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IN THIS ISSUE

Page

News and Views from the ITF

ITF Executive Board meets in Paris 113

Transport

Common EEC fishing limit from next year 114

Trade Unions

Norwegian Labour Court upholds right of merchant navy officers to engage in sympathy strikes 114

ICFTU calls for concerted union campaign against South Africa 115

NMU president adds voice to call for strong US merchant marine 116

Social and Industrial News

Improved rates of pay for Belgian inland navigation workers 117

End to lock-out of dockers at port of Halifax (Canada) 117

Agreement for Wardair personnel (Canada) 117

Canadian cabin attendants' union seeks restoration of pay parity for PWA staff 118

New rates of pay for Danish navigating and engineer officers 118

Danish Seamen's Union accuses coastal shipowners of under-manning 119

Greenlandair pilots resume work 119

New pay agreement for Luxembourg public service workers 119

Norwegian trawler skippers' contract talks run into difficulties 120

Seven per cent rise for Singapore seafarers 120

Strike of Madrid municipal bus company employees 120

Spanish air traffic controllers win major concessions 121

Agreement on improved supplementary pensions for employees in the Swedish private sector 121

Job protection agreement for US east coast dockers 121

News in Brief 122

Personalia 123

124

Forthcoming Meetings

- Supplements:
- 1) *ITF Seafarers focus on manning and welfare*
 - 2) *Seafarers win important gains at 62nd (Maritime) Session of ILO International Labour Conference*
 - 3) *Statement by ITF Executive Board on India*

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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

ITF Executive Board meets in Paris

The ITF Executive Board met in Paris on 19 October 1976, with ITF President Fritz Prechtl in the chair.

The Board was informed that for personal reasons the ITF General Secretary Charles Blyth did not wish to stand for re-election at the Dublin Congress in 1977. It reluctantly decided to respect his wishes and expressed its deep appreciation of all that he had done for the Federation during his period of office. The Board will consider the situation arising from this decision at its next meeting.

Much of the discussion at the meeting centred on the present situation in India and in particular on the action taken by the ITF in support of George Fernandes, former president of the All India Railwaymen's Federation. It was brought to the Board's attention that certain of the ITF's Indian affiliates had serious misgivings as to the ITF's statements and actions in this matter, especially the criticisms it had voiced of the Indian government. After careful consideration of the issues involved, the Board came to the firm conclusion that the position adopted on behalf of the ITF was entirely justified and a statement to this effect was accordingly adopted by the meeting. (A copy of the statement is attached as a supplement to this issue of the Newsletter.)

Applications for affiliation were accepted from unions in Australia and Rhodesia, subject to the completion of any remaining formalities.

The President presented ITF Gold Badges to two retiring members of the Board, Jelte Post (Netherlands) and Don Secord (Canada), as a token of appreciation for the many years of loyal service they had given the Federation. It was also announced that Simon Barendregt, President of the Dutch Transport Workers' Union - NVV, had been co-opted on to the Board to succeed Post.

At the invitation of Vice-President Jack Jones, the next meeting of the Board will be held on 15 and 16 March at the T&GWU's newly-opened centre in Eastbourne.

TRANSPORT

EUROPE

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Common EEC fishing limit from next year

The Foreign Ministers of the Nine have agreed that a joint EEC 200-mile fishing limit will come into effect on 1 January 1977. Still to be settled are the question of exclusive fishing zones and the establishment of fair quotas for Common Market countries fishing in each other's waters. Special arrangements have already been made to protect the growth of the Irish off-shore fleet.

The EEC has just recently opened talks with Iceland aimed at securing continued access for British trawlers to Icelandic waters after the six-month interim agreement between the two countries expires in December of this year. Similar negotiations will be held with the Norwegian, Canadian and United States authorities in the expectation of reaching reciprocal framework agreements when these countries extend their limits shortly.

TRADE UNIONS

NORWAY

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Norwegian Labour Court upholds right of merchant navy officers to engage in sympathy strikes

Arising from a dispute in 1975, the Maritime Employers' Association and the Shipowning Employers' Association approached the Norwegian Labour Court in April of this year for a decision in principle as to whether:

- 1) officers' unions had the right under the collective agreement to instruct their members to stop work in a sympathy strike after issuing joint notice to the employers;
- 2) it was legal to give notice of a sympathy strike before work stopped in the main dispute; and
- 3) it was legal to put a sympathy strike into operation before work stopped in the main dispute.

