment. It should be mentioned that, unlike navigating and engineer officers, the overwhelming majority of radio officers are employed by Marine Wireless Companies and not directly by



The modern trawler is fitted with a radio installation comparable with, and in some cases more comprehensive than, that of many an ocean-going ship. This corner of a trawler's wireless room shows two receivers, a radiotelephony transmitter and a long-range medium and short-wave telegraph transmitter. Photos by Marconi

the shipowners. In effect the radio officers are in the wireless companies' pool and are assigned for service to any ship in the British Merchant Navy.

Wages and the transfer system

Prior to 1926 their wage structure was a straight incremental scale and reflected the peculiarity of their employment, since they could be required to serve on any class of ship at any particular moment in time dependent upon the needs of service. On the other hand navigating and engineer officers were, for the most part, employed by particular shipping companies for the greater part of their working lives and their rates did not in practice fluctuate with the class and tonnage of the vessel on which they were serving. The present system of payment of radio officers, whilst broadly comparable to that applying to navigating and engineer officers, contains special safeguards designed to mitigate the worst effects of transfers from higher-rated to lower-rated vessels.

It may be a point of interest to mention that before 1941 wages negotiations on behalf of marine radio officers were conducted with the Engineering and



Allied Employers' Federation and not the National Maritime Board. The Radio Officers' Union was admitted to membership of the National Maritime Board in 1941 and there is no doubt whatsoever that the direct access to shipowners which has resulted has had the effect of transforming relations between the Radio Officers' Union and the shipowners. Many tributes have been paid to the National Maritime Board. Indeed, the late Ernest Bevin once described it as a 'model to the rest of the world'. And whilst we should be the last to say that we are completely satisfied with our present rates of pay and conditions of service, we willingly associate ourselves with those tributes. Since our admission to the Board we have, by and large, obtained reasonable satisfaction and would be clearly wrong not to acknowledge this.

Wide interpretation of functions

From the very beginning the union has interpreted its functions widely. It has not been content merely to seek to improve rates of pay and conditions of service, but has participated in the wider movements designed to improve cultural and recreational facilities for all seafarers. The fact that great strides have been made in seafarers' welfare in the British Merchant Navy in recent years is now

The radio operator of a modern trawler using his vessel's high power radiotelephony and telegraphy transmitter. Before him are two of the vessel's receivers and behind him one of her direction-finders

accepted as a commonplace. What is not so well known is that our union was a pioneer in this field in so far as its own members were concerned. In 1920, the Radio Officers' Union was responsible for promoting the formation of a limited liability company known as Radio Clubs Limited, the shares being exclusively subscribed by our members and the management vested in the members and officials of the union. The purpose of Radio Clubs Limited was to set up residential clubs in all ports of the United Kingdom for the benefit of Radio officers, one of the main objects being to provide 'good food and accommodation at reasonable prices'.

Another of the Company's purposes was to bring the members together in fellowship and to endeavour to promote their social and cultural welfare in the widest possible sense, thus attempting to reverse Adam Smith's dictum in his *Wealth of Nations* that 'people of the same trade seldom meet together, even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the public or in some contrivance to raise prices'. Residential clubs were in fact opened and maintained at Liverpool, Cardiff, and Newcastle-on-Tyne, but owing to the depression that overtook shipping in subsequent years the union was forced to abandon this project. Another activity of the union indicating the wide view it took of its responsibilities was its efforts in relation to the training of marine radio officers. In the years following the 1914-18 war, the union decided, in view of the technolo-



gical developments that had resulted from the use of radio during the war years, to review the technique of training of marine radio officers, and for this purpose it accepted responsibility for setting up two training schools, one at Cardiff and another at London. There can be no doubt that the impact of these schools on the service was of considerable benefit in the ensuing years.

Thoroughly democratic structure

The Webbs say that the history of British trade unionism is the history of a State within our State, and one so jealously democratic that to know it well is to know the English working man as no reader of middle-class histories can know him. This union, like most British trade unions, is thoroughly democratic in its methods of administration and its structure. Its constitution provides for five separate Sections; namely, Marine, Aircraft, Inspectors and Technical Employees, Small Craft, and Civil Service. Each of these sections elects its representative or representatives by ballot vote to the National Executive Committee which is the supreme governing body. The unit of organization is the District or Branch meeting, which remits its finding to the appropriate sectional authority for reference to the National Committee. Provision is made in the constitution for annual elections of representatives and there are also provisions governing the holding of District, General, and Extraordinary General meetings.

Means in abundance are provided for the members at all levels to make their views known to the central authority and to ensure that their voice is heard and acted upon. The Marine Section is composed of members who take service as seagoing radio officers on ocean-going vessels. In the Aircraft Section are members who are employed as flying radio officers, or as radio industrial grades on the inspection and maintenance of radiocommunications and other radio equipment for aircraft. The Inspectors and Technical Grades are

employed on the installation, inspection, maintenance, and survey of shipborne radio equipment. Our Small Craft members take service as radio operators in the trawler fishing industry and our Civil Service Section is composed of members engaged on communications in the Government Service; for instance, in the Diplomatic Wireless Service. Membership of the union is voluntary and that principle has been insisted upon throughout. It is felt that only in this way can we accrete to ourselves a membership which can be relied upon to support the organization in all circumstances.

From the time of its inauguration in 1912 to the present time, the union's main objective has been to promote and safeguard the interests of its members. In order fully to effect this purpose, it has been found necessary to link its destiny with that of our fellow workers through affiliation to the British Trades Union Congress and the International Transport Workers' Federation. Both of these steps have had the fullest approval, and indeed the enthusiastic support of our members, and the union is proud to be associated with these progressive bodies, which exist to promote the highest ideals of freedom, democracy and well-being by making the most effective use of the power of the organized workers.

