

The Indian Industrial Commission was appointed by the Government of India in the year 1916 under the Presidentship of Sir T. H. Holland. The Commission was "instructed to examine and report upon the possibilities of further industrial development in India and to submit its recommendations with special reference to the questions (a) whether new openings for the profitable employment of Indian capital in commerce and industry can be indicated; (b) whether and, if so, in what manner, Government can usefully give direct encouragement to industrial development". The Commission surveyed the then state of industrial backwardness in India and further analysed the causes for industrial development including state of industrial education and the Government's policies towards industries. The Commission made a strong case to start the economic development of India along the path of progress by an organised system of technical, financial and administrative assistance. The Report contains the analytical note by the Hon'ble Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, Member of the Commission. This Report is one of the most important documents on the industrial progress of India and will be of eminent interest to economic historians, industrialists, businessmen, agricultural scientists, and all those interested in the economic and industrial development of India, for the valuable data it contains.

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CONTENTS OF REPORT.

INTRODUCTORY.

PARA.	PAGE.
Appointment and constitution of the Commission	xv
Monsoon tour of the President	xvi
Preparation of a list of questions	xvi-xvii
Methods of enquiry	xvii
Tour of 1916-17	xvii-xviii
Tour of 1917-18	xviii
Scope of enquiry	xviii-xix
Effect of the war on public opinion regarding industrial matters	xix-xx
Acknowledgements of assistance	xx

CHAPTER I.

RURAL INDIA, PAST AND PRESENT.

1-3. Relative industrial backwardness of India : its causes	1-2
3-4. India before railways	2-3
<i>Effect of Exports.</i>	
5. Economic changes in rural areas	2-4
6. Scarcity of capital for agriculture	4-5
7. Labour and wages in rural India	5
8. Middlemen and the export trade	5-6
<i>Effect of Imports.</i>	
9. Influence of imports on village life	6
10. Standard of comfort affected by imports	7

CHAPTER II.

SOME INDUSTRIAL CENTRES AND DISTRICTS.

11. Diversity of conditions in different parts of India.	8
12. The large agency firms	8-9
<i>Calcutta.</i>	
13. Calcutta	9-10
14. The jute industry	10
15. Labour in the jute mills	10-12
16. Share taken by Indians in the jute industry	12
17. Engineering firms and miscellaneous factories	12-13
18. Sea-borne and inland trade	13-14

CHAPTER II—*contd.*

SOME INDUSTRIAL CENTRES AND DISTRICTS—*contd.*

PARA.	<i>Bombay.</i>	PAGE.
19.	Trade and communications	14
20.	The cotton industry	15
21.	Labour in the cotton mills	15—16
22.	Other industries	16
23.	Sea trade	16—17
24.	Share taken by Indians in Bombay trade	17—18
<i>The Bengal Coal Field.</i>		
25.	The Bengal coal field	18
26.	Methods of working	18—19
27.	Labour on the coal field	19—20
28.	The Bengal Iron and Steel Company	20
29.	The Tata Iron and Steel Company	20—21
30.	Engineering works	21
<i>The Deccan Cotton Tract.</i>		
31.	The Deccan cotton tract	21—22
<i>The Jute Districts.</i>		
32.	The jute districts	22—23
<i>The Tea Districts of North-East India.</i>		
33.	Growth of the tea industry	23—24
34.	Labour on the tea gardens	24
<i>Indigo in Bihar.</i>		
35.	Indigo in Bihar	24—25
<i>The Railway and Government Workshops.</i>		
36.	The railway workshops	25—26
37.	Labour in the railway workshops	26
38.	Government workshops	26
<i>Mofussil Distributing Centres.</i>		
39.	Delhi	26—27
40.	Labour in the Delhi mills	27
<i>Mofussil Manufacturing Centres.</i>		
41.	Cawnpore	28—29
42.	Labour in Cawnpore	29

CHAPTER II—*concl.*

SOME INDUSTRIAL CENTRES AND DISTRICTS—*concl.*

Other Industrial Centres.

PARA.	PAGE
43. Other industrial centres	29—30

Burma.

44. Agricultural description	30—31
45. Forests	31
46. Organised industries	31—32
47. Small and cottage industries	32—33
48. Lack of coal	33

CHAPTER III.

RAW MATERIALS FOR INDUSTRIES.

Agricultural Products.

49. Agricultural products as a basis for industries : cotton	34
50. Sugarcane	34—35
51. Fibre crops other than cotton	35
52. Oil seeds	35—36
53-54. Hides and leather	35—37

Mineral.

55. India's mineral resources	37—38
56. Mica	38
57. Cement and pottery	39
58. Glass	39
59. Saltpetre	39

Forests.

60. The extent and value of the Government forests	39—40
61-62. Incomplete use made of forest resources	40—42
63. Necessity of a link between research and commercial exploitation	42—43
64. Failures to develop industries dependent on forest products	43—44
65-66. Success of correct methods of pioneering	44—45
67. Conclusions	45
68. Necessity of plantations	45—46

Fisheries.

69. Indian fisheries and their development	46
70. Work of Madras Fisheries Department	46—47
71. Fisheries in other provinces	47
72. Conclusions	47—48

CHAPTER IV.

INDUSTRIAL DEFICIENCIES OF INDIA.

PARA.	PAGE.
73. Incompleteness of India's industrial equipment	49
74. Causes of deficiencies	49
75. The Indian iron and steel industry	49—50
76. Imports of machinery	50—51
77. Shyness of capital for modern enterprises generally	51
78. Deficiencies in industrial system	51—52
79. Deficiencies in manufactured materials—	52—54
(a) Metals	52—53
(b) Chemicals	53—54
(c) Vegetable and animal products	54
80. Other deficiencies	54
81. Deficiencies in the production of articles	54—55
82. Dangers of deficiencies	55—56
83. Suggested remedies	56

CHAPTER V.

INDUSTRIES AND AGRICULTURE.

84. Importance of agricultural improvement	57
85. Possibilities of improved agricultural methods	57—58
86-87. Scope for machinery in Indian agriculture	58—59
88. Irrigation by mechanical methods	59—61
89. Increased yields to be obtained from sugarcane cultivation	61—62
90. Improvements in oil extraction	62
91. Effects of agricultural improvements on industries	63
92. Co-operation between Departments of Agriculture and Industries	63

CHAPTER VI.

POWER.

93. Position of India in respect of power supplies	64
94. Coal	64—65
95. Wood fuel	65—66
96. Oil and alcohol	66
97. Wind power	67
98. Water power	67—68
99. Necessity for hydrographic surveys	68—69
100. Reasons why Government should undertake this work	69—70

CHAPTER VII.

THE INDIAN IN INDUSTRIES.

101. The share taken by different classes of Indians in industrial development	71—72
102. Exceptional position in Bombay	72—73
103-104. The <i>swadeshi</i> movement	73—74

CHAPTER VIII.

PARA.	GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL POLICY IN RECENT YEARS.	PAGE.
105.	History of recent Government policy of industrial development	75—76
106.	United Provinces	76—77
107.	Madras	77—78
108-109.	Effect of Lord Morley's despatch of 1910 on industrial policy	78—80
110.	Subsequent history of Government action	80—82
111.	Industrial surveys	82

CHAPTER IX.

THE ORGANISATION OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SERVICES AND THE PROVISION FOR RESEARCH WORK IN INDIA AND ABROAD.

112.	Existing position of research work in India	83
113.	Scientific advice an essential preliminary to development	84
114.	Research on vegetable products	84—85
115.	Reasons why the carrying out of research devolves upon Government	85—86
116-117.	Existing lack of organisation in the scientific services	86—87
118.	Classification of scientific officers—	87
	(a) The science as the bond : the Geological Survey	88
	(b) Application of sciences as the bond : the Agricultural and Forest Departments	88—90
119.	Effect of systems of classification on Local Governments	90—91
120.	Arguments in favour of classification with the science as the bond	91—92
121.	Proposed organisation for an Indian Chemical Service	92—93
122.	Recruitment and terms of service	93—94
123.	How effect should be given to recommendations	94
124.	Organisation of the other scientific departments	94—95
125.	Relations of scientific officers with the Education Department	95—96
126.	Position of scientific officers serving under Local Governments	96—97

Research Work in India.

127.	Relations between research officers and industrialists	97—100
128.	Location of research institutes	100
129.	Constitution of the Indian Institute of Science	100—101
130.	Case for specialised research institutes	101—102

Research Abroad.

131-132.	Dangers of relying on research abroad	102—103
133.	Special cases in which problems may be referred abroad	103

CHAPTER X.

INDUSTRIAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

134-135.	Reasons why India did not share in industrial evolution of west	104—105
136-137.	Recent attempts to improve technical education in India	105—106

CHAPTER X—*contd.*

INDUSTRIAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION—*contd.*

Technical Scholarships Abroad.

