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# **International Transport Workers' Journal**

*Monthly Publication of the International Transport Workers' Federation*

**International  
Transport Workers'  
Journal**

*Monthly Publication of the ITF*

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*Our cover-picture:* In this issue we publish a feature on the use of radio in the Dutch taxi industry, a development which nowadays has its counterparts in many other countries.

# The limitation of shipowners' liability



A GOOD DEAL OF ATTENTION HAS BEEN GIVEN in both the general and the shipping press of the world to the International Convention on the Limitation of Shipowners' Liability which was adopted at an Intergovernmental Diplomatic Conference on Maritime Law, held in Brussels in the early part of October last, and which is to replace the earlier convention of 1924 on the subject. The latter convention never became effective because many maritime countries, including Britain and the United States, did not ratify it.

In this article we do not examine the convention as a whole, since this has been done extensively elsewhere, but single out one or two aspects which are of special concern to seafarers, fishermen, and categories of workers assimilated to them for the purpose of the convention.

In one respect the new convention is certainly a big improvement on the old one. It provides for a substantial increase in the limits to the liability of shipowners in connection with claims for compensation arising out of personal death or injury or damage or loss of property.

## Revision was overdue

Indeed, the limits set by the 1924 convention no longer bear any relation to present-day monetary values. It allowed shipowners to fix their responsibilities according to the value of the ship or to a fixed amount of £8 per ton. But it was not specified, it seems, whether indemnities were to be paid on the basis of the 1924 value of the pound or at the rates of exchange prevailing at the time of payment. This, incidentally, was the reason why some countries did not ratify.

The convention, as stated, never entered into force owing to lack of ratifications. In practice, however, the limits set to the liability of shipowners were of the order fixed by the convention in the different countries. For instance, as far as material claims are concerned, the limit applied has been B.fr.s. 1400 per ton in Belgium, £8 per ton in Britain (£15 for personal claims), D. Kr. 145 per ton in Denmark, FM. 1550 per ton in Finland, N. Kr. 145 in Norway, S. Kr. 145 per ton in Sweden, \$60 per ton (personal and material claims) in the United States.

How obsolete these figures are may

be judged from the fact that the British figures are those laid down by the Merchant Shipping Act in 1894! One of the effects of the new convention, if it is implemented, will be to bring about more uniformity as well as to fix limitation funds at more realistic figures. The new figures are related to the tonnage of the ship and are fixed at £24 per ton for property claims and £74 per ton for personal claims.

## Exceptional position of shipping in relation to liability

In spite of the improvement represented by the new convention in the respect mentioned, from the point of view of seafarers and assimilated groups it is open to serious objection on grounds of principle.

In the first place there is the fact that the responsibility of shipowners is limited in a way that it is not limited in other industries. Though not unaware of the arguments used to justify this situation, we cannot see why in transport by sea there should be a limitation which does not apply to other transport industries or industries in general, or why shipowners should not carry the same responsibility and underwrite it in the same way as is done in other industries and is done by the shipowners themselves in regard to other obligations.

The point is to some extent, indeed, of a general character, but it becomes one of direct interest to seafarers, fishermen and assimilated groups because they are brought within the scope of limited liability by the provisions of the convention. There are countries where this has always been the position under national legislation. As already mentioned, in Britain, for instance, the Merchant Shipping Act of 1894 fixes the maximum liability of shipowners,

including personal claims, at £15 per ton; in the United States it is fixed at \$60 per ton for personal and property claims together. This provision is usually sufficient to meet all claims, but in the case of major catastrophes when the aggregate of claims may be very large or in the case of vessels of small tonnage when the limitation fund is small, it may result in real hardship. In British courts it has happened more than once that judges have deplored the fact that limitation of liability prevented them from awarding personal damages which they considered adequate.

## Liability not limited in some countries

On the other hand, there are countries where shipowners' liability in respect of persons in their employment is unlimited. It is true that in that event the limitation provided by the convention would not apply. Nevertheless, the fact that the principle of limited liability towards employed persons now has the sanction, be it conditional, of an international convention is a socially retrograde step and much diminishes our satisfaction at the improvement it represents in other respects. Our objection is strengthened by the fact that this kind of limitation does not apply in the case of workers in any occupation ashore. Again it appears to us as completely anomalous that shipowners should be in an exceptional position and able to restrict liability towards persons in their employment in a way not permitted to other categories of employers.

## ITF objection registered with Diplomatic Conference

The unions affiliated with the ITF feel strongly about this and accordingly a letter was addressed to the President of the Diplomatic Conference in Brussels declaring (1) that to limit employers' liability towards employed persons is unjust in principle, (2) that in particular it is not just to treat any group of workers differently from workers generally in this respect, and (3) that, particularly in international industries like shipping and fishing, it is undesir-

able for such limitation to operate in *some countries and not in others*. The hope was therefore expressed that employed persons would be entirely excluded from the scope of the convention and from the limitation of liability for which it provides.

The letter was duly brought to the notice of the conference in Brussels, but had no noticeable effect upon its decision.

This leads us to another reflection of a more procedural kind. The texts which were used by the Diplomatic Conference as a basis of its discussions were drawn up, we understand, by the International Maritime Committee at a meeting held in Madrid in 1955. Though the constituents of this body are in no wise to be identified with the delegates to a diplomatic conference such as the one held in Brussels – indeed, on occasion the recommendations of the Committee have been known to be flatly turned down at the diplomatic level – it is a fact that shipping lawyers, shipowners and others perhaps, were through it able to influence the framing of the convention in a way in which the wage and salary earners concerned were not.

#### **Social aspect should be dealt with through the ILO**

As a final and related reflection we doubt whether a Diplomatic Conference, where governments only are directly represented, was the best medium for dealing with this special aspect of the question of shipowners' liability. Inasmuch as it concerns persons in the employ of shipowners we submit that it is a social question and could therefore be properly dealt with through the ILO. There already exists an ILO convention on certain aspects of shipowners' liability, namely the Shipowners' Liability (Sick and Injured Seamen) Convention of 1936. It would have been consistent, we feel, for the convention on the complementary aspect of shipowners' obligation towards their employees to be framed through the same agency.

If we make the observation at this late stage, it is because what has happened in connection with the question of shipowners' liability seems to show the need for a clearer recognition of the role of the International Labour Organization as the proper agency for dealing with social questions at the international level.

THE BRITISH NATIONAL UNION OF RAILWAYMEN suffered a grievous blow in November when Jim Campbell, its General Secretary, and Tom Hollywood, its President, died as a result of injuries received in a road accident during a visit of an NUR delegation to the Soviet Union. For any union to lose its two chief officers is sad indeed, but when the men are of the calibre of Jim Campbell and Tom Hollywood, when they are men who inspire, as they did, respect, trust and real affection in equal high measure, the loss is truly tragic for the union, railwaymen in general and, even more, for their families and countless friends. The ITF has extended its deepest sympathy to all at the passing of two fine and dedicated trade unionists.



JIM CAMPBELL (or 'Big Jim', as he was affectionately known) was sixty-two. He had been an active member of his union practically all his working life. Soon after joining the railways in his native Scotland he became a Branch Secretary. After serving as District Council Secretary and acting several times as a delegate to the British Trades Union Congress he became a member of the NUR National Executive Committee in 1937.

In 1938 he became an organizer and in 1947 was put in charge of organization in Ireland. A year later he was Assistant General Secretary and in 1953 he was elected as the NUR's chief officer.

In recent years he has been a prominent figure in ITF circles, serving on the General Council and the Management Committee and, of course, playing his part in the Railwaymen's Section. He was one of the most well-known of Britain's trade union leaders, making the railwaymen's voice heard both in the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party.

Quietly spoken, modest, but tough and determined, everyone liked 'Big Jim'. Fellow trade unionists, the press or his opponents across the bargaining table – all will miss him greatly.

TOM HOLLYWOOD was fifty-five years old. He had spent the forty-one years of his working life on the railways, starting as an engine cleaner in 1916 at the age of fourteen and ending as an engine driver. Like Jim Campbell, he worked in Glasgow, the son of Scots parents but born just over the border in the north of England.

He first joined the locomotive-men's union but soon afterwards became a member of the NUR. He quickly began active work for his new union and for many years was to serve the West of Scotland District Council as Chairman or Secretary.

In 1943 he became a member of the NUR National Executive Committee for three years and was elected to the Committee again in 1949. In 1956 he was elected as the NUR's President for the following year. Meanwhile he played his part in political activities as Chairman of the Scottish Labour Party for three years and later as a member of the Labour Party National Executive Committee.

His part in the ITF was all too brief but it was long enough for the ITF to realize that it too has good reason to lament his death. Self-effacing, clear-headed and friendly he was a sturdy representative of trade unionism at its finest





# The story of one railroad union

by H. E. GILBERT, *President, Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen*



IN THE EARLY DAYS OF RAILROADING, death – sudden, violent, horrible – rode the rails with disturbing, tragic frequency. More often than not, the wives and children of those who sacrificed their lives were left destitute.

When Joshua A. Leach, a hostler on the Erie Railroad, passed the hat around among his fellow workers for the widow and fatherless children of Fireman George Page who had been killed in a wreck, an idea germinated in his mind.

That idea brought together eleven Erie firemen at Port Jervis, New York, on December 1, 1873, who pledged their support to one another and to their families. They there and then formed themselves into what they termed the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, Deer Park Lodge No. 1.

Josh Leach's idea found ready acceptance at other division points on the railroad and finally throughout the country. The first convention, held on December 15, 1874, reported twelve lodges functioning in the new organization.

Although the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen was formed for bene-

volent purposes, other needs came to the fore. A labor organization was required which would stop wrecks, raise wages and shorten the hours of work. Accordingly, the BLF soon focused its efforts on improving the locomotive firemen's lot.

The rise from one lodge and eleven members to the present high estate of a thousand lodges and over 95,000 members represents a journey well interspersed with blood, sweat and tears.

As the new organization began to show strength, terror-stricken railroad managements utilized all the weapons at their command to destroy the BLF. Unfriendly local authorities, state militia and federal troops, as well as a subsi-

dized press, were some of the tools employed by the managerial hierarchy to defeat unionization of the firemen.

That loathsome abomination, the labor spy, also played his nefarious role by infiltrating the lodges and encouraging the members to adopt unwise procedures, financial and otherwise. The spy was usually a glib, persuasive orator and used his talents to exhort the men to commit acts of violence, thus furnishing the excuse for the intervention of governmental authorities on the side of the companies.

The first success achieved by the BLF, insofar as wages and working conditions were concerned, was an increase in wages for firemen on the Indianapolis, Bloomington and Western Railroad, now a part of the Big Four System, in 1876.

However, the young organization suffered materially as a result of the 'unorganized' strike of 1877, a great up-

rising of non-union railroad men against injustices perpetrated by their employers. The unsuccessful strike lasted about two weeks.

Many members of the BLF became involved in the unpleasantness. A large number of them were compelled to renounce their allegiance to the cause of labor in order to retain their employment with railroad companies and, as a consequence of the fight waged against it, the BLF once again became a purely fraternal organization.

Another difficulty confronting the BLF during this period was the existence of another organization presuming to represent firemen, the International Firemen's Union. The IFU was strictly a trade union with few or no fraternal and insurance features. The union never levied an assessment on its members for any purpose except to defray expenses of strikes. Those strikes generally proved disastrous, although in some undertakings the IFU was victorious. Fortunately, the IFU was absorbed by the BLF in 1878.

The panicky but unyielding opposition of railway officials was responsible for the disbanding of many BLF lodges and the loss of a large number of members.

The sixth annual convention, held at

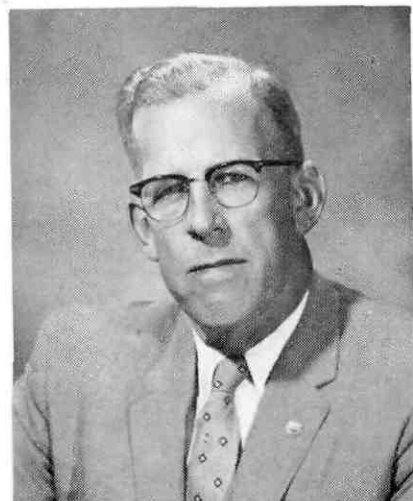
*Brother H. E. Gilbert, International President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen and author of the accompanying article. The BLFE is a member-union of the US Railway Labor Executives' Association (an ITF affiliate)*

Chicago on September 8 1879, apparently decided to appease management by adopting a resolution to 'ignore strikes and that we hereafter settle our grievances with our employers by arbitration'.

By the time the twelfth annual convention rolled around in 1885, the BLF had recovered measurably from the effects of the sympathetic strike of 1877. The policy adopted by the sixth convention to ignore strikes was abandoned and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen once again became a labor organization. The convention adopted a resolution 'that the lodges shall be allowed to protect themselves and their interests as their best judgment may dictate'.

Greetings were sent to other organizations of labor, and the BLF asserted publicly that henceforth it would be counted with those working people who demanded justice and were willing to fight for it.

About 1900 the BLF, acting in concert



with the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, was able to have an injunction dissolved which had been obtained by the Wabash Railroad.

The injunction had been designed to prevent the two organizations from striking in order to obtain a revision of their respective schedules. This feat may well be a first in the history of railroad labor unions.

