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INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRANSPORT:  
 DEVELOPMENT AND PROBLEMS UNDER REVIEW

Note by the Secretary-General

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Transport and Communications Commission has, from its second session onwards, reviewed at each session developments in the field of international road transport and advised the Economic and Social Council concerning problems in the field which may require international action. It was as a result of this activity by the Commission that the Council convened the Conference on Road and Motor Transport which was held in Geneva in August-September 1949. This Conference opened for signature the Convention on Road Traffic superseding the 1926 Conventions on Road Traffic and on Motor Traffic. It also opened for signature the Protocol on Road Signs and Signals which revised the 1931 Convention on Road Signals, but at the same time recommended in its Final Act that the United Nations, through the instrumentality of the Economic and Social Council and the Transport and Communications Commission, continue its efforts to secure world-wide agreement concerning a uniform system of road signs and signals. The Conference recommended also that the Commission review periodically developments in the field of road transport and on the basis of these reviews advise the Council on what further international action is desirable whether by Conference or otherwise. The Council endorsed these recommendations at its tenth session, February-March 1950, in resolution 272(X). The present paper, containing information with respect to a number of problems in the field of international road transport, has been prepared in order to assist the Commission in making the desired review.

Before taking up the problems which constitute the main subject of the paper certain developments growing mainly out of the Conference on Road and Motor Transport should be mentioned.

### Certain Developments Since the Fourth Session of the Commission

#### Ratification of the Convention on Road Traffic

Developments with respect to the ratification of the Convention on Road Traffic are reported in document E/CN.2/108 prepared for the fifth session of the Transport and Communications Commission.

Uniform System of Road Signs and Signals. As a result of the recommendation on this subject in the Final Act of the Conference on Road and Motor Transport referred to above, a Group of Experts on Road Signs and Signals was appointed by the Secretary-General in consultation with the Chairman of the Transport and Communications Commission, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 272(X) and resolution 10 adopted by the Transport and Communications Commission  
/at its

at its fourth session. The Group of Experts held its first session from 20 November to 20 December, 1950 and submitted a progress report to the fifth session of the Transport and Communications Commission (E/CN.2/94 and E/CN.2/CONF.1/3; see also E/CN.2/CONF.1/1 entitled Uniform System of Road Signs and Signals prepared for the Group of Experts) in conjunction with item 3 of the Commission's provisional agenda.

Agreements Concluded Under the Auspices of the ECE Supplementing the Convention on Road Traffic and the Protocol on Road Signs and Signals. Subsequent to the Conference on Road and Motor Transport the Sub-Committee on Road Transport of the ECE Inland Transport Committee prepared three agreements supplementing on a European regional basis the main instruments concluded at the Conference. These supplementary agreements are:

1. European Agreement Supplementing the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic and the 1949 Protocol on Road Signs and Signals, signed at Geneva on 16 September 1950. (Document E/ECE/TRANS/228; E/ECE/TRANS/SC.1/90.)
2. European Agreement on the Application of Article 23 of the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic Concerning the Dimensions and Weights of Vehicles Permitted to Travel on Certain Roads of the Contracting Parties, signed at Geneva on 16 September 1950. (Document E/ECE/TRANS/229; E/ECE/TRANS/SC.1/91.)
3. European Agreement on the Application of Article 3 of Annex 7 of the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic Concerning the Dimensions and Weights of Vehicles Permitted to Travel on Certain Roads of the Contracting Parties, signed at Geneva on 16 September 1950. (Document E/ECE/TRANS/230; E/ECE/TRANS/SC.1/92.)

The first two were signed by Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Yugoslavia. The third was signed by Belgium, France, and Luxembourg.

Declaration on the Construction of Main International Traffic Arteries Prepared under the Auspices of the ECE. This Declaration was also prepared by the Sub-Committee on Road Transport. It contains a list, with numbers, of roads comprising an international network and indicates the conditions to which they shall conform. It was signed on 16 September 1950 by Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

Problems Under Review by the Transport and Communications Commission

The Transport and Communications Commission at its third and fourth sessions had before it information concerning the following problems relating to

/international

international road transport:

- (1) customs formalities
- (2) civil liability and compulsory insurance
- (3) fiscal charges
- (4) freedom of movement of international road transport
- (5) road transport contract.

The present paper contains further information on problems (2) to (5). The question of customs formalities is the subject of a separate document, i.e. E/CN.2/114.

The Commission at its fourth session suggested that the Secretary-General in his next report on the subject of international road transport include also information on the following subjects:

- (a) Driver-licensing regulations and practices;
- (b) Right and left traffic rules;
- (c) Motor car headlamp requirements;
- (d) Road development in under-developed areas;
- (e) Transport of dangerous goods.

The present paper contains information on (b) and (d), while information with respect to (c) will be the subject of an addendum to document E/CN.2/95. Meanwhile (a) driver-licensing regulations and practices, and (e) transport of dangerous goods are the subjects of separate documents, E/CN.2/96, and E/CN.2/97 respectively.

One additional problem in the field of international road transport will also be the subject of a separate document for the fifth session of the Commission, namely road traffic accident statistics - document E/CN.2/113; E/CN.3/118.

The attention of the Transport and Communications Commission is drawn to the fact that the Secretariat of the World Touring and Automobile Organization (OTA)<sup>1/</sup> has provided information with respect to a number of the problems under review as indicated in the relevant sections of this paper.

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<sup>1/</sup> Composed of the International Automobile Federation (FIA) and the International Touring Alliance (AIT).

## II. CIVIL LIABILITY AND COMPULSORY INSURANCE

### Introduction

In documents E/CN.2/54 and E/CN.2/76 prepared for its third and fourth sessions the Transport and Communications Commission was informed of the international consideration which had been given to the problems of civil liability and compulsory insurance, before the War by the League of Nations and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (Rome), and since the War by the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and by the Third Inter-American Travel Congress. In the Present report developments during 1950 are summarized and the requirements of countries with respect to compulsory insurance in the various parts of the world are tabulated (Annex 1).