PARA.	PAGE.
138. Institution of State technical scholarships for study abroad	108—107
139. Defects in system	107—108
140-141. Latest rules for State technical scholarships abroad	108—109

Primary Education of Industrial Classes.

142. Necessity of primary education for labouring classes	109—110
---	---------

Cottage Industries.

143. History of industrial schools	110—111
144. Recommendations of the Commission	111—112
145. Control of industrial schools	112

Organised Industries.

146. General principles affecting the training of men for organised industries	112—113
147. Classification of industries for purposes of training	113—115
148. Different classes of training required	115—116
149. Training of artisans	116—117
150. Raising the status of artisans	117
151. Training of foremen : existing arrangements	118—119
152. Training of foremen : proposals of the Commission	119—120

The Training of Mechanical Engineers.

153. Public Works Department colleges and schools	120—121
154. Defects of Indian system of training engineers	121—122
155. Necessity of providing for industrial developments	122
156-157. System recommended in England for training mechanical engineers	123—124
158. Proposals of the Commission for training mechanical engineers	124
159. Further training of mechanical engineers in special subjects	124—125

Technological Training.

160. Expansion of engineering colleges into technological institutes	125—126
161. Imperial engineering colleges foreshadowed	126
162. Scientific and technical societies	126—127

The Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute, Bombay.

163. Proposed utilisation of engineering classes to supplement workshop training	127—128
164-165. Technological courses : two years' practical course recommended	128

CHAPTER X—*concl.*

INDUSTRIAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION—*concl.*

Mining and Metallurgical Education.

PARA.	PAGE.
166. Mining education: existing position	129
(a) Sibpur Colloge courses	129
(b) Evening classes on the coal field	130
167. Recent proposals for improvement	130
168. Insufficiency of evening classes as sole means of instruction	130—131
169-171. Location of the proposed school of mines	131—133
172. The proposed Sakchi school for metallurgical training	133

Miscellaneous Educational Proposals.

173. Navigation and marine engineering	133
174-176. Commercial education	133—135
176. The provision of teachers for industrial and technical education	135—136

The Control of Technical and Industrial Education.

177. Arguments for control by Department of Education	136
178. Arguments for control by Department of Industries	136—137
179. Necessity for imperial visiting officers	137—138

CHAPTER XI.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL INTELLIGENCE.

180. Objects of a Commercial Intelligence Department	139
181. Necessity for collection of statistics by expert agency	139—140
182. Collection of statistics and information by provincial agency	140
183. Control of Department of Commercial and Industrial Intelligence	140—141
184. Special officers for Calcutta and Bombay	141
185. Method in which statistics and information should be dealt with by imperial agency	141—142
186. Statistics of production and employment	142
187. General summary of proposals	142—144
188. Crop forecasts	145
189. The Indian Trade Commissioner in London	145—146
190. Indian trade representatives abroad	146
191. The "Indian Trade Journal"	146—147

CHAPTER XII.

GOVERNMENT PURCHASE OF STORES.

192. Failure of existing rules to secure local purchase to adequate extent	148—149
193. Lack of local inspecting agency	149
194. Change required in system of purchase	149
195. Relative advantages of local and centralised systems of purchase	149—150
196. Appointment of expert committee proposed	150—151
197. Nature of future organisation	151—152
198. Importance of an efficient inspecting staff	152—153

CHAPTER XIII.

LAND ACQUISITION IN RELATION TO INDUSTRIES.

PARA.	PAGE.
199. Difficulties of industrial concerns in acquiring land	154
200. Cases where a willing transferor is prevented by law from passing a clear title	154—155
201. Proposal for compulsory declaration of rights objectionable	155
202. Acquisition by Government on behalf of an industrial concern under section 40 of Land Acquisition Act	155—156

CHAPTER XIV.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO INDUSTRIES BY GOVERNMENT.

203. Reasons for adopting in India a policy of direct assistance to industrialists	157
204. Difficulties experienced by Indian industrialists	157—159
205. Meaning of "pioneering" and "demonstration"	159—160
206. Division of industries into "cottage," "small organised" and "large organised" industries	160—161
207. Help to cottage industries	161—162
208. Help to large organised industries	162
209. Help to small organised industries	162
210. Initiation of small industrial undertakings	163
211. Maintenance of small industrial undertakings	163—164
212. Industries of national importance	164—165
213. Organisation required by Government to fulfil the above duties	165
214. Functions of Imperial Government	165—166

CHAPTER XV.

MISCELLANEOUS POINTS OF GOVERNMENT LAW AND PRACTICE AFFECTING INDUSTRIES.

The Employment of Jail Labour.

215. Lack of policy	167
216. Nature of industries which should be adopted in jails	167—168

The Prevention of Adulteration.

217. Food and drugs	168
218. Raw produce	168—169
219. Certificates of quality	169
220. Fertilisers	169

The Administration of the Boiler and Prime-mover Acts.

221. Diversity of practice in various provinces	170
222. Recommendations of the Commission	170—7

CHAPTER XV—contd.

MISCELLANEOUS POINTS OF GOVERNMENT LAW AND PRACTICE
AFFECTING INDUSTRIES—contd.

PARA.	PAGE.
<i>The Mining Rules.</i>	
223. Criticisms of existing rules	171
224. Increased staff to inspect Government concessions recommended	171—172
225. Simplification of mining leases proposed	172
226. Difficulties in acquiring mineral rights	172
227. Mining manuals might be prepared in certain provinces	173
<i>The Administration of the Electricity Act.</i>	
228. Administration of law and rules	173—174
229. Electric Inspectors should be transferred to the Department of Industries	174
<i>Patents.</i>	
230. Patents	175—176
<i>Registration of Trade Marks.</i>	
231. Registration of Trade Marks	176
<i>Registration of Partnerships.</i>	
232. Obstacles in the way of legislation	176—177
233. Recommendations of the Commission	177—178
<i>Registration of Business Names.</i>	
234. Registration of Business Names	178

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WELFARE OF FACTORY LABOUR.

235-236. Nature of problem	179—180
237. Education of factory children	180—181
238. Conditions of housing industrial labour in India	181—182
239. General proposals regarding housing of industrial labour	182
<i>Special Proposals for Bombay.</i>	
240. Necessity for special action in case of Bombay City	183
241-242. Conditions under which labour is housed in Bombay City	183—185
243. Location of the mills	185
244. The Bombay Improvement Trust	185—186
245. Suggested schemes for dealing with congestion in Bombay City	186
246-247. The case for and against compulsion to employers	187—188
248. Responsibility for the financing of industrial dwellings in Bombay	188
249-251. Recommendations regarding congestion in Bombay City	188—189

CHAPTER XVI—*contd.*

THE WELFARE OF FACTORY LABOUR—*contd.*

<i>General Measures.</i>	
PARA.	PAGE.
252. Factory hours	190
253. Improvement of public health	190—191
254. General welfare work	191—192

CHAPTER XVII.

COTTAGE INDUSTRIES.

255. Present position of cottage industries	193—194
256. Hand-loom weaving	194
257. Metal working	194
258. Sericulture and silk weaving	194—195
259. Dyeing	195
260. Suggested remedies for defects of present position	195—196
261. Training of master workmen	196—197
262. Financial assistance to cottage workers	197
263. Artistic industries	197—198
264. The provision of markets for products of cottage industries	198—199

CHAPTER XVIII.

CO-OPERATION FOR SMALL AND COTTAGE INDUSTRIES.

265-266. Present position of co-operative effort with regard to cottage industries	200—201
267-269. Suggestions regarding future policy	201—202
269. Functions of Director of Industries	202—203

CHAPTER XIX.

INDUSTRIES AND TRANSPORT.

270. Effect of railway rates on Indian industries	204
271. General course of traffic and its effect on railway policy	204—205
272. Necessity for a change in rate fixation policy	205—206
273. Other effects of individualistic railway policy on rates	206—207
274. The congestion of industrial centres	207
275. Effect of proposed policy as applied to imports	207
276. Miscellaneous difficulties of industrialists	207
277. Representation of industrial interests with Government of India	207—208
278. How far individual concessions should be given to industries	208
279. Water transport	208—209

CHAPTER XX.

INDUSTRIAL FINANCE.

PARA.	PAGE.
280. Attitude of Indian capital towards industrial undertakings	210
281-283. Capital in the mofussil	210-212
284. Capital in Presidency towns	212-213
285. The financial difficulties of the small industrialist	213
286. Summary of position	213-214
<i>Industrial Banks.</i>	
287. Industrial banks	214
288. Industrial banks in Germany and Japan	214-215
289-291. Industrial banks : their possibilities for the assistance of industries	215-217
292. Appointment of expert committee proposed	217
<i>Other Measures to provide Financial Facilities.</i>	
293. Provision of current finance for middle-class industrialists	217-219
294. Circumstances in which Government financial assistance may be given to large industrial undertakings	219-220
295. Nature of Government financial assistance to large industrial undertakings	220
296. Government supervision in such cases	220
297. Appointment of Government directors	221
298. Raising of capital for aided companies	221
299. Undertakings by companies in consideration for Government assistance	221
300. Enterprises in competition with foreign concerns	221
301-302. Special recommendations regarding Government loans to small and cottage industries	221-222

CHAPTER XXI.

PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENTS OF INDUSTRIES.

303-304. Recapitulation of previous proposals	223-224
305. Shares of Imperial and Local Governments in industrial policy	224-225
306. Work of provincial Departments of Industries	225-226
307. Relations of Department of Industries with other departments	226-227
308. Proposals for a Board of Industries	227-228
309. Composition and strength of the Board	228
310. Payment of members of the Board for attending meetings	228
311. Qualifications of Director of Industries	228-229
312. Relations of Director with Local Government	229-230
313. Salary of Director of Industries	230-231
314. Salaries and duties of other officers of the Department of Industries :	
Deputy Directors	231
315. Industrial engineers	231
316. Chemists	231
317. Circle officers	231-232
318. Intelligence work	232
319. Tabular statement of staff	232

CHAPTER XXII.

AN IMPERIAL DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIES.

PARA.	PAGE.
320-321. Degree of responsibility attaching to Imperial Government for the industrial policy of the country	233—235
322. Necessity for a Board of Industries	235
323. Relations between Member in charge and the Board	235—236
324. Functions of Imperial Department of Industries	236—238
325. Duties and qualifications of members of the Indian Industries Board	238
326. Salaries and responsibilities of the members	238—239
327. Secretary to the Board	239
328. Location of the Board]	239
329. Necessity for a Financial Adviser	239—240
330-332. Organisation for carrying out the work of the department	240—242
333. Arguments for creating an Imperial Industrial Service	242—243
334. The Imperial Industrial Service	243
335. Possible subsequent alteration in the nature of the work of the department	243—244
336. Special temporary measures required	244
337. Necessity for training Indians	244

CHAPTER XXIII.

ESTIMATE OF COSTS.

338. Scope and basis of estimate	245—246
--	---------

The Imperial Department of Industries.

339. The Member in charge	246
340. The Indian Industries Board	246—247
341. Audit and accounts	247—248

Subordinate Departments.

342. Subordinate departments	248
343. Geology and minerals	248
344. Salt	248—249
345. Commercial and Industrial Intelligence	249—250
346. Stores	250—251
347. Purchasing staff (Stores)	251—253
348. Inspecting staff (Stores)	253
349. The Testing House at Alipore	253
350. Possibilities of decentralisation	252—253
351. Incidence of cost	253
352. Industrial education	253—254
353. Electricity : hydrographic surveys	254—255
354. Ordnance factories and inspection of ordnance manufactures	255
355. Chemical research	255—256
356. Imperial factories for research and demonstration	256

CHAPTER XXIII—contd.

ESTIMATE OF COSTS—contd.

Provincial Departments of Industries.

PARA.	PAGE
357. Heads of expenditure	256—257
358. Administration and control	257—258
359-363. Technical and industrial education	258—263
364. Experiments and demonstrations	263—264
365. Professional advice and assistance to local industries	264
366. Grant of loans and the supervision and inspection of rural industries	264—265
367. Inspection of factories and steam boilers	265—266
368. Collection of commercial and industrial intelligence	266
369. Purchase of stores	266

Capital Expenditure—(A) Recommended Schemes.

370. Industrial schools	266—267
371. Technological institutes	267
372. Training of mechanical engineers	268
373. Workshops and laboratories attached to Director's offices	268

Capital Expenditure—(B) Possible Schemes.

374. Possible schemes	268—269
---------------------------------	---------

Summary of Estimates.

375. Summary of estimates	269—272
-------------------------------------	---------

CHAPTER XXIV.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	272—289
--------------------------------------	---------

CONCLUSION	290—291
----------------------	---------

NOTE BY THE HON'BLE MINISTER M. M. MALAVIYA	292—355
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INDEX TO REPORT.

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Sir DORABJI JAMSETJI TATA, Kt., J.P.

SECRETARY.

Mr. R. D. BELL, I.C.S.

JOINT SECRETARY.

Mr. G. H. W. DAVIES, I.C.S.

INTRODUCTORY.

The Indian Industrial Commission was appointed by the Government of India by order conveyed in Resolution No. 3403 (Industries), dated the 19th May 1916, in the Department of Commerce and Industry, the full text of which is reproduced as Appendix A-1. The Commission was "instructed to examine and report upon the possibilities of further industrial development in India and to submit its recommendations with special reference to the following questions :—

- " (a) whether new openings for the profitable employment of Indian capital in commerce and industry can be indicated ;
- (b) whether and, if so, in what manner, Government can usefully give direct encouragement to industrial development—
- (i) by rendering technical advice more freely available ;
 - (ii) by the demonstration of the practical possibility on a commercial scale of particular industries ;
 - (iii) by affording, directly or indirectly, financial assistance to industrial enterprises ; or
 - (iv) by any other means which are not incompatible with the existing fiscal policy of the Government of India."

In addition to the exclusion of the tariff question from the scope of the Commission's enquiries, it was also stated to be unnecessary for it to undertake the examination of those aspects of technical and industrial education which had recently been dealt with by the Atkinson-Dawson Committee, appointed in 1912 to enquire into the means of bringing technical institutions into closer touch with employers of labour in India, and by the Morison Committee which reported to the Secretary of State in 1913 on the system of State technical scholarships established by the Government of India in 1904.

The Commission was composed of the following Members :—

- (1) Sir T. H. Holland, K.C.I.E., D.Sc., F.R.S., President of the Institution of Mining Engineers. (President.)
- (2) Mr. Alfred Chatterton, C.I.E., B.Sc., F.C.G.I., A.M.I.C.E., M.I.M.E., Director of Industries and Commerce in Mysore.
- (3) The Hon'ble Sir Fazulbhoy Currimbhoy Ebrahim, Kt., Messrs. Currimbhoy Ebrahim and Company, Bombay.
- (4) Mr. Edward Hopkinson, M.A., D.Sc., M.I.C.E., M.I.M.E., M.I.E.E., Managing Director, Messrs. Mather and Platt, Ltd., Manchester, and Vice-Chairman, Chloride Electric Storage, Ltd.

- (5) The Hon'ble Mr. C. E. Low, C.I.E., I.C.S., Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Commerce and Industry.
- (6) The Hon'ble Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, B.A., LL.B., of Allahabad.
- (7) The Hon'ble Sir Rajendra Nath Mookerjee, K.C.I.E., Messrs. Martin and Company, Calcutta.
- (8) The Right Hon'ble Sir Horace Curzon Plunkett, P.C., D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.S., K.C.V.O.
- (9) The Hon'ble Sir F. H. Stewart, Kt., M.A., C.I.E., Messrs. Gladstone, Wyllie and Company, Calcutta, President, Bengal Chamber of Commerce.
- (10) Sir Dorabji Jamsetji Tata, Kt., J.P., Messrs. Tata, Sons and Company, Bombay.

Secretary.—Mr. R. D. Bell, I.C.S.

Unfortunately Sir Horace Plunkett was unable to join the Commission, owing at first to ill-health and subsequently to other duties of high national importance. Dr. Hopkinson submitted his resignation during the second season's tour, having been debarred under medical advice from coming out to India in November 1917, though during the first year we received great assistance from the advice which his range of experience both as a manufacturer and as a scientist enabled him to furnish. In October 1917, Mr. G. H. W. Davies, I.C.S., was appointed Joint Secretary, as Mr. Bell, whose services had some months previously been transferred to the Indian Munitions Board, could not be spared for the forthcoming tour, though he continued to assist the Commission by supplying information on various points and afterwards in the preparation of the report.

It was arranged that the President should come to India some months before the Commission assembled, in order to acquaint himself with the existing industrial position. He arrived in India in May 1916 and proceeded to Simla; whence, after making preliminary investigations, he started on tour at the end of June and visited Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, Madras, Bangalore, Bombay, the Central Provinces and the United Provinces, returning to Simla towards the end of September. The scattered information available was marshalled in the form of a preliminary note by the President on the scope of the Commission's enquiry, and placed before the Members at a meeting held in Calcutta in July 1916, when the methods of procedure to be adopted in the formal collection of evidence were discussed and decided. This note is printed as Appendix A-2.

At the end of September 1916 we assembled at Simla and prepared a list of questions covering, as far as possible, the scope of the Commission's enquiry, in order to assist witnesses in focussing their attention on those parts of it of which they had special knowledge, or in which

they were specially interested. This list, as subsequently revised, consisted of 113 questions under 10 main heads (*vide* Appendix A-3).