Many changes since 1912

Viewed in retrospect the years that have passed since 1912 have brought many changes, the most notable being the rapid advances in the theory and practice of radio. From empiricism, it has developed overnight, so to speak, into an exact science of vast complexity. And moreover, its successful application demands men who are not only skilled specialists, but who must also possess native intelligence and qualities of initiative and improvisation. The contribution which radio has made to the safety of life and property at sea and in the air is incalculable, and is not measurable in terms of items in a profit and loss ac-

count. In war the maintenance of communications is a prime necessity, and in the two wars which most of us of the present generation have known, our members have been in the front line from the beginning and have consistently distinguished themselves. Moreover, for those at sea, peacetime demands the same qualities of courage and determination, for the fight continues, though the enemy is now the accidents of nature, rather than man. We have only to mention the name of Radio Officer David Broadfoot of *Princess*



The radio officer of a liner taking a bearing on a shore radio beacon station by means of the 'Lodestone' direction-finder

Victoria, posthumously awarded the George Cross, to remind our readers of the record of bravery which our profession bears at all times.

The most marked feature of the union during the last twenty years or so, has been its resolute constitutionalism. It has shed, outwardly at least, its early combativeness which is at once the glory and the danger of youth. But the change has been due not to any faltering or faint-heartedness, but to the fact that maturity has taught us how to husband and use our strength and not to waste it. The union has not concerned itself solely with materialistic conditions. It has always sought to give to the profession an inflexion of ardent, altruistic service. It will continue in that great tradition.

PROGRESS TOWARDS a more economical and efficient transport system has been temporarily halted by a Government prepared to subordinate the national well-being to political prejudice and private greed. But, as one of the country's leading transport authorities has recently stated, the 1953 Transport Act cannot provide any enduring solution to the nation's transport problems. It ignores the lessons of transport operation in this country, lessons which have been underlined in the reports of numerous official and unofficial bodies which have inquired into the provision of transport services in the years since the First World War.

From British Transport, a policy statement issued by the Labour Party National Executive



The British seaman and his Union

Contributed by the
**National Union of
Seamen**

SEAMEN WORK IN A VERY DANGEROUS TRADE, separated from their wives and families and subjected to a semi-military discipline, yet becoming by the nature of their occupation, by the risks and struggles they have to undergo, a race of men of extraordinary worth and resource. In some respects, their conditions were like those of the miners in the first half of the nineteenth century. In some ways they were even worse off. For the seamen there can be no Truck Act; in the old days they had to accept whatever conditions of food, accommodation and clothing that were thrust upon them. Split up and separated, continually sent off for long voyages, resting in port for short periods only between voyages, it has taken many years of patient effort, struggle and sacrifice to build up the stable union which now controls their industrial affairs. An impetus to trade unionism amongst seamen was developed by the agitation sponsored by Samuel Plimsoll with regard to the Load Line and unsafe ships.

Phenomenal growth

The National Sailors' & Firemen's Union of Great Britain and Ireland was formed in 1887, and first appeared in the Trade Union Congress in the year 1888, registering 500 members. Its growth

was phenomenal, because at the next Congress at the end of 1889, its registered membership amounted to 65,000 members. The programme put forward was:

1) To make advances to members on security of wages and allotment notes;

2) to establish reasonable hours of duty and fair rates of wages;

3) improvement in the conditions of life on board ship;

4) to establish proper homes for seamen in the ports;

5) to obtain compensation for accidents to seamen and obtain legal help; and further

6) to establish claims for compensation for seamen with respect to salvage and loss of wages, also to protect them in other ways from undesirable people such as crimps and other pests in the ports.

About the time the union was founded, the wages paid amounted to 45s. to 55s. per month for able seamen. Firemen were better off with a wage of 50s. to 60s. per month. Food was provided by the owners, but its quantity

and quality left much to be desired.

A mournful note

The wages paid prior to the 1911 strike were £ 3 15s. 0d. per month to the Eastward and £ 4 10s. 0d. per month to the Westward, Firemen being invariably paid 10s. a month more than able seamen. There is an old saying amongst old sailormen that the Bell of the Bar Lightship at the mouth of the River Mersey, Liverpool, always struck a mournful note. They assert that it tolled '£ 2 10s. 0d., £ 2 10s. 0d.' which was the wage that all seamen could command for very many years.

Throughout all the conflicts which have taken place between the shipowners and the seamen, the centre of the dispute was always the obstinate refusal of the owners to agree to the setting up of a National Negotiating and Wages Board. Without this, there could not be full recognition of seafarers as an organized body. It was therefore over this question in this, as in other industries, that the struggle was waged. Before 1887, seamen worked eighty-four hours a week, and more when they 'flogged the clock'. Wages, food, accommodation and safety arrangements on board ship were notoriously far below the worst conditions of shore workers. By 1910, seamen had secured a few amendments to the Merchant Shipping Acts and had been brought within the scope of the Workmen's Compensation Acts. But except during the years 1889 to 1892, the owners stubbornly refused seamen the right to have any say whatever concerning wages and the conditions under which they worked.

In July, 1910, the National Sailors' & Firemen's Union demanded a National Negotiating and Wages Board to consider amongst other things, the following claims:

- 1) A uniform sliding scale of wages for all ports, with a minimum wage;
- 2) A scale of manning for the seamen employed on deck, in the stokehold and in the galley;
- 3) Abolition of the engagement of seamen in Shipping Federation Offices;
- 4) Hours of labour and rates of over-

The four-inch manilla hawsers are made ready as the 10,000 ton MV Deseado moves into her berth in the Port of London. Homeward-bound from a regular run to South America, she carries cargo of meat and oranges in her holds

time to be fixed;

5) Improved forecastle accommodation; and

6) The right of seamen to have a representative present when Articles of Agreement were signed.

These claims were put forward simultaneously by seamen in seven maritime countries of Europe, for the International Committee of Seafarers' Unions (formed in September, 1909) had decided to take the offensive against the International Shipping Federation. In every country the shipowners refused to discuss these claims on the grounds that the organizations were not representative of the seamen and an international seafarers' strike was called in five countries in June, 1911.