The dispute referred to was one between three merchant navy officers' associations (2 of them ITF affiliates) and the Norwegian Oil Rig Owners' Association regarding pay and working conditions on oil rigs, during which the officers' unions issued joint notice to the two employers' associations mentioned above of their intention to undertake concerted sympathy action by calling out their members on oil rig supply ships in North European waters. As it so happened, negotiations were quickly resumed and a satisfactory settlement reached, thus rendering the solidarity action unnecessary.

After due consideration, the Labour Court found on 21 September that as the employers' associations had the authority to accept, on the shipping companies' behalf, joint notice of termination of union collective agreements, they had by extension also the authority to accept joint notice of sympathy action from unions which had vested in themselves the authority to call out their members on strike. The Court therefore ruled that the unions had acted perfectly properly in giving joint notice of their intentions. Such notice should, however, always be accompanied by a list of the names of the officers involved in sympathy action and details of the company they worked for.

The Court further ruled that unions should have the right to give notice before the main dispute resulted in strike action, otherwise it would make it extremely difficult -- and in the Court's opinion unnecessarily and unreasonably so -- for unions to put sympathy action into operation. Nonetheless, it was the generally accepted -- and indeed the Court's own -- view that such strikes should never begin before the main dispute resulted in industrial action being taken.

SOUTH AFRICA

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ICFTU calls for concerted union campaign against South Africa

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, together with the World Confederation of Labour, held an International Trade Union Conference on Southern Africa in Brussels on 21 September, which was attended by representatives of the two world bodies' affiliated organizations, as well as the International Trade Secretariats and the Socialist International among others.

The meeting adopted a strongly-worded resolution denouncing apartheid as a "crime against humanity and a threat to world peace and stability" and expressing full support for "the struggle of the African peoples of Southern Africa in pursuance of political, human and trade union rights". The resolution went on to call for the imposition, by the United Nations and national governments, of an embargo on all economic, social, cultural and sporting contacts with South Africa as well as an immediate ban on military collaboration with the South African government. A policy of non-

recognition of the Bantustans was also urged. On Namibia, the Conference insisted that the South West Africa Peoples' Organization (SWAPO) should be represented at any constitutional conference that might be called to decide the country's future.

The resolution also called on trade unions in industrial countries to embark upon a coordinated programme of action against the South African régime, the dates of which would be fixed by the next meeting of the ICFTU Executive Board. This joint union campaign would include banning the handling of goods to and from South Africa, participating in international consumer boycotts of South African goods, intensifying campaigns against emigration to Southern Africa and taking industrial action against companies that did not recognize African unions inside South Africa or failed to comply with internationally-recognized labour standards. The resolution also appealed to the unions represented at the meeting to give moral support to African unions inside South Africa and to increase their voluntary contributions to a solidarity fund set up to aid African workers.

UNITED STATES
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NMU president adds voice to call for strong merchant marine

During the union's quadrennial convention held in early October, NMU president Shannon Wall added his voice to the call for the development of a strong US merchant marine, an effort which, he said, would require coordinated action on the part of all American maritime unions if the necessary political and legislative initiatives were to be taken. Other objectives which the union has set itself for the next four years, include : a renewed drive to ensure that labour-backed legislation to fix rising oil import quotas for US-flag vessels is got through Congress; intensified action to abolish the "effective control" status of and the tax concessions and other forms of protection granted to US-owned runaway flag ships; support for more bilateral pacts such as the recent grain shipping agreement reached with the USSR, as these provide increased job opportunities for seafarers; and enactment of other US-flag safeguards, particularly in respect of the carriage of oil and natural gas cargoes which are in danger of being diverted to foreign-flag ships.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

BELGIUM

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Improved rates of pay for inland navigation workers

The ITF-affiliated Belgian Transport Workers' Federation (BTB) has negotiated new rates of pay for its members in inland navigation, effective 1 October 1976. Skippers' rates of pay now range from 21,077 B frs to 31,362 B frs depending on size of vessel and type of navigation; certificated mates receive 22,674 B frs on vessels up to 1,000 tons and 23,079 on large vessels and uncertificated mates 22,066 and 22,269 B frs respectively.