Our enquiry included the personal inspection of industrial enterprises, the examination of witnesses, and discussions with representatives of local committees and institutions. We had also the advantage of conferring with the Provincial Industrial Committees which existed in some provinces and with some of the Local Governments and Administrations. In all we recorded the written statements of 472 witnesses, and 342 appeared before us for oral examination.* In deference to the wishes of witnesses or from other considerations, it was considered advisable to treat as confidential some of the matter brought before us, and we have accordingly prepared one volume of confidential evidence, which will not be available to the general public. In view of the fact that the Commission was freely admitted to inspect industrial concerns, and that information, often of a confidential nature, was placed at our disposal on these occasions, our inspection notes also will not be published.

We met at Delhi on the 26th October 1916, with the exception of Mr. Low who joined the Commission at Bankipore, and, after taking evidence in the Delhi Province, we visited the United Provinces, Bihar and Orissa, Bengal, the Central Provinces, Madras and Bangalore. Details of our itinerary with a list of institutions visited are given in Appendix A-4. In January 1917, in consequence of the increased difficulties of obtaining from Europe stores for war and essential purposes, the necessity of stimulating the local manufacture of munitions became a matter of vital importance. Taking advantage of the experience already gained by the Commission, the Government of India summoned Sir Thomas Holland to Delhi at the end of the month and requested him to organise a new department for the purpose. This decision—although the resulting organisation was in its final form precipitated by the conditions developed during the war—was welcomed by us as a practical anticipation of many of the conclusions which had been forced upon us by evidence that began to repeat itself most strikingly before we reached Madras. For the newly formed Indian Munitions Board, as the central authority controlling the purchase and manufacture of Government stores and munitions of war, became, in effect, an experiment on a large scale designed to test the value of many of our conclusions regarding not only the manufacturing capabilities of the country, but also regarding the kind of administrative machinery most suitable to carry out our proposals. The Munitions Board is thus our principal witness,

* The evidence is printed in six volumes :—

- Volume I. Delhi, United Provinces and Bihar and Orissa.
- Volume II. Bengal and Central Provinces.
- Volume III. Madras and Bangalore.
- Volume IV. Bombay.
- Volume V. Punjab, Assam, Burma and General.
- Volume VI. Confidential.

and we have had the benefit of information regarding some of its activities. After the departure of Sir Thomas Holland from Madras, Sir Francis Stewart acted as President for the remainder of our visit to Southern India. On the conclusion of the tour Messrs. Low, Chatterton and Bell assembled at the office of the Munitions Board to summarise the results of the first year's enquiries.

When the Commission re-assembled on the 7th of November 1917,

Tour of 1917-18.

Sir Thomas Holland rejoined and presided over our enquiries in the Bombay Presidency. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was unable to take part in our sessions at Bombay, but accompanied us for a portion of the ensuing Punjab tour. Mr. Chatterton was compelled to be absent during our tour in this province. The Commission afterwards visited Assam and Burma. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sir Fazulbhoj Currimbhoj and Sir D. J. Tata were unable to take part in the Assam tour, and the two former were also prevented from visiting Burma. As the President had to revert to his duties with the Munitions Board after the Bombay tour and was only able to join us for special discussions on one or two subsequent occasions, Sir R. N. Mookerjee was appointed to act as President of the Commission until its re-assembly at Simla for the preparation of the final report.

During the tour the personnel of the Commission was strengthened by the inclusion of an officer with local knowledge in each province, nominated by the Local Government to help in our enquiries, and co-opted by the Commission. The following gentlemen, to whom our thanks for their ready help are due, assisted in our proceedings :—

- (1) Mr. G. A. Thomas, I.C.S., Secretary to Government, Bombay.
- (2) The Hon'ble Mr. H. J. Maynard, C.S.I., I.C.S., Financial Commissioner, Punjab.
- (3) The Hon'ble Lieutenant-Colonel P. R. T. Gurdon, C.S.I., I.A., Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, Assam.
- (4) The Hon'ble Mr. H. Thompson, C.S.I., I.C.S., Financial Commissioner, Burma.

In conducting our enquiries and even more so in drafting our report, we found it impossible to treat at length all the very numerous questions involved; and we were compelled to dismiss somewhat briefly many subjects of importance, in order to avoid loading our report with a mass of detail which would have delayed its issue very seriously, while not adding materially to its practical usefulness.

Moreover, although much information of technical and industrial value will be found in the evidence of some of the expert witnesses, our report is not intended as an industrial survey of India, and we have, therefore, concentrated our attention on the machinery which we propose should be set up to effect industrial development generally, rather than on the particulars of industries to be improved. This machi-

nery will, we believe, do what is needed for all industries, and it would be useless for us to attempt to frame detailed recommendations for which technical enquiries by experts are required. We have carefully studied the position of certain important industries and the proposals which have been made for their improvement; but we have used the knowledge so obtained as a basis for our recommendations for the technical and administrative equipment which Government will require and for the financial facilities it should provide. In a few cases, however, when we deemed an industry of sufficient importance to deserve special treatment, we have had notes prepared in greater detail: these will be found as appendices. We have dealt at length with the important questions of the organisation of the scientific and administrative services, with technical education and industrial finance; and have, we hope, worked out a scheme which will enable Government to keep in touch with, and assist, industries of all classes, whether domestic or organised. But the reader must not expect to find in this report the practical information which would enable a particular undertaking to be started; such, for instance, as would be furnished by an expert when reporting on the prospects of a proposed industry. Still less must he regard it as an industrial *vade mecum* to guide him by short cuts to fortune. Even had we attempted to describe the general principles determining the success or failure of any particular industry, this would still be of no use to the would-be industrialist, without knowledge of local details regarding the supplies of raw material, the markets for the finished article, and the cost of labour, information which it would be impossible to give in a report of this nature. We hope, however, that in the imperial and provincial Departments of Industries, when in working order, will be found an organisation for collecting such information.

We feel it necessary to refer to the considerable change in public opinion regarding industrial questions brought about by the war, a change which we also see reflected clearly in the policy of Government.

We have explained in our report the deadening effect produced by Lord Morley's dictum of 1910 on the initial attempts made by Government for the improvement of industries; but a change of sentiment was gradually coming about, and a considerable step in advance was marked by the appointment of our Commission, with liberty to discuss the question of the direct participation of Government in the industrial development of the country. Since then, the views of Government and of the public have been further modified under the stress of war necessities, which have led to a still more definite adoption of the policy of State participation in industrial development, and to the grant of State assistance to several industrial undertakings, of which the scope is not in every case limited by the possible duration of the present war. The working of the Indian Munitions Board has shown several examples of this policy, and we trust that care will be taken to preserve such features of this organisation as are properly adaptable to peace conditions. We desire here to refer to the

extent to which the action taken by Government and private industrialists under conditions created by the war has assisted us, by furnishing actual examples of schemes which we had been contemplating: though some of our conclusions have thus been forestalled, we have been enabled to present them with more certainty and completeness. Finally, we may claim that the public discussions called forth by the activities of our Commission and the evidence taken by it have also borne their part in this movement, and have led to proposals being put forward or action being taken by Local Governments for the improvement of technical education, the employment of experts, the creation of official organisations, and assistance to individual industries which clearly evidence the widespread desire for progress in the direction indicated in our report.

It is our pleasant duty gratefully to acknowledge the generous assistance and hospitality which we received from officials and non-officials throughout the course of our work. We wish in particular to record our sense of the help which we received from representatives of the numerous industrial firms to whom we applied for advice and information. We derived much encouragement from their readiness to place at our disposal the results of their valuable experience. We desire also to express our thanks to the Local Governments and Administrations for their cordial co-operation in our enquiries.

We have now only to place on record our appreciation of the services of Mr. R. D. Bell, I.C.S., our Secretary, and of Mr. G. H. W. Davies, I.C.S., who joined us as Joint Secretary in October 1917. The former rendered valuable assistance in working out the detailed lines on which we subsequently conducted our work; and his service with the Indian Munitions Board gave him most useful experience which was freely placed at our disposal. Mr. Davies, who had previously acted as Secretary to the Bengal Provincial Industries Committee, lightened our labours materially by his willing help.

INDEX TO REPORT.

[*N.B.*—Page numbers are given in all cases.]