### Developments in 1950

The international scheme approved by the ECE Sub-Committee on Road Transport for insurance of motorists<sup>1/</sup> which was discussed in documents E/CN.2/54 and E/CN.2/76, has not yet gone into effect. The scheme had been submitted to the member governments of ECE for their views as to its application. In the light of their comments<sup>2/</sup> and in particular that of Switzerland which put forward a new proposal to grant liberal recognition to insurance policies issued outside the country visited, the Sub-Committee on Road Transport at its sixth session in September 1950<sup>3/</sup> decided to refer the matter back to the Working Party on Legal Questions for consideration at a special session so that the system may be put into effect before the next tourist season.

Meanwhile the international unification of legislation concerning civil liability has been left aside for the present in view of the great difference between national systems of liability in Europe.<sup>4/</sup>

### Requirements of Various Countries With Respect to Compulsory Insurance for Motorist Against Third Party Risks

Annex 1 contains a table prepared by the World Touring and Automobile Organization (OTA), showing the situation in the various countries of the world with respect to the requirement of compulsory insurance for motorists.

<sup>1/</sup> E/ECE/TRANS/145. Restricted.

<sup>2/</sup> ECE document TRANS/WP.9/15 and Adds. 1 and 2. Restricted.

<sup>3/</sup> E/ECE/TRANS/SC.1/97; E/ECE/TRANS/233, E/ECE/TRANS/SC.1/96. Restricted.

<sup>4/</sup> E/ECE/TRANS/SC.1/64; E/ECE/TRANS/WP.9/10. Restricted.

### III. FISCAL CHARGES

#### Introduction

The Transport and Communications Commission was informed at its third and fourth sessions of the pre- and post-war international activity which has taken place with respect to fiscal charges on international road transport (documents E/CN.2/54 and E/CN.2/76). The present report contains some further information concerning such charges and international action relating to them.

While international road transport may be subject to many forms of taxes and charges, only those which are specifically imposed on road transport as such are of concern here, and more particularly the direct fiscal charges which are levied - usually as a license or registration fee - on the use or possession of motor vehicles.

It should be noted that this is a distinct problem from that of customs duties on the temporary importation of vehicles which in the case of private vehicles, is covered by Article 3 of the Convention of Road Traffic.

As was brought out in the earlier reports to the Commission the question of fiscal charges really has two separate parts, relating respectively to private, and to commercial motor vehicles.

#### Taxation of Private Motor Vehicles

Annex II contains a memorandum prepared by the Secretariat of the OTA showing the present situation with respect to the taxation of private motor vehicles in a large number of countries. It will be seen from this memorandum that there is widespread exemption of foreign motor vehicles from taxation for periods of varying duration. The arrangements under which such exemptions are made differ considerably.

The OTA memorandum indicates that sixteen countries and twelve territories do not levy any direct fiscal charges upon motor vehicles. Revenue is derived by means of indirect fiscal charges, such as petrol tax, which is paid - with two exceptions - equally by residents and foreign visitors.

As was reported in document E/CN.2/54 a Convention on the Taxation of Foreign Motor Vehicles was concluded in 1931 and came into force in 1933. Although generally ratified in Europe and by a few other countries and applied also in a number of non-European territories, its provisions were considered too stringent and more liberal systems were gradually introduced by most parties to the

/Convention,

Convention, inter alia by extending the period of 90 days or abolishing the requirement of an International Fiscal Certificate. Several countries, in addition to the parties to this Convention, exempt foreign motor vehicles from taxation, sometimes on a basis of reciprocity.

A great variety of exemptions has developed. In 16 countries and six territories exemptions exist for all foreign motor vehicles for periods ranging from 30 days to one year and, in the case of Belgium, even for an unlimited period. In other countries, exemptions are granted for periods from 30 days up to 12 months to motor vehicles from certain foreign countries, frequently on the basis of reciprocity, while a few countries grant no exemptions at all. For further details see Annex 2.

The question arises as to whether action may not be desirable with a view to promoting a more uniform world-wide system of tax exemption for private motor vehicles circulating temporarily abroad, for example by revising the 1931 Convention on the Taxation of Foreign Motor Vehicles.

#### Taxation of Commercial Motor Vehicles

The question of the taxation of international commercial road transport would appear to require a regional approach, as the circulation of such vehicles is for all practical purposes limited to a region and in many cases to their own and immediately neighbouring countries.

Europe. As previously reported (document E/CN.2/54) the question had been considered by the ECE Sub-Committee on Road Transport during its third session in May 1949 on the basis of documentation prepared by the International Road Transport Union,<sup>1/</sup> which indicated that most European countries levied direct fiscal charges and that there were great divergences in the system applied and considerable complexity in the methods of assessment. The question was brought up again at the sixth session of the Sub-Committee on Road Transport, which met in September 1950. The Sub-Committee then noted that there were two ways of abolishing fiscal charges on international commercial road transport; that is by bilateral agreements or by general agreement. Several governments had expressed their willingness to conclude such bilateral agreements or had already done so. The Sub-Committee recommended that such action be continued until a general agreement could be concluded and it decided to include this question in the agenda for its next session.<sup>2/</sup>

1/ ECE document TRANS/SC.1/4. Restricted.

2/ Document E/ECE/TRANS/SC.1/97. Restricted.



The Americas. The question of fiscal charges arises mainly in connexion with commercial road transport between Canada and the United States. Many States of the United States exempt foreign motor vehicles from paying registration fees on a basis of reciprocity. Canadian commercial motor vehicles can therefore circulate temporarily in the U.S.A. without paying registration fees and this seems to be true in practice even in cases where Canadian provinces do not grant a similar exemption to U.S. trucks and buses circulating temporarily in Canada. However, as indicated in Section IV below the amount of international truck traffic between Canada and the United States is not great although bus traffic is considerable.

As also indicated in Section IV of this paper there is little international commercial road transport between the United States and Mexico. The same is true with respect to traffic between Latin American countries. Development of the Pan American Highway may, however, give new impetus to the development of international road transport and importance to the question of fiscal charges.