Broad basis was international

In England, the National Sailors' & Firemen's Union and the Stewards, who then had a separate union, called out all members employed in vessels controlled by the Shipping Federation. The transport Workers' Federation, of which the seamen were members, called out the Dockers and Carters in sympathy with the seamen, and the latter decided to seize the opportunity to settle long-standing grievances of their own. In

England, 120,000 transport workers were directly affected. By August, the seamen had returned to work, securing in most ports considerable advances in wages, recognition of the union and restrictions on the exercise of the Federation ticket. Although these settlements were local, sectional, varying, and incomplete, the result was an astonishing victory for the seamen.

The Manager of the Shipping Federation had stated that there were only two hundred sailors and firemen who would respond to the strike. The late T. Chambers, then Treasurer of the National Sailors' & Firemen's Union, accounted for the success of the strike by the fact that 'Sectionalism was non-existent; the broad basis was international with united action all round'. ('The Seaman' - December, 1911.)

After the 1911 strike, the seamen put forward their demands for national recognition and a National Negotiating & Wages Board. In 1913 their demand was so strong that the shipowners granted a wage increase, but found that the demand for a National Board still continued. The National Sailors' & Firemen's Union still continued with their campaign. District Conciliation Committees were then set up, notably at Li-





Disabled British seamen learn how to thin vines in a Springbok Farm greenhouse. Springbok Rehabilitation Centre provides twelve months' training in farming and market gardening for many disabled ex-members of the British Merchant Navy

verpool and on the North-East Coast. By 1914, the seamen were in measurable distance of attaining their object.

The outbreak of the first world war entirely altered the situation. The shipping industry was brought under Government control and when the Ministry of Shipping was set up in 1916, a National Board was practically assured. In April, 1917, the new Ministry set up an interdepartmental Mercantile Marine Conciliation Committee. Under its auspices, a series of seven conferences were held between the Shipping Federation and the National Sailors' & Firemen's Union. At the beginning of October, a number of National Sailors' & Firemen's Union members struck at Liverpool for increased wages. The Ministry, realizing the urgency of a settlement, proposed that wages in all ports should be increased up to a national standard rate of £11 10s. 0d. per month, and

finally on 22nd November, 1917, established a National Maritime Board for the duration of the war and the transition period. Thus, at a single stroke, the seamen not only secured an increase of pay, but a standardized national wage rate, obliterating all previous local differences. Other industries had to content themselves for the time being with war bonuses. The seamen were the first to make this notable advance through trade unionism.

The work of the Board was so successful that it was decided that it should continue as a permanent joint industrial council. Therefore, in January, 1920, the new constitution of the National Maritime Board was established. The only important change was that the Liverpool shipowners and railway companies were also represented and that the device of referring deadlocks to the shipping controller was abandoned.

Spirit of self-sacrifice

Since that time the Board has been most successful and it is largely due to its effective working machinery and the co-operation existing between the shipowners, seamen's representatives and the government departments, coupled with the heroic spirit of self-sacrifice and determination displayed by the seamen, that the Merchant Navy was able to play such a tremendous part as a vital link that is of paramount importance to effective operations of the Army and Navy in war-time and the main artery upon which the British Commonwealth depends to keep the lines of communication open and for the transportation of the commodities of life, both in war and peace.

In 1922, a Cooks' & Stewards' Section of the union was formed and the Hull Seamen's Union, the oldest and

Water craft of all shapes and sizes come to London. At Regent's Canal Dock, the Grand Union Canal and the River Lea Navigation have an outlet to the Thames and to the sea. Both ships and canal boats are here seen loading in the dock

strongest of the remaining local societies was absorbed, and the present title of the union was assumed and registered in 1926.

Skilful leadership

Every age produces its man and the union is now making great progress under the leadership of Brother Tom Yates, C.B.E., its present General Secretary. Much has been done by the union to improve the conditions of service for seamen in recent years. Skill and experience in the art of collective bargaining have led to a steady improvement in the wages and conditions of employment on board ship. From the monthly wages of 45s. to 55s. for able seamen and 50s. to 60s. per month for firemen in 1886, scales have been pushed up and hours reduced. The average hours of work for seamen in 1886 were eighty-four per week; in 1936 they were fifty-six hours per week, and forty-five hours in port. They are now forty-eight hours per week at sea, the principle of the eight-hour day having been established, with compensation for hours worked in excess of forty-eight hours per week in all departments. In fact, all Sundays worked at sea are now paid for either in cash or by special leave with subsistence allowance in port.

Monthly rate of wages 1886:

able seaman 45s. to 55s., firemen 50s. to 60s.

Monthly rate of wages 1911:

able seaman £4 to the Eastward; £4 to the Westward; fireman and trimmer £4 5s. 0d. to the Eastward; £4 10s. 0d. to the Westward.

Monthly rate of wages 1913:

able seaman £4 10s. to the Eastward; £4 10s. 0d. to the Westward; fireman and trimmer £4 15s. 0d. to the Eastward;

In addition to providing convalescent facilities, Limpsfield has eight bungalows in which veteran seamen and their wives can spend a comfortable retirement. The bungalows were provided by the citizens of Birmingham in memory of the men of the British Merchant Navy who lost their lives during the Second World War



£ 5 to the Westward.

Monthly rate of wages 1936:

able seaman £ 8 15s. 6d.; fireman £ 9 5s. 6d.

Monthly rate of wages 1938:

able seaman £ 9 12s. 6d.; fireman £ 10 2s. 6d.

Rate of wages 1952:

able seaman £ 24 per month, plus £ 4 efficiency allowance per month after four years' service equalling £ 28; fireman £ 24 10s. Od. per month, plus £ 4 efficiency allowance per month after four years' service, equalling £ 28 10s. Od.

Rate of wages 1954:

able seaman £ 25 10s. Od. per month, plus £ 4 efficiency allowance per month after four years' service equalling £ 29 10s. Od.; fireman £ 26 plus £ 4 efficiency allowance per month after four years' service equalling £ 30.

Many other improvement in conditions have also been secured. The Holidays with Pay Agreement has been in operation for some years. Established ratings receive fourteen days' holiday per year, with subsistence allowance.