A

- Acknowledgements of assistance :**
of individuals, xx.
- Acquisition of land :**
Difficulty in interpretation of section 40 of Act, 153, 156.
- Adjustment of freight :**
for single journey over more than one line, 208.
- Adulteration :**
of food and drugs, 168; of oil seeds, 168; of jute, 169; of cotton, 169; of fertilizers, 169.
- Advisory Boards :**
for appeals under Electricity Act, 174; See also "Board."
- Advisory Committee :**
Bombay Industrial, 81.
- Agency firms :**
Tendency of, to develop commerce rather than industry, 8, 9.
- Agricultural Department :**
as example of classification of scientific officers, 88, 89; publications of, 89.
- Agricultural engineering :**
to be controlled by Department of Industries, 226.
- Agricultural labour :**
Wasteful employment of, in India as compared with England and Germany, 58.
- Agricultural machinery :**
Economies effected by use of, in England and Germany, 59; possible scope for, in India, 59, 60.
- Agricultural products :**
Indian, as a basis for industries, 34-36.
- Agriculture :**
Importance of, to industries, 57; co-operation between departments of, and industries, 63.
- Alcohol :**
Manufacture of industrial, suggested, 66.
- Allpore :**
Use of testing house at, for inspecting Government stores, 252.
- Aluminium :**
Ore of, 38.
- Aluminium factory :**
started by Madras Department of Industries, 77.
- Aluminium manufacture :**
Necessity of cheap electric power for, 68.
- Amarapura :**
Weaving School, 161.
- Antimony :**
Occurrences of, 38.
- Apprentices :**
Artisan, in railway workshops, 116, 117; foreman, in railway workshops, 118-120; engineer, in railway workshops, 124.
- Art crafts :**
Manufactures of Indian, 3; improvement of Indian, 197, 198.
- Artisans :**
Necessity of primary education for, and industrial labourers, 109, 110; training of, for mechanical engineering, 116, 117; urban, may be helped by bank of Schultze-Delitech type, 201.
- Assistance, technical :**
Need for, to industries by Government 157. See "Financial assistance."

Asst establishment :

Estimated cost of, for imperial Department of Industries, 247, 248.

B

Babnauli :

Loan to sugar factory at, 76.

Bacteriological Service :

Proposals for, 94, 95.

Bangalore :

Indian Institute of Science, 100.

Banking facilities :

Lack of, in Burma, 33.

Lack of, in mofussil, 210, 211 ; in Presidency towns, 212, 213.

Banks, industrial :

Lack of, in India, 214 ; in Germany and Japan, 214, 215 ; conditions under which, should work, 215, 216 ; See also "Industrial Banks."

Bauxite :

Existence of, in India, 38

Bengal :

Director of Industries appointed in, 81 ; industrial surveys in, 82.

Bengal coal field :

Mining development in, 18, 19 ; description of, 18-21 ; quality of coal in, 19 ; labour on the, 19, 20.

Bengal Eastern :

Government industrial policy in, 80.

Bengal Home Industries Association :

Work of, 202.

Bengal Iron & Steel Company : 20.

Bengali labour :

Dislike of, to factory work, 10, 11.

Bihar :

Indigo in, 24, 26

Bimlipatam jute :

an Indian fibre plant, 35.

"Block rates" :

Effect of, on railway traffic, 206.

Board :

Provincial, of Industries, 227, 228 ; Provincial, of Industries may appoint sub-committees, 228 ; proposed Indian Industries, 235 ; estimated cost of Indian Industries, 246, 247 ; "See also Industries Board, Indian."

Boiler attendants :

Certification of, 170.

Boiler inspection :

Cost of factory and, 265.

Boilers :

Licensing of, 170.

Bombay :

Description of, 14-18 ; rail-borne trade of, 14 ; cotton mill industry of, 15, 72, 73 ; wages in cotton mill industry of, 15 ; labour in cotton mill industry of, 15, 16 ; labour recruited by jobbers in cotton mill industry of, 16 ; engineering firms in, 16 ; sea-borne trade of, 17 ; share taken by Indians in trade of, 17, 18 ; Director of Industries appointed in, 81 ; Advisory Committee on industries, 81 ; collection of commercial and industrial intelligence in, 141, 266 ; special difficulties in connection with housing of workmen in, 183 ; description of chawls in, 183, 184 ; industrial dwellings in, - 185, 186 ; work of Improvement Trust, 186, 186 ; finance of industrial dwellings in, 188 ; Salsette, site for future industrial extension of, 188 ; railway workshops in, 189 ; successful working of Swadeshi Stores in, 199 ; capital for industries readily forthcoming in, 212.

Botanical Service :

Suggested, 94, 95.

Botanical Survey :

Staff of, 86.

Brass-work :

industry, 166.

Buckingham and Carnatic Mills :

Primary education in, Madras, 109, 180.

Burma :

Description of, 30-33 ; agriculture, 30-31 ; forests, 31 ; organised industries, 31, 32 ; mining industry, 32 ; cottage industries, 32 ; part played by women in cottage industries, 32 ; oil fields, 33 ; lack of banking facilities, 33 ; lack of coal, 33.

Business names :

Registration of, 178.

Calcutta :

Description of, 9-14 ; Jute mills in, 10 ; See also "Jute mills" ; engineering

Calcutta—contd.

Arms, 13; sea-borne trade, 13; river-borne trade, 13; rail-borne trade, 13, 14; collection of commercial and industrial intelligence, 141, 266; housing of labour, 181; See also "Housing of industrial labour."

Capital :

Scarcity of, in rural areas, 4, 5; attitude of India, towards industries, 157, 210; for industries readily forthcoming in Bombay, 212; for Government-aided industrial undertakings to be raised in India in rupees, 221.

Cannopere :

Description of, 28, 29; wages of textile operatives, 29; housing of labour, 29, 181; oil mill started by Government in, 77.

Cement :

works in India, 39.

Central Provinces :

Director of Industries appointed in, 81; law of, affecting purchase of land for industrial concerns, 154.

Certificates of quality : 169.**Charcoal :**

By-products of, 66.

Chawls :

Description of, in Bombay, 183-184.

Chalmers-Montagu Report :

not at variance with Commission's scheme, 290.

Chemical research institutes :

Recurring cost of proposed central, 255, 256; capital cost, 269.

Chemical Service, Indian :

Proposed organisation of, 92, 93; recruitment and terms of service of, 93; committee suggested to work out organisation of, 94; controlled by imperial Department of Industries, 237; cost of central laboratory for, 255, 256.

Chemicals " heavy " :

Materials for, 63.

Chemist :

Chief, 92; Deputy Chief, 92; proposed for Salt Department, 248; salary of Chief, 255.

Chemists :

employed under different departments, 87; provincial industrial, 231.

China :

Trade in yarn with, 73.

Chrome tanning :

Future possibilities of, 37; introduction of, by Madras Department of Industries, 78.

Chromite :

Occurrence of, in India, 38.

Circle officers :

already appointed in Madras for local assistance to industries, 166, under provincial Departments of Industries, 231, 232; cost of, 264, 265

Classification of scientific services :

Agricultural Department as example of, 88, 89; Geological Survey as example of, 88; as affecting Local Governments, 90; proposed by Commission, 91, 92.

Coal :

royalty owners, 19; lack of, in Burma, 33; limited extent of coking, in India, 19, 64, 65; special survey to secure economy in use of, required, 65.

Coal fields :

in Assam, Bengal, Central India, Central Provinces, Hyderabad, 18, 64.

Coke :

Production of, on Bengal coal field, 19; by-products of, distillation, 64.

Coking coal :

Limited extent of, in India, 19, 64, 65.

Collegiate education :

Control of, in technology, 126, 137.

Colliery owners :

Proposed compulsion of, to house their workmen, 187, 188.

Commerce and Industry :

Creation of department of, 75.

Commercial and Industrial Intelligence :

Department of, under Government and public, 139; must be dealt with by same agency, 141; Director of, to be member of Imperial Industrial Service, 141; collection of, in Calcutta and Bombay, 141, 266; collection of, in offices of Directors of Industries, 232; department controlled by imperial Department of Industries, 236; department, estimated cost of, 249.

Audit establishment :

Estimated cost of, for imperial Department of Industries, 247, 248.

B

Bahnauli :

Loan to sugar factory at, 76.

Bacteriological Service :

Proposals for, 94, 95.

Bangalore :

Indian Institute of Science, 100.

Banking facilities :

Lack of, in Burma, 33.

Lack of, in mofussil, 210, 211; in Presidency towns, 212, 213.

Banks, industrial :

Lack of, in India, 214; in Germany and Japan, 214, 215; conditions under which, should work, 215, 216; See also "Industrial Banks."

Bauxite :

Existence of, in India, 38

Bengal :

Director of Industries appointed in, 81; industrial surveys in, 82.

Bengal coal field :

Mining development in, 18, 19; description of, 18-21; quality of coal in, 19; labour on the, 19, 20.

Bengal Eastern :

Government industrial policy in, 80.

Bengal Home Industries Association :

Work of, 202.

Bengal Iron & Steel Company : 20.

Bengali labour :

Dislike of, to factory work, 10, 11.

Bihar :

Indigo in, 24, 24.

Bimlipatam jute :

an Indian fibre plant, 35.

"Block rates" :

Effect of, on railway traffic, 206.

Board :

Provincial, of Industries, 227, 228; Provincial, of Industries may appoint sub-committee, 228; proposed Indian Industries, 235; estimated cost of Indian Industries, 246, 247; "See also Industries Board, Indian."

Boiler attendants :

Certification of, 170.