Other Regions. With regard to other regions the available information concerning fiscal charges is very scanty. In the preparatory documentation for the Central and Southern Africa Transport Conference, which was held from 25 October to 14 November 1950 in Johannesburg, the question was raised of the fiscal regime to be applied to international highways with respect to the circulation of vehicles. The Conference however took no action on this point.

#### IV. FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL ROAD TRANSPORT

##### Introduction

In this field the principal international activity has continued to be on a regional basis in Europe as was the case when documents E/CN.2/54 and E/CN.2/76 were prepared. The present paper reviews the developments in Europe during the past year and also contains some information concerning the situation in North America.

##### Europe

The previous report (document E/CN.2/76) summarized the recommendations contained in a report by a team of specialists appointed by the Sub-Committee on Road Transport of the ECE entitled "Development and Improvement of Transport of Passengers and Goods by Road in Europe".<sup>1/</sup> The Sub-Committee on Road Transport considered the report during its fifth session, held in March 1950,<sup>2/</sup> and was unable to accept the proposal of the team of specialists for the establishment of an International Road Transport Board with executive authority over international road transport. The Sub-Committee decided to set up an Ad Hoc Working Party on the Development and Improvement of Transport of Passengers and Goods by Road<sup>3/</sup> with the task inter alia of preparing proposals for "a rational regime for road transport in Europe which would be as flexible and simple as desirable, leaving ample room for healthy competition and taking into consideration the general co-ordination of the various means of transport."

Meanwhile the short-term Agreements on the Lifting of Restrictions on the Freedom of the Road, which were concluded under the auspices of the ECE Inland Transport Committee in 1947 and which have been renewed from year to year; have now been extended for an indefinite period by agreement in the Sub-Committee on Road Transport, with the understanding that each government maintains the right to withdraw at the end of each year.<sup>4/</sup>

The same countries which were listed in document E/CN.2/76 and E/CN.2/76/Add.2 were as of 16 November 1950<sup>5/</sup> still parties to the agreements with the following modifications:

- 1/ ECE document TRANS/SC.1/22.
- 2/ E/ECE/TRANS/SC.1/78.
- 3/ E/ECE/TRANS/209.
- 4/ E/ECE/TRANS/SC.1/ Restricted.
- 5/ E/ECE/TRANS/SC.1/98. Restricted.

/Agreement concerning

Agreement concerning international tourist traffic by road

Czechoslovakia and France have indicated that they apply this only with regard to tours beginning and intended to end in the same country.

Agreement concerning the most liberal application of the authorization systems for all international passenger transport by road and in particular for international tourist traffic services not falling under the previous agreement

Czechoslovakia and Denmark are also parties.

The Americas

In North America no international arrangements exist for authorizing truck or bus services between the United States on the one hand and Canada and Mexico on the other hand. Authorization has to be secured by each carrier from the appropriate bodies in the territories where a service will be operated. In the United States the Interstate Commerce Commission is entrusted with the task of granting permission for operating international services, while in Canada this comes within the purview of the ten provincial governments. It should be noted, however, that international goods traffic by road between Canada and the United States is very limited despite the fact that such traffic is highly developed within both countries. Motor transport operators complain that difficulties in securing authorization and cumbersome customs formalities have hampered the development of international traffic. Traffic by bus, however, is more developed between the two countries, which may be indicated by the fact that in 1946 36 per cent of the Canadians, returning from the United States to Canada by public means of transport, travelled by bus. However this traffic was partly effected by means of interchange arrangements between Canadian and United States operators at border points and partly by international through services.

As far as international services between the United States and Mexico are concerned it seems that the existing regulations make through services generally impracticable. According to available information a few Mexican trucks cross the border but no United States services enter Mexico. All bus traffic between Mexico and the U.S.A. seems to be effected by means of interchange of passengers at border points.

International commercial road transport is not very developed between the Latin American countries, where no international action has yet been taken to simplify regulations which may hinder the development of such transport. The agenda of the Third Inter-American Travel Congress, held in San Carlos de Bariloche,

/Argentina, in

Argentina, in 1949 contained an item entitled "The use of the bus in international travel routes". While international bus travel was discussed in some papers before the Congress, no resolutions were adopted on the subject by the Congress.

The development of the Pan American Highway may stimulate the development of international road transport services and the international agreement or agreements which may be necessary to the development of such services. In this connexion it may be noted that the Pan American Commercial Conference convened by the Argentine Government at the request of the Seventh International Conference of American States, and which met at Buenos Aires in May-June 1935, adopted a recommendation (XII) on Inter-American Roads and the Pan American Highway in which it advocated the study of unification of legislation and regulations on transit and transport by road and preparation of a project for a Pan American Convention on transit and international transport by road.

V. ROAD TRANSPORT CONTRACT

The previous report to the Transport and Communications Commission (document E/CN.2/76) summarized the report of a joint committee composed of experts from the International Chamber of Commerce, the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law and the International Road Transport Union (IRU) on uniform rules for a transport contract for international road transport in Europe.

The report which contained a "Draft Convention Concerning the Contract for the International Transport of Goods by Road" was reviewed by the Working Party on Legal Questions of the ECE during its third and fourth sessions, held in Geneva in January and April, 1950.<sup>1/</sup>

The discussion was confined to the substance of the problems raised by the Draft Convention which then was referred back to the Tripartite Committee with instructions to prepare a new draft, taking into account the observations made by government representatives during these sessions.

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<sup>1/</sup> Documents E/ECE/TRANS/SC.1/64 and 79. Restricted.

## VI. RIGHT AND LEFT TRAFFIC RULE ON HIGHWAYS

The Transport and Communications Commission at its fourth session suggested that the next report to the Commission on international road transport should include information summarizing developments concerning the right or left traffic rule on highways.