When effects are lost as a result of enemy action in war-time or marine peril, both in peace and war, compensation ranging from £ 40 in the case of boys, £ 60 for seamen, up to £ 225 for a master, is now paid. Before the establishment of this agreement, seafarers had to bear this loss themselves.

Men left ashore sick abroad previously had their wages stopped. An agreement now in operation provides that the basic wage is continued for twelve weeks in case of sickness or injury to a seafarer when abroad.

Seamen previously had to provide their own beds and bedding, including sheets and blankets. By agreement, this is now provided by the owners.

A new and adequate food scale has now been agreed and put into operation on board all British ships.

Under Government regulation, there is a much improved standard of accommodation on newly built ships and standards are improved wherever possible on old ships where space allows for improvements. The union is fully consulted, both in the construction stage and when improvements are suggested or take place on all types of vessels.

Social welfare activities

With regard to social welfare in ports, magnificent Merchant Navy Clubs, hotels and hostels are now in being. The union have led the way and have established a Convalescent Home for Seamen at Limpsfield in Surrey, where men who have broken down in health and are physically debilitated owing to the strenuous life they lead and the inclement weather that they often have to endure, are nursed back to health. They are maintained in comfort at the Home, and, in addition, receive pocket money which is extra to any social insurance benefit that they are entitled to from the Ministry of National Insurance. Whilst they are recuperating, their wives or dependents are properly maintained.

There has also been established a Rehabilitation Centre based upon scientific lines. The seaman's calling is a hard one - it wears men out and many seafarers have become overstrained and incapacitated as a result of both war and peacetime service and are not now fit for further service at sea. At the 'Springbok' Farm and Rehabilitation Centre, Alfold, in Surrey, these men are retrained for another industry. They receive trade union rates of pay whilst training, ample provision also being made for the

For seamen, who, by the nature of their calling, spend most of their time separated from their wives and families, letters are the main source of contact with home. A pleasant change for them, mail is delivered daily whilst the ship is in port

maintenance of dependents, so that a man has no worry about what is happening at home whilst he is being rehabilitated.

The union has already completed a part of its programme from points put forward in the International Seafarers' Charter. It has drafted a new Merchant Shipping Act to replace the old 1894 and 1906 Acts, which is now awaiting Government attention. It has secured, as already stated, improved accommodation, sleeping, messing, recreational and higher sanitary arrangements, embodying all the lessons of war-time experience in life-saving appliances.

Provision for the decasualization of labour has also been made by the setting up of the Merchant Navy Establishment. This is a reservoir of vital manpower and the source from which we are able to man our ships and carry all the food and raw materials required across the seas and oceans of the world. We have put this Establishment Scheme into operation because of the security of tenure it provides for the sailor.

We have also put forward to the National Maritime Board a scheme for a seafarers' pension. This is a question which will have to be given serious attention in the future.

We have also given attention, by the establishment of the pre-sea training schemes in the Deck, Engineerroom and Catering Departments, to the important question of training boys in all departments for the sea service, so that, in future, their desire to rise in life can be realized and any boy can qualify to reach the bridge, or become a head steward if he has the necessary ability. In the case of the man in the Engineerroom Department, his ambition of obtaining a better position will not be bounded by the engineerroom bulkhead.

Run for seamen by seamen

The union is run for seamen by practical seamen and it has branches at all the principal ports in the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, and representatives at terminal ports within the British Commonwealth and in many foreign countries. The main benefits are death, accident, shipwreck, free legal advice and assistance and old-age benefit. In its work, its desire is to constantly further and promote the interests and well-being of all men who go down to the sea in ships.

(continued on the next page)



Railways and railwaymen in Great Britain

by J. S. Campbell, General Secretary, National Union of Railwaymen



BRITAIN WAS THE PIONEER COUNTRY OF RAILWAYS, and of the technical and scientific developments which made railway construction possible. The early developments were entirely uncoordinated, and were financed by private capital with the result that the railway system became the most highly capitalized in the world.

The period of experiment in railway construction ended in 1844 and from then onwards there began a period of consolidation of small companies into larger. In that year a Bill was introduced into Parliament proposing State purchase of the railways, but it reached the Statute Book in such an emaciated form that it became completely unworkable.

In 1908 the evils of unrestricted competition led to attempts to mitigate them. The era of cut-throat competition was passing and a new era of amalgamation,

(continued from page 122)

The National Union of Seamen is the seamen's sheet anchor; whilst it remains strong, active and watchful of their interests, seafarers need have no fear so far as the future is concerned.

pooling schemes, and working agreements was beginning. A Governmental Department Committee was set up in 1911 by the then President of the Board of Trade (Mr Winston Churchill) and in evidence before that Committee the Railway Unions urged that in all schemes of amalgamation there should be incorporated provisions for compensating officers and servants who otherwise suffered loss by reason of amalga-

mation. The Report of that Committee 'accepted that the era of competition between railway companies is passing' and could not be prevented. It is not without significance that the report was written in the year when railwaymen had given their first effective display of industrial solidarity.

The Committee also accepted the Unions' contention with regard to compensation, and thus were laid down the invaluable compensation provisions which were ultimately incorporated in the Ministry of Transport Act, 1919, and subsequent Acts vitally affecting the conditions of employment of railway staff.