Boiler inspection :

Cost of factory and, 265.

Boilers :

Licensing of, 170.

Bombay :

Description of, 14-18; rail-borne trade of, 14; cotton mill industry of, 15, 72, 73; wages in cotton mill industry of, 15; labour in cotton mill industry of, 15, 16; labour recruited by jobbers in cotton mill industry of, 16; engineering firms in, 16; sea-borne trade of, 17; share taken by Indians in trade of, 17, 18; Director of Industries appointed in, 81; Advisory Committee on industries, 81; collection of commercial and industrial intelligence in, 141, 266; special difficulties in connection with housing of workmen in, 183; description of chawls in, 183, 184; industrial dwellings in, - 185, 186; work of Improvement Trust, 185, 186; finance of industrial dwellings in, 188; Saleette, site for future industrial extension of, 188; railway workshops in, 189; successful working of Swadeshi Stores in, 199; capital for industries readily forthcoming in, 212.

Botanical Service :

Suggested, 94, 95.

Botanical Survey :

Staff of, 80.

Brass-work :

industry, 166.

Buckingham and Carnatic Mills :

Primary education in, Madras, 109, 180.

Burma :

Description of, 30-33; agriculture, 30-31; forests, 31; organised industries, 31, 32; mining industry, 32; cottage industries, 32; part played by women in cottage industries, 32; oil fields, 33; lack of banking facilities, 33; lack of coal, 33.

Business names :

Registration of, 178.

C

Calcutta :

Description of, 9-14; Jute mills in, 10; See also "Jute mills"; engineering

Calcutta—contd.

Arms, 12; sea-borne trade, 13; river-borne trade, 13; rail-borne trade, 13, 14; collection of commercial and industrial intelligence, 141, 266; housing of labour, 181; See also "Housing of industrial labour."

Capital :

Scarcity of, in rural areas, 4, 5; attitude of Indian, towards industries, 157, 210; for industries readily forthcoming in Bombay, 212; for Government-aided industrial undertakings to be raised in India in rupees, 221.

Cawnpore :

Description of, 28, 29; wages of textile operatives, 29; housing of labour, 29, 181; oil mill started by Government in, 77.

Cement :

works in India, 39.

Central Provinces :

Director of Industries appointed in, 81; law of, affecting purchase of land for industrial concerns, 154.

Certificates of quality : 169.

Charcoal :

By-products of, 66.

Chawls :

Description of, in Bombay, 183-184.

Chelmsford-Montagu Report :

not at variance with Commission's scheme, 290.

Chemical research institute :

Recurring cost of proposed central, 255, 256; capital cost, 269.

Chemical Service, Indian :

Proposed organisation of, 92, 93; recruitment and terms of service of, 93; committee suggested to work out organisation of, 94; controlled by imperial Department of Industries, 237; cost of central laboratory for, 255, 256.

Chemicals " heavy " :

Materials for, 53.

Chief of :

Chief, 92; Deputy Chief, 92; proposed for Salt Department, 248; salary of Chief, 255.

Chemists :

employed under different departments, 87; provincial industrial, 231.

China :

Trade in yarn with, 73.

Chrome tanning :

Future possibilities of, 37; introduction of, by Madras Department of Industries, 76.

Chromite :

Occurrence of, in India, 38.

Circle officers :

already appointed in Madras for local assistance to industries, 165, under provincial Departments of Industries, 231, 232; cost of, 264, 265

Classification of scientific services :

Agricultural Department as example of, 88, 89; Geological Survey as example of, 88; as affecting Local Governments, 90; proposed by Commission, 91, 92.

Coal :

royalty owners, 19; lack of, in Burma, 33; limited extent of coking, in India, 19, 64, 65; special survey to secure economy in use of, required, 65.

Coal fields :

in Assam, Bengal, Central India, Central Provinces, Hyderabad, 18, 64.

Coke :

Production of, on Bengal coal field, 19; by-products of, distillation, 54.

Coking coal :

Limited extent of, in India, 19, 64, 65.

Collegiate education :

Control of, in technology, 126, 137.

Colliery owners :

Proposed compulsion of, to house their workmen, 187, 188.

Commerce and industry :

Creation of department of, 75.

Commercial and Industrial Intelligence :

Department of, under to Government and public, 139; must be dealt with by same agency, 141; Director of, to be member of Imperial Industrial Service, 141; collection of, in Calcutta and Bombay, 141, 266; collection of, in offices of Directors of Industries, 232; department controlled by imperial Department of Industries, 236; department, estimated cost of, 249.

- Commercial and industrial interests :**
Representation of, with the Government of India, 207, 208; representation of, on Railway Conference, 208; on Goods Classification Committee, 208.
- Commercial education :** 133, 134.
- Commercial exploitation :**
Necessity for, of Indian forests, 41.
- Commercial Intelligence officers :**
Special for Bombay and Calcutta, 141; cost of special, 206.
- Commercial member :**
Proposed, of Railway Board, 207.
- Committee :**
proposed to work out detailed organisation of Indian Chemical Service, 94; of other scientific services, 95; of Stores Department in India, 150; proposed to enquire into extension of banking facilities, 217.
- Compulsion :**
Case for and against, of employers to house their workmen, 187, 188; proposed, of colliery owners to house their workmen, 188.
- Computatory education :**
in municipalities in Bombay Presidency, 180, 181.
- Congestion :**
Effect of railway rates on industrial, in port towns, 207.
- Controller-General :**
of Stores proposed, 151, 152; cost of, 253.
- Co-operation :**
Degree of success attained by, in cottage industries, 200; lack of unofficial workers for industrial, 201; duties of Directors of Industries in respect of industrial, 202.
- Co-operative credit :**
Effect of, as a preparation for other forms of co-operation, 200; relation between Departments of Industries, Agriculture and, 203, 226, 227.
- Co-operative unions :**
Need for, for industries, 200.
- Co-opted members :**
List of, of Indian Industrial Commission, xviii.
- Copper :**
Occurrence of, in India, 38; smelting, in India, 52.
- Cottage industries :**
of Burma, 32; part played by women of Burma in, 32; industrial schools - useful for, not for organised industries, 112; industrial schools must work in close touch with, 112; technical assistance to, 161; assistance in marketing products of, 161, 198, 199, 202; in jails, 167, 168; effect of modern manufactures on, 193; relative importance of, in India, 194; existing weak points of, 195; organisation of, in Japan, 198; provision of markets for products of, 198, 199, 202; degree of success attained by co-operation in, 200; organisation of, by small entrepreneurs, 201, 202; marketing organisation for products of, 202; loans by Government to small and, 221, 222; cost of organisation for granting loans to small and, 264, 265.
- Cottage industry :**
Metal working as a, 194; sericulture as a, 194; silk weaving as a, 195; dyeing as a, 195.
- Cotton :**
Indian, crop, 34; adulteration of, 169.
- Cotton mill industry :**
Description of, in Bombay, 15; labour recruited by jobbers in, in Bombay, 16; labour in, in Bombay, 16; wages in, in Bombay, 15; in Ahmedabad, 30; growth of, 72, 73; started by Indians in Bombay, 72.
- Crafts :**
See "Art crafts."
- Crews, Lord :**
Views regarding industrial policy, 79, 80.
- Crop forecasts :** 145.
- Current finance :**
Scheme for provision of, for middle-class industrialists, 217, 218.
- D**
- Deccan :**
Cotton tract, 21, 22.
- Deficiencies :**
in manufactured materials not produced in India—metals, chemicals, other products, 52-54; articles not produced in India, 54, 55.

Dehra Dun :
Recommendations regarding the Forest Research Institute at, 42, 45; Forest Research Institute, 90.

Defini :
Description of, 26, 27.

Demonstration :
Explanation of term, 159; Imperial research and factories to be controlled by Imperial Department of Industries, 237; cost of Imperial research and factories, 250; cost of provincial industrial experiments and, 263.

Department of Industries :
Relations between, Co-operative Credit and Agriculture, 63, 203, 226, 227; in Madras, 77, 78; sample list of industries that may be aided by provincial, 166; control of electric inspectors by, 174; arguments for a provincial, 224, 225; heads of business under provincial, 225, 226; agricultural engineering to be controlled by, 223; circle officers under provincial, 231, 232; staff of, 232; arguments for an Imperial, 233, 234; Member in charge of Imperial, 235; heads of business under Imperial, 236-238; Financial Adviser to Indian Industries Board and, 239, 240; engineering qualifications required by majority of officers under Imperial, 241, 242; cost of Imperial, 246; cost of audit establishment of Imperial, 247; cost of administration of provincial, 257.

Deputy Director of Industries :
Salary, qualifications and duties of, 230, 231.

Dhanbaid :
Proposed school of mines at, 130, 131.

Director of Commercial and Industrial Intelligence :
to be member of Imperial Industrial Service, 141; headquarters of, to be at Calcutta, 141; should have right to attend meetings of Railway Conference and Goods Classification Committee, 208; See also "Commercial and Industrial Intelligence."