### Present Situation

Annex 3 contains a table showing the situation in most countries and territories with respect to the existence of the right or left-hand traffic rule. While the right-hand rule, i.e. where vehicular traffic is required to keep to the right-hand side of the road, and in overtaking, to pass on the left of overtaken vehicles or animals, has had increasingly wider application than the left-hand rule, the latter still applies in a number of countries and territories including several countries with considerable motor traffic. Attempts to secure international uniformity have so far been unsuccessful except in the Americas where there is almost complete uniformity.

### International Efforts to Secure Unification

#### A. Meeting and Overtaking

League of Nations. The Advisory and Technical Committee for Communications and Transit of the League of Nations considered, particularly with respect to Europe, the problem of Unifying the rule of the road and urged such unification in resolutions in 1927 and again in 1937, in the interests of promoting safety on roads.

Economic Commission for Europe. When the problem of the uniform direction of traffic in Europe was taken up again by the Inland Transport Committee of the ECE in 1948-1949, the situation had altered as several European countries which before the War had had the left-hand rule had changed meanwhile to the right. Iceland, Ireland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom retained the left-hand rule.

The Sub-Committee on Road Transport of the Inland Transport Committee at its second session in January 1949 adopted the following resolution:

"The Sub-Committee considers it desirable, in the interests of road safety, that the direction of traffic should be the same in all countries. It recognized, however, that financial and economic circumstances are likely to preclude, for many years, any change of the direction of traffic in the minority of countries whose rule is to drive on the left. Nevertheless, the

/Sub-Committee

Sub-Committee would request those Governments to keep in mind the desirability of such a change."<sup>1/</sup>

The Americas. A high degree of uniformity has been developed in the Americas where the right-hand traffic rule is generally accepted, the only exceptions being in the British territories in Central and South America - the most important of which are Jamaica and Bermuda. The present uniformity in the Americas is a recent development, dating from 1945 when Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay changed over to the right-hand rule, following two years after Panama. The 1930 Pan American Convention on the Regulation of Automotive Traffic contained a provision requiring countries with the left-hand rule to change over to the right-hand rule. The 1943 Convention on the Regulation of Inter-American Automotive Traffic which superseded the 1930 Convention, however, contained no traffic rules.

1949 Conference on Road and Motor Traffic. The United Nations Conference on Road and Motor Transport, held at Geneva in 1949, did not discuss directly the problem of right and left hand traffic. The provisions relative to the direction of traffic in the Convention on Road Traffic, which was opened by the Conference for signature at Geneva on 19 September 1949, are contained in Chapter II, Rules of the Road, Articles 9, 11, and 12.4. These provisions are so worded as to apply where either the left-hand or the right-hand rule is in force.

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<sup>1/</sup> E/ECE/TRANS/143, E/ECE/TRANS/SC.1/32, Restricted, and E/ECE/TRANS/SC.1/40, Part II, Restricted - paragraph 21.

## VII. ROAD DEVELOPMENT IN UNDER-DEVELOPED AREAS

The Commission at its fourth session suggested that information on road development in under-developed areas should be included in the Secretary-General's next report on the subject of international road transport.

Road development involves the following activities: planning, construction, maintenance, administration and provision of operational facilities. It will not be possible within the limits of the present paper to examine road development programmes of individual countries but only to draw attention to international activity with respect to the problem of road development in under-developed areas. International action takes the forms mainly of co-ordinated planning of road networks, exchange of technical information and the provision of technical and financial assistance to individual countries requiring such assistance in the various aspects of road development. Although technical or financial assistance is also sometimes rendered by individual countries to other countries, the present paper is concerned more particularly with multilateral activity at the world-wide and regional levels.

### Action at the World-Wide Level

International action at the world-wide level with respect to road development in under-developed areas includes the exchange of information, and technical and financial assistance.

International Road Organizations. Two world-wide non-governmental organizations are concerned with road development, (1) the semi-official Permanent International Association of Road Congresses with its headquarters in Paris, and (2) the International Road Federation, with headquarters in London and Washington. These bodies are concerned with the development of roads in general and not specifically in under-developed areas although some attention is given to the solution of the particular problems of road construction, maintenance, and administration in such areas. The Permanent International Association of Road Congresses promotes progress in the construction, lay-out and maintenance of roads, studies of road traffic, and the development of road systems throughout the world by organizing congresses and centralizing and disseminating information. The International Road Federation collects and disseminates data and statistics of an economic nature pertaining to road transport and organizes national groups wherever possible, including economically under-developed countries with a view to

/publicizing the



publicizing the social and economic benefits to be derived from adequate road systems, and promoting improvements and development of roads and road transport throughout the world.

United Nations Technical Assistance Programme. Under resolution 200(III) adopted by the General Assembly in December 1948, the United Nations extends technical assistance to governments on their request as regards such activities as resource development, industrialization, public administration, statistics, and inland transport, by the following means: providing experts' advice, training of nationals abroad, facilitating the obtaining of technical personnel, equipment, or supplies, seminars on problems of economic development, exchange of technical information.

These activities have been placed on a continuing basis and have annual appropriations within the regular budget of the United Nations. Additional technical assistance common to the United Nations and those of the specialized agencies which participate in the programme, is provided by the Expanded Programme for Technical Assistance (Economic and Social Council resolution 222 (IX)) to which Governments have agreed to contribute the equivalent of approximately \$20,012,500. for the year 1951. (Final Act of the Technical Assistance Conference, document E/CONF.10/11.)

In 1949-1950 expert missions of varying sizes were sent to sixteen countries at their request. In two cases, Bolivia and Guatemala, road development was included among the subjects on which advice was given.

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development which is empowered to make loans to meet foreign exchange expenditures for specific projects of reconstruction or development which are urgently needed for increasing the productive resources of member countries, has granted some loans for projects which include road development. Thus Australia in 1949-50 received \$100,000,000 for the purchase of imported capital equipment needed for a 5-year development programme. Of this amount \$24,000,000 would be applied to industrial crawler tractors and earthmoving equipment. In september 1950 two loans were made to the Government of Ethiopia aggregating \$7,000,000 of which \$5,000,000 was for highway improvement as it was recognized that road transport is vital to both the internal and foreign trade of this country. The Ethiopian government will establish a highway authority and in

consultation with the International Bank, will select a suitable management consisting of experienced administrators, an important part of whose duties will be to train Ethiopian personnel. The proceeds of the loan will be used to finance the foreign exchange cost of equipment, supplies and services required for a programme planned by the highway authority.