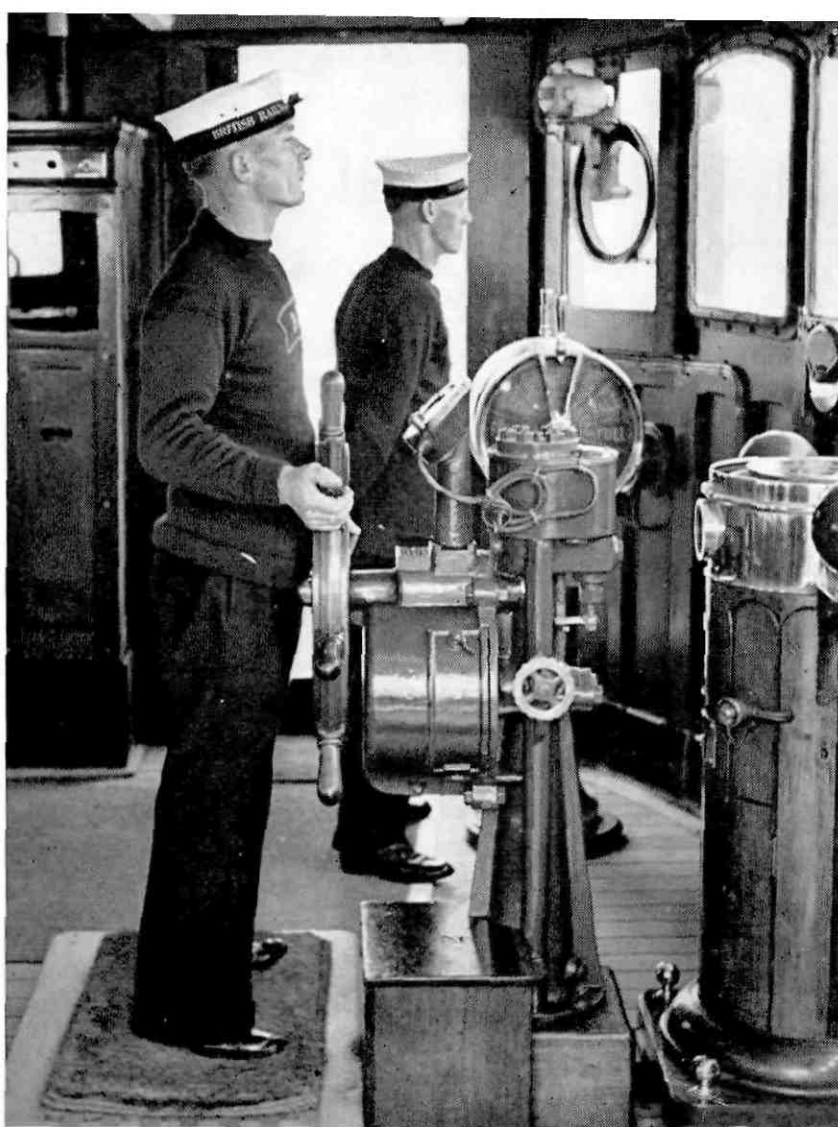
The early years of the twentieth century were characterized by much keener world competition. Industrialization had now assumed a highly-developed form over a wide area of the world, and in Europe the railways were used, by special forms of subsidization, as instruments leading to cheaper exports. Our own fare and freight structure, the growing pressure from railwaymen for better conditions, and world competition in exports, combined to keep railway profits down, and the outbreak of war in August 1914 helped to obscure the fact that the railways had entered upon a period of great difficulties from which they were ultimately rescued by the Labour Government's Transport Act, 1947.

At the outbreak of the 1914 war the Government implemented the powers conferred on them by the 'Regulation of Forces Act 1871' and took control of the railways. Compensation was payable on the basis of the net receipts for the year 1913, and an additional sum in respect of wear and tear which, ultimately, was agreed at £ 60,000,000.

The control by the Government was maintained for two years after the war ended.

Amalgamation - four main line railway companies

The gradual experimental process which began in the 1840's of creating larger railway units under private enterprise assumed its final form with the passing



One of the crew of a British Railways cross-Channel steamer at the wheel. The railways in Great Britain have owned and operated ships for nearly a hundred years

of the Railways Act 1921 which resulted, in January 1923, in the creation of four main railways from 123 companies. This Act provided for the reorganization of the railway companies' capital structure and provided also for a standard revenue for each group which was fixed by a Railway Rates Tribunal, whose decisions, by majority vote, were not subject to review by Parliament. It is to be noted that at no time between 1928 and 1938 did the railway companies reach the standard revenue to which the Act entitled them.

A new factor in the transport situation was introduced by the development of road transport which, by 1928, had become a serious competitor to the railways, and parliamentary powers were sought by the railway companies to enable them to develop road transport services of their own.

In 1930 a Labour Government passed the Road Traffic Act, the primary object of which was the regulation of traffic on the roads, particularly as regards

the public safety. It is interesting to note that the 'Fair Wages Clause' was only retained in the Act after a struggle with the House of Lords, which did its best to strike it out of the Bill. Since 1930, one impartial authority after another has insisted that coordination of transport is the only answer to the transport problem.

With the outbreak of war in 1939, the Government again took control of the railways. The terms of the take-over were a payment of £ 43,469,000 rental annually and charges for maintenance and renewal.

Nationalization of the railways

The policy of the Labour Movement to put all major forms of inland transport under one authority and to coordinate and integrate the different transport services, came to fruition with the passing of the Labour Government's Transport Act, 1947. This Act came into effect as from 1 January 1948. It nationalized the railways; established machinery for

developing area passenger schemes, and dealt with harbour and coastal shipping. It provided for the nationalization of long distance road haulage. A Transport Commission was created, charged with the duty of providing an efficient, adequate, economical and properly integrated public inland transport and port facilities within Great Britain. It also provided machinery for dealing with charges schemes, and for the compensation of employees adversely affected by the provisions of the Act.

If rail efficiency were to be judged purely by monetary results, British Railways can point to a £ 39.6 million surplus of receipts over expenditure in 1952. There has, in fact, been a surplus in each year since 1948 when British Railways came into being, but only in the last two years was it sufficient to pay the so-called 'central charges' (interest on capital, etc.).

Over the whole undertaking the Transport Commission earned, during the five years to 31 December 1952, a working surplus in total of £ 221.3 million, but after deduction of central charges for interest and administration, and charges for capital redemption and special items, the aggregate deficit, of which almost one-half is represented by capital redemption, was £ 31.5 million.

There is a popular but misconceived conception that the nationalized transport has been a charge upon the taxpayer. In fact, nationalized transport has not cost the taxpayer a penny, despite the very generous compensation terms and the provision made for capital redemption. It has been said, not perhaps without some justification, that the Transport Commission inherited a 'bag of bones', but despite many adverse circumstances, and difficulties beyond the control of the Transport Commission, tremendous headway has been made by the Commission whilst undertaking a gigantic process of reorganization.

