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UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ROAD AND MOTOR TRANSPORT

COMMITTEE II ON TECHNICAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED BY VEHICLES

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRTEENTH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 2 September 1949 at 10 a.m.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. FEIFER (Czechoslovakia)

SECRETARY: Mr. MATTER

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IN A CONVENTION ON ROAD AND MOTOR TRANSPORT
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CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT PROVISIONS FOR INSERTION IN A CONVENTION ON ROAD AND MOTOR TRANSPORT PREPARED BY THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE. (Item 4 of the Conference Agenda) (Documents E/CONF.8/3, E/CONF.8/26 and WRT/4/49) (Continued).

Annex 2 (Continued)

Mr. NAP (Netherlands), commenting on the proposals of his delegation concerning maximum dimensions and laden weights of vehicles, contained in working paper WRT/4/49, drew attention to the fact that the distribution of loads affected not only the axle, but also the pressure on the wheel. Whereas the weight of the axle-load came into play when the vehicle was crossing a bridge, the wheel pressure was exercised constantly on the surface of the road. In the opinion of his delegation, the maximum pressure exerted by any single wheel should not exceed 4 tons.

Referring to the demonstration given at the preceding meeting by the representative of the United States of America, in the course of which the different pressures exercised by loads according to their distribution had been demonstrated, he expressed agreement with the conclusion reached by the United States representative, that greater weights should be distributed over a greater number of axles. At the same time, he must also stress the importance of distributing the pressure over the road surface by the use of double tyres. The diagram attached to the working paper submitted by his delegation set out the differences in the permissible weights according to the number of wheels. If four double-tyred wheels were used, each of which could support a pressure of 3.25 tons, the maximum load could be 13 tons.

The representative of France had pointed out at the preceding meeting, in reply to the United States representative, that roads in the United States were constructed differently from those in Europe. The failures of roads in the United States were, in his (Mr. Nap's) opinion, due to the nature of the sub-soil and the method used in constructing joints; "pumping" did not occur to the same extent in Europe as it did in the United States, where it was due largely to the absence of road foundations.

Mr. BANG (Denmark), Rapporteur, considered that the Committee should decide whether, in fixing the figures for maximum weights, consideration should be given to the wheel pressure or to the pressure on the most heavily loaded axle.

Mr. NAP (Netherlands) was of the opinion that load per axle and wheel pressure should be taken into account equally.

Mr. CHARLOTEAUX (Belgium) pointed out that the load per axle and the wheel pressure differed in their effects on the road, the former causing flexion and shearing of slabs, the latter affecting the coating of the road surface. Tyres capable of withstanding heavy loads would increase the pressure on the road surface.

Mr. DAUVERGNE (France) gave the following figures for the maximum weights permitted in France:

For vehicles with 2 axles 19 tons
For vehicles with 3 axles 26 tons
For articulated vehicles or combinations of a drawing vehicle with a trailer 26 tons

The maximum permitted weight per axle was 13 tons. The maximum weight for the most heavily loaded axle varied between 3.5 and 10.5 tons according to the distance between the axles, that distance itself varying from 0.90 to 1.35 metres. Combinations of vehicles were permitted to carry up to 41 tons.

Replying to the RAPPOREUR, he added that no figure was prescribed for maximum wheel pressure.

Mr. FAIRBANK (United States) said that in his country the intensity of wheel pressure was controlled in terms of the width of the tread of the tyre. In most States, besides the limitation of the load per axle, there were limitations of weight in terms of pressure per inch-width, the highest permissible figure being approximately 800 lbs. per inch width. That limitation was intended to protect road surfaces.

Mr. BANG (Denmark), Rapporteur, fully appreciated the pertinence of the arguments advanced by the United States and Netherlands representatives, but considered that it would not be possible to include such detailed regulations in an international convention. The problem of wheel pressure had been discussed in the preparatory committees, and proposals that reference should be made to it in the Convention had been rejected. For the purposes of international traffic it was essential to establish the maximum load per axle.