In 1906 the twenty-third convention changed the name of the BLF to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen. Thousands of members promoted to engineer had retained membership in the BLF, and there was a general demand that the name of the organization be changed so as to indicate that its membership also was comprised of engineers.

Disunity had begun to rear its head during the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy walkout of 1888 and 1889. As a result of a conflict of interests, the BLF was forced to call off the strike and swallow the bitter pill of defeat.

Today the BLF&E is still plagued by the same disunity among enginemen. There are two organizations representing the men who are employed on locomotives. But there are grounds for optimism in this regard. A new generation of enginemen bred in the sound economic philosophy of unity for victory will force the taking of necessary



*From its beginnings of one lodge and twelve members, the BLFE has today a thousand lodges with a total membership of over 95,200. The fact is that the modern engineman today works less hours for more money with greater safety to all*

steps to bring all men who work on a locomotive under one roof.

The time is near, as is attested by the recorded fact that today the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen represents the enginemen on both sides of the cab on over 180 railroads in the United States and Canada.

The admittance into the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen of Eugene V. Debs doubtless constituted an epic in the history of the organization. His devotion to the BLF and to the cause it represented rapidly advanced him to the offices of general secretary and treasurer and editor of the BLF magazine. The impact of his deep-rooted philosophy not only gave impetus to the building of the BLF for the purpose for which a labor union is created, but it also firmly established the principle that in unity there is strength.

Debs was a bitter opponent of violence in labor disputes. He sincerely believed that railroad men could achieve their objectives only by representing a united front to the railroad managements. Such an array of power, he felt, would be sufficient to make unnecessary the use of the strike weapon to dispose of grievances.

Debs gave effect to his formula for unity by organizing his ill-fated American Railway Union, the 'one big union' idea for the railway industry. Although the ARU failed in its first great test, failure did not occur because the principle inherent in the ARU was unsound.

The principle of unity eventually found expression in that splendid organization, the Railway Labor Executives' Association (an ITF affiliate), truly the United Nations concept applied to railway labor unions. Our membership in the RLEA is one of our most prized assets.

The RLEA constitutes a potent weapon in obtaining economic justice for railway labor in particular and organized labor in general.

The pattern of unity so deeply rooted in the philosophy of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen was given a tremendous overall impetus when the organization's application for a charter in the AFL-CIO was granted on August 29, 1956. Thus the BLF&E, as a part of that great congress of progressive labor unions, will continue the good fight not only on behalf of all enginemen but also in the interest of organized labor as a whole.

The BLF early recognized that, in addition to its protective machinery, legislation would be necessary to bring about the many essential improvements and protections which could not be obtained by direct negotiations with the employers.

It became necessary to enter the political field so that the voting strength of the membership could be utilized to elect legislators favorable to labor and defeat those who opposed laws which protected the working man from the abuses of management. Legislative departments were accordingly established in the United States and Canada. Their magnificent accomplishments are history.

The direct result of our organization's legislative policies brings to the railroad man a measure of protection and security which at the inception of the BLF would have seemed not only visionary but impossible of attainment.

Technological advances on railroads have served to reduce firing jobs. Yet the Brotherhood has at no time opposed modernization and more efficient operation.

For example, the organization fought a long battle to force railroads to install mechanical stokers on all road locomotives. Management's opposition was fierce despite the fact that a stoker-equipped engine would haul greater tonnage at consistently higher speeds

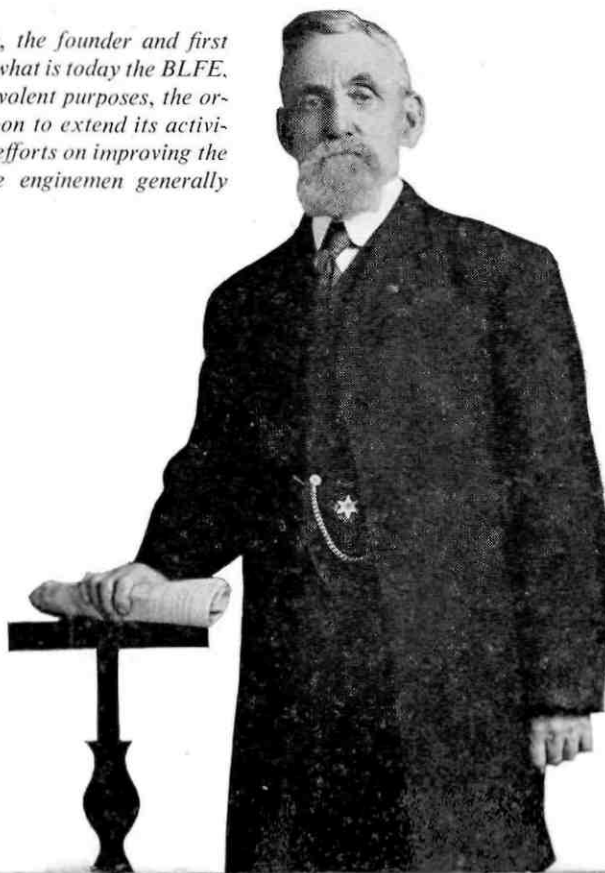
for greater distances without the necessity of servicing the locomotive. The case was won, but only after the roads had exhausted every delaying tactic available to them, including judicial review.

The advent of the diesel-electric locomotive presented now problems. The abortive effort of railroads in the United States to transfer work which should properly be performed by firemen to other classes of employees was successfully defeated. The Canadian Pacific Railway engaged in a similar undertaking, but the stern determination of our members across the border caused the railroad managers to pause in their delusion that the rights of the employees and the public could be flagrantly violated.

Although the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen has developed into a powerful union, it has never lost or relinquished its benevolent characteristics. The organization conducts an aggressive, well-managed insurance operation designated as the Beneficiary and Accident Indemnity Departments. In making available to the members low-cost, actuarially sound insurance, the Brotherhood has kept faith with the eleven Erie Railroad firemen who, at Port Jervis in 1873, pledged their support 'to one another and to the families of each other'.

The first available record of the initial

*Joshua A. Leach, the founder and first Grand Master of what is today the BLFE. Founded for benevolent purposes, the organization was soon to extend its activities and focus its efforts on improving the lot of locomotive enginemen generally*






membership of the BLF dates back to 1881. At that time there were 2,998 members represented by ninety-five lodges. The membership peak was reached in 1921, at which time the rolls listed 125,862 members. The first lodge in Canada was organized early in 1877 at Brockville and Montreal Divisions of the Grand Trunk. Today there are about 120 BLF&E lodges in Canada.

At times there have been those who have undertaken to undermine the Brotherhood by establishing rump organizations. That challenge has been met successfully at all times, and those 'rumps' are today covered with the dust of oblivion.

### Wages in Japan

 THERE ARE OVER SEVENTEEN MILLION wage and salary earners in Japan. Over half of them get less than 12,000 yen a month, i.e. before taxes. (There are 1,010 yen to £1 and 360 to US \$1.)

Just over seven per cent get less than 4,000; almost twenty-nine per cent get between 4,000 and 8,000; nineteen and a half per cent, between 8,000 and 12,000; just over sixteen per cent, between 12,000 and 16,000; about nine per cent, between 16,000 and 20,000; seven and a half per cent, between 20,000 and 24,000. The rest get more than 24,000, but at the top of the scale there are only four per cent earning over 32,000 yen monthly.

Pay is invariably higher for those employed by the large undertakings (those with more than 1,000 workers) but even here the largest wage group falls within 12,000 and 20,000 yen. Generally, wages are related to the age of the worker and the man aged between forty and fifty earns the most.

Obviously wages of this order are insufficient for the lower-paid worker if his wife and family are to live by his earnings alone and thus in many cases even the children go out to work, either part-time or whole time during periods of absence from school.

It is usual in the lower income groups for the head of the family to contribute no more than forty to sixty per cent of the family's budget. Families with a very low income often spend less than 2,000 yen per person a month – about the same as that allowed to the unemployed under the unemployment compensation law. Almost sixty per cent live on-be-


To Frank P. Sargent – not as grand master but as a member of Southern Pacific Lodge No. 94 – belongs the distinction of being the father of the Ladies' Society of the BLF&E. To him and to his good wife, Georgie, is due the credit for much of the pioneer work in establishing and building that splendid association.

It can truly be said that these good ladies are the women behind the guns. They are a familiar sight on the picket lines, passing out coffee, sandwiches and other food to the menfolk who are striving through the use of the economic force to obtain economic justice. The Ladies' Society is the Brotherhood's best morale builder.

tween 2,000 and 3,000 yen per person. A large amount of the income is set aside for food (usually three meals a day) and there remains very little for emergencies such as illness or a spell of unemployment.

As for retirement and pensions, the white-collar worker and the employee of the very large industries may expect a lump-sum benefit when they retire but for the vast majority there is nothing of that sort to look forward to.

### India's cinema-on-rails

 INDIA'S FIRST CINEMA-ON-RAILS came into regular service with the Howrah-Delhi Janata Express trains on the Eastern Railway towards the end of last year. It is a specially-built dual-purpose integral coach fitted with a screen and projection equipment for the exhibition of sixteen mm films. When films are not being shown, the coach can be used as a buffet car with tea, coffee and snacks sold at moderate prices.


The cinema car operates only between Jhajha and Kanpur, a distance of about 640 km, and there are four shows on the run each way. Sixty passengers can be admitted at a time for a nominal admission fee of two annas per passenger. Documentary films dealing with India's second Five-Year Plan, various aspects of railway operation and social education subjects are shown.

The coach has been welded together into an integral unit with its under frame and this will help greatly to minimise vibration. Apart from a main hall, where the films are exhibited, there are small compartments for use as projection room, generator room, manager's office and stores and lavatory.


No historical sketch of the BLF&E would be complete without mentioning, with pardonable pride, that the Brotherhood carries on its rolls the name of its most distinguished honorary member, the late Theodore Roosevelt, a former President of the United States.

Allenginemen in the United States and Canada work less hours today for more money and with greater safety for themselves, the public and the railroads. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen has made its contribution to this fine achievement. The unending fight for better things for enginemen and organized labor will continue unabated. There will be no retreat.

### The economics of fishing

 THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO) is planning to hold an international meeting – probably in London next autumn – to study costs and earnings in fishing. The meeting is stated to be of direct interest to fishermen, fishing-boat owners, processors and others in the world's fishing industries. It will be attended by men with direct experiences of keeping track of costs and earnings, and it is hoped that some twenty to thirty qualified participants will come from important fishing countries belonging to the FAO. It is expected that the meeting will last a week. Interested persons who wish to contribute papers to the meeting are asked to contact the Chief of the Economics and Statistics Branch, Fisheries Division of the FAO in Rome.

### Red licence holders only

 THE OFFICIAL ORGAN of the Hungarian Communist Party, Népszabadság, has published a bitter attack on what it describes as 'class alien lorry drivers', many of whom are stated to have taken part in the October Revolution. Here is a sample: 'Only a thorough spring cleaning will help the situation. Strengthening the controlling apparatus does no good. Dismissing dubious employees does no good either, because they will just get new jobs elsewhere. The time has come for energetic measures. The driving licences of counter-revolutionary lorry drivers should be revoked.' We sincerely hope that the Hungarian licensing authorities don't take this advice too literally. After all, even a Communist State must need some road transport.





## The ITF Executive Committee meets in London

A MEETING OF THE ITF'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE was held at the Secretariat in London from 4 to 6 November. Members of the Committee attending the meeting were: M. A. Labinjo (African region); J. D. Randeri (Asian region); A. Thaler (Austria); R. Dekeyzer (Belgium); E. Borg (Denmark); F. Laurent (France); H. Jahn (Germany), who acted as Chairman; F. Cousins (Great Britain); S. de A. Pequeno (Latin American Region); I. Haugen (Norway); H. Düby (Switzerland); and A. E. Lyon (United States). Also present was the General Secretary, Brother Omer Becu. Apologies for absence were received from T. Yates, the Chairman of the Management Committee, and Brother H. Kanne of the Netherlands.

At the opening session of the meeting, the Chairman paid a moving tribute to the work of the late Charles Lindley, co-founder of the ITF, on behalf of the international transport workers' movement. The Committee stood in silent homage to Brother Lindley's memory.

The Committee then went on to consider the Secretariat's Report on Activities for the period from 1 May to 30 September 1957. It gave particular attention to the activities of the ITF Special Seafarers' Section in connection with the menace of Panlibhonco shipping. After hearing a report by the General Secretary on the action which

had been taken by the Section in despatching a special pamphlet on the subject to members of Parliament throughout the free world, and the widespread publicity which had been thereby given to this issue, the Committee unanimously adopted the following resolution:

'The Executive Committee of the ITF, meeting in London from 4 to 6 November 1957, has once again received a report on the problem of the flags of convenience.

The Committee notes with the gravest concern that the drift of shipping, both

old and new-built, to the flags of countries where there is no proper supervision or guarantee of maritime standards and practices continues year after year at an alarming rate.

As has been stressed repeatedly in the attempts made by the Dockers' and Seafarers' Sections of the ITF since 1948 to draw the attention of world opinion to the situation, this development is not only a threat to the social and safety standards built up progressively in the maritime industries over the years, it endangers also the national economies of the traditional maritime countries and is bound to undermine the value of shipping as a factor in national defence systems.

