

A three-day congress of the Building Workers' Union opened in Budapest on 13th December. The 404 delegates, representing 160,000 building workers, met in the presence of Sándor Rónai, the President of the Assembly; Sándor Gaspar, Secretary-General of the Trade Union Council; Károly Trautmann, the Minister of Building; and József Prieszol, Member of the Party Central Committee.

Bruttyo's Report

János Bruttyo, General Secretary of the Union, made a report. Speaking of the housing problem, he said that in spite of the large number of dwellings built, there was a housing shortage. The country's economic situation did not make it possible to satisfy the demand for housing out of State resources alone. Despite the considerable investments made by the State, private building must also be encouraged. In the union's opinion some of the dwellings built by the State could be sold at favourable terms to workers. The money thus recovered by the State could be used for more housing.

Bruttyo spoke of the great need to train more skilled building workers. As a result of recent wage adjustments, building operatives were the fourth best paid group of workers. Their earnings had gone up by 30-53 per cent since 1954. He also underlined the importance of tightening work discipline and the need to launch a campaign against pilfering in enterprises.

Speaking of the trade unions' political activities, Bruttyo said it would be a good thing to reorganise union meetings in such a way as to enable the participants to discuss important political problems. Relations between the building workers' unions and unions in capitalist countries had greatly developed. On behalf of the union, Bruttyo thanked the sister unions for their help after the counter-revolution. (MTI 13.12.57)

Debate on Bruttyo's Report

On 14th December the Congress debated Bruttyo's report.

Károly Trautmann, the Minister of Building, said that thanks to the workers, the industry had fulfilled this year's plan commitments. His Ministry's opinion was that the building industry could "no longer remain without unified central guidance" either organisationally or from the point of view of equipment and supplies. The Ministry would therefore draw up a set of standard rules applicable to all branches of the State-owned building industry and to civil engineering. (Budapest 15.00, 14.12.57)

Oskar Jaske, a delegate from the GDR, said that on the initiative of his union DM.150,000 had been collected to aid Hungarian workers. His union would send equipment to fit out 30 day nurseries completely and tents for a camp for 200 children.

Sándor Rónai spoke of the need to reduce building costs and appealed to engineers and technicians to help solve this problem. The factory councils should help to increase production and maintain the present standard of living.

Erkki Salonen, Secretary-General of the Finnish Builders' Union, spoke of the Finnish workers' sympathy for the Hungarian workers' struggle to defend the workers' power. The Italian and Polish delegates Giorgio Guerri and Edmund Garnowski also spoke. (MTI 14.12.57)

Election of Officers

The congress ended on 15th December. A draft resolution was adopted with some minor amendments. The Congress sent a telegram of greetings to the Party Central Committee. The members of the union's executive were elected by secret ballot. Miklós Somogyi was re-elected Chairman, and János Bruttyo Secretary-General. The congress ended with a closing speech by Bruttyo, no details of which were heard here. (Budapest 16.00 and 21.00, 15.12.57)