Able seaman have a salary range of 16,814 to 20,654 B frs depending on size of vessel and type of navigation and ships' boys with more than one year's service get from 16,028 to 17,846 B frs.

New rates also came into operation on the same date for inland navigation workers in pushboat and continuous navigation. Captains now receive a monthly rate of 34,168 B frs (excluding allowances). The corresponding rates for 1st mates are 30,929 and for second mates 29,079 B frs. ABs are paid 26,302 B frs per month.

CANADA

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End to lock-out of dockers at port of Halifax

Canadian members of the ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) have returned to work at the Atlantic container port of Halifax, Nova Scotia following the adoption last month of legislation in the Canadian parliament to end the 11-week-old lock-out of workers at the port. The two parties to the dispute over hiring and dispatching practices -- the ILA and the Maritime Employers' Association -- have been given until 10 December to settle their differences.

(See ITF Newsletter No. 9, 1976, page 94 for earlier details of the dispute.)

Agreement for Wardair cabin personnel

With the assistance of the federal mediator, agreement has been reached between the ITF-affiliated Canadian Airline Flight Attendants' Association and the charter company Wardair on the terms of a new one-year contract, effective 1 April 1976, for company cabin staff. The agreement grants a 14 per cent increase in hourly rates from 1 April, with a further 4.5 per cent on 1 August

1976. A reduced quarterly flight time limitation of 240 hours is introduced for all quarters and the minimum duty period guarantee is increased from 3½ to 4 hours. The agreement, which expires on 31 March 1977, also lays down that in future guaranteed days off shall be granted on a monthly rather than a quarterly basis.

CALFAA seeks restoration of pay parity for Pacific Western Airlines staff

The ITF-affiliated Canadian Airline Flight Attendants' Association (CALFAA) is to ask the Anti-Inflation Board to reconsider a recent decision which has caused its members with Pacific Western Airlines to lose the pay parity with Air Canada stewardesses which they won on 1 October 1974. A crucial time-lag of three months between Air Canada and PWA settlements has meant that the latest award to PWA staff, which would have kept them in line with Air Canada salaries, has been cut back by the AIB from 20.46 per cent to 14 per cent to comply with government wage controls. The Air Canada settlement was reached just prior to the imposition of restrictions and thus was implemented in full.

CALFAA believes that it has a strong case to put before the Board as there appears to have been some misunderstanding as to how long pay parity with Air Canada had existed. The union contract with PWA also expired before the wage curbs were introduced.

DENMARK
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New rates of pay for navigating and engineer officers

New pay agreements have been signed on behalf of navigating and engineer officers organized in the ITF-affiliated Danish Navigating Officers' Association and the Engineer Officers' Association respectively.

For the navigating officers, new pay rates effective 1 October 1976, range from 5805 kr per month (basic pay plus cost-of-living allowance) to 9014 kr for chief officers, depending on size of vessel and length of service; from 5683 kr to 7826 kr for first officers; and from 5683 kr to 6816 kr for second officers.

Overtime rates, inclusive of cost-of-living supplement, per half-hour range from 21.35 kr to 29.60 kr for weekdays and from 27.10 kr to 37.57 kr for Sundays and Public Holidays.

The two-watch allowance (vessels not exceeding 1,400 grt) is 167.00 kr per 24-hour period for chief officers and 151.00 for first officers. Subsistence allowance (also including cost-of-living supplement) during vacations, days off, sick leave and duty time on board at home port is 36.10 kr per day, and during duty time on board at home port, where food is not provided, the daily rate is 88.20 kr.

For engineer officers, the corresponding monthly pay rates are 8057 kr to 13,156 kr for chief engineers; 5683 kr to 8607 kr for 1st engineers; 5683 kr to 7468 for 2nd engineers; and 5683 kr to 6816 for 3rd engineers. The corresponding weekday overtime rates range from 21.35 to 28.07 kr, the rate for work on Sundays and Public Holidays being in the following range: 27.10 to 35.63 kr. Subsistence allowances are the same as for navigating officers.