Several countries have asked the Bank to organize special missions to make comprehensive surveys of their economies without reference to any financial operation. The first mission went to Colombia, where it worked from July to November 1949. The mission drew up a five-year development plan which includes the improvement and extension of highways. Such missions have gone also to Turkey, Guatemala, and Cuba. Their terms of reference included, inter alia, transportation.

#### Regional Activity

##### Africa

Central and Southern Africa Transport Conference. The Central and Southern Africa Transport Conference, held in October-November 1950 at Johannesburg is discussed in document E/CN.2/102 prepared for the fifth session of the Transport and Communications Commission.

The Conference agreed on a number of recommendations relating to road development.

Thus a list of existing and proposed inter-territorial roads was drawn up and recommended for acceptance by governments in order to facilitate the geographical co-ordination of the different territorial road systems and a uniform system of numbering was agreed upon.

Recommendations were made to governments on the standard construction of inter-territorial roads, in particular as regards construction standards of roads, bridges and culverts and on the desirable traffic speeds for which roads should be designed.

A uniform system of classification was recommended permitting the logical grouping of roads complying with various standards.

Finally as regards road research it was recommended that an approach should be made to the Scientific Council for Africa South of the Sahara<sup>1/</sup> to ascertain

<sup>1/</sup> Established by agreement of the Governments of Belgium, France, Portugal, Southern Rhodesia, United Kingdom, and the Union of South Africa, at the African Regional Scientific Conference held at Johannesburg in October 1949.

whether that Council would be prepared to deal with scientific, technical and economic problems of road research referred to it by various territories. If the reply should be in the negative, further examination of this question would be required.

The Americas. Highway development has been a subject of great regional interest. Four Pan American Highway Congresses have been held, the first in 1925 at Buenos Aires. The Fourth Congress was held in Mexico City in 1941. A fifth Congress will meet in Lima, Peru in October 1951. The Permanent Association of Pan American Highway Congresses has its headquarters at Buenos Aires. A Central Committee, inter alia, has the function of co-operating with national sections in each country in all matters relating to highway construction and maintenance.

Regional Co-operation has been concerned particularly with the development of the Pan American Highway to connect the capitals and highways systems of the United States, Mexico, and of the countries of central and South America, a total of over 15,500 miles (24,000 kms.). The portion of the highway from the southern border of the United States through Mexico and Central America to Panama is also known as the "Inter-American Highway".

Plans for the Pan American Highway were discussed at a number of inter-American congresses from 1924 onward and a Convention on the Pan American Highway was signed by twenty-one countries at the Conference for Consolidation of Peace, held at Buenos Aires in 1936. It has subsequently been ratified by a large number of American countries. In 1936 a permanent technical commission was created under the Convention to co-ordinate construction activities in the various countries and a financial commission was set up to study means of financing. A proposal to set up a non-profit finance organization, the Pan American Highway Finance Authority, has not been put into effect so far.

Work has been carried on by the separate countries on their sections of the Highway. Assistance has been extended by the United States Government for the construction of some sections of the Highway and development of national systems of roads. Such assistance has consisted of loans, gifts of material, and of technical aid rendered by the United States Bureau of Public Roads (formerly United States Public Road Administration).

The Pan American Highway has now been constructed except for the following three gaps which total about 400 miles (640 kms.): (1) southern Costa Rica into northern Panama, (2) from Panama to Colombia, (3) in southern Ecuador to the Peruvian border. However, the standard of construction of the different sections varies widely. Approximately 2,000 miles are impassable during the rainy season.

/Asia and the

Asia and the Far East

ECAFE. Considerable interest in road development has been shown by the two inland transport meetings held by ECAFE, i.e. (1) the Meeting of Experts on Inland Transport held in October 1949 as reported to the fourth session of the Transport and Communications Commission (E/CN.2/72 and Add.1) and (2) the Ad Hoc Committee on Inland Transport held in October 1950 which is discussed in document E/CN.2/102 on Regional Developments in the Field of Inland Transport, prepared for the fifth session of the Transport and Communications Commission.

The Ad Hoc Committee took note of recommendations and suggestions contained in a report by the Secretariat entitled "The Most Economical Methods for the Construction, Repair and Maintenance of Roads, Including Standardization and other Characteristics and Comparative Methods of National Financing", which was based largely on experience in the United States. Seven out of twenty-four resolutions adopted by the Ad Hoc Committee dealt with highway development. These dealt with highway planning, mechanical methods of construction and maintenance, highway maintenance registers, highway safety, highway finance, highway cost accounting, and highway classification. Thus it was recommended inter alia that governments prepare and maintain continuous plans of construction and development for at least five-year periods; that mechanization be increased for large-scale and concentrated works; further that a general classification of highways be adopted on a functional basis with sub-division into all-weather roads and seasonal roads.

Middle East

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. As noted in document E/CN.2/74 and E/CN.2/74/Add.1 (Developments in the Field of Inland Transport in the Middle East) for the fourth session of the Transport and Communications Commission as well as in document E/CN.2/102 (Regional Developments in the Field of Inland Transport) for the fifth session some road development was envisaged as part of the programme to be carried out in conjunction with local governments by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East established under General Assembly resolution 302(IV) of 8 December 1949. According to an interim report by the Agency entitled "Assistance to Palestine Refugees"<sup>1/</sup> the original programme had to be modified as the Agency came into being later than was hoped and the negotiations with governments

1/ A/1451.

concerning the works to be undertaken have proved to be more protracted than had been anticipated by the Mission.