The last report of the Transport Commission (1952) shows that in every direction that matters British Railways did a good job; moreover, they did it with greater efficiency and at less cost. In 1947, the last complete year prior to nationalization, there was a shortfall of

approximately £ 60 million (£ 43½ million interest guaranteed to the railways by the Government, plus £16 million deficit on operations). It is abundantly clear that the railway companies would have gone bankrupt had the Government not come to the rescue.

The future of British transport was thrown into the melting pot when in May 1952 the Conservative Government, without any consultation with those responsible for running the publicly-owned transport system, published its White Paper on Transport Policy which eventually, in a modified form, became an Act of Parliament in 1953. Implementing the pledges given to the private road transport interests, the Transport Act 1953 breaks up the publicly-owned transport system and returns long distance road haulage to private ownership.

British railway trade unions

There are forty-three trade unions concerned in the organization of British Railways' staff, which number approximately 600,000. Only three of these unions – National Union of Railwaymen, Transport Salaried Staffs' Association, and Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen – are affiliated to the ITF. Those not affiliated are concerned with the organization of railway workshop staff as distinct from operating staff, etc., though the NUR also organizes railway workshop staff, and has the majority of them within its ranks.

The NUR is the largest of the three railway trade unions, having a membership of approximately 400,000. It is an all-grades industrial union, and its members come from all grades employed on or in connection with British Railways.

The NUR was constituted on 29 March 1913, by the fusion of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants (founded in 1872), the United Pointsmen and Signalmen's Society (founded in 1880), and the General Railway Workers' Union (founded in 1889). The union's 400,000 members are contained in 1,475 branches throughout the country, and these branches are grouped according to their geographical position in the twenty-

eight District Councils, whose main function is to eliminate non-unionism. Whilst many of the branches are all-grades branches, others cater for specific grades, such as goods and cartage, clerical and supervisory, locomotive, signalmen, etc.

The head offices of the union are situated at Unity House, Euston Road, London, N. W. 1., and in addition to the General Secretary and two assistant General Secretaries, with a head office staff of eighty-five, the union has nineteen organizers (permanent officials), most of whom are allocated to districts throughout the country to guide and assist branch secretaries and members.

The union's assets are in the region of £ 5 million pounds, and the weekly minimum contribution paid by members is 8½ d. per week, 2¾ d. of which goes to the local branches and the remainder to head office.

The official organ of the union is the 'Railway Review', which is the only weekly trade union newspaper published in the country.

The contribution of 8½ d. per week covers all the usual benefits of trade union membership, such as the safeguarding and improvement of wages and conditions of service; representation at inquiries and appeals hearings; legal aid in all matters connected with a member's employment; also weekly pay-

ments when dismissed from employment, when suspended from duty, and when on strike.

For additional small weekly contributions benefit is paid from such provident funds as the Accident Fund, Death and Orphan Fund, Disablement Fund (which includes retirement) and the Sick Fund.

Membership of the union enables individuals to have the advantage of education courses under the auspices of the Trades Union Congress and the National Council of Labour Colleges. In addition the National Union of Railwaymen is in the process of setting up its own education scheme under which, for a trial period of two years, sixty selected union members will be trained each year in the work of the union.

Wages and conditions of service

Compared with wages paid in other industries, wages of British railwaymen cannot be regarded as satisfactory. This disparity and a rapidly rising cost of living were responsible for a succession of wage claims during the last few years. Increases were obtained but still the railwaymen's pay remained inadequate. It was necessary, after all other means had failed, to give notice of strike action. This resulted in an increase of six per cent and an undertaking to examine

(continued on the next page)

Inside the signal box at York Station showing the control room and panels. This is the largest route relay interlocking system in the world, controlling 33¼ miles of track in and around York and sixteen platforms at York Station



Britain's navigating and engineer officers

Contributed by the
Navigators and Engineer Officers' Union

ALTHOUGH GREAT BRITAIN was possessed in the nineteenth century of great natural mineral resources, as a result of which she was able to achieve a remarkable industrial development, the relatively small size of the country when compared with the population means that she is dependent on imports for many vital necessities of life. At the present time Britain requires to import half her food, four-fifths of raw wool, and *all* the petrol and oil essential to maintain transport services.

Conversely, it is a truism that Britain must export to live. These bulk imports must inevitably be brought into the country by sea, and the manufactured exports similarly transported, factors which make it self-evident that Britain must maintain a large Merchant Navy.

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the whole wage and salary structure. Negotiations are now proceeding.

One unsatisfactory feature about railway wages in Britain is the large number (over 100) of varying rates. The National Union of Railwaymen is proposing that there should be only twenty-six rates, each representing the measure of skill and responsibility related to the particular grade.

At the time of writing, wages range from 124/6 d. for a porter to 178/6d. for an engine driver. There are additional payments for overtime, night duty (ten p.m. to six a.m.), and Sunday duty. The working week is forty-four hours, worked on the basis of a five-day week, a six-day week, or an eleven-day fortnight. The latter arrangement provides for a 'Rest Day' every two weeks, but if it should be necessary to work on that day, payment is at an enhanced rate. Additional payment is made for turns of duty commencing at two p.m. or later on a Saturday.

At the present time, negotiations are in progress regarding the introduction of a contributory pension scheme, and it is expected that this will soon be in operation.

Apart from this primary reason for the existence of her merchant fleet, Great Britain has had a very long seafaring tradition, and her ships have earned for themselves a leading place as carriers of the world's goods, resulting from services which have been provided for generations.

The Merchant Navy not only makes a valuable contribution to the trade of the world by the efficient transportation of goods and passengers, but also plays a vital part in maintaining the country's economy. The earnings from shipping services provide an important contribution to the United Kingdom's balance of trade position and it might be noted that in 1952 the total net earnings of the Merchant Navy in the overseas trades was over £ 200 million. It will be therefore appreciated that a heavy responsibility rests on the British shipping industry and particularly on the men who man this great fleet. Consequently efficient seafarers' organizations have been long established and so far as the officers are concerned the Navigators and Engineer Officers' Union is probably the largest Merchant Navy officers' organization in the world.