Seamen's union accuses coastal shipowners of undermanning

The ITF-affiliated Danish Seamen's Union has accused coastal ship-owners of allowing their vessels to sail without a full crew complement. Undermanning is, it says, a serious problem in the coastal fleet and as many skippers are part-owners of the vessels they command they do not always do as much as they could to ensure that vessels are properly manned at all times. The union therefore intends to approach the authorities with a request to tighten up the manning regulations.

GREENLAND
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Greenlandair pilots resume work

The pilots' strike that had halted Greenlandair operations for the past four weeks ended on 16 October when the pilots voted to accept the draft collective agreement drawn up on their behalf by the ITF-affiliated Danish Salaried Employees' Union. The new agreement reduces hours from 45 to 40 (the normal working week in Greenland) and grants four days off after each fourteen days of duty. A new wage system based on allowances for qualifications is introduced, with certain adjustments being made to ensure that no pilot suffers a reduction in pay as a result of the change-over.

LUXEMBOURG
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New pay agreement for public service workers

Agreement was reached on 22 October between the Luxembourg government and the four unions organizing public service workers -- which include the ITF-affiliated Luxembourg Federation of Railway and Transport Workers (FNCTTFEL) on a new pay agreement for the next two years. This gives public service workers a 2 per cent increase next January, followed by a further 3 per cent at the beginning of 1978. Workers in the lower salary ranges will receive proportionately higher salary increases during 1977.

Meanwhile, our Luxembourg affiliate has rejected as "totally unsatisfactory" the employers' latest offer on the terms of a new collective agreement for bus drivers. An arbitrated settlement now seems inevitable.

NORWAY

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Trawler skippers' contract talks run into difficulties

Negotiations between the ITF-affiliated Norwegian Navigating Officers' Association and the employers on the revision of the agreement covering trawler skippers and mates have now reached the mediation stage. A suggested settlement put forward by the state mediator at a meeting between the two parties on 13 October has been submitted to a membership ballot. The reply date is 1 December.

SINGAPORE

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Seven per cent rise for seafarers

Effective 1 July 1976, Singapore seafarers in the local, home and foreign trades organized in the ITF-affiliated Singapore Organisation of Seamen received the National Wages Council recommended increase for 1976 of seven per cent. The rate for an AB in the local and home trades is thus increased by \$33.60 to \$285.60 and by \$53.01 to \$448.01 for foreign-going service as AB. All seamen will be entitled to three days' paid leave for each completed month of service, as well as to the bonus and other benefits laid down in the collective agreement.

SPAIN

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Strike of Madrid municipal bus company employees

Madrid bus workers employed by the municipal bus company (EMT) went on strike on 28 October after their negotiating committee had demanded and been refused across-the-board increases of 6,000 pesetas a month; genuine paid holidays; a 40-hour week with two consecutive rest days; retirement at 60; the right to hold meetings on company premises; and the reinstatement of workers dismissed for attempting to organize the labour force.

The government used the military to run a partial strike-breaking service, and violent clashes took place between riot police and striking workers, a number of whom were imprisoned pending trial on sedition charges. All the members of the 13-man negotiating committee were dismissed and forty others sacked as a warning to their colleagues.

The busmen resumed work on 4 November. Talks have been held between representatives of the workers and the employers, and it is felt that certain of the busmen's demands may soon be met.

Air traffic controllers win major concessions on safety

Spanish air traffic controllers have won major concessions following their two-month-old work-to-rule (see ITF Newsletter No. 9, 1976, page 96). A Commission composed of Air Ministry officials and two controllers has been set up to look into ways of improving air traffic flow control throughout Spain and -- in response to the controllers' request for an independent assessment -- US Federal Aviation Administration officials have been called in to examine equipment at the three major control centres of Seville, Madrid and Barcelona. (On a previous visit, the FAA criticized the poor standard of maintenance of equipment and the lack of refresher courses to keep controllers abreast of modern techniques.)