On 15 September 1950 there were 193 km of road construction works in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon on which other seven thousand (7,357) refugee workers were employed. There were 2,126 refugee workers employed on all the other projects. Some road construction is also included in further projects either approved or under consideration but the non-road projects will have a larger part in the scheme.

The International Islamic Economic Organization. The Transport and Communications Committee of this Organization, held in Karachi in 1949,<sup>1/</sup> expressed the opinion that the Middle East Region is very deficient in roads and that as a first step there should be a complete exchange of information concerning road mileage, conditions of roads, strength of bridges, and traffic and regulations. The Committee, renamed the Committee on Transport, Communications and Travel Facilities, recommended in its report adopted by the second Conference of the Organization held in Teheran in October 1950<sup>2/</sup> that a

"special Conference of technical experts and administrators as also representatives of various companies and interests covering all Muslim Countries should be called at Cairo (Egypt) in April next"

to examine inter alia the feasibility of

"Drawing up a detailed plan of International Highways needed by the Islamic Countries in the region in connexion with their development and inter-connexion. Also advice to be given as regards pooling of expert knowledge and resources for research and for collection and publication of statistics and regulations."

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<sup>1/</sup> Report of the Transport, Communications and Travel Facilities Committee, 1950 of the International Islamic Economic Organization, printed and published by the Secretariat of the Organization at Karachi, Pakistan.

<sup>2/</sup> Ibid.

### VIII. CONCLUSION

As regards the question of further international action to be taken, it would seem that of the problems reviewed in this paper, that of fiscal charges for private motor vehicles may be the most suitable for early action on a world-wide level in view of the general tendency toward exemption of foreign motor vehicles from such taxes and, at the same time, of the lack of uniformity with respect to arrangements under which such exemption is granted. Such action might take the form of the revision of the 1931 Convention on the Taxation of Foreign Motor Vehicles. Commercial vehicles might conceivably be covered by the same agreement at a later date, although the international circulation of commercial vehicles seems to be for practical reasons a regional rather than a world-wide matter. For the time being at any rate, it would seem that, before considering the question on a world-wide basis, further agreement needs to be reached between countries in the same region on the question of taxation of foreign commercial vehicles.

The question of right or left traffic is certainly one of world-wide import, being closely related to the other rules of the road covered in the Convention on Road Traffic and having a strong relation to the problem of road safety. However, economic circumstances make the achievement of uniformity appear to be a long-term project.

In considering the question of action required with respect to civil liability and compulsory insurance the opinion arrived at in the ECE that the great difference between national systems of liability made attempts at international unification of legislation concerning civil liability impractical at present would seem to be even stronger on the world-wide than on the European regional level. As regards the question of compulsory third-party insurance, despite the desirability of uniformity of treatment in the various countries of the world both from the point of view of foreign drivers of motor vehicles and the possible victims of damage and injury by such drivers, it is suggested that before approaching this problem on the world-wide level, it would be desirable to see the outcome of the ECE international scheme under which Governments would recognize third-party insurance carried by foreign motorists in their own countries.

As regards the important problem of the authorization and regulation of international commercial road traffic, as this seems to be essentially a type of traffic which is limited to a single region, or to neighbouring countries in

/contiguous

contiguous regions, it would seem to require action by regions. Although only in Europe has an attempt been made until now to reach agreement on a regional basis with respect to this question, the need for agreement would appear to be of growing importance in other regions. The Commission may wish to recommend that attention be given in the various regions to this problem and that the Secretary-General be instructed to give such assistance as may be desired to the countries of such regions in holding of conferences, drafting agreements, etc. in this connexion.

With regard to the question of the road transport contract, this too, seems to be a question of immediate importance mainly on a regional level and it is suggested that for the time being the action at the world-wide level be limited to following the work of the joint committee of experts which is working on this matter in conjunction with the Working Party on Legal Questions of the ECE Sub-Committee on Road Transport.

In the case of road development actual working out of international road networks, whether in economically developed or under-developed areas is a regional problem. Assistance at the world-wide level to the development of both national and international road systems in under-developed regions, it would seem; should continue to take the form of organizing the exchange of information and of technical and financial assistance.

Thus with the exception of the problems of (1) fiscal charges for private foreign motor vehicles, and (2) the authorization and regulation of international commercial road traffic for both of which certain action was suggested above, it would seem that for the time being no international action at the world-wide level is required or would be practicable. Meanwhile developments with respect to the various problems should continue to be followed with a view to considering from time to time whether the time has arrived when some action is required.

ANNEX 1

TABLE SHOWING COMPULSORY INSURANCE OF MOTORISTS IN CERTAIN COUNTRIES  
(Prepared by the Secretariat of the World Touring and Automobile  
Organization (OTA))

Country	Compulsory for residents	Compulsory for foreigners	Is it compulsory for foreigners to be insured in accordance with local legislation?
EUROPE			
Austria	yes	not yet	no
Belgium	no	no	no
Bulgaria		no	no
Czechoslovakia	yes	no	no
Denmark	yes	yes	yes
Finland	yes	yes	yes
France	no	no	no
Germany	yes	no	no
United Kingdom	yes	yes	no
Greece	no	no	no
Hungary	no	no	no
Iceland	yes	no	no
Ireland (Eire)	yes	yes	yes
Italy	no	no	no
Lichtenstein	yes	no	no
Luxembourg	yes	no	no
Monaco	no	no	no
Netherlands	no	no	no
Norway	yes	yes	yes
Poland	no	no	no
Portugal	no	no	no
Roumania	no	no	no
Spain	no	no	no
Sweden	yes	yes	yes

/Switzerland



Country	Compulsory for residents	Compulsory for foreigners	Is it compulsory for foreigners to be insured in accordance with local legislation?
Switzerland	yes	no <sup>1/</sup>	Swiss Federal Council's decree of 22 June 1948.
Turkey	no	no	
Yugoslavia	no	no	no
OTHER COUNTRIES			
Afghanistan	no	no	no
Belgian Congo	no	no	no
Brazil	no	no	no
Chile	no	no	no
Costa Rica			
Cuba	no	no	no
Egypt	no	no	no
Algeria	no	no	no
Morocco (French)	no	no	no
Tunisia	no	no	no
French Indo-China	no	no	no
French West Africa	no	no	no
Madagascar	no	no	no
Guadeloupe	no	no	no
Martinique	no	no	no
Syria	no	no	no
Lebanon	no	no	no
South Africa	yes	yes	yes
Canada	no	no	no
Ceylon	no	no	no
Guernsey	yes	yes	no
Cyprus	no	no	no
Malta	no	no	no
India	yes	yes	yes

<sup>1/</sup> Foreign motorists must either be insured and carry a certificate recognized as valid in Switzerland or contribute at each entry 3 Swiss francs to a central fund for the compensation of the injured.