Mr. CHARLOTTEAUX (Belgium) said that if the maximum permissible weight of the load per axle were greatly increased, the surface of the road as well as the slabs must be protected from the effects of excessively heavy tyres.

Mr. NAP (Netherlands) said that if the Committee were not prepared to accept the figure of 4 tons for the maximum load per wheel, the Netherlands delegation would be unable to accept a higher figure than 8 tons for load per axle.

Mr. BANG (Denmark), Rapporteur, recalled that the Committee had before it several proposals for the maximum permissible load per axle: reference was made in the Explanatory Memorandum to the ECE draft convention to figures of 13 tons and 10 tons (Document E/CONF.8/3, pages 7 - 8, footnotes (1) and (2)). The United States delegation proposed a figure of 8.2 tons, while the Scandinavian countries preferred 8 tons.

Mr. MASLOG (Philippine Republic), Mr. VELLODI (India), Mr. WICHRZYCKI (Poland), Mr. VILJOEN (Union of South Africa), and Mr. BARIM (Turkey) agreed to the figure of 8 tons.

Mr. STUMPF (Czechoslovakia) stated that his delegation shared the views expressed by the Netherlands Government in its reply of 13 April 1949 (Document TRANS/WP.7/11) to the questionnaire sent out by the Working Party on Highways of the Sub-Committee on Road Transport of the Inland Transport Committee of the Economic Commission for Europe requesting Governments to comment on the proposed lists of figures for maximum dimensions and weights

(Document E/ECE/TRANS/144 and E/CONF.8/3, pages 7 - 8, footnotes (1) and (2)). The expense involved in reconditioning roads was so great that it was impossible to keep up with the prevailing tendency of the weight of vehicles to increase, a tendency which was solely in the interests of transport enterprises. The laissez-faire policy hitherto followed had already had detrimental effects on the international road network. If carriers wished to increase the weight of their loads, they should distribute the weight over a number of axles in order that roads might be relieved of excessive pressure. He supported the proposal to adopt the figure of 8 tons as the maximum weight for the most heavily loaded axle. The figures given in footnote 1 to paragraph 8 on page 7 of Document E/CONF.8/3 were acceptable to his Government, but the figures given in footnote 2 on page 8 were not.

Mr. VEZZANI (Italy) proposed the adoption of a compromise figure of 10 tons for the most heavily loaded axle.

In discussing the effect of pressure on roads and bridges, the United States representative had stated that the effect of dynamic action was double that of static action. In his opinion that point could be met by imposing a speed limit of 20 or 30 miles per hour for heavy vehicles.

Mr. BANG (Denmark), Rapporteur, recalled that the figure fixed for the most heavily loaded axle would apply only to vehicles using main international traffic arteries.

Mr. CHARLOTEAUX (Belgium) added that only a small number of the vehicles on the road would be affected by the provisions of Annex 9.

Mr. W. G. HUNT (United Kingdom) said that his delegation could accept no other figure than that of 8.125 tons.

Mr. BUZZI-QUATRINI (Austria) considered that the figure of 8 tons was the highest possible.

Mr. LUBARSKY (Brazil) and Mr. KOMNENOVIC (Yugoslavia) expressed similar views.

Mr. DAUVERGNE (France) stated that it was impossible for France to accept the figure of 8 tons, since the French road network had during the past four years been re-conditioned to carry the maximum weights to which he had referred previously.

After a prolonged discussion in which Mr. BANG (Denmark), Rapporteur, Mr. de MERCY (Permanent International Bureau of Motor Manufacturers), Mr. DAUVERGNE (France), Mr. NAP (Netherlands), Mr. MASLOG (Philippine Republic), Mr. EGERTON (Austria) and Mr. HALL (Sweden) took part,

Mr. FAIRBANK (United States of America) drew attention to the proposed additional paragraph to Annex 2 contained in the proposals submitted by the United States delegation (Document E/CONF.8/26, page 6), which read as follows:

"The provisions of this Annex shall not apply to a Contracting State or sub-division thereof which may permit maximum dimensions or weight in excess of those specified herein."