It is encouraging that in shipowning circles there is of late evidence of increased awareness of the danger and willingness to consider action to meet it. It is high time that governments also recognize the growing seriousness of the situation. To this end a pamphlet explaining the nature and the extent of



Participants in the ITF Executive Committee meeting held from 4 to 6 November: From left to right seated: S. de A. Pequeno (Brazil); Miss T. Asser (ITF); A. Thaler (Austria); F. Cousins (Great Britain); H. Jahn (Germany); O. Becu (ITF General Secretary); A. E. Lyon (United States); R. Dekeyzer (Belgium); J. D. Randeri (India). From left to right standing: H. Düby (Switzerland); F. Laurent (France); L. Martinez (Latin American Office); G. Berger (ITF); H. Imhof (ITF); R. Coutts (ITF); R. Santley (ITF); M. A. Labinjo (Nigeria); I. Dahlbom (ITF); E. Borg (Denmark); and K. A. Golding (ITF)

the problem has been published by the ITF and, through the medium of affiliated unions, is being circulated among the members of the legislatures of many countries throughout the world. In this pamphlet, the need for speedy and effective action by governments, jointly with shipowning and seafaring circles, is strongly urged.

The Executive Committee of the ITF expresses the earnest hope that the appeal to governments may meet with favourable response and that unions in all affiliated countries will assist these endeavours all they can, by bringing every possible influence to bear upon governments and shipowners and by otherwise supporting the activities of the ITF.

The Executive Committee also adopted the following resolution to mark the first anniversary of the Hungarian people's spontaneous uprising against the Communist régime:

'The Executive Committee of the International Transport Workers' Federation, meeting in London from 4 to 6 November 1957

Recalls with pride and sorrow the heroic struggle for national liberation, supported by the entire population, which was fought out in Hungary exactly one year ago.

This brief and tragic uprising, which was finally drowned in blood by the overwhelming military might of the Soviet Union, not only fired the imagination of the whole democratic world, but demonstrated for all time the utter emptiness of the Communists' claim to speak on behalf of the peoples of Eastern Europe and their completely callous disregard for the most elementary human rights.

On the anniversary of this spontaneous national movement for freedom, we express our undying admiration for the Hungarians who fought so gallantly in defence of civilization, and our deepest sympathy with those who are at this very moment suffering under the abominable tyranny which has been reimposed in their country by alien forces. We are convinced that their sacrifice has not been in vain, for by their example they have shown the whole world that the most brutal repression is incapable of stifling, let alone of destroying, the basic ideals of human decency and justice.

On behalf of the transport workers of the ITF, who played a very full part in aiding the Hungarian people's fight, we associate ourselves wholeheartedly with the world-wide demonstrations of solidarity which have been organized this week by the ICFTU. In doing so, we express the fervent hope that the time will soon come when the people of Hungary will once again be able to live as free citizens, and pledge the support of the ITF in all efforts to achieve that aim.

In view of the fact that next year's session of the International Labour Conference has on its agenda three questions affecting fishermen, the Executive Committee approved the holding of a conference of the Fishermen's Section during 1958 in preparation for this.

The Committee then went on to consider a number of new applications for affiliation with the ITF. The following unions have now been accepted into membership: Nyasaland Railway African Workers' Union; Ghana Motor Drivers' Union; Flight Stewards' Association of Australia; Transport Workers' Federation of Nicaragua; Seafarers' Centre of Uruguay; Seamen's Union of Colombia; and the Union of Seamen, Firemen and Catering Staff of the Gulf of Mexico. Also considered were a number of requests for assistance from transport workers' unions in several countries.

The Committee had before it a report from the Secretariat on the regional activities of the ITF. Consideration of this resulted in a very full discussion covering all aspects of the Federation's present and future work in this field. At the conclusion of its discussion, the Committee decided to entrust its Subcommittee on Regional Activities with the task of making a thorough inquiry into the whole question of the implementation and financing of ITF regional programmes and of making recommendations for eventual submission to the 1958 Congress. At the same time, in view of the many urgent problems now facing transport workers' unions in the African Continent, the Committee decided to take the immediate step of appointing Brother M. A. Labinjo as the ITF's African Regional Representative. Brother Labinjo, Executive Committee member for the region, had expressed his willingness to undertake missions on behalf of the ITF in the

various African territories as and when this proves necessary.

The Committee also considered the grave situation which has arisen in Japan as the result of the refusal of the National Railways to recognize the railwaymen's unions and its victimization of their democratically-elected leaders. In this connection, the General Secretary reported that a proposal has been made to send an international trade union fact-finding committee, including representatives of both the ICFTU and the ITF to Japan in order to investigate the situation and to help seek a peaceful settlement of the present labour-management crisis in the country. The Executive discussed this proposal and decided to authorize the inclusion of ITF representatives in the delegation.

In addition, the Committee heard a report on the successful conclusion of the recent strike by the ITF-affiliated All-Japan Seamen's Union and requested the General Secretary to convey to our affiliate its heartiest congratulations on the excellent result of the action.

Following this, the Executive Committee took cognizance of a number of decisions arrived at by the Fair Practices Committee, the Fishermen's Sectional Conference, and the Inland Transport and Railwaymen's Conferences held recently in Frankfurt. It also noted the progress made with preparations for next year's biennial Congress in Amsterdam.

The General Secretary gave a verbal report on the recent arrest by the Egyptian authorities of the Israeli fishing vessel *Doron* and its crew. Following discussion of this, the Committee decided to send the following telegram on the subject to President Nasser:

*'Executive Committee of International Transport Workers' Federation meeting in London today deplores seizure of Israeli fishing vessel 'Doron' by Egyptian authorities. Incidents of this character have serious implications for those who earn their livelihood at sea and for international relationships generally. Committee is particularly concerned at hardship caused to crew members and addresses urgent appeal to Egyptian authorities to order immediate release of fishermen concerned.'*

Omer Becu  
ITF General Secretary.

Finally, the Committee noted that the

seat for the co-opted member for North America had now become vacant owing to the fact that the former member had not sought re-election in his own organization. It was agreed to refer the filling of this vacancy to the new Executive Committee which will be elected by the Amsterdam Congress since it would, in any case, not be possible for nominations to be received in time for a new member to attend any EC meeting before that held in conjunction with the Congress.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be held in Athens from 24 to 26 February 1958.

### **Incidence of sickness among US railwaymen**



THE UNITED STATES RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD *Monthly Review* recently issued an analysis of the incidence of sickness among US railwaymen as revealed by sickness benefit payments made by the Board during the 1955-56 'benefit year'. The analysis is not quite a complete record of sickness in the industry as for one reason or another some employees who were sick did not claim or did not receive benefits – taking the previous year as a guide these would be about ten per cent of those who did receive benefits—but even so the analysis is based on a sufficiently large number of cases for this not to detract from its validity.

The 130,300 separate spells of illness which began during the year represent eighty-eight spells per thousand employees, an increase as against the last year when comparable data were available (1952-53) of ten spells. This the Board attributes among other things to the fact that in 1955-56 there was a higher proportion of qualified beneficiaries in employment (the Board, as its name implies, is to a large extent concerned with retired workers and the incidence of illness is higher among those still employed), to the increase in the proportion of older beneficiaries and to an amendment to the scheme in 1954 which made it possible for many to receive Board benefits who could not do so formerly.

Fractures, arthritis and rheumatism, and arteriosclerotic and degenerative heart disease, in that order, occurred most frequently among railroad employees. For these illnesses, the incidence rates were six, five, and five spells

per 1,000 qualified employees respectively and they each accounted for more than 7,000 spells of sickness. Other frequent illnesses, with a range between 6,200 and 3,300 spells, were hernias, ulcers, hypertensive disease, pneumonia, and the injuries classed as sprains and strains.

Incidence rates, as usual, rose markedly with age up through sixty-four. The rates ranged from thirty spells per 1,000 qualified employees for those under twenty-five to 146 per 1,000 for those sixty-sixty-four. However, deaths and retirements among employees after they have earned enough in the base year to be qualified, tended to reduce the incidence rates for employees aged sixty-five and over. Compared with 1952-53, incidence rates were higher in every age group except fifty-five to fifty-nine. The sharpest rise occurred in the ages under thirty.

The tendency for frequency of sickness to increase with age was especially pronounced for the common chronic illnesses such as heart disease, hypertensive disease, malignant neoplasms (cancers), and arthritis and rheumatism. This rise in incidence rates with age was also evident for hernias and for such less common infirmities as diabetes, vascular lesions, and eye diseases. While the principal respiratory ailments – influenza, pneumonia, and bronchitis – are not associated primarily with older ages, they disabled older workers much more frequently than younger. The incidence rates for injuries were not greatly influenced by age, and the rate for appendicitis was higher among younger than among older employees.

Compared with 1952-53, fewer spells of sickness (as against incidence rates) were reported for most occupational groups, the exceptions being the engineers and conductors; gang foremen; way and structures craftsmen; and station and platform employees. The groups with the most spells were again the shop craftsmen; firemen, brakemen, switchmen, and hostlers; engineers and conductors; extra-gang, section and other maintenance-of-way men; and clerks and other office employees. Illnesses among these five groups accounted for sixty-three per cent of the total. The highest incidence rate – 174 spells per 1,000 qualified employees – was among engineers and conductors. This was fifty-six spells per 1,000 more than the next highest group – shop craftsmen. The

high incidence rate for engineers and conductors may be attributed partly to the fact that, as a group, they are older than any other occupational group except the executives, supervisors, and professionals. An increase in the frequency of heart disease, arthritis and rheumatism, and work injuries raised the incidence rate for way and structures craftsmen to 112 spells per 1,000 qualified employees compared with eighty per 1,000 in 1952-53. They thus became the group with the third highest incidence rate, replacing the firemen, brakemen, switchmen and hostlers who were third in the earlier year.

Executives, supervisors, and professionals again had the lowest incidence rate – twenty-three spells per 1,000 qualified. This was partly because many of these employees continued to receive their regular pay while they were sick, and so were not eligible for benefits.

Only three occupational groups – executives, supervisors, and professionals; station agents and telegraphers; and firemen, brakemen, switchmen and hostlers – had incidence rates lower than in 1952-53. Moreover, the declines for these three groups were not pronounced, the greatest being seven spells per 1,000 qualified for the firemen, brakemen, switchmen and hostlers. The increases were sharpest for the extra-gang, section, and other maintenance-of-way men; way and structures craftsmen; and station and platform employees. Rates for these groups were thirty-five to fifty per cent higher.

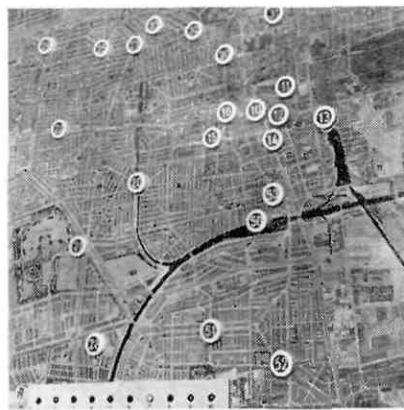
Although the frequency rate of sickness generally rose with age, up through sixty-four, in each occupational group, the increases were particularly sharp for way and structures craftsmen; extra-gang, section, and other maintenance-of-way men; and other shop and stores employees. Except for engineers and conductors, employees aged fifty-five–sixty-four had the highest incidence rates in each occupational group.

### **Canadian 'Piggyback' service**



THE TWO BIG CANADIAN RAILWAYS, the Canadian National and the Canadian Pacific, started their first 'piggyback' service in October. Road trailers will be hauled regularly between Montreal and Toronto on flat cars. The railways hope that the service will prove sufficiently successful to justify its extension to other parts of Canada.





## Radio - taxi driver in The Hague

1) The map of the Hague in the office of the Hague Taxi Telephone Exchange showing the numerous taxi-cab ranks scattered throughout the city. The indicator lights up when a taxi is available at the rank. The driver notifies his presence by opening the door housing the telephone.

2) Three or four men service the taxi telephone exchange. This twenty-four-hour service was set up in 1954 by 128 concerns operating 204 taxis. The taxi-phone operators know every one of the Hague's 2,000 streets. Incoming calls are passed out to the taxi rank nearest the place where the call came from.

3) A typical taxi-rank in the Hague. The telephone call system has many advantages. It cuts down empty mileage and drivers make extensive use of the many ranks situated throughout the town instead of concentrating on the more popular ranks in the town centre.

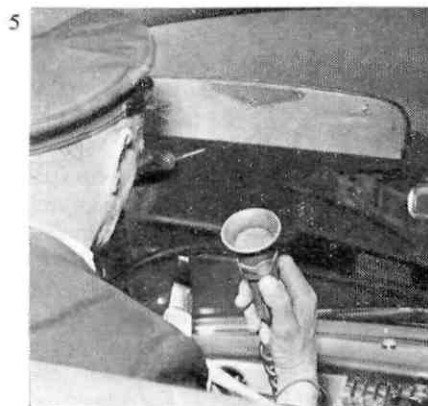
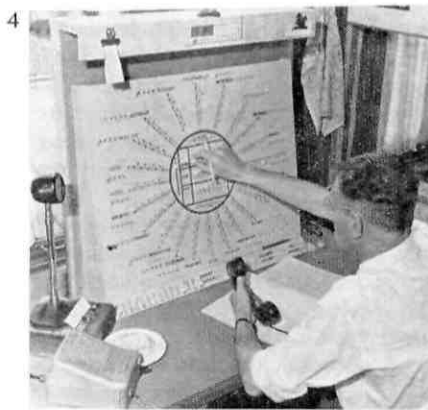
4) The position indicator in the radio taxi exchange. Every taxi is indicated by means of a movable button. Direction of travel is shown by an am-

ber or red line; amber means the driver is returning empty to his allotted stand. On arrival he reports to the exchange.