Country	Compulsory for residents	Compulsory for foreigners	Is it compulsory for foreigners to be insured in accordance with local legislation?
Pakistan	yes	yes	yes
Malaya	yes	yes	yes
New Zealand	yes	yes	yes
Israel	yes	yes	yes
Indonesia	no	no	no
Iran	no	no	no
Iraq	no	no	no
Mexico	no	no	no
Panama			
Peru			
Thailand	no	no	no
Spanish Morocco	no	no	no
Tangier	no	no	no
U.S.A.	compulsory only in Massachusetts	after 30 days in Massachusetts	
Hawaii	yes	yes	yes
Philippines	no	no	no
Uruguay	no	no	no
Fiji Islands	no	no	no

ANNEX 2

EXEMPTION FROM TAXATION FOR FOREIGN PRIVATE MOTOR VEHICLES

Memorandum submitted by the World Automobile and  
Touring Organization (OTA)

General

1. Motor Vehicle taxation can be considered under two main heads:

- (a) indirect taxation
- (b) direct taxation.

In general it can be said that all countries apply some form of indirect taxation on motor vehicles and that this generally takes the form of a tax on motor fuel and other consumable commodities. The amount of tax imposed varies in each country and is often dependent on whether or not a given country imposes some form of direct taxation in addition.

Direct taxation usually takes the form of an annual licence fee which is payable for the right to use a motor vehicle on public roads. This may be supplemented by a registration fee payable when a new vehicle is placed in circulation for the first time and also on every occasion ownership changes.

2. These two forms of taxation are considered below in so far as they affect temporarily imported foreign motor vehicles. There are other forms of direct taxation, such as luxury tax or purchase tax payable on new vehicles, tyres, spare parts etc., which are not considered here. In many cases, however, these are not applicable to visitors paying temporary visits to a foreign country, provided the goods are exported within a stated period.

Indirect taxation

3. In the countries listed below there is no system of direct taxation on motor vehicles. In most cases revenue is derived from a tax on petrol, tyres etc., which must be paid by resident and visiting motorists alike:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Australia (Queensland, Tasmania, New South Wales), Czechoslovakia, Cyprus, France, Gold Coast, Guadeloupe, Guernsey, Indonesia, Iraq, Indochina, Jersey, Lebanon, Madagascar, Martinique, Mexico, French Morocco, Monaco, Portugal, Peru, Syria, Sierra Leone, Thailand, Tunisia, French West Africa, Yugoslavia.

There is no system whereby foreign motorists visiting the above mentioned countries can obtain exemption or partial exemption from the form of indirect taxation applied, except in Tunisia and the Belgo-Luxembourg Union.

/In Tunisia

In Tunisia there is a Consumption Tax of 11 per cent ad valorem on tyres, but this is only applicable to foreign motorists remaining in the country for more than 90 days.

In the Belgo-Luxembourg Union, in addition to granting road circulation tax exemption to all visiting motorists for an unlimited period (see Paragraph 6 below), the Union also grants a tax refund of B. Frs. 2.00 per litre of petrol purchased. This is granted to visiting motorists provided they spend at least three days in the Union during the period from 1 April to 30 September, and purchase at least 20 litres of petrol per day. The maximum sum refundable has been fixed at B. Frs. 600.

#### Direct taxation

5. - Exemption from the common form of direct taxation known as a "Circulation Tax" or "Road Tax" has been the subject of an agreement between a number of countries and the agreement is embodied in the Convention on the Taxation of Foreign Motor Vehicles, 1931.

This Convention has been ratified by the following countries:  
Belgium, Bulgaria, Ceylon, Cyprus, Denmark, Eire, Finland, Great Britain and Northern Ireland, British East Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika), British West Africa (Nigeria etc.), Hong Kong, Greece, Iraq, Jamaica, Italy, Luxembourg, Malaya, Malta, Netherlands, Palestine, Poland, Nyasaland, Portugal, Roumania, Sweden, Switzerland, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, Trinidad, Turkey, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Windward Islands, Yugoslavia.<sup>1/</sup>

Under the terms of this Convention, a document entitled "International Fiscal Permit" (IFP), was introduced and provision was made for private motor vehicles registered in one of the above named countries and travelling in any other of the said countries to be exempt from taxation for a period of stay not exceeding 90 days during the validity of the Permit.

Since the conclusion of the Convention, the majority of the signatory states have, by means of bilateral agreements or unilateral decision, increased the facilities they are prepared to grant foreign motorists and a large number no longer require the presentation of an IFP. A number of non-signatory states have made similar agreements and decisions; in some cases an international document (such as the International Certificate for Motor Vehicles) is required and in other cases exemption from taxation is granted solely on a system of reciprocity.

<sup>1/</sup> Also Egypt, Latvia, Newfoundland, Spain, Zanzibar.

/As a result,

As a result, it can be said that whilst the 1931 Convention remain the basis of the system of granting tax exemption for foreign motor vehicles, it has been rendered obsolete to a very great extent by other arrangements made by both signatory and non-signatory countries. There is wide divergence in the terms and conditions whereby these arrangements are applied; the principal ones are therefore summarized in paragraphs 6 and 7 below.