It is perhaps worth recalling the part played by the Merchant Navy in the second world war, during the course of which over twelve million tons of shipping was sunk and 32,000 seafarers paid the supreme sacrifice. It is considered that British shipping effected a remarkable recovery and the total amount of shipping on the British register now

amounts to 19,829,000 tons gross.

Industrial progress

It must be admitted that for many years wages and conditions for officers in British ships were poor by any standards and inadequate industrial representation undoubtedly played its part in this sorry state of affairs. In the years immediately after the first world war shipping was in the doldrums, due partly to short-sighted shipping policies and partly to the economic nationalism so prevalent in the 1930's, both of which were responsible for impeding an orderly development of international trade. It was during this period that the wages and conditions of employment for the officer personnel of the Merchant Navy fell to extraordinarily low levels, but out of the frustration some good emerged. Officers at long last realized that if improvements in their conditions of employment were to be effected a prerequisite was the establishment of a strong and virile trade union to represent their industrial and professional interests.

In 1936 the Navigators and Engineer Officers' Union came into existence and its emergence was generally welcomed by the officer personnel. It became affiliated to the Trades Union Congress and was the first British officers' organization to link up internationally through the appropriate organization of that time, namely, the International Mercantile Marine Officers' Association. It was perhaps fortuitous, but nevertheless true, that at the time of the union's inception in 1936 there was an increased demand for shipping services, due no doubt to the deterioration of the international situation and the ensuing stockpiling which undoubtedly took place between that year and the outbreak of war in 1939.

The NEOU is represented on the National Maritime Board which comprises of the shipowners' and seafarers' organizations. The Board is completely removed from any form of governmental interference so far as its activities are concerned and over the years has established an enviable record, as, despite the many and varied controversial industrial issues and matters dealt with, all have been settled by joint discussion and without recourse to industrial action or arbitration.

Great improvements won

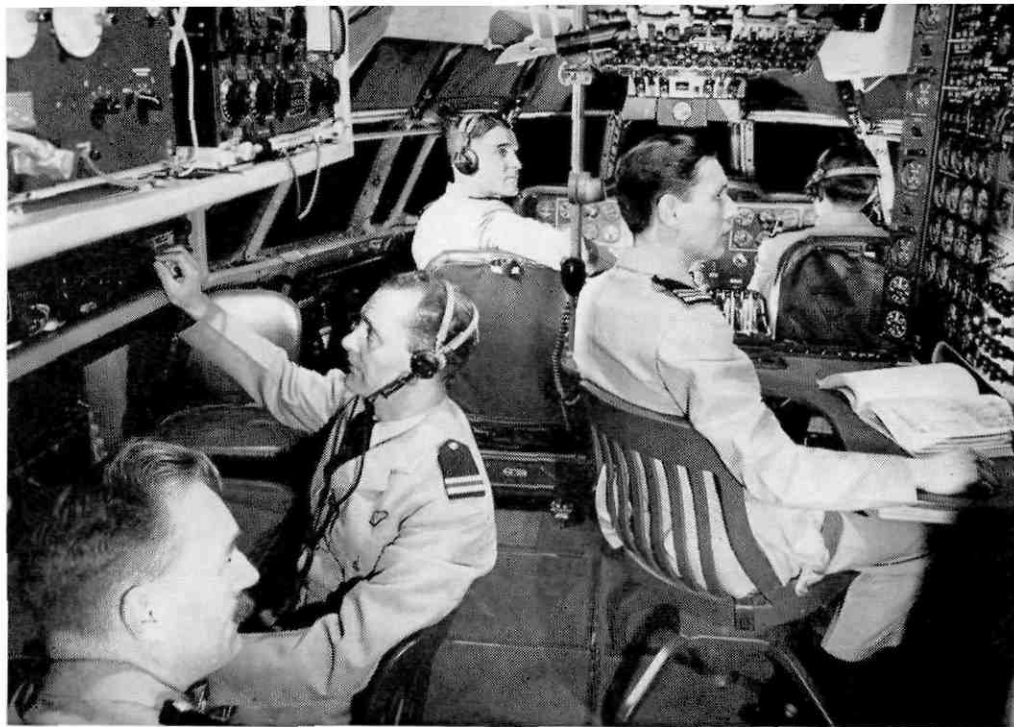
The success of the endeavours of the

On the flight deck of a BOAC Strato-cruiser. The NEOU has effected virtually complete organization among British flight navigating and engineer officers. The union regards this as one of the most important phases of its activities

NEOU since its inception may be measured by the agreements which it has been responsible for negotiating on behalf of its members. Salaries have been improved three-fold; additional hours of duty are compensated for; leave has been increased; a Sundays at sea agreement applies to all ships; provision is made for sick pay, whether in home ports or abroad; and there are enhanced standards of accommodation, improved welfare facilities, and by no means least, increased security provided through the Established Service Scheme. In addition to these considerations, all officers are covered by an Agreement which provides for an adequate pension on retirement based upon the services which the individual officer has performed in the Merchant Navy.

In addition to these 'economic gains', the union has established a reputation as a responsible body which is brought into full consultation by Government departments and by shipowners' organizations before any action is taken likely to affect the interests of its members. Representatives of the NEOU serve on a wide variety of official and industrial committees, including working parties set up by the Government to consider such issues as safety of life at sea; radar aids; training; examinations; shipping defence and the like. The NEOU has also played an important part in the development of welfare services both at home and abroad.

An important section of members serves in the whaling industry and it may be of particular interest to note the arrangements which have been concluded between the British and Norwegian whaling industries so as to ensure that the British and Norwegian seafarers' interests are adequately protected. Annually the NEOU, together with the NUS, meet with their sister Norwegian seafarers' unions and negotiate with the British and Norwegian whaling owners the wages and conditions which are to apply in the Anglo-Norwegian whaling fleets. This sound principle, designed to remove the possibility of competition being carried on at the expense of the



seafarer, has worked admirably for many years and it is believed that these international industrial negotiations are unique. In 1950 the joint negotiations broke down and probably for the first time in international trade union history both sides agreed – the British and Norwegian owners, together with the British and Norwegian Unions – to submit the dispute to an international arbitrator whose decision would be accepted as final.

