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Third report on the activities of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport

Report

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The Inland Waterways Committee, whose main task is to implement Resolutions Nos. 4 and 6 (Inland Waterways) of the Council of Ministers, concerning the co-ordination of national and international freights on inland waterways; it met 7 times;

An ad hoc group to study the question of weights and dimensions of road vehicles : this met twice.

Between sessions, the work of the Committee of Deputies was regularly prepared and followed up by its officers, who also held several meetings in the course of the year with the OEEC Council Group responsible for liaison with the E. C. M. T.

2. The Restricted Groups mentioned in previous reports have for the most part continued to function. Some details of their activities will be

drafting of a reply, which was discussed by the Assembly on 23rd October in the presence of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of E. C. M. T. At the conclusion of its discussions, the Consultative Assembly adopted Resolution 100 (1956), wherein :

It emphasises the importance of " establishing rational investment programmes and European co-operation in this field";

" Requests the E. C. M. T. to examine the question of the financing of highway construction ";

With regard to the co-ordination of freight rates, " while it appreciates what has been done so far, would like

ordinate inland waterway freight rates, urging that any new administrative measures which were not clearly justified should be avoided. He also asked the E. C. M. T. to adopt a sympathetic attitude to transport " on own account ".

- g. The representative of the International Federation of Forwarding Associations (F. I. A. T. A.), at the Session of the Council of Ministers, endorsed the I. C. C.'s view on the need to maintain the 1949 Convention on road traffic, and to extend its field of application. He also urged that carriers should be guaranteed tariffs which would cover their costs.
- h. The International Transport Committee of the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions of Transport Workers referred, in a letter of 16th July 1956, to passages in the ECMT. Report concerning collaboration with international non-governmental organisations and to the Decision taken by the Council of Ministers of Transport at its meeting on 22nd March to associate them

4.1. Financial situation of the railways

10. As mentioned in the previous Report (paragraph 8, section 2), priority was given to this matter because of its grave impact both on the finances of certain countries and on the steps to be taken, at national level, to solve the problem of the co-existence of the different types of transport.

11. To provide a basis of discussion, the I. R. U. made a study, at the E. C. M. T.'s request, of the financial situation of the railways; this reviewed and made a critical analysis of the actual position and put forward a number of suggestions. Following its transmission to the E. C. M. T. in January 1956, the Committee of Deputies held a general discussion on this study with all the international organisations working with the E. C. M. T., and then examined it in more detail with the parties most

17. With regard to traffic on waterways west of the Rhine, it seems necessary for the control of connections within each State to be maintained either directly by the States, or through the water transport companies. With regard to international relations, negotiations have been opened within the E. C. M. T. with a view to concluding, as quickly as possible, an intergovernmental Convention to enable steps to be taken to co-ordinate freight rates and the conditions governing water transport in countries where these are not covered by legal provisions.

18. The Convention, which is now being prepared, will be based on the following principles :

18.1. Obligation to transact water transport business, other than transport " on own account ", on public freight exchanges (whether organised by the State or by the industry). This obligation would cover not only

24. Bearing in mind the actual position ruling at the time when the E. C. M. T. was established, which was characterised by a multiplicity of electric systems, electrification seems to be progressing on satisfactory lines, and no special action has been found necessary in this connection at international level.

25. At the request of certain countries, a few more lines have been added to the map of electrified main lines, in view of their importance in international traffic. These have been included in a new edition of the map. The network of main lines thus reproduced includes some 30,700 km, of which 51 per cent are already electrified. By the end of 1960, the percentage will have risen to 65 per cent, according to the programmes established.

26. In its Resolution No. 7 (General Problems), the Council of Ministers of Transport drew

32. The work of the Germany-Netherlands Restricted Group is not confined to the E 36 Arnhem—Oberhausen motor highway, but also includes other main European highways : E 39 Heerlen—Aachen; E 3 Eindhoven— Venlo—Oberhausen; E 8 Oldenzaal—Osna-bruck; E 72 Oldenzaal—Lingen; and E 35 Groningen—Oldenburg. With regard to Highway E 36 Arnhem —Oberhausen, complete agreement has been reached as to its course and its dimensions in cross section. The Netherlands Government proposes to complete the section from Arnhem to the frontier if possible by 1959-1960, and the German Federal Government will endeavour as far as possible to complete in 1961-1962 the adjacent section (Frontier—Oberhausen), which forms part of the ten-year highways improvement plan of the Federal Republic. Steps will be taken to ensure that, as sections are completed, they will be immediately connected with the present road system in the most suitable manner. With regard to Highway E

34.4. Rhine—Main—Danube link Work progressed in 1956 as far as Kitzingen and should reach Bamberg by 1961-1962. It is not yet possible to give a completion date for the next adjacent Bamberg-Nürnberg section. The flow of the Danube is regulated between Regensburg and the Austrian frontier. On Austrian territory below Passau, the Danube is to be graded Class IV (suitable for vessels up to 1,350 tons) like the Regens-burg-Passau section.

35. With regard to the canalisation of the Moselle, which is one of the projects taken up by the Council of Ministers of Transport, it will be remembered that an agreement was signed in that connection on 27th October 1956 by the German, French and Luxemburg Governments.

Governments of the member countries ", and by drawing the attention of the E. C. M. T. " to the favourable effect which the harmonisation of legislation and regulations governing highways, finance and property would have in this respect, by facilitating the conclusion of any agreement to this end ".

40. The O. E. E. C.'s reply thus confirms the conclusions of the Report by the Sub-Committee on Road Transport which was approved by Resolution No. 7 (Road Transport Problems) of the Council of Ministers of Transport, to the effect that countries concerned in a project should set up restricted groups to enquire into all aspects of the project and find the most suitable means of financing it. As has been indicated above (paragraphs 30-33), three restricted groups of this kind have already been formed, and the ECMT countries interested in other projects have been invited to set up other groups of this kind.

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multilateral system within which the proposed Customs Union and such member countries would be associated ", the Council of Ministers of the O. E. C. C. decided to establish " a special Working Party which shall study the possible forms and methods of association, on a multilateral basis, between the proposed Customs Union and member countries not taking part therein. As a possible method of association, the Special Working Party shall take into account the creation of a free trade area which would include the Customs Union and such member countries ". This Working Party submitted a preliminary report in January 1957, which is to be considered in February by the Council of Ministers of the O. E. E. C. The institution of a free trade area, including both the Customs Union proposed by the countries represented on the Brussels Committee of Governmental Delegates and the other member countries of the O. E. E. C, would probably have repercussions on the transport economy of most of the countries represented on the E. C. M. T. The E. C. M. T. therefore proposes to keep in touch with the progress made by the O. E. E. C. on this question and with any further developments in this scheme.