6. The following countries grant exemption from taxation for a stated period of temporary stay to all foreign motor vehicles. In some cases this is conditional on the visitor being in possession of an international document, such as a carnet de passages en douanes or an International Certificate for Motor Vehicles (ICMV) established by the 1926 Convention. (1931 Convention countries are marked<sup>x</sup>):

<sup>x</sup> Belgium	: unlimited (IFP not required)
Brazil	: one year
Canada	: 30 days in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia 90 days in Ontario, Quebec, Prince Edward Island 6 months in Manitoba, British Columbia, Saskatchewan.
<sup>x</sup> Ceylon	: 90 days on presentation of an IFP <u>or</u> ICMV
Egypt	: 90 days on presentation of a carnet or triptyque
<sup>x</sup> Finland	: 90 days on each entry (IFP not required)
W. Germany	: 90 days on each entry
<sup>x</sup> Greece	: total period of validity of temporary importation documents i.e. carnet or triptyque, (IFP not required).
Hungary	: 30 days per annum
<sup>x</sup> Italy	: 90 days (IFP not required)
Norway	: one year
Pakistan	: 6 months
Philippines	: 45 days
<sup>x</sup> Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika	: 90 days (IFP not required)
<sup>x</sup> Northern Rhodesia and <sup>x</sup> Southern Rhodesia	: 90 days on presentation of IFP <u>or</u> during the period of validity of an ICMV. If in possession of neither, exemption is granted during period of validity of home licence.
<sup>x</sup> Nyasaland	: 90 days (IFP not required)
South Africa	: unlimited during period of validity of ICMV
Uruguay	: 6 months
<sup>x</sup> United Kingdom	: 90 days (IFP not required)

/7. The following

ANNEX 3

THE RULE OF THE ROAD IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES  
FOR WHICH INFORMATION AVAILABLE

Countries and territories included in this Annex are sub-divided by geographic areas, as follows, based on the continental arrangement: Africa, Asia and the Far East, Central and South America, Europe, Middle East and North America. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is included for the purpose of this survey in the European region. The names of countries and territories are alphabetical according to their English spelling.

AFRICA

Countries and Territories of the Region	Traffic Rule		Countries and Territories of the Region	Traffic Rule	
	Left	Right		Left	Right
Egypt		x	Moroccan Protectorate (Span.)		x
Ethiopia		x	Morocco (Fr.)		x
Liberia		x	Mozambique		x
Union of South Africa	x		Nigeria (U.K.)	x	
Algeria (Fr.)		x	Nyasaland (U.K.)	x	
Angola (Port.)		x	Reunion (Fr.)		x
Basutoland (Brit.)	x		Rhodesia, North (U.K.)	x	
Bechuanaland	x		Rhodesia, South (U.K.)	x	
Belgian Congo		x	Sierra Leone (U.K.)	x	
British Somaliland	x		South West Africa (Union of S.A.)	x	
Eritrea		x	Spanish Guinea (Span.)		x
East Africa (Fr.)		x	Spanish Possessions in North Africa (Span.)		x
French Equatorial Africa		x	Spanish Sahara (Span.)		x
French Somaliland		x	Sudan (Anglo-Egypt. Condominium)	x	
French West Africa		x	Swaziland (U.K.)	x	
Gambia (U.K.)	x		Togoland (Trust - Fr. and U.K.)		
Gold Coast (U.K.)	x		Tunisia (Fr.)		x
Guinea (Port.)		x	Uganda (U.K.)	x	
Kenya (U.K.)	x				
Libya		x			
Madagascar (Fr.)		x			

/CENTRAL AND SOUTH

CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA

Countries and Territories of the Region	Traffic Rule		Countries and Territories of the Region	Traffic Rule	
	Left	Right		Left	Right
Argentina		x	Uruguay		x
Bolivia		x	Venezuela		x
Brazil		x	Bahama Islands (U.K.)	x	
Chile		x	Barbados (U.K.)	x	
Colombia		x	British Honduras (U.K.)	x	
Costa Rica		x	Falkland Islands (U.K.)	x	
Cuba		x	Guadeloupe (Fr.)		x
Dominican Republic		x	Guiana (Fr.)		x
Ecuador		x	Guiana (U.K.)	x	
El Salvador		x	Jamaica (U.K.)	x	
Guatemala		x	Leeward Islands (U.K.)	x	
Haiti		x	Martinique (Fr.)		x
Honduras		x	Netherlands West Indies		x
Nicaragua		x	Puerto Rico (U.S.)		x
Panama		x	Surinam (Neth.)		x
Paraguay		x	Trinidad and Tobago (U.K.)	x	
Peru		x	Windward Islands (U.K.)	x	

EUROPE

Albania	x		Hungary		x
Andorra	x		Iceland	x	
Austria	x		Ireland	x	
Belgium	x		Italy		x
Bulgaria	x		Lichtenstein		x
Byelorussian SSR	x		Luxembourg		x
Czechoslovakia	x		Monaco		x
Denmark	x		Netherlands		x
Finland	x		Norway		x
France	x		Poland		x
Germany	x		Portugal		x
Greece	x		Roumania		x

/San Marino

Countries and Territories of the Region	Traffic Rule		Countries and Territories of the Region	Traffic Rule	
	Left	Right		Left	Right
San Marino		x	Vatican City		x
Spain		x	Yugoslavia		x
Sweden	x		Channel Islands (U.K.)	x	
Switzerland		x	Gibraltar (U.K.)		x
Trieste		x	Isle of Man (U.K.)	x	
Ukrainian SSR		x	Malta and Gozo (U.K.)		x
U.S.S.R.		x	Svalbard (Nor.)		x
United Kingdom	x				

MIDDLE EAST

Iran		x	Saudi Arabia		x
Iraq		x	Syria		x
Israel		x	Turkey		x
Jordan		x	Aden (U.K.)	x	
Lebanon		x	Cyprus (U.K.)	x	

NORTH AMERICA

Canada		x	Alaska (U.S.)		x
Mexico		x	Bermudas (U.K.)	x	
United States of America		x	Greenland (Denmark)		x

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