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PRESS RELEASEFive days of meetings on railway matters

These meetings which were arranged by the Commission in accordance with an EEC Council decision, in Brussels from 24 to 28 October 1966, were attended by fifty or so government and railway experts from the six Member States and by officials from EEC and ECSC institutions.

After an opening address by M. Lambert Schaus, member of the Commission, M. Paolo Rho, Director-General for Transport at the EEC Commission, presided over the work which, on the basis of five particularly important reports, permitted a number of fundamental conclusions to be drawn:

- (i) The railways ought, like any industrial enterprise, to operate on business lines and enjoy financial independence;
- (ii) Consequently they should have a certain liberty in fixing rates, but the degree of liberty remains to be decided;
- (iii) Support by the public authorities should be limited to that justified by the economic situation and regional necessities, and any support which proves to be indispensable should be compensated;
- (iv) Special importance must be attached to the settlement of the fundamental problem of apportioning infrastructure costs correctly between the forms of transport according to common criteria, while users must bear their share of the costs;
- (v) It is necessary to decide on criteria and adopt measures permitting a rational and co-ordinated choice of investments;
- (vi) Close co-operation must be established between the railways themselves and with other forms of transport and users, the main objective being to achieve the lowest possible overall cost for the community;
- (vii) Measures to be taken in accordance with the above guidelines should be adopted rapidly so that the application of the principle of competition in the Community is not jeopardized.

On Thursday 27 October M. Paolo Rho gave an address on the work of the meetings to the Committee of ITF Unions in the EEC, the European Transport Committee and the Group of Six of the International Union of Railways, which in their turn made a number of observations.