5) 'Mission completed!' This driver, operating one of twenty-eight taxis fitted with radio telephone, is advising headquarters that he has set his fare down. Unless sent direct to another customer, he will return to his allotted stand. This service was set up in June 1949 by eight taxi operators.

6) Even the taxi-driver cannot escape clerical work and this photo shows a Hague taxi-driver recording details of his trips on his time sheet. Basic weekly wage of taxi-drivers in the major towns is in the region of thirty guilders (about £3). They also get 7% of their takings, plus tips.

7) Also an important operation. Paying in at the end of the day. The Dutch taxi-driver works quite long hours - fifty-five a week. The taxi-cab trade is an exception to the usual forty-eight-hour week. Drivers are insured against sickness, accident, disablement and unemployment by a joint fund.



## London Transport programme - machine signalling

 A NEW SYSTEM of signalling of junctions by means of a programme machine is being introduced on London Transport. Each programme machine will contain the complete information on the time-table for the day for the trains working over a particular junction.

Details of each train passing over the section of the line in sequence will be typed on a rolled sheet. It will be an exact reproduction of the time-table information.

It will include the destination, the number of the train and the time. Holes in the roll will interpret the typed information, and actuate electric contacts to control the signalling equipment. Each train that passes will cause the roll to move forward so that the electric contacts 'read' the next train approaching. The machine is so arranged that at the end of each day's working it will automatically re-roll itself to start again next day.

The machine is in the relay room. A repeater of the programme machine will be located in the central supervision room for information of the supervisor in charge. An installation at Kennington station has programme machines controlling the signalling there with repeating machines in the supervision room at Leicester Square which has an illuminated diagram of the area, a set of push buttons for the manual control of routes, if necessary, and switches for switching in and out the programme machine.

From there three operations can be controlled: (1) Normal programme machine working, everything running automatically in accordance with the time-table; (2) in the event of departure from the time-table the equipment can be switched into a train describer. The junction will still work automatically, but trains will be signalled with their destination; (3) all automatic working can be switched out and routes manually operated from push-buttons in the central supervision room.

The programme machine will normally check the train description as received on the train describer with the description as shown in the time-table. Provided they agree the train will be signalled through.


If they do not the machine will hold up setting the route for half a minute and set off a warning buzzer in the supervision room at Leicester Square. The machine will not wait any longer if the staff takes no action and will send the train forward according to the train describer destination, ignoring the time-table. If the train describer is in error the operator at Leicester Square can press a button which tells the machine instead to observe the time-table.

As soon as any train becomes more than two minutes late as shown on the programme machine a warning will be sounded at Leicester Square.

In some cases of a converging junction the programme machine can be arranged automatically to take account of a train being more than a certain lateness and send a train forward from another branch out of its turn. The programme details of the late train will be stored and that train is subsequently signalled to keep the machine in step.

Trains can be cancelled on the programme machine by push buttons at Leicester Square. The operator 'states' the train to be cancelled and the machine counts the trains as they pass and steps twice, in this way wiping out one of its trains.

## New proposals on engagement and registration of Swedish seamen

 THE SELECT COMMITTEE set up in 1946 by the Swedish Parliament to inquire into matters concerning seafarers has recently submitted proposals to the Minister of Commerce covering the engagement and registration of seamen.

The principal recommendation made by the committee is that nineteen of the existing Seamen's Houses (basically seamen's employment exchanges) should be closed down, and that instead eleven engagement districts (mönstringsdistrikt) should be created and placed under the control of the country's Shipping Board.

The districts would be centred on the following ports: Gothenburg, Hälsingborg, Malmö, Kalmar, Visby, Oxelösund, Stockholm, Gävle, Sundsvall, Umeå and Luleå. The committee believes that the rationalization achieved as a result of this change would mean an annual saving of 600,000 kronor (£1 equals 14.50 kr.; 100 kr. equal \$19.35).

In addition, it is proposed that a


central seamen's registry should be set up covering all those in possession of a discharge book. This system, too, would lead to a greater degree of rationalization, and would enable statistical information on seamen's questions to be collected more easily.

It is proposed that the possession of a discharge book should be required of all Swedish nationals serving on board Swedish vessels. The conditions of issue should be the same as those required for a passport. A discharge book could be withdrawn if it became obvious that the holder was unfitted to be a seaman.

Before a discharge book is issued, the antecedents of the applicant should be examined. A person who has been guilty of a crime of violence, who is an alcoholic, or has been guilty of some other form of gross misconduct would be refused a discharge book. The committee considers that this should make it possible to solve the problem of preventing unsuitable persons from obtaining employment on Swedish vessels - a problem which is causing both seafarers' organizations and the shipping industry generally some concern at the present time.

Some control of this kind is already exercised by maritime organizations - including the unions - but only after a man has actually been signed on. If the committee's proposals are implemented, this would be done before a man is employed at sea. In this connection, it is worth mentioning that one of the main preoccupations of the committee was to find ways and means of making a career at sea more attractive by eliminating unsuitable elements from the industry.


## New British scheme for engine-room rating entrants

 AN EXPERIMENTAL SCHEME which will make it possible for boys and youths to enter the British Merchant Navy as engine-room ratings has been introduced for a trial period of three years by the National Maritime Board. The scheme is not compulsory and in the early stages the intake of boys will be very small. Up to now it has not been possible for youths under eighteen to be employed in the engine-room.

The scheme results from two years of discussion within the National Maritime Board. It is hoped that it will make new rating entrants to the engine-room department 'sea-minded' from the start

and establish a proper ladder of promotion in the same way as in the deck department. A similar system is already in existence in Scandinavian countries where for years it has been the practice to start a career in the engine-room department as an engine-room boy. The normal system of rating entry into engine-rooms has hitherto been through fishermen's training schools, with a minimum age of twenty. The new scheme, however, will make it possible for boys to join as engine-room boy from fifteen years eight months and, provided they make the necessary progress, become junior engine-room ratings at sixteen and a half, senior ratings at seventeen and a half, and engine-room hands at the age of 18.

### **Wanted - an industrial pensions scheme**


 THE NETHERLANDS TRANSPORT WORKERS' UNION is proposing to continue pressing for a compulsory old age industrial pensions scheme for those employed in the transport industry. Of late it has been holding its fire awaiting the outcome of the National Old Age Pensions Insurance Scheme of the Netherlands government. This has now become law, and provides a modest old age pension for all, based on the cost of living and without deduction from workers' earnings. If the general working population is to enjoy adequate provision for old age, however, it must look to supplementary industrial schemes to make up the difference between the modest pension provided by the national scheme and what may be regarded as a satisfactory old age pension.

The union sees the answer in a compulsory industrial pension scheme covering transport workers (road haulage and passenger transport). The present position is that, in the passenger transport field, there are quite a few concerns whose employees have for some years now enjoyed good pension conditions. In a number of cases they include dependents' and invalidity benefits as well as old age provisions. In 1945, a number of passenger transport concerns pooled their insurance resources to form a general insurance fund covering their employees. Nevertheless there are still many undertakings in which next to nothing has been done by way of pension schemes.


In the road haulage sector, the position also leaves much to be desired. A

number of concerns have either taken out insurance cover for their employees or have joined the general scheme providing pensions for transport workers. There is still a regrettably large number of firms, however, who have not taken advantage of the facilities offered or attempted to introduce schemes of their own. It is for this reason that the Netherlands Transport Workers' Union feels that an insurance scheme providing old age pensions for transport employees should be compulsory.

### **Radar certificate for Swedish ship's officers**

 NAUTISK TIDSKRIFT, published by the ITF-affiliated Swedish Merchant Officers' Union, reports that Sweden's Shipping Board has now been authorized by the Government to publish regulations on the holding of examinations in radar proficiency at officer training schools and the issue of radar certificates. It will be recalled that as from 1 June last, all new holders of Certificates of Competency as Second Mate (foreign-going) or Mate (home trade) in Great Britain are also required to be in possession of a Radar Observer Certificate.

### **Not just hot air**

 IN A RECENT ISSUE of his union's monthly magazine, a member of the New Orleans branch of the ITF-affiliated Norwegian Seamen's Union makes a strong plea for an increased use of air-conditioning plant on board merchant vessels - and particularly those which operate in tropical waters. Basing himself on his own experience of working in the United States, he points out that the use of air-conditioning is now normal practice throughout the South - especially in subtropical regions. The system functions in very many private homes, as well as in practically all offices shops, and factories. Employers in the Southern States have found that proper ventilation increases working capacity and thus productivity.


The writer admits that employers in Norway itself are, of course, not faced with this problem, but stresses that it is a very real one for thousands of Norwegian seafarers who serve for shorter or longer periods in tropical waters. When they are off duty it is no easy matter to sleep properly in a stifling atmosphere and sweat-drenched clothes. Portholes usually have to be kept shut,

the fresh-air system is usually inadequate in hot climates, and the small electric fans hum monotonously and merely succeed in circulating air which is already warm.


Nor is the actual temperature the only factor; humidity is if anything even more important. A temperature of over 100° F may not be too bad at eighty per cent humidity, but at ninety-five per cent it becomes unbearable. This is specially relevant to seafarers, since the degree of humidity is normally much higher both in ports and at sea than in inland areas. Air-conditioning can help here too, because it has the added advantage that it filters the air and makes it considerably less humid.

The Norwegian correspondent ends with the remark that the seaman, who has to give up so much in other directions, should certainly be given priority in benefiting from any improvement in comfort which can be introduced on board. The most satisfactory thing would be to install air-conditioning plant on ships at the building stage.

### **Black book in his black bag?**

 THE CZECH 'TRADE UNION' PAPER PRACE has complained that Czech doctors are not sufficiently aware of the 'economic aspect' of their work, and 'concentrate on the medical side only'. Many doctors, it writes, 'still show too much so-called social feeling (sic) and judge working capability with too great indulgence'. Factory doctors have been told to call personally on all workers who report sick, and special flying squads of 'control doctors' are to check on the diagnoses of family and factory doctors, to see that workers are not kept away from work 'unnecessarily'. Yes, apparently even a diagnosis can be deviationist.

### **Survey of Norwegian fishing industry**

 THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT has appointed a committee headed by the Governor of the Bank of Norway to give a report on economic conditions in the Norwegian fishing industry. This follows demands by the fishermen's organizations for state guaranteed sales of their catches at fixed minimum prices. The Committee has been given a broad mandate to investigate the national economic aspects of the fishing industry.



# Swedish Transport Workers' Union - sixty years old

by KNUT WRENBY (STU)



THE SWEDISH TRANSPORT WORKERS' UNION, founded sixty years ago, originally consisted mainly of dock workers. With the advent of motorized transport, the picture changed and motor transport workers became the principal group within the union. Today the Swedish Transport Workers' Union has some 47,000 members in all branches of the transport industry. Dockers account for 6,000. Bus personnel employed by the railways and numbering some 4,000 belong to the Railwaymen's Union - also affiliated with the ITF. Bus drivers and other road transport staff employed by the large number of bus lines operated by local authorities belong to the Municipal Workers' Union, whilst a number of civil aviation personnel belong to the Commercial Employees' Union. The Transport Workers' Union however organizes workshop, ground, servicing and loading staff employed in the Swedish civil aviation industry. The Union also has many members more appropriately classifiable as general workers, viz. watchmen, window cleaners and news-vendors.

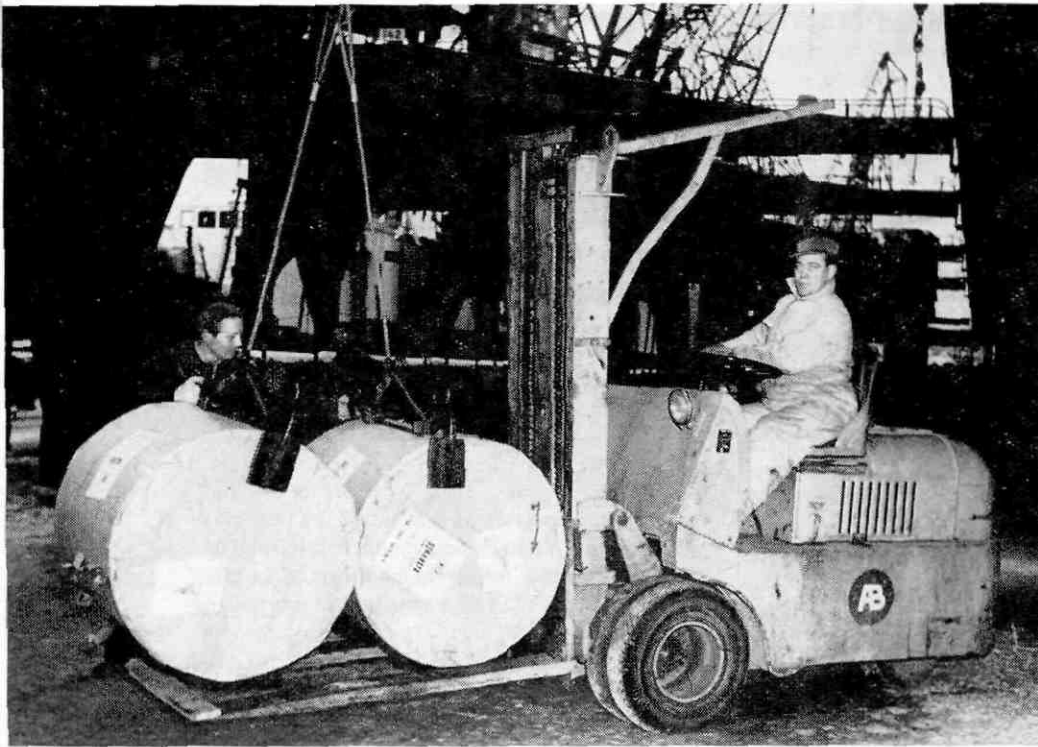
*Almost half of the total membership of our Swedish affiliate now consists of road transport workers. The latter have good reason to be grateful for the excellent work which their union has done to improve their wages and working conditions*

When the Swedish Transport Workers' Union was set up in 1897, its original membership at the end of the year was 1,257. It had twenty branches. It owed its existence largely to the efforts of the late Charles Lindley, that tireless worker in the cause of trade unionism, former President and 'grand old man' of the ITF. Charles Lindley was originally a seaman, had sailed for many years in British ships and had a big hand in the creation of the British Seamen's Union, when he found himself 'half against his will' (as he put it in a radio interview) at the head of the newly-founded Transport Workers' Union.