SWEDEN

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Agreement on improved supplementary pensions in private sector

After discussions lasting for over a year, agreement has at last been reached between the Swedish unions represented in the TCO Private Salaried Employee Cartel (PTK) and the Employers' Confederation (SAF) on the distribution of the approximately 800 million kroner (or 4.1% of the total salary bill) saved by employers in the private sector with the reduction on 1 July 1976 of the pensionable age from 67 to 65 years. The employers have conceded the unions' demand that the money thus released should be used to improve supplementary pensions and not to increase salaries, as the employers had originally insisted. The main demand of the employee side -- namely for the introduction of a flexible retirement age -- has also been granted, with workers in the private sector being allowed to retire between 62 and 65. Those wishing to stay on after 65 will have to make individual arrangements with their employer.

To achieve this result, the PTK was obliged to resort to industrial action -- this took the form of an overtime ban and a refusal to undertake duty journeys outside normal working hours -- from 30 August and lasting five weeks,

UNITED STATES

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Job protection agreement for East Coast dockers

In 1975, the ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) signed a job protection agreement with the North Atlantic port employers, which guaranteed dockers the right to handle all containerized cargo within a 50-mile radius

of six North Atlantic ports (see ITF Newsletter No. 7/8 1975, page 70). The validity of this agreement has now been called into question and an authoritative ruling on the matter is awaited from the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, the ILA has negotiated an interim agreement with the Council of North Atlantic Shipping Associations which anchors in the collective contract a measure of job protection for their members and should offset the effects of the loss of the original agreement if a decision unfavourable to the union is reached. Under the new agreement, the employers have agreed that more stuffing and stripping of consolidated containers will be done at the piers of the North Atlantic ports. They have also promised to use ILA labour for traditional longshore work. The minimum size of container gangs has been increased to 18 men, the present size of gangs in the port of New York.

The two industrial partners have also agreed that they will try to work towards a single master agreement for the entire eastern seaboard, including the Gulf of Mexico. The current ILA/CONASA contract expires on 30 September 1977.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Well over one million Canadians stopped work and joined in a national day of protest organized by the Canadian Labor Congress on 14 October, the first anniversary of the imposition of wage controls by the national government. The ICFTU has expressed its solidarity with Canadian workers in their campaign to stop "attempts to destroy free collective bargaining".

A nationwide 24-hr. general strike was called by France's leading trade unions for 7 October in protest against the government's anti-inflation austerity programme, which will increase taxation while holding back wages. Public transport in Paris was badly hit, as were train connections within France, all domestic and some international flights were halted and cross-Channel ferry services between Dunkirk and Dover were cancelled for the duration of the stoppage.

Norwegian marine pilots belonging to the Norwegian State Employees' Union (not an ITF affiliate) came out on strike at midnight on 24 October after negotiations under the state mediator broke down on the question of whether pilots' rates of pay should be state-regulated or whether, like coastal seafarers, they should continue to have a separate agreement on pay and conditions as their union is demanding. The strike has closed down the majority of pilot stations along the Norwegian coast.

Peruvian fishermen last month staged an 11-day strike in protest against the government's decision to denationalize the anchovy fishing fleet. Some 5,000 of the 9,000 striking fishermen refused to sign on for work again on October 28, the deadline set by the government.

Surinam has joined the Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organization, becoming its one hundred and first member.

Some 1,400 US pilots with Braniff International have won important wage and other improvements under the terms of a new 32-month agreement -- backdated to 1 August -- negotiated recently by the Air Line Pilots' Association. This grants 18 per cent wage increases spread over 34 months to pilots on conventional narrow-bodied aircraft, 15 per cent over the same period being received by the smaller number of pilots on wide-body 747s. Other gains include: improved medical and dental insurance cover, better sick leave provisions, higher retirement benefits and increases in travel expenses.

US air line pilots struck Continental Air Lines on 23 October in a dispute over pay and working conditions.

PERSONALIA

Trygve Bøhn, one of the founder members of the Norwegian Navigating Officers' Association, died on 8 October, aged 90. His early experiences as an officer convinced Bøhn of the necessity of forming a professional organization to defend their interests and he accordingly called the union's first meeting, at which he wrote his name on a piece of paper and handed it round the meeting for the others to sign, thus becoming member no. 1. Brother Bøhn was created an honorary member of the association in 1960.