The Union and civil aviation

Another important phase of the NEOU's activities is to be found in civil aviation where the union has effected complete organization among flight navigating and engineer officers serving with the national corporations and also in many of the independent charter companies. There is no doubt that this section will grow in importance with the inevitable growth of British civil aviation. The union has been instrumental in materially improving the wages and conditions of its air membership and is represented on the National Joint Council for Civil Air Transport. The NEOU works closely in conjunction with the civil aviation section of the ITF and is working diligently, both nationally and internationally, on the revision of those air regulations which have an important bearing on air crew complement.

The union has developed facilities for housing and the purchase of property, initiated free legal advice on personal problems and a wide range of advice

on technical matters and inventions.

A quarterly magazine, the Merchant Navy Journal, is published by the NEOU in conjunction with the shipmasters' organization, the Mercantile Marine Service Association. The Journal is designed not only to keep members informed of the day-to-day work of their organization, but also keeps them acquainted with technical developments and matters affecting their profession. That this duty is well carried out may be evidenced by the fact that over 25,000 copies of the Journal are published quarterly and the magazines are found aboard all British ships and are read throughout many maritime countries.

Work in the international field

From the time of its inception the Governing Body of the NEOU has always recognized that both shipping and civil aviation are essentially international industries and that consequently the highest degree of cooperation and consultation is necessary on an international basis if shipping and civil aviation are to be developed on an orderly basis and the interests of those it represents in these two spheres adequately protected. In 1946, when by resolution the IMMOA suspended its activities, the NEOU was one of the first officers' organizations to join the International Transport Workers' Federation in accordance with the recommendation made by the resolution. The NEOU is proud to have played its part in the seafarers' and civil aviation sections and thereby to have ce-



mented many of the friendships made during the stress of the war years.

During those years, the General Secretary, Mr D. S. Tennant, succeeded Mr O. Becu as the Honorary Secretary of the Officers' International Organization and devoted considerable time during the war years to assisting the officers from the overrun countries of Europe to re-establish their organizations in London on a temporary war-time basis. Not only were these endeavours successful, but they resulted in many of these temporarily-established organizations being able to take funds back with them after the war to their own countries and thereby help in the reconstruction of the national organization.

The NEOU played its part in the development of the International Seafarers' Charter which was drawn up during the war years in consultation with other seafarers' representatives and formed the basis of many Conventions which were subsequently adopted at the International Maritime Conference in Seattle in 1946, a number of which are today ratified and embodied in the national legislation of many countries.

How it is administered

The NEOU is governed by a Council comprising ten navigating officers and ten engineer officers elected by the membership every second year, and presided over by the Rt. Hon. The Lord Winster, P.C., K.C.M.G. Consequently all members of the Council are certificated officers, representatives of each branch of the Merchant Navy, sea and air. The officials of the organization responsible

for the day-to-day work are experienced officers, each major port having a district secretary and a varied number of assistants to render service to members visiting these ports. The Head Office, situated in London, under the General Secretary, together with the national officials, is responsible for the sectional activities of the organization, e.g., industrial, air, coastwise, legal, technical, tankers, publications, income tax, etc., together with adequate clerical staff, and separate departments are maintained for finance and records.

The General Secretary is Mr D.S. Tennant, C.B.E., a Master Mariner, who had varied experience at sea before becoming an official of the organization at the time of its inception. Mr Tennant came ashore a few years before the organization was founded and played an important part in its foundation. He was appointed General Secretary in 1943 when Captain Coombs voluntarily relinquished the position on being appointed President of the Officers' (Merchant Navy) Federation. The period since 1945 has seen a consolidation of the progress made and the union has a solid record of achievement behind it. The General Secretary has served as Chairman of the Seafarers' Section and is well-known for his international activities on behalf of seafarers generally.

Looking ahead

Although in general the wages and conditions of service for the officer personnel of the Merchant Navy can be considered as reasonably satisfactory, constituting as they do a revolutionary chan-

'Stand by below!' – a Second Engineer answers the telegraph. The wages and conditions of employment of officer personnel fell to an extremely low level in the years after the First World War. A strong and virile union brought the remedy

ge as compared with those which were existing at the time of the union's inception, there are still many problems which it is the duty of the union to endeavour to solve.

A period of intense competition is undoubtedly ahead for the maritime industries of the world and the NEOU views with concern the measures of flag discrimination and other artificial devices which are being introduced by many countries to bolster their merchant fleets. The NEOU believes that the seafarers' organizations from the bona fide maritime countries of the world must face up realistically to these issues through the ITF.

The NEOU has played its part in facing up to the menacing problem which has been set by the registration of an increasing number of ships in countries with little or no maritime tradition or law. The registration of ships in Panama and small obscure Central American Republics – registrations effected, it is believed, to escape national taxation and other obligations – if not brought into control may well undermine the wages and conditions of employment which have been so laboriously established by seafarers' organizations over the years.

In its approach to all these problems the NEOU is guided by the principle that, of all professions, that of the seafarer and aircrew member is international in character and fundamentally their problems are the same whatever their nationality may be. For this reason it is essential for the individual seafarers' and aircrew organizations to be strong so that they are able to play a responsible and indeed an essential part in shaping the policy of their industries in each country, such policy being made on the basis of accepted international guiding principles. They must play their part in the international sphere to ensure that – so far as they can – there shall be no returning to the days of not so distant memory when mass unemployment and the consequent acceptance of sub-standard conditions of employment was a prelude to the seafarers determining, by unprecedented sacrifices, that the light of freedom was not extinguished.

INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS' FEDERATION

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

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

Seven industrial sections catering for

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

The aims of the ITF are

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

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

Affiliated unions in

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



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