At first it was the dock workers who formed the hard core of the Swedish Transport Workers' Union. As late as the Autumn of 1906, there were 6,324 dockers in the union distributed among sixty-eight branches. Cartage workers accounted for 2,213 members (in twenty-three branches), whilst a further thirteen branches had 1,248 members engaged in 'trade and warehousing'. In addition, the union had five 'general branches' with 667 members. Today, dockers account for no more than 6,800 members, an indication of the extent to which the machine has replaced human labour in dockwork.

The new union made steady progress in the first ten years of its existence and by 1907 it had 12,300 members. There came the big strike, however, and by 1910 membership had sunk to a mere 3,600. Losses were not recuperated until 1919 when membership stood at 12,835.

The increase in motor transport began to make itself felt by the 1920s and was reflected in the union's membership figures - 13,179 at the beginning of the decade. Ten years later the figure was 26,235. It would be a mistake, however, to view this increase in membership



solely in terms of the growth in motorized transport without reference to the braking effect on trade union development of the big strike of 1909 and the first World War.

In 1940 union membership was 34,835 in spite of the fact that the union's adherence to the Swedish Federation of Labour's policy of promoting the principle of industrial unionism meant its relinquishing large groups of its members to other unions. Thus bus staff employed by State and municipal enterprises were transferred to other unions. Among the resultant disadvantages to the union may be mentioned the fact that it now has to contend with three different levels of pay in the labour market for precisely the same job. It is perhaps not surprising that this causes a certain amount of bitterness among the rank and file.

At the beginning of the present year,

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*When Charles Lindley first started organizing the dock workers of Sweden in the 1890s, the conditions under which they worked were probably the worst in the country. Today, thanks to their union, the position has completely changed. The excellent washing and bathing facilities for dockers shown in this photograph give some idea of the revolutionary advances which have been made in the port industry*

the Swedish Transport Workers' Union numbered some 15,000 road transport workers, 5,300 engaged in the petroleum and oil transport trade, 4,000 taxi-drivers, 1,300 civil aviation workers, 1,100 night-watchmen, 500 employees in the rubber industry, and 4,000 news-vendors—the latter part-time employees. In addition the union has a few other small groups such as mechanical excavator operators, window-cleaners, employees in coal and timber yards, etc.

Last year, to commemorate its sixtieth jubilee, the union started a recruitment drive. This has gone pretty well and the membership figure of 45,000 it started off with should by now have

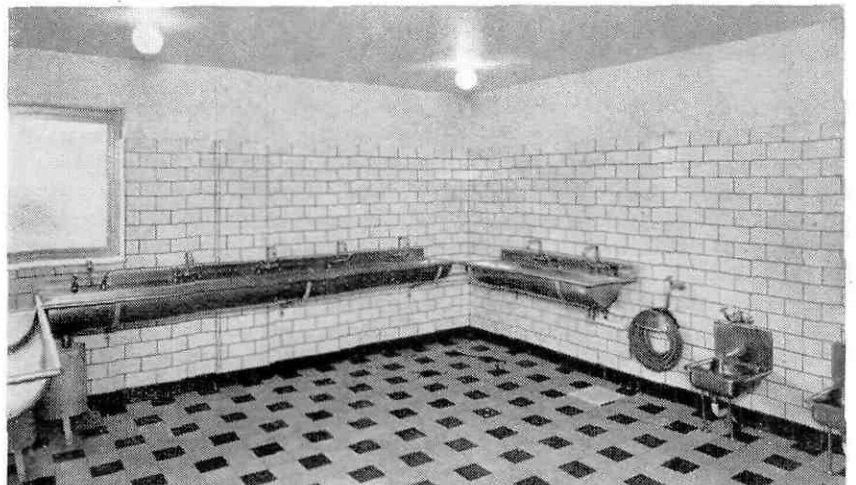
*The dockers once formed the main group organized in the Swedish Transport Workers' Union. Although that is no longer the case, it is still true to say that they are the group which has made the biggest advances – particularly in the field of wages and improved conditions*

reached about 47,500. The target was set at 50,000, but the union leaders realized this was setting the sights pretty high and it will occasion no great disappointment if that rather optimistic figure is not reached.

The history of the Swedish Transport Workers' Union goes back to the days when there was no accident, unemployment or sickness insurance, no national pension schemes, and no lodging, children's or maternity allowances. Relations between employees and employers were often characterized by much more bitterness than is the case today. This was perhaps the case in certain sections of industry but, in his cheerful report submitted on the occasion of the union's ten-year jubilee, Charles Lindley, who can certainly never be accused of having been afraid to speak out against intransigent employers, wrote:

'Relations with the employers are very good over the entire field, in some cases they are marked by positive goodwill. Drawn-out battles with them and the bitterness these engender are practically a thing of the past. When differences do arise, they are usually settled by an amicable approach to the union leadership. Even the country's richest and most powerful shipowners and industrialists, when the occasion arises, do not hesitate to enter into direct negotiations with the union's executive.'

Then came the big strike and the



bright picture was clouded. It was followed by a general reduction in wage levels which was extended over the entire labour field. As mentioned above following this major conflict, conditions did not return to normal as regards the field of activity of the Transport Workers' Union until the 1920s. Nevertheless a general rise in the wage levels of transport workers has since occurred. Thanks to a considerable amount of piece-work, the dock workers have made the biggest advance. Drivers, employees in the petroleum and oil transport branch and a number of other transport workers' groups on the other hand are among the badly-paid labour groups, although they are by no means on the lowest scales.

One of the union's most difficult problems at the present time – strange though it may seem – has arisen as the result of the realization of an old socialist doctrine whereby the community is expected to take over many functions formerly left to private enterprise. This doctrine has found its most extensive expression in the field of transport. Seeing that, at the same time – and quite rightly – it is insisted that the community should be a model employer, wages and conditions in the socialized sectors of the transport industry are considerably better than those in the private sector – and it is from the latter that the Transport Workers' Union draws its members. The expression 'model employer' can of course be interpreted in various ways. If, for example, a worker employed by a State-run or municipally operated enterprise gets 250 kronor a week as against the 200 kronor a week of a man doing exactly the same job in a privately operated enterprise, thanks to the former working for a 'model employer', does this 'model employer' cease to be such if the worker in the private sector gets the same wage?

This is the problem at present under discussion among the members of the Transport Workers' Union. Members are asking whether it accords with present-day trade-union thinking for the socialized transport undertakings to pay higher wages, irrespective of the extent to which they are operated at a profit, and to which the lowly-paid wage groups must make a contribution through taxation based on appreciably lower payment for doing the same job.

Such problems did not exist sixty years ago when the Swedish Transport

Workers' Union was founded. Meanwhile society has changed and has created new problems – not least for the trade union movement. No harm is done if we cast our eyes back and subject these new problems to a critical survey. True, this is an inflammable subject, but the discussion of such questions within the trade union movement has never been taboo in the past and should not be so today.

### **New British Railways apprentice school**



BRITISH RAILWAYS have opened a new apprentice training school in London for their London-Midland Region. The school will provide a year's training and instruction will be both in theoretical and practical work. The first four months of the course are probationary and at the end of this period the school authorities are able to decide which trade the apprentice is best fitted to follow. Every trainee is expected to attend appropriate evening classes at local technical colleges.

### **Government fishing projects in Singapore**



THE SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT has extended its pilot scheme for joint Singapore-Japanese deep-sea fishing enterprises. For some months a small number of Singapore fishing fleets have been assisted by Japanese technicians and their success has encouraged the Singapore Government to invite applications for deep-sea fishing licences from other Singapore enterprises. It is a condition of the licence that from the start a scheme should be prepared for the replacement of the Japanese helpers by local men within three years. Other licence conditions are that the fishing fleets should confine their fishing to areas not already being fished by Malayan fishermen and that the fish caught must be sold in Singapore.

### **Fewer sea casualties**



FOR THE FIRST TIME since records were kept, a year has passed during which no British fisherman lost his life as a result of an accident to his vessel. This was revealed with the recent publication of the British Ministry of Transport's report on shipping casualties and deaths in 1956.

At the same time there has only ever been one year with fewer deaths from

casualties to merchant vessels and not a single death among passengers could be attributed to that cause.

These figures are all the more welcome since in terms of the loss of merchant vessels the year was not a good one and more were lost than in any year since 1948. Thirty-five power-driven merchant vessels, of which twenty-one were of over 100 tons, were lost – a total gross tonnage loss of 30,707. Almost 13,000 tons of this total were lost by foundering, the highest loss through this cause since 1929, war years excepted.

The tonnage seriously damaged fell by eight per cent as against the previous year, three tankers coming within this category as compared with five in 1955.

The number of power-driven fishing vessels lost was the lowest to be recorded and the gross tonnage lost (2,819) was only about half of that in 1955 – less than one per cent of the gross tonnage registered. Sailing fishing vessels fared even better; none were lost or badly damaged over the year.

### **Increasing the world's fish catch**



AN ICELANDIC REPRESENTATIVE, Mr. Hilmar Kristjónsson, told an international fishing apparatus congress at Hamburg that the world's catch of fish could be boosted to 50,000,000 tons per year. The present figure is about 30,000,000. Mr. Kristjónsson said this could be increased if more modern techniques were used.

The congress, sponsored by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, was attended by thirty-five countries, including all European lands and the United States.

### **Atomic locomotive by 1960?**



ACCORDING TO THE NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, a former official of the United States Atomic Energy Commission, Edward J. Kehoe, has stated that railroads can have an atomic locomotive in operation by 1960. Mr. Kehoe told the ninth Pan-American Railway Conference at Buenos Aires that the first atomic-powered locomotive would be a prototype, and would probably be unable to compete with diesels in cost.

However, by 1970, he said, atomic locomotives should be able to compete with other types in speed and better service.



## Two ITF Conferences in Frankfurt



*A general view of the Inland Transport Conference which was held by the ITF at Frankfurt during October. On the platform can be seen (from left to right): Brother Walter Schevenels (European Regional Organization of the ICFTU); Herr Seebohm, West German Federal Minister of Transport; Philip Seibert of the German Railwaymen's Union; and the General Secretary, Omer Becu*

OVER ONE HUNDRED DELEGATES, observers and guests from sixteen countries attended the ITF Inland Transport Conference and the International Railwaymen's Conference held in October. Our hosts, the German Railwaymen's Union, made us warmly welcome and provided an admirable organization. The conferences were held in the charming setting of the Palm Gardens in Frankfurt, in which, thanks to exceptionally fine weather, delegates could thoroughly enjoy their short strolls between sessions. All these factors doubtless had a bearing on the success of these two conferences.

The Inland Transport Conference, held on 14 and 15 October, was attended by delegates representing the Railwaymen's, Road Transport and Inland Waterway Sections of the ITF. Conference was called upon to deal with two questions which have long engaged the attention of the ITF, the successful solution of which has an important bearing on the social conditions of European transport workers, and transport policy within the framework of European economic integration.

Taking it that these two subjects have far-reaching effects on the livelihood and social welfare of every individual transport worker, ITF-affiliated unions are immediately faced with the question: should a union limit its activities to the day-to-day interests of its members, or should it in addition actively concern itself with the complicated fundamental problems of transport policy, including those concerned with rate-fixing and investment policies, so that,

in this field too, it could press trade-union views on responsible authorities and administrative bodies with due weight?

Limitation of activity to immediate watch over members' interests would be in conformity with tradition. Extension of activities to include matters of fundamental political and scientific significance in the field of transport in many respects would mean placing much higher demands on unions. There are however three good arguments in favour of such an extension at the present time. The power and influence of trade unions, and not least those of the transport workers, are considerable in a number of countries. In countries with democratic forms of government, this power and influence is balanced by a corresponding responsibility towards the general public. Furthermore, the solution of social problems is greatly influenced by the manner in which the basic problems are tackled and solved.

Transport concerns which go bankrupt or carry on at a loss covered by State subsidies are a bar to social progress in keeping with the times. Finally, ITF-affiliated unions cannot afford the luxury of standing on the side-lines whilst matters of fundamental importance to transport are under discussion and when all sorts of bodies representing private interests and employers are making their voices very much heard and exercising a corresponding influence on developments.