C.E. Dennis has resigned, primarily for health reasons, from his post as president of the US Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks. Brother Dennis, who is 68, was elected president of the union, the largest transport union in the AFL-CIO, in 1963. Fred J. Kroll was unanimously elected to fill the remaining period of the presidential term.

Wim Hulsker, former president of the dockers' section of the Dutch Transport Workers' Union and more recently administrative director of the Dockers' Training Centre at Renesse in Zeeland, died on 6 November, aged 58. Bro. Hulsker had many good friends in the ITF, having being closely connected for many years with the work of both the Dockers' and Fishermen's Sections.

R.K. Mortimer and V.C. Bolger have been elected Senior and Junior Vice President respectively of the Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia. Former Senior Vice President H. McDowell is now the union's General President.

Edward W. Oliver retired from his post as International Executive Vice President of the US Amalgamated Transit Union on 1 September and was succeeded by John W. Rowland. Raymond C. Wallace was made International Secretary-Treasurer from the same date.

Hans Schmölz, national secretary of the Austrian Railwaymen's Union, has been elected to the Austrian Federal Council (Bundesrat).

Don N. Secord, fourth national president of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers, retired at the Brotherhood's recent Montreal convention. Brother Secord started work for the CBRT&GW in 1947, became National Secretary-Treasurer in 1952 and rose to the peak of his union career when he was elected to the presidency in 1970. Don Secord is a well known and much respected figure in ITF circles. In addition to being a member of our Executive Board, he is his country's representative on the Seafarers' Section Committee and a member of the Fair Practices Committee of the Special Seafarers' Section. Brother Secord is succeeded by Don Nicholson, who is a Section Committee member of the ITF Road Transport Workers' Section.

We deeply regret to announce the untimely death of Patricia Gill Sneddon, daughter of William Gill Jr., who is International President of the US Flight Engineers' International Association.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Cabin Attendants' Technical Committee | - | London, 22-23 November 1976 |
| Inland Navigation Section | - | Vienna, 23-24 November 1976 |
| Travel Bureau Section | - | London, 9-10 December 1976 |
| Dockers' Section Conference | - | London, 17-18 February 1977 |

AFFILIATED UNIONS REQUIRING
FURTHER INFORMATION ON ANY ITEM
IN THIS NEWSLETTER MAY OBTAIN IT
ON REQUEST FROM THE SECRETARIAT
OF THE ITF

SEAFARERS WIN IMPORTANT GAINS AT 62nd (MARITIME) SESSION OF ILO
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE

One of the most successful Maritime Sessions of the International Labour Conference ever to be held from the seafarers' point of view took place recently in Geneva (13 to 29 October 1976). The Conference was held under the Presidency of Mr. Modolv Hareide, Norwegian Director-General of Shipping and Navigation, with the following acting as the main officers of the Seafarers' Side: Seafarers' Vice-President of the Conference: Earl Shepard (USA); Chairman of the Seafarers' Group: Knud Mols Sørensen (Denmark); Chairman of the ITF Seafarers' Section); and Seafarers' Group Secretary Ake Selander (Secretary of the ITF Seafarers' Section).

The Conference adopted -- in all cases by large majorities -- Conventions and Recommendations dealing with the technical agenda items: Continuity of Employment; Sub-standard ships, particularly those registered under flags of convenience; the Protection of Young Seafarers; and Holidays with Pay for Seafarers, together with a large number of resolutions on subjects of vital interest to the world's seafarers.

The main results of the Conference can be summarized as follows:

Sub-standard vessels, particularly those registered under flags of convenience

On this, the Conference adopted (by 164 votes to nil, with 67 abstentions) the Convention on Minimum Standards in Merchant Ships, which was described by the Conference President as a "significant breakthrough" in the effective control of sub-standard vessels, particularly those registered under flags of convenience.