Director of Industries :
proposed by Naini Tal Conference, 76; qualifications of provincial, 228, 229; provincial, to be member of Imperial Industrial Service, 229; provincial, to be Secretary to Local Government, 229; salary of provincial, 230, 231.

Director of Statistics :
Statistics how to be dealt with by, 141, 142; and crop forecasts, 145.

Directors :
Government, in Government-aided industrial undertakings, 297.

Directors of Industries :
appointed in Bengal, Bombay, Central Provinces, Madras, Punjab, United Provinces, 81; to collect provincial commercial intelligence, 140; work of, in purchase of Government stores, 151, 152; duties of, in respect of industrial co-operation, 202; cost of workshops and laboratories for, 268.

Disease :
Effect of, on efficiency of labour, 170, 190, 191.

Distillation :
of coke to recover by-products, 54; of wood should be undertaken experimentally by Government, 66; See also "Wood distillation."

Drugs :
Possible extended manufacture of, in India, 53; adulteration of food and, 168.

Dyeing :
industry, 166; as a cottage industry, 195.

Dyes :
Comparison of synthetic and vegetable, 195.

E

East India Company :
Policy of, towards industries, 1, 75.

Eastern Bengal and Assam :
Industrial policy of Government in, 80.

Economic conditions :
Diversity of, in different parts of India, 8.

Education :
Unpractical and literary tendency of, 104, 105; of factory children, 180; of half timers, 180; technical and industrial, controlled by Imperial Department of Industries, 236; cost of supervision of industrial, by Imperial Department of Industries, 253, 254, 262; recurring cost of, of mechanical engineers, 258-261; recurring cost of engineering and technological, 258-261; cost of technical and

Education—contd.

industrial, 261-262; capital cost of technological, 260, 267; recurring cost of industrial, 262; capital cost of industrial, 263; capital cost of engineering, 263.

Education Commission :
Indian, 1892, 103.

Education Department :
Scientific officers in, 95, 96.

Educational Conference :
Simla, 1901, 106.

Electric Inspectors :
Improved type of, 174; control of, by Departments of Industries, 174; salaries of, 257.

Electrical engineers :
training of, 103, 124, 125

Electrical plant :
not manufactured in India, 55.

Electricity Act :
Administration of, 173, 174; provincial advisory boards for appeals under, 174; administration of, controlled by imperial Department of Industries, 237.

Electro-chemical :
Possibilities of, and thermo-electrical work, 64, 68.

Electro-motors :
for small urban industrial workers, 161.

Employers :
Assistance to, for building industrial dwellings, 182; case for and against compulsion of, to house their workmen, 187, 193; taxation of, to finance industrial dwellings, 189.

Employment :
Collection of statistics of, 142.

Engineering apprentices :
Training of, 123-124; recurring cost of training, 259, 260; capital cost of training, 268.

Engineering colleges :
in India, 120, 121; Engineering College, Roorkee, 120; Madras Engineering College, 120; Sibpur Engineering College, 121; Poona Engineering College, 121; technological training to be given in, 125, 126; imperial engineering college proposed, 126; cost of existing, 258; capital cost of proposed, and technological colleges,

Engineering colleges—contd.

260, 267, 268; cost of proposed imperial engineering college, 269.

Engineering firms :
in Calcutta, 12; in Bombay, 16.

Engineering qualifications :
generally required by majority of officers under imperial Department of Industries, 241, 242.

Engineering shops :
Absence of Indian foremen in, 26, 118, 119.

Engineering training :
in India, too largely influenced by needs of Public Works Department, 121, 122; age of students for starting, 123; See also "Mechanical engineering," "Mechanical engineers."

Engineers, industrial :
Duties of, 162, 231, 257, 258.

Entomological Service :
suggested, 94, 95.

Entrepreneurs :
Organisation of cottage industries by small, 202.

Essential oils :
industry, 166.

Estimate of costs :
based on pre-war rates, 246; summary of, 269-272.

Evening classes :
Mining education in, 130, 131.

Exhibition :
Calcutta, of 1894-85, 75; Indian and Colonial, 1886, 75.

Exhibitions, industrial :
a duty of provincial Departments of Industries, 225.

Experiments :
Cost of provincial industrial, and demonstration, 263.

Explosives Act :
controlled by imperial Department of Industries, 236.

F

Factories Act :
Reasons for imperial control of, 225; Director of Industries to administer, in provinces, 227; administration of to be controlled by imperial Department of Industries, 236.

- Factory and better inspection :**
a duty of provincial Departments of Industries, 226, 227; cost of, 265.
- Factory childrens :**
Education of, 160; See "Education."
- Factory hours :** 190.
- Famine Commission, Indian (1890) :**
Remarks on excessive numbers of persons employed in agriculture, 58, 103.
- Famines :**
Effect of improved communications, on, 4.
- Ferro-manganese :**
Manufacture of, in India, 38, 53.
- Fertilisers :**
Adaptation of, 109.
- Fibre crops :**
Industrial possibilities of, 35, 54.
- Finance :**
Responsibility for, of industrial dwellings in Bombay, 188; taxation of employers to, industrial dwellings, 189.
- Financial Adviser :**
to Indian Industries Board and Department of Industries, 239, 240.
- Financial assistance :**
Government, to industrial undertakings, 210-222.
- Financial difficulties :**
of small industrialists, 213.
- Financial organisation :**
Lack of, in mofussil, 210, 211; See "Banking facilities."
- Fish :**
canning industry, 166.
- Fisheries :**
Proposals regarding, 46-48.
- Fisheries Department :**
in Madras, 46; in Bengal, 47.
- Flax :**
little grown in India, 35, 54.
- Floor :**
milling industry, 166.
- Food :**
Adaptation of, 168.
- Foremen :**
Lack of Indian, in engineering shops, 26, 118; training of, for mechanical engineering, 118-120.
- Forests :**
in Burma, 31; extent of Indian, 39, 40; recommendations regarding working of, 42-45; commercial exploitation of Indian, 42.
- Forest communications :** 40, 41.
- Forest Department :**
Bulletins of, 43.
- Forest Economist :**
Work of, 42, 90.
- Forest produce :**
Transport of, 41, 42.
- Forest products :**
Commercial utilisation of results of research into Indian, 42-45; pioneer factories required for, 43-44.
- Forest Research Institute :**
Dehra Dun, 42, 45, 90.
- Freight :**
Adjustment of, for single journey over more than one line, 206; shipping, 209; See "Railway rates."
- Fruit :**
canning industry, 166.
- Fuel :**
Economy in use of coal as, required, 65; experiments in use of wood as, required, 63, 66; plantations for, 65; uses of mineral oil as, 66.
- G**
- Gas engine plants :**
Use of, recommended, 65, 66.
- Geological Survey :**
devoted special attention to economic work from about 1904, 75; work of, department, 84; as an instance of organisation of a scientific department, 88; to inspect Government mining concessions, 171, 172; to be controlled by Imperial Department of Industries, 236; proposed strengthening of, 248.
- German :**
Hide trade largely in, hands, 36.
- Germany :**
Industrial banks in Japan and, 214, 215.

Glass :
Dependence of India on-imported, 55.

Glass manufacture :
Materials for, 39; failure of experimental, in Madras, 81; technical assistance required for, 166.

Goods Classification Committee :
Director of Commercial and Industrial Intelligence should have right to attend meetings of Railway Conference and, 208; representation of commercial and industrial interests on, 208.

Gorakhpur (Bahhnani) :
Loan to sugar factory in, 76.

Government-aided industrial undertakings :
Capital for, to be raised in India in rupees, 221.

Government directors :
for aided industrial undertakings, 221.

Government financial assistance :
to industrial undertakings, 219-222.

Government of India :
industrial policy of, 75, 76; responsible for general industrial policy of country, 233, 234.

Graphite crucibles :
not made in India, 53.

H

Half-timers :
Education of, 180; proposed system of split shifts for, 180.

Hand-loom :
weavers affected by competition of mills, 6, 7, 111, 193; assistance to, industry, 161, 166; importance of, weaving, 194; training of master weavers, 196, 197.

Hand-loom factories :
Possibilities of small, 196, 202.

Handicrafts :
School of, at Nagpur, 81.

Heads of business :
under provincial Departments of Industries, 225, 226; under imperial Department of Industries, 236-238.

Hide trade :
largely in German hands before war, 36.

Hides :
and leather trade, recommendations regarding the, 36, 37; low railway rates on, to Calcutta, 205.

"High-speed" steel :
not made in India, 52.

Hindu joint family :
an obstacle to registration of partnerships, 176, 177.

Hours of employment :
in factories, 190.