The ITF Inland Transport Conference, held in Bern in the autumn of 1955, elected to follow the latter course and set up a Committee of Experts drawn from various unions to make a study of the basic problems in the field of transport co-ordination. The Committee made an interim report covering the transport of goods by road which was dealt with by the ITF 1956 Congress held in Vienna. The present Inland Transport Conference was called upon to consider an interim draft report setting out the main problems and suggesting solutions.

Considering the great disparity between conditions in the various countries, it was not surprising that discussion of the report revealed divergence of views on a number of particular points. It now remains for the Committee to review its report on co-ordination and make additions or amendments to it in the light of the suggestions made.

The specific problems of co-ordination in the fields of coastal shipping, civil aviation, ports and short haulage, as well as those arising from the economic integration of Europe are to be enumerated succinctly and commented on in parts two and three of the draft report to be prepared in time for the next ITF Congress in Amsterdam in

*The President of the ITF, Brother Hans Jahn (centre), welcoming participants to the opening session of the ITF's Inland Transport Conference. On his immediate right, facing camera, is Dr Seebohm, West Germany's Minister of Transport*

1958. The Conference approved this working programme for the Committee.

The Conference's views on transport co-ordination and the handling of transport problems within the framework of the movement for transport integration were set down in two resolutions the text of which appears in the ITF Press Report (Supplement to Press Report No. 21 of 24 October 1957). The Conference was unanimous in calling for due representation of transport workers' unions on the competent bodies of the Common Market and for all appropriate steps to be taken to co-ordinate the safeguarding and promotion of transport workers' interests within the ITF.

*The International Railwaymen's Conference* which was held immediately thereafter, on 16 to 18 October, was attended by about the same number of delegates as the Inland Transport Workers' Conference, additional railwaymen's representatives more than compensating for those road transport and inland waterways representatives who had returned to their homes. Delegates included some from Japan and Canada who had made the long journey from those countries in order to be present at the Conference.

The manning of locomotives once again held a prominent place in discussions. Technical developments on the railways, general economic and military considerations, together with competition with other forms of transport have induced railway managements throughout the world to modernize and rationalize their undertakings as far as possible. This has given rise to a large number of staff problems of which the manning of locomotives is one of the most frequently debated. Although originally all unions were opposed to the introduction of one-man operation of modern electric or diesel locomotives, over the years, and as a result of experience with this form of manning and with the technical aids which have been developed, certain countries have come round to approving this form of operation. In other countries, however, where



different conditions prevail, ITF affiliates remain opposed to one-man operating. The Conference was called upon to formulate an opinion having due regard to the arguments advanced by both sides. The difficulty in arriving at a compromise was finally solved and the resultant resolution, unanimously adopted, will be laid before next Congress for final approval.

Further items on the agenda were: the employment of auxiliary labour on the railways and railwaymen's hours of work and other conditions. On the former subject a resolution was unanimously adopted, whilst the general review of working conditions in a large number of countries was intended to



*Guillaume Devaux, Chairman of the Railwaymen's Section of the ITF, presided over the second conference which took place in Frankfurt. The conference discussed a number of matters of vital importance to railwaymen, including the all-important question of diesel manning*

act as background information for the benefit of affiliated unions. In this connection, the Secretariat was asked to approach the various appropriate international bodies with a view to the regular production of statistical data on the social conditions of railwaymen in the various European countries.

A further resolution recommends national unions to press for the extension of retired railwaymen's free travel facilities to include one free trip a year to foreign countries.

Our Japanese affiliate has for months past been faced with extraordinary difficulties as a result of the dismissal of, or reprisals against many of their leading officials, and the withdrawal of union rights to negotiate. Reasons for the dispute may be found mainly in the country's anti-democratic legislation. Following a description of existing conditions by the Japanese delegation, the conference unanimously acclaimed a resolution calling upon the Japanese authorities to bring about an honourable settlement of the conflict and to guarantee full trade union freedom by means of appropriate amendment to legislation.

We would not wish to conclude this review of the Inland Transport Workers' Conference, and that of the International Railwaymen, without expressing thanks to all those, too numerous to name, whose efforts have made them such a success. With the Conferences now behind us, and the path laid down along which we hope to find a solution of the problems concerned, it but remains for us to continue our labours along the lines indicated by the resolutions and conclusions adopted.

## US Rail Clerks learn to live with automation



THE EFFECTS OF AUTOMATION on clerical workers employed by America's railroads are being given serious attention by the ITF-affiliated Brotherhood of Railway Clerks as new contracts are negotiated. Although the union is not opposed to new technological developments, it is determined that employees adversely affected should be dealt with fairly.

George M. Harrison, president of the Brotherhood, has said that the union 'does not oppose the introduction of machinery and new methods to perform work, but we are well aware that such progress means a loss in total employment for railroad workers. It is this direct adverse effect upon faithful employees that concerns the employees and consequently concerns the Brotherhood.'

Some railroads are using electronic machines to replace manual methods of selling train tickets, print tickets, confirm reservations, maintain waiting lists, and cancel expired reservations and automatically restore the space to available status.

In some railway offices, the introduction of new electronic machines has almost completely revolutionised railroad accounting procedures. For example, one machine made by International Business Machines not only performs such routine book-keeping details as computing earnings, deductions, taxes and net pay, labour costs and year-to-date records required for reports to Federal, state and city authorities in the United States; it will also make costs and traffic comparisons, management reports and special studies, keep stockholders and pension records, figure earnings forecasts, and also deal with the distribution of freight cars.

These machines do a fine job and help the railroads, but they also 'devour jobs quite as successfully as it consumes information and spits out answers,' said C. B. Moore, general chairman of the Brotherhood's Chesapeake and Ohio system board.

The C & O is believed to be the first carrier to install a 'Univac' but other railroads also are making changes in their accounting offices through installation of machines.

According to Brother Harrison, all problems, so far as the clerks member-

ship is concerned, can be broken down into the following categories: 1. Centralizing and consolidation of facilities; 2. Installation of labour-saving machinery; 3. Relocation of personnel; 4. Furloughing or firing of personnel; 5. Employment of skilled workers able to handle the new type of machinery.

Consequently, the Brotherhood has set down certain demands it will ask from the railroad companies in future negotiations, if the company plans technological improvements. Many of these are based on the Washington job protection agreement of 1936, which was an agreement between the railroads and the unions to cover displaced workers' rights due to mergers of railroads.

One major demand is that the union be notified immediately by the carrier when it plans installation of new machines. Full particulars should be given the union, including the number of employees and positions affected, so that both sides can prepare for the transition. 'If this is done,' Brother Harrison said, 'plans can be completed and proper agreements reached to be effective when the machines are installed.'

Even after an initial understanding, there should be further conferences to work out 'detailed agreements covering all ramifications, including rates of pay, titles, assignments and the like.'

Other demands the union will make include:

- 1) If a worker is transferred to another area, that the carrier in each case will pay for movement of family and household goods, and provide a new rate of pay and service at destination equal to that from which the worker was removed;

- 2) Workers considered no longer essential to operation be released with severance pay proportionate to wage level and length of service - no contractual provision for those with less than two years of service, up to five years full pay for those with twenty years of service;

- 3) Present employees be given the first chance at retraining programmes; that they be sent to school at equipment factories instead of hiring outsiders, since their practical railroad experience makes them a better investment for retraining for higher skill.

So far, only about one half dozen new contracts incorporating some of these demands have been signed as the railroads slowly convert to automation.

One of these is an agreement signed on July 16, 1957, between the union and the Texas and New Orleans Railroad after the latter put in its newly-formed mechanised accounting department. Its provisions include supplemental unemployment benefits to be paid by the carrier to employees who may be furloughed as a result of the establishment of a mechanised accounting department, employees will be given a fifteen-day notice and the opportunity to bid. Seniority protection has been written into the agreement which provides equal chances for all employees, in the departments being consolidated, to transfer into the mechanised operation.

If some employees are furloughed as a result of the consolidation, T. & N. O. will supplement their unemployment benefits to a point where the furloughed employee will receive ninety-five per cent of the daily rate of his last position for a period of one year following the consolidation. The carrier will also maintain health and welfare payment for the employee for a one-year period.

Another agreement was signed on August 1, 1957, between the union and the Terminal Railway Alabama State Docks, an agency of the state of Alabama State Docks, an agency of the state of Alabama, which operates a switching service between state-operated ocean terminals and on-line industries. This agreement provides that full salary for a two-year period will be paid to those employees who become unemployed as a result of work now performed manually being converted to electronic machines.

In addition, employees so affected will be retained on the payroll as active employees and the carrier will continue payments covering medical and hospital benefits for these employees for a two-year period.

As the carrier makes a gradual changeover to electronic operation in departments where union members work, the agreement provides that employees performing such work will be given preference in filling the new machine positions. They also may exercise displacement rights to other remaining posts within their seniority district.

The agreement further provides that when an employee assumes a material increase in duties and responsibilities in a new position, an upward adjustment of pay will be open for negotiation.

*(continued on the next page)*



## The Danish seaman and his union



THE DANISH SEAMEN'S UNION CAN LOOK BACK ON over sixty years of activity – its foundation date being given as 5 May 1897. This marks the date on which an entire crew of a Danish vessel joined the newly-formed union. The first move to create a union had been made a few weeks earlier, on 28 February 1897, when some thirty-two Danish seamen led by Axel Svendsen wrote to the Danish Dockers' Union asking them for their aid in forming a seamen's union – aid which was readily forthcoming. Up to that date, attempts to form a seamen's union had not met with any lasting success. This time, however, the union was to 'stay put' and overcome every challenge to its growth over the years.

In spite of opposition the union grew rapidly under the able leadership of S. Chr. Petersen and Axel Svendsen, and by 1901 it had a membership of 2,500; had entered into a collective bargaining agreement with the owners' federation, guaranteeing *inter alia* payment for overtime; had set up its own benevolent fund covering sickness, accident and payment of funeral expenses in case of death; and had sent a representative to the 1900 Paris Congress of the ITF. That same year (1901) marked the first congress of the Danish Transport Workers' Union, the joint body set up by the Dockers', Seamen's and Firemen's unions – the latter having been established the same year as the Seamen's Union.

### Strike – and aftermath

Things were going too well apparently, from the point of view of the owners who were waiting a favourable opportunity to crush the union. Their chance came when the Firemen's Union's contract came up for revision. This was due to expire on 1 January 1902. The nature of the demands put forward by the owners was such as to provoke a strike

among the firemen. The employers' answer was to bring in blackleg labour. The Shipowners' Federation followed this up by presenting the Seamen's Union with the same unacceptable demands concerning the hiring of crews as had caused the firemen to go on strike. Attempts by the union to get talks going were turned down by the owners, whereupon the Danish Transport Workers' Federation called the seamen and dockers out in sympathy with the firemen. The employers brought in blackleg labour by the hundreds.

The end was perhaps inevitable. There was a lack of co-ordination among the striking unions, due to differences in organizational affiliations, which gave the employers too much time in which to organize counter-measures. In the end their strike-breaking organizations proved too strong for the seamen and firemen who, having fought to the end

of their resources, were finally compelled to call the strike off.

The end of the strike meant the end of the Seamen's Union – at least for a time. It had fought to the limit of its means, and for some weeks longer than others who had earlier called the fight off as hopeless. Now it was broken and the owners were triumphant all along the line. In the summer of 1903 – a little more than a year after the end of the conflict – the number of paying members of the Union was seven! The half-yearly general meeting in the summer of 1904 was attended by four men only.

Things looked black indeed. Under conditions imposed by the shipowners, any seaman seeking work had to sign a document declaring under oath that he was not a member of any union and would not seek such membership as long as he was in the employ of any member of the Danish Shipping Federation, under pain of forfeiting his wages. The owners set up a seamen's control centre where seamen had to register and be medically examined. Personal details were entered in an individual file and the control centre kept a personal record book covering every seaman, in which masters were required to enter details concerning every seaman's sobriety, bearing towards others, general behaviour and efficiency. When the Danish TUC challenged the shipowners in the Industrial Disputes Arbitration Court to show cause why they should continue to boycott union members it was met by a counter-charge against the TUC for having called out the dock workers in sympathy with the striking seamen.

The Court in effect found that the charges cancelled themselves out – and that was the end of the matter!

### A fresh start

The Danish Shipping Federation doubtless considered it had grounds for congratulating itself on the success of its efforts to break the Seamen's Union. In the space of a short time the Federation had scattered the union's membership to the four winds, smashed its power to such an extent that it could be said to exist only on paper, and, by means of a hiring control system and 'good conduct' sheets, effectively reduced Danish seamen to the level of criminals on



*Svend From Andersen, General Secretary of the Danish Seamen's Union, was re-elected to office at the May 1957 Congress of the Union which also commemorated the sixtieth anniversary of foundation*

(continued from page 254)

In a recent interview, Brother Harrison was asked whether a national agreement would cover the whole situation and he cited the fact that national negotiations have been going on between the unions and carriers for a quarter century and 'we can see no good reason why the change to machine operation or automation should not be handled in the same manner.' He added, however, that while a national agreement 'could lay down the procedure and terms for protection of the employees,' it would also be necessary 'in each case to write an implementing agreement spelling out the manner in which those terms would be applied.'