The Convention provides for control procedures in respect of sub-standard vessels, to be implemented by the flag-State or port-State. Inspection of such ships calling at a port may be carried out following a complaint, or as the result of evidence that conditions on board do not conform with the standards set by the Convention. In the context of the Convention, such a complaint may come from a member of the crew, a professional body, an association, a trade union, or, generally, any person with an interest in the safety of the ship, including an interest in safety or health hazards to its crew.

Shipboard conditions should be substantially equivalent to those laid down in a number of ILO instruments relating to seafarers, which are listed in an appendix to the new Convention, and which cover, inter alia: prevention of accidents;

accommodation; food and catering; officers' competency certificates; seamen's articles of agreement; freedom of association and the right to organize and bargain collectively.

Any action taken by the port authority to correct sub-standard conditions has to be notified to the flag-State. The Convention also provides that ratifying countries may advise their nationals of the existence of possible problems if they sign on ships registered in a non-ratifying country, until such time as it is clear that internationally-accepted standards are being applied.

The Convention is complemented by a Recommendation concerning the Improvement of Standards in Merchant Ships, which sets out guidelines to governments for the achievement of more extensive shipboard standards, as well as by a resolution which urges the speedy ratification of the Convention and implementation of the Recommendation's guidelines.

Continuity of Employment

On this subject -- one which is of particular significance in the current situation of widespread recession and unemployment in shipping -- the Conference again adopted both a far-reaching Convention and a Recommendation which establishes guidance for maritime countries.

The Convention prescribes that in each ILO member-State which has a maritime industry it shall be national policy "to encourage all concerned to provide continuous or regular employment for qualified seafarers, in so far as this is practicable". It further states that "every effort" shall be made for seafarers to be assured minimum periods of employment, or either a minimum income or a monetary allowance, in a manner and to an extent depending on the economic and social situation of the country concerned.

Measures envisaged to achieve the objectives of the Convention include: contracts or agreements for continuous or regular employment; and the establishment and maintenance of registers or lists of qualified seafarers. In cases where no work is available, seafarers should receive payments through unemployment insurance or other forms of social security, or by way of severance or separation benefits, or through a combination of such payments where this is provided for by law, regulation or collective agreement. Provision should also be made, where necessary, for retraining for other employment.

The Convention was adopted by the Conference with 213 votes for, 4 against, and 10 abstentions.

Holidays with pay for seafarers

Here the Conference adopted a new Convention updating ILO Convention No. 91 of 1949 (which provided for minimum annual leave of 18 working days for masters and officers and 12 working days for ratings). At last year's Preparatory Maritime Conference, the Shipowners refused to go beyond a minimum of 28 days, and they maintained this attitude at the 62nd (Maritime) Session. In Committee, however, seafarer and Government representatives voted for 30 days, and despite a last-minute attempt by the Owners to amend this figure back to 28 in Plenary, the Convention received overwhelming support (183 for; 25 against, with 18 abstentions).

The new annual minimum does not include the following: public and customary holidays; periods of incapacity for work; temporary shore leave, or compensatory leave of any kind. In calculating service for leave entitlement purposes, the following are to be counted: service on the ship before or after a voyage; absence from work for vocational training, or absence due to illness, accident or maternity. In this connection, it should be stressed that this is the first time that maternity has been included in an ILO Convention relating to seafarers.

The right to annual leave may not be relinquished and any agreement to that end is null and void under the terms of the Convention. Only in exceptional circumstances (to be determined by the competent authority) may cash payment be substituted for leave.

Protection of young seafarers

The Conference also adopted (by 223 votes to nil, with 2 abstentions) a Recommendation which provides effective standards covering the protection of seafarers under the age of 18, including the safeguarding of their health, morals and safety, and the promotion of their general welfare. Countries in which ships carrying young seafarers are registered should also provide for their vocational guidance, education and vocational training.

Normal working hours should not exceed 40 per week and eight per day, with the consistent working of overtime being avoided wherever possible. In addition, no young seafarer should work at night, and should be given a 15-minute rest period as soon as possible following each two hours of continuous work. Departures from the foregoing shall only be permitted exceptionally and all such exceptions must be recorded, with reasons, and the record signed by the Master.

If, after four months' foreign-going service, it becomes apparent that a young seafarer is not suited to life at sea, he should be given the opportunity of being repatriated, at no expense to himself, from the first suitable port of call.