If some such wording were included in Annex 2 the French representative's point would surely be met.

Mr. BANG (Denmark), Rapporteur, stated that that was not the appropriate moment to consider the proposed paragraph quoted by the United States representative, but believed that since the French Government would be at liberty to allow vehicles of the weights specified in its national regulations to circulate on its national network, and since, moreover, it could negotiate entry for those vehicles into neighbouring countries by means of regional agreements, the French representative should find it possible to fall in with the views of the majority.

Mr. CHARLOTTEAUX (Belgium) recalled that during the discussions on Annex 2, representatives had been unable to agree on even minor modifications. It was even more difficult to ask them to agree to such modifications to Annex 2 as would lead to enormous expenditure on the re-conditioning of national road networks. It was impossible to adopt figures which would in practice only be

applicable in the distant future, since the main purpose of Annex 9 was to ensure the acceptance of maximum dimensions and laden weights practicable in international traffic at the present time. He would, moreover, emphasise that some progress had already been attained, since a number of representatives who had given a maximum figure for weight per most heavily loaded axle of 7 tons at the preceding meeting, had now accepted the figure of 8 tons. States which wished to permit the higher figure of 10 or 13 tons need only negotiate a regional convention among themselves. In the meantime, other States should continue to effect improvements in their roads in order that the higher figures might become acceptable to them in due course. With those considerations in mind he would also be prepared to accept the figure of 8 tons.

Mr. W.G. HUNT (United Kingdom) congratulated the representative of Belgium on his clear statement. In agreeing any one figure for the various weights or dimensions, it was almost inevitable that that figure would be too high for some countries and perhaps too low for others. For that reason, the United Kingdom delegation had grave doubts as to the wisdom of including such figures in an Annex to the Convention.

Mr. NAP (Netherlands) expressed his country's readiness to negotiate a regional convention with neighbouring countries, but wished to emphasise that for the purposes of the Convention his delegation was not prepared to accept a higher figure than that of 8 tons. The difficulty might perhaps be solved by adding a paragraph to Annex 9 stating that, since the Contracting States believed that the future weight per most heavily loaded axle would be higher than that fixed in the Convention, Governments were urged to recondition roads and bridges.

Mr. BANG (Denmark), Rapporteur, said that although Committee II was not the appropriate body for the negotiation of regional agreements, the exchange of views on that subject had undoubtedly been useful. He would draw the attention of the representative of the Netherlands to the fact that the Committee had agreed that it would consider Annex 9 strictly from the point of view of

immediate requirements, without reference to the future. He appealed once more to the representative of France to accept the views of the majority.

Mr. DAUVERGNE (France) said that he was obliged by his instructions to reserve his position on that point, but would be prepared to discuss it with the head of his delegation. He would add that it was erroneous not to take into account the number of tyres on a vehicle, since a pressure of 8 tons on two wheels was considerably more dangerous than a pressure of 10 tons on four wheels.

Mr. BANG (Denmark), Rapporteur, said that with the Chairman's permission he would now consider the discussion closed. It would be resumed after the representative of France had consulted the head of his delegation.

The CHAIRMAN asked if representatives could agree that Annex 8 as redrafted in the light of the Committee's decisions should be transmitted direct to the Conference, without being again submitted to the Committee.

Mr. W.G. HUNT (United Kingdom) opposed the Chairman's proposal on the grounds that the United Kingdom amendment relating to invalid carriages had not yet been discussed by the Committee.

On the proposal of Mr. DAUVERGNE (France),

the CHAIRMAN ruled that only the United Kingdom amendment relating to invalid carriages should be discussed by the Committee, the rest of Annex 8 being considered as adopted for submission to the Conference in plenary meeting.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.