*In recognition of their services on behalf of members over many years these officials of the Union – A. V. Lundström, C. Damm and Mathias Nielsen – are awarded honorary membership of the Union*

parole. It looked as if the Union could never recover from the blow. Less than four years after the conflict however, i.e. by the beginning of 1906, the Union again had over 1,000 paying members, and the Federation had started to discontinue the use of the 'good conduct' records, which had proved worse than useless.

In 1907 the union concluded its first agreement since the 1902 lockout with a Danish shipping company – the East Asian Line, which held aloof from the strife at the time. It is significant that the outlawed union did so as an accredited union – as far as the company was concerned – and not under the title of 'Seamen's Benevolent Society' (Sømaendenes Understøttelsesforening) which it had been obliged to assume to conceal its real trade union aims. At the beginning of 1908, it dropped the necessary camouflage, however, and went back to its old title, the Danish Seamen's Union (Sømaendenes Forbund i Danmark). The Union was back in business.

Although it was able to secure wage increases for its members by means of agreements with three shipping companies not affiliated with the shipowners' federation, the Union was however, unable at this stage to break the federation's resistance to union recognition. When a meeting was finally arranged between the seamen's and firemen's unions and representatives of the Danish TUC on the one hand and the Employers' and Shipping Federations on the other, it was only to hear the shipowners confirm their refusal to have anything to do with the union.

#### **A door re-opened**

The goal the Danish Seamen's Union had been striving for since the unhappy strike of 1902 – 'de facto' recognition by the owners as a bargaining unit – was finally reached in the summer of 1911 with the conclusion of an agreement to run for eight years. Similar agreements were thereafter concluded with other shipping companies which were not members of the Danish Shipping Federation.

The conclusion of this agreement marked an end to the persistent refusal



of the Danish Shipowners' Federation to have anything to do with seamen's unions in Denmark in accordance with the policy laid down by the International Shipping Federation, of which it was a member. It would appear that the Danish Federation had learnt the lesson that crushing, or attempting to crush, employees' unions was not the answer to the problems arising in connection with management-labour relations. The door was now open for a more normal relationship between employers and employees.

Much of the initial work leading up to the meetings which resulted in the representatives of the Seamen's Union and the Shipping Federation getting together at the same negotiating table was done by the state mediation officer appointed under the terms of an Act of 1910, which set up mediation machinery to operate in the case of industrial disputes.

The year 1911 also marked the Seamen's Union's disaffiliation from the Danish TUC (DSF), with the effectiveness of which at the time it considered it had good grounds to be dissatisfied. This act of disaffiliation, however, did not absolve the union from complying with the terms of the September 1899 Arbitration Award which laid certain restrictions on the freedom of Danish trade unions to call a strike of their members.

By the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, the Danish Seamen's Union had managed to place its affairs on a solid footing and had consolidated its position as a bargaining agent in relation to the shipowners. Benefits to which its members were entitled at this time included compensation in the event of

shipwreck, strikes, lockouts and boycotts; financial assistance in the case of court proceedings; and sick pay in the event of illness. Benefits became payable after six months' membership. In certain cases members were also entitled to unemployment pay.

At this time, a dispute with the collier owners ended in the State Mediator stepping in. His proposals, accepted by both sides, after the Union had already called a strike in conditions complicated by the outbreak of war, laid down a monthly rate of 80 kr. for carpenters and boatswains, 75 kr. for ordinary seamen and 70 kr. for the others. Accident insurance was fixed at 4,000 kr. irrespective of family responsibilities.

#### **The 1914–18 War**

The position of Danish seamen during the First World War was a particularly unenviable one. Denmark was neutral but her seamen had to carry on in conditions which exposed them to most of the dangers incurred by combatants, as a result of the unrestricted warfare carried out against neutral shipping by the German High Command. By the summer of 1916, 121 neutral vessels had been sunk, of which twenty-two were Danish. A war bonus and increased accident insurance, together with wage increases to meet the ever-mounting cost of living, were poor compensation for the losses incurred and the risks run by all those who sailed in Danish vessels. As a result of the intensified campaign against all non-German shipping initiated by the German High Command at the beginning of 1917, many Danish owners laid their vessels up with a consequent grave increase in the number of unemployed seamen.

With the unemployment problem reaching serious proportions, the Danish Seamen's Union decided to establish an unemployment benefits fund with effect from 1 October 1918. Contributions, compulsory for all members of the Union, were at the rate of one krone a month. Members under the age of eighteen paid at half this rate.

### Post-war-difficulties

The immediate post-war period found the Danish Seamen's Union pressing for wage increases and the introduction of a three-watch system (eight-hour day). Negotiations ended with agreement on the introduction of an eight-hour day at sea, including watch (three-shift watch). Where the three-watch system was not observed, a supplement of 25% of wages became payable. Wages were fixed at 300 kr. for a boatswain, 275 kr. for an AB and 160 kr. for an ordinary seaman. The overtime rate was 1.25 an hour up to nine o'clock in the evening and 1.75 kr. an hour thereafter and for work on Sundays and holidays.

It was not long before these hard-won standards came under attack, an attack which was to develop all along the wage-front in the country paralleling similar movements throughout the world which had been intensified by the trade depression which followed the short-lived boom immediately after the First World War. Things came to a head in the Spring of 1920 with the calling of a general strike by the Danish TUC (DSF) in which the seamen joined only to find themselves almost alone in pressing their demands when the national federation, of which the Seamen's Union was not a member, called off the strike some time later. Prominent among the seamen's demands at this time was one for the appointment of a crew's spokesman on board ship. The union was also pressing for fourteen days holiday in the summer.

By June 1920, the union finally capitulated and agreed to arbitration. By then it had been sued by the Shipowners' Federation in the Industrial Dispute Arbitration Court and fined 400,000 kr. plus costs to the amount of 300 kr. (needless to say it had not a penny in its coffers by this time), and had seen all

*General Secretary Sv. From Andersen addressing the Congress of the Danish Seamen's Union in May, 1957. The DSU first affiliated with the ITF in 1929*

the other unions outside the Danish TUC instruct their members to return to work. The last to hold out (apart from the seamen) were the transport workers and the ship's firemen. The strike had lasted ten weeks.

Under the imposed agreement monthly rates were fixed at 345 kr. for a boatswain, 316 kr. for an AB and 200 kr. for an ordinary seaman. The fine was rescinded. The arbitration award was subsequently replaced by an agreement which ran until 31 December 1921. One result of the events during the ten-week strike was that the working arrangement for joint action between the Seamen's Union and the Firemen's Union, entered into the year before, was discontinued, and the two unions have remained completely separate entities up to this day although they have continued to work together when their joint interests have been affected.

These rates could not long withstand the campaign of wage depression being carried out by the owners, not only in Denmark, but throughout Europe and the world generally. In January 1921 the seamen were obliged to accept a 40% cut in wages. They did so largely in the hope that, as a consequence, much of the laid-up tonnage would be put into service again – a hope that was not realized. Unemployment among seamen continued to increase, and further wage cuts brought an AB's wage down to 170 kr. a month by the beginning of 1923. A small wage increase won in 1925 did little to offset the general low level of wages. That same year, pressure by the union to get the subject of manning and hours of work at sea regulated succeeded to the extent that a government committee was appointed to go into the



question. After seven years of labour the only agreement this committee could reach was that it could not reach *any* agreement.

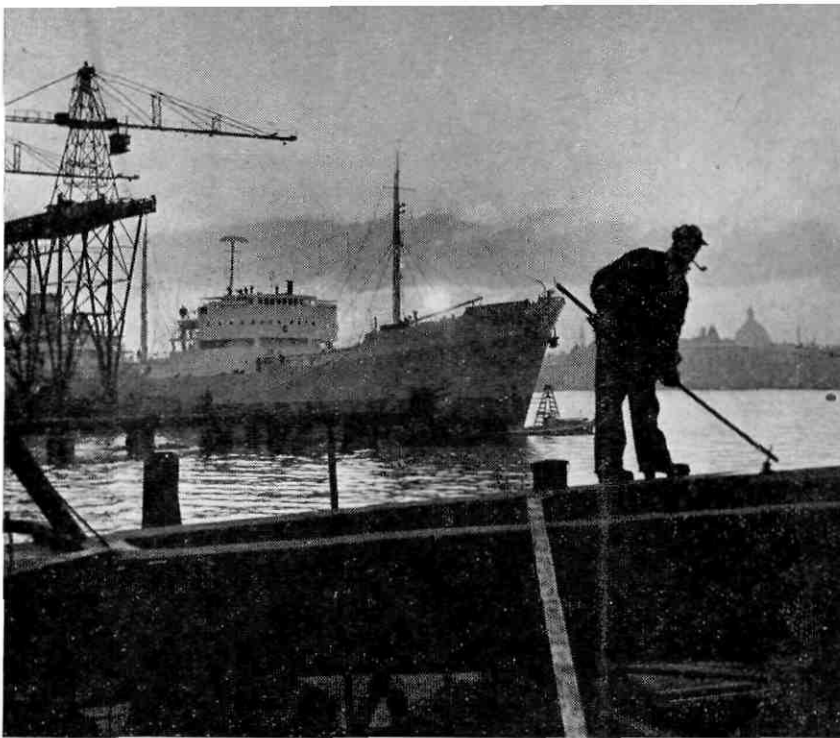
### Affiliation with the ITF

The history of the Danish Seamen's Union during this period reveals repeated but unsuccessful attempts on the part of extremist elements to use the union for political ends and prevent collaboration and affiliation with the more responsible national and international trade union bodies. Thus the affiliation of the Danish Seamen's Union with the ITF in 1929 was discontinued in 1931 when, of a comparatively small number of total votes cast, these elements managed to secure a small majority in favour of disaffiliation from the ITF and affiliation with the communist-run International of Seamen and Harbour Workers (ISH) with its headquarters in Hamburg. This Communist 'victory' was of short duration, however, the union returning to the ITF the following year. Affiliation with the Danish TUC (DSF) did not occur until some years later – in 1937, some three years after a further attempt by extremist elements to take over control of the union's affairs, in connection with the 1934 strike, had led the union almost to the brink of ruin.

Meanwhile, union pressure for the introduction of legislation regulating manning scales and hours of work at sea finally led to a tangible result in the form of an Act on manning scales which came into force on 1 July 1939. The effect of the Act was that Danish seamen serving in vessels of over 2,000 GRT continued to work an eighty-four-hour week at sea as opposed to Norwegian and Swedish seamen who had gained the three-watch system on such vessels. Danish seamen continued to work these long hours until they were reduced some six years later – in 1945.

In spite of this failure to bring their standards as regards hours of work up to those of other Scandinavian seafarers, the Danish Seamen's Union had brought their union out of the 'doldrums' of the twenties by the time the Second World War again subjected their members to the danger associated with total warfare. In 1932, the Union had purchased and moved into its own home – the first it had possessed. In April 1938, an American trade supplement had been introduced whilst holi-





*A scene in a Danish port. Danish seafarers have a long tradition of trade union activity and were among the earliest to organize in defence of their own interests (Photo from the Royal Danish Embassy)*

days with pay followed about the same time.

### War – and aftermath

On the morning of 1 September 1939, German troops invaded Poland. The Second World War had begun. On 9 April 1940, Denmark was invaded and following a token resistance the country was occupied until the end of the war in 1945.

Warned by the experience of the first war, the Danish TUC and Employers' Association early got together to agree on a nation-wide introduction of a sliding scale to meet the inevitability of an ever-mounting cost of living. Agreement was also reached at an early stage on a war-risk bonus for seafarers, originally fixed at 125% to 250%, according to zone, and subsequently increased. The Seamen's Union was unable to achieve general introduction of the three-watch system during this period, however.

Immediately after the end of hostilities, the Union initiated a wage movement and again raised its demand for the introduction of the three-watch system not only with the owners but also with the government, pressing its claims by means of a strike. After interim agreement in 1946, both claims were settled along collective bargaining lines by means of an agreement which came into force in April 1947.

### The 1947 agreement

Highlights of the 1947 collective agreement were: introduction of the three-

watch system on vessels of over 500 GRT where manning regulations permit; a long-hours bonus as compensation where the two-watch-system is maintained; an eight-hour day in port and for day-men; and the right to appoint a spokesman from among the members of the crew to represent their interests (similar to the shop steward).

Monthly wage rates on three-watch vessels were fixed at boatswain, basic 330.50 kr. plus cost-of-living supplement of 110.50, making a total of 441 kr.; AB, 310 kr. plus 119.50 kr., totalling 429.50 kr.; and ordinary seaman, 165.50 kr. plus 165, making 330.50 kr.

On two-watch vessels corresponding rates were fixed at: 330.50 kr., 141 kr., 471.50 kr.; 310 kr., 150.50 kr., 460.50 kr.; and 165.50 kr., 184.50 kr., 350 kr.

At a rate of exchange of nearly 20 to £1 it will be noted that the AB's basic minimum worked out at a little less than £16 a month.

### Merchant Seamen's Act revised

In 1952, the Danish Merchant Seamen's Act, which hitherto had operated largely to the advantage of the owners, was revised. The new Act, the provisions of which took effect on 1 January 1953, represented in many respects an improvement on the old Act although it still fell short of the legitimate aspirations of Danish seafarers.

By this time, the Union's affairs had stood on a solid financial basis long enough for it to give practical expression to the idea of a seamen's hostel in Co-

penhagen, first mooted in 1946. This was the year in which a joint action agreement was concluded between the Seamen's Union (deck ratings) and the Firemen's Union, and the two unions acting together saw the realization of their plans when, with government and shipowner support and assistance, the Danish Seamen's Hostel was opened in Copenhagen on 20 December 1954.