In addition, after six months' service without leave in a foreign-going vessel which has not returned to the young seafarer's country of residence in that time and will not do so in the subsequent three months, the young seafarer should be entitled to repatriation -- again, at no expense to himself -- in order to take leave earned during the voyage.

Resolutions adopted

The Conference also adopted no less than fifteen resolutions, dealing inter alia with seafarers' welfare at sea and in port; revision of ILO Conventions and promotion of maritime social legislation; standards relating to seafarers; ILO regional maritime conferences; shipboard environment; medical care aboard ship; the minimum basic wage of ABs; employment of women on board ship; and workers' education for seafarers.

One of the most controversial resolutions was that dealing with discriminatory employment conditions for seafarers serving in vessels of other countries. This recommends that all seafarers with the same qualifications serving under the same flag should benefit equally from all the advantages provided by law or by collective agreements applicable to seafarers of the country under whose flag the ship is registered.

Despite a last-minute attempt by the Indian Government representative to have this resolution remitted to the Governing Body, the resolution was overwhelmingly approved (by 171 votes to nil, with 30 abstentions).

One resolution sponsored by the Seafarers' Group, namely that dealing with safety and working conditions on maritime mobile offshore rigs and supply vessels, fell victim to the guillotine procedure, but will be put forward again by the Seafarers on a future occasion.

ILO Joint Maritime Commission

At a meeting of the Joint Maritime Commission, specially convened during the 62nd (Maritime) Session, it was agreed to recommend that the international minimum wage for an AB should be fixed at \$187 or £78, whichever of these amounts may from time to time be the greater.

The Seafarers' Group at the Conference also selected the members and deputy members of the new Joint Maritime Commission.

Conclusion

All in all, the 62nd (Maritime) Session proved to be an extremely successful one for seafarers, and in this connection the ITF would like to express its deep appreciation of the hard work put in by all members of the Seafarers' Group in Geneva,

and of the excellent spirit of discipline and unity displayed by them. Our particular thanks for the success of the Conference also go to all officers of the Group, including the Workers' Vice-Chairmen of the various Committees, namely Heinrich Rake (Germany; Continuity of Employment); Ron Spruhan (UK; Young Seafarers); Eric Nevin (UK; Sub-standard Vessels, particularly those registered under flags of convenience); Gene Spector (US; Holidays with Pay); and Kevin Murphy (UK; Resolutions Committee), together with their Secretaries and Whips -- all of whom did a first-class job on behalf of seafarers.

Footnote

The full texts of the new ILO instruments and the resolutions adopted at the Conference are being despatched to all affiliated seafarers' unions, together with a circular on the Conference results.

STATEMENT BY ITF EXECUTIVE BOARD

ON

I N D I A

At its meeting on 19 and 20 October the Executive Board of the ITF fully endorsed the action taken on behalf of the ITF to seek fair and proper treatment of George Fernandes, former President of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF) who was arrested in Calcutta on 10 June 1976 and was first brought to court on 4 October.

The Board has carefully considered the views of a number of its Indian affiliates on the ITF's actions and wishes to make it clear that throughout its dealings with the Indian authorities the ITF has sought to comply with the letter and spirit of its Constitution which enjoins the ITF to uphold trade union rights and civil liberties. The ITF has a long and honourable tradition of unwavering support for the Indian transport workers' unions and has consistently stood firm against colonialism in all its forms. It is therefore invulnerable to any thoughtless charge that the ITF's position with regard to George Fernandes is somehow "anti-Indian", whatever that may mean.

Nor does it accept that its actions are an "interference" in a purely domestic affair. The Indian government recognizes

no such reservation when it expresses itself on the internal situation of a country such as South Africa, arguing quite properly that fundamental issues of human rights transcend national boundaries. The ITF's involvement in the case of George Fernandes is based precisely on the same considerations.

The Board has noted that he is now before a court. It has asked the General Secretary to watch the situation closely and to do all he can to ensure that George Fernandes is guaranteed a completely fair hearing and given every opportunity to conduct his defence as he and his legal advisers think fit.