The spring of 1956 saw one of the longest strikes in the history of the Danish Seamen's Union. It lasted for forty days and ended only when compulsory arbitration obliged the Union to call off the strike. One of the main points at issue was the shipowners' unreasonable policy with regard to the employment of trainees and in its statement calling off the strike the Union stressed its determination to urge a settlement of this question satisfactory to its members.

More success was achieved on the wage issue, however, and the March 1956 collective agreement laid down a monthly basic rate of 463.50 kr. for boatswains, 403 kr. for ABs, and 251.50 kr. for ordinary seamen. Watch-standing deck ratings on vessels under 500 GRT with a two-watch system received a 'long-hours' bonus of 35 kr. a month. The full rates (including cost-of-living supplement) were: boatswains, 764 kr.; AB's, 712.50 kr.; and o/seamen, 606.50 kr. on three-watch vessels. On two-watch vessels the rates were fixed at 842 kr., 791 kr., and 673.50 kr. respectively.

Subsequent wage increases were negotiated in September 1956 (to 784 kr., 732.50 kr., and 626.50 kr. respectively on three-watch vessels, and to 867 kr., 816 kr., and 698.50 kr. on two-watch); in March 1957 (794, 742.50, 636.50; and 879.50, 828.50, 711); and in September 1957. Current rates are: on three-watch vessels, boatswain, 804; AB, 752.50; o/seaman, 646; on two-watch, 892; 841; and 723.50. (The Danish krone for purposes of conversion may be taken at a little less than 20 to £1 and 6.82 to US \$1).


In concluding this summary of the history of the Danish Seamen's Union to which the Union devoted a special number of its official organ, 'Ny Tid',

to mark its sixtieth birthday, the ITF can do no better than echo the words of its general secretary, Svend From Andersen, and wish it many more years of progress. It is clear as the union's story unfolds, that there were times when the control of its affairs was in danger of being taken over by less responsible elements in the movement (this, of course, is true of many unions throughout the world). In the end, however, wiser counsels usually prevailed, and in this connection the fact that, in elections to the union's Executive earlier this year, no member of the union known to have communist sympathies was elected to office, is a gratifying pointer to the way in which the democratic core of the Union is thinking and to the course the Union proposes to steer in the future.

### Trade union representation on European bodies

 AT A CONFERENCE held in Luxembourg agreement has been reached on the formation of a permanent committee which will co-ordinate trade union activity within the various integrated European institutions. Represented at the conference were the national trade union centres of the six Common Market countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Italy and the Netherlands), the European Regional Organization of the ICFU, and the Trade Union Committee of Twenty-one of the European Coal and Steel Community. It was decided to hold a further conference this month for the purpose of finally establishing the Committee. Until the permanent body becomes a reality, secretarial and liaison duties will remain in the hands of Robert Bothereau, General Secretary of France's Force Ouvrière.

### US check on defective trucks

 THE US RAILWAY LABOR EXECUTIVES' ASSOCIATION'S PAPER, *Labor*, reported recently on an investigation by the US Interstate Commerce Commission into the state of repair of American road haulage vehicles.


One check was made in August from 175 points on roads in various parts of the country. No fewer than 88.4 per cent of the 12,018 vehicles inspected had one or more defects which violated safety regulations. 2,047 of these vehicles had four or more defects.

Of those trucks which were given a complete inspection 20.2 per cent were found 'so imminently hazardous to operate' that they were ordered off the road.


The most common mechanical faults were defects in braking systems, these being revealed in 7,368 vehicles. Other facts shown by the check were that 5,359 drivers' logs were unsatisfactory in some way and that in 3,379 cases doctors' certificates on a driver's physical fitness were 'deficient'.

The Interstate Commerce Commission has said that the road checks (there has been a series of them over the past year) have been undertaken to correct the 'prevalent laxity' in vehicle inspection and maintenance and to reduce accidents. It has moved to revoke the operating certificates of some of the worst violators of safety standards.

### The library train

 A UNIQUE TRAIN has been working for some time on the stretch of the Swedish State Railways network which runs through the lonely and almost unpopulated areas of northern Sweden. The train is the 'library train' which provides library facilities to the sparse population of Lapps and railwaymen. The train runs once a month and carries about 600 books of which about half are loaned out on each trip. The books most in demand are tales of travel, national history and books about the tropics! The Lapps prefer books about their own people and country. As a result of the success of the rolling library, the Swedish railway authorities intend to start a similar service for another part of the country.


### Diesels lead eight to one on US railroads

 DIESEL MOTIVE POWER in the United States continues to expand, reports the *Locomotive Engineers Journal*. On 1 May of this year, the diesel fleet of Class 1 railroads had reached a total of 26,622 units. Of these, 510 were new ones, installed in service during the first five months of the year. The steam fleet, on the other hand, was down to 3,515 units.

According to a report by the Association of American Railroads, at the end of this five-month period, Class 1 railroads had on order 582 new units, of which 552 were diesel-electrics, and thirty gas turbine-electric. Fifty of the


locomotives on order were 1,750 h.p. all-purpose diesels costing \$9.75 million, destined for freight service on the Pennsylvania Railroad. Six others, also having 1,750 h.p., and costing \$1.14 million were general purpose diesels for the St. Louis Southwestern Railroad.

### Poor state of Polish shipping


 THE POLISH MINISTER OF SHIPPING recently gave an interview to the periodical *Przekroj*, in which it was revealed that although a large amount of the country's resources had been set aside for the Polish merchant fleet, the shipping plan had only been half fulfilled at the end of 1956. Instead of 124 ships of a total 675,000 GRT planned in the programme, Poland had only seventy-six sea-going vessels totalling 334,000 GRT. The share of Polish trade carried by these ships has fallen steadily.

More than a third of the ships flying the Polish flag are over twenty years old, most of them once German vessels. In world shipping as a whole the proportion of vessels in this age group is only 18.7 per cent. The world average speed for merchant vessels is seventeen knots; that of the Polish fleet is under twelve knots. There is a similar low level of efficiency in the ports. The former German ports of Gdingen, Danzig and Stettin can only muster 168 cranes between them: Hamburg alone has 620.

### Road transport nationalization in Ceylon

 THE CEYLON GOVERNMENT aims to nationalize the country's motor transport services on 1 January 1958. The proposed law under which this would be carried out provides for the establishment of a Transport Board to operate bus services. The Board and the Minister of Transport are to have authority to take over the existing services and the law provides for the assessment and payment of compensation to the former owners. Any dispute arising on the question of compensation will be settled by a Compensation Tribunal and a Fares Board will be set up to determine reasonable fares. The continued employment of workers for the former operators is to be safeguarded under the Transport Board. The former employers are also to pay gratuities to their workers in recognition of their past services.

## Spotting whales by helicopter

 THE 1957 WHALING SEASON marks the fourth in which civil aviation has been called in to assist in the business of spotting whales. In whaling, as perhaps in no other 'hunting' expedition, the accent is on 'first spot your whale' and in this connection invaluable services are performed by those prepared to face the dangers and rigours of the Antarctic by spotting the whales from the air.


The advantages of using aircraft for this purpose are obvious even to the layman, and doubtless the number of helicopters being used will increase as the years go by. This season the British expedition is using four. They are being flown by twelve pilots and serviced by fourteen ground crew.

Last year, the two aircraft accompanying the British expedition flew 700 hours, operating in all but the worst weather. They were up on eighty of ninety possible flying days. Work begins at one in the morning and sorties start at first light. In fine weather they may be continued until dusk, till as late as ten at night.

There are many discomforts and dangers to be faced in this type of work such as long flying hours and unpredictable weather, especially fog, which comes down rapidly and unexpectedly whereas a really high wind is usually preceded by the normal indications of storm. The pilots have no met. facilities to aid them and have to rely on the weather lore of the whaling men.


In the three previous seasons in which aircraft have been used for whale spotting, there has been one fatal accident and two aircraft have been lost. All factors taken into consideration, this may be regarded as a remarkably good safety record.

## Nice work - if you can get it

 THE US RAILWAY LABOR EXECUTIVES' ASSOCIATION'S PAPER, *Labor*, recently published an extract from the Interstate Commerce Commission's annual report which shows that the number of highly paid railway company executives is greater than ever. The report shows that in 1956, 865 executives received salaries and 'other compensation' in excess of \$20,000. This number is 106 more than in 1955 and 455 more than in 1946. The average compensation was \$33,371 a year in 1956 compared with


\$32,859 in 1955. Forty-one executives received salaries of more than \$70,000, the top place going to the President of the Southern Pacific Railroad who has a salary of \$140,000. The President of Union Pacific gets \$137,000 plus almost \$2,000 as director's fees. The head of Pennsylvania Railroad has a salary of \$126,398 plus almost \$4,000 'other compensation', whilst the boss of the Santa Fe gets \$120,000 plus \$900 'other compensation'. The President of the Chesapeake and Ohio has a salary of \$103,068 to which is added \$30,000 'incentive compensation' and \$2,400 director's fees. Among those who are comparatively hard-done-by is the President of the Louisville and Nashville who is paid a meagre \$81,351 plus \$2,650 'other compensation'. The board chairman of the Chicago North Western is in an even worse position, receiving a flat \$75,000.

## Israeli fishermen's conditions regulated

 IN ISRAEL, fishermen form a national section of the Histadrut Agricultural Workers' Union which has concluded a series of collective bargaining agreements with companies owning fishing vessels regulating the wages and working conditions of crews.

The agreements provide for employment of organized labour and lay down the size of crew for vessels of different tonnage and type. Seven grades are defined, ranging from skipper to grade C fisherman, and wages are fixed for each grade. Wages consist of two parts: a fixed monthly wage and a share of the catch. Fishermen are entitled to one day off for every three spent at sea or every six on land. Companies are required to provide a complete set of storm clothes every two years.


## Ultra-sonic device helps detect faults

 AN ULTRA-SONIC DEVICE used by the German Federal Railways to detect rail faults on the permanent way was recently loaned to the Austrian Federal Railways. The apparatus was used to test certain stretches of line in the Linz region where a number of old rails and numerous weldings are due to be checked in the interests of operational safety. At the same time, the Austrian permanent way engineers were given an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the advantages of this device.

During the six days it was in the hands of the Austrian engineers, the machine was used at eight different points in the regional network. Altogether some ten miles (sixteen km) of track were tested including 1,300 joints and 360 weldings. In addition to numerous minor incipient cracks, the ultra-sonic rail-testing device detected a number of cases where welding had been imperfectly executed, as well as other flaws and faults requiring attention in the interests of operational safety.

Austrian track maintenance engineers were stated to be impressed by the rapidity and reliability with which the machine detected faults. The advantage of the ultra-sonic rail fault-detector device appears primarily to be its ability to disclose, rapidly and with maximum reliability, instances of faulty welding and other defects at railends - where experience shows that splits most frequently occur - without the need to remove the fish-plates.

## Behind the festive mask

 AN ASIAN VIEW of the much-publicized Moscow 'Festival of Youth' has been given by a correspondent of the Indonesian newspaper *Merdeka*. In a report published in Holland, the correspondent says that he had not expected to find a prosperous classless society in the Soviet Union. 'But what I saw,' he continues, 'did not even live up to my most pessimistic expectations. . . In the sheds and hovels of the beggarly villages along the railway line (between Brest and Moscow) a human existence seems barely possible. . . No, there is no classless society in the Soviet Union; there is a ruling class of the élite and social differences are greater than in the "capitalist" world. . . And, judging by the appearance of the people, there is no prosperity after forty years of the Soviet régime.'

The festival itself was 'all artificial and directed from above. Behind it all the individual is missing, the Soviet citizen is no factor; he is not allowed to have a will of his own, he may only obey. He is a slave. . .

'The result, forty years after the 1917 revolution, seems very meagre and disappointing, especially when one realizes how much sacrifice, how much blood and tears, how many fatal judicial errors and political purges there have been before this extremely poor result was achieved.'



# International Transport Workers' Federation

President: H. JAHN

General Secretary: O. BECU

**7** industrial sections catering for

RAILWAYMEN  
ROAD TRANSPORT WORKERS  
INLAND WATERWAY WORKERS  
PORT WORKERS  
SEAFARERS  
FISHERMEN  
CIVIL AVIATION STAFF

- Founded in London in 1896
- Reconstituted at Amsterdam in 1919
- Headquarters in London since the outbreak of the Second World War
- 174 affiliated organizations in 58 countries
- Total membership: 6,500,000

#### *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 economic, 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 • Australia • Austria • Belgium  
Brazil • British Guiana • British Honduras  
Canada • Chile • Colombia • Cuba • Denmark  
Ecuador • Egypt • Estonia (Exile) • Finland  
France • Germany • Ghana  
Great Britain • Greece • Grenada  
Hong Kong • Iceland • India • Indonesia  
Israel • Italy • Jamaica • Japan • Kenya  
Luxembourg • Malaya • Mauritius • Mexico  
The Netherlands • New Zealand • Nicaragua  
Nigeria • Norway • Nyasaland • Pakistan  
Panama • Paraguay • Philippines  
Poland (Exile) • Republic of Ireland • Rhodesia  
St. Lucia • South Africa • South Korea  
Spain (Illegal Underground Movement)  
Sweden • Switzerland • Tanganyika  
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