Housing of industrial labour :
in Calcutta, 11, 181; in Bombay, 15, 183-189; on the coal field, 20; at Sakchi, 21; in Cawnpore, 29, 181; acquisition of sites for, 155, 156, 162; general question of, 181, 182; in Rangoon, 181; schemes for financing, in Bombay, 185, 186; case for and against compulsion of employers, 187, 188; proposed compulsion of colliery owners, 188.

Hydro-electric licences :
Standard conditions for, 69.

Hydro-electric survey :
should be undertaken by Government, 69; cost of, 254, 255.

Hydro-electric works :
on Western Ghats, 16, 67, 68.

Hydrographic survey :
See "Hydro-electric survey."

I

Ichthyologists :
Need for, 48.

Imperial Department of Industries :
respective shares of provincial and, in technical assistance to industries, 165; See also "Department of Industries"; arguments for an, 233, 234; Member in charge of, 235, 236; subjects under, 236-238; estimated cost of, 246, 247; estimated cost of audit establishment for, 247.

Imperial engineering college :
proposed, 126; cost of, 269.

Imperial Industrial Service :
See "Industrial Service."

Imperial Institute :
Value of work done by, 103.

- Imports :**
Effect of, on cottage industries, 6, 7 ; effect of, on Indian rural life, 6, 7 ; principles which should govern railway rates on, 207 ; favourable railway freights on, of industrial machinery, 207.
- Improvement Trust, Bombay :**
Work of, 185, 186.
- India Office :**
Stores Department of, 148, 149.
- Indian Chemical Service :**
" See Chemical Service, Indian."
- Indian Industrial Commission :**
Constitution of, xv ; list of Members of, xv, xvi ; tour of, in 1916-17, xvii ; tour of, in 1917-18, xviii ; assistance derived from work of Indian Munitions Board by, xix ; scope of report of, xviii, xix.
- Indian Industrial Conference :**
started in 1905, 73.
- Indian Industries Board :**
See " Industries Board, Indian."
- Indian Institute of Science :**
Bangalore, 100, 101.
- Indian Munitions Board :**
Assistance derived from work of, by Indian Industrial Commission, xix ; work of, for improvement of tanning industry, 45 ; work of, showing possibility of manufacturing Government stores in India, 148.
- Indian trade agents :**
abroad, 146.
- Indian Trade Commissioner :**
work of, 145, 146 ; to be member of Imperial Industrial Service, 146 ; to be assisted by agricultural, forest and geological experts, 146.
- Indian Trade Journal :** 146.
- Indians :**
in industry, reasons for comparative want of success, 71, 72 ; in industry, more successful in west of India, 72 ; share taken by, in industrial work, 71-74 ; recruitment of, for chemical service, 93, 94 ; as chief source of recruitment for industrial service, 244.
- Indigo :**
in Bihar, 24, 25 ; possibilities of improvement of, 25.
- Indus :**
harrao schomo, 60, 61.
- Industrial and technical teachers :**
Provision of, 135.
- Industrial Bank :**
Idea of, supported by Bombay Advisory Committee, 214 ; Tata, 214, 217.
- Industrial Banks :**
in Japan and Germany, 214, 215 ; conditions under which, should work, 216, 217 ; expert committee recommended to report on necessity of Government assisting, 217.
- Industrial Commission :**
See " Indian Industrial Commission."
- Industrial Conference, Indian :**
started in 1905, 73 ; Naini Tal, 1907, 76 ; Ootacamund, 78.
- Industrial co-operation :**
Lack of non-official workers for, 201 ; duties of Directors of Industries in respect of, 202.
- Industrial development :**
Relative backwardness of Indian, a comparatively recent historical feature, 1 ; reasons why India did not share in modern, of West, 104.
- Industrial dwellings :**
Acquisition of sites for, 156, 182 ; assistance to employers for building, 182 ; in Bombay, See " Bombay " ; responsibility for finance of. See " Bombay " ; taxation of employers to finance, 189.
- Industrial education :**
Control of, in Madras, 78, 81 ; control of, 112, 136, 137 ; cost of supervision of, by imperial Department of Industries, 263, 254, 262 ; cost of, 261, 262, 266.
- Industrial engineers :**
Duties of, 162, 231, 257, 258.
- Industrial enterprises :**
Risks of, 167, 168.
- Industrial experiments and demonstration :**
imperial, cost of, 260 ; provincial, cost of, 263.
- Industrial information :**
Exchange of, between provinces, 153, 224.

Industrial Intelligence :

Director of Commercial and, to be member of Imperial Industrial Service, 141; and commercial intelligence must be dealt with by same agency, 141; collection of, in offices of Directors of Industries, 232; See also "Commercial and Industrial Intelligence."

Industrial labour :

Necessity of primary education for, See "Primary Education"; relative inefficiency of, in India, 179; low standard of comfort of, 179; housing of, See "Housing of industrial labour."

Industrial machinery :

Favourable freights on imports of, 207.

Industrial organisation :

Total cost of imperial, 269; total cost of provincial, 269.

Industrial policy :

of Government, 75, 82; Government of India responsible for general, of country, 233, 234.

Industrial schools :

History of, 110; founded by missionaries, 110; useful for cottages, not for organised, industries, 112; control of, 112, 136-138; must work in close touch with cottage industries, 112; recurring cost of, 262; capital cost of, 262, 266; See also "Industrial education"

Industrial Service :

Director of Commercial and Industrial Intelligence to be member of, 141; Indian Trade Commissioner to be member of, 146; Director of Industries to be member of, 229; Deputy Director to be member of, 231; Imperial, proposed, 242, 243; recruitment for, 243; salaries of members of, 243; temporary measures for recruitment for, 244; Indians as chief source of recruitment for, 244.

Industrial surveys : 82.**Industrial undertakings :**

Government financial assistance to, 219-222; Government directors in Government-aided, 221; capital for Government-aided, to be raised in India in rupees, 221; now, may be helped by Government, though they compete with established industries outside India, 221.

Industrial work :

Share taken by Indians in; See "Indians."

Industrialists :

Financial difficulties of small, 213; scheme for provision of current finance for middle-class, 217, 218.

Industries :

Importance of agriculture to, 57; technical assistance to, of national importance, 164; sample list of, that may be aided by provincial Departments of Industries, 166; capital for, readily forthcoming in Bombay, 212; financial assistance to, of national importance, 219; See also "Department of Industries" and "Industries Board, Indian."

Industries Board, Indian :

proposed, 235, 238; members of, 238; salaries of members of, 238; Financial Adviser to, and Department of Industries, 239, 240; headquarters of, to be with Government of India, 239; Secretary to, 239; estimated cost of, 246, 247.

Industry :

Trade found more profitable than, by business houses in India, 9, 51; and by Indians, 71, 72.

Inspecting staff for stores :

Cost of, See "Stores."

Inspection :

of technical and industrial education by imperial visiting officers, See "Technical and industrial education"; of Government stores purchased in India, See "Stores"; absence of facilities for, of stores in India, 149.

Institution of Civil Engineers :

Principles recommended by Council of, for training of engineers in England, 123.

Intelligence, commercial and industrial :

See "Commercial and Industrial Intelligence."

Interest :

High rate of, in busy season, 212.

Inventions and designs :

to be controlled by imperial Department of Industries, 236.

Iron :

Extent of, ore in India, 33.

Iron and steel :
manufacture, 20, 21; Bengal Iron and Steel Company, 20; Tata Iron and Steel Company, 20, 21; Sakshi Iron and Steel Works, 20, 21; deficiencies in manufacture of, 49, 50.

Irrigation :
by power pumping, 50, 60.

Jail labour : 167.

Jails :
Cottage industries in, 167, 168; power plant in, 167.

Japan :
Success of, as a stimulus to *swadeshi* movement, 74; organisation of cottage industries in, 198; industrial banks in, 215.

Jobbers :
Labour recruited by, in cotton mill industry of Bombay, 16; effect of recruitment by, 185.

Jute :
the, industry, 10-12; marketing of, 22, 23; adulteration of, 169.

Jute districts :
Wages in, 23.

Jute mills :
in Calcutta, 10-12; labour recruited by sardars in, 11; wages of labour in, 11; Indians take no share in management of, 12.

K

Kashmir :
Installation of hydro-electric power in, 67.

Key industries :
Mineral deposits of India sufficient to maintain, 38; technical assistance to, 213; financial assistance to, 219.

Kips :
Trade in East India, 36.

L

Laboratory :
Cost of central, for Chemical Service, 256.

Laboratories :
of Directors of Industries for testing machinery, 63; of Directors of Industries for industrial investigations, 162; cost of workshops and, for Directors of Industries, 268.

Labour :
General scarcity of, in India, 5; on the coal field, 19, 20; in the tea gardens, 24; in the railway workshops, 26; in the Delhi mills, 27; in Cawnpore, 29; See "Agricultural labour"; "Cotton mill industry"; "Housing"; "Jute mills."

Laissez faire :
policy, 2, 75, 104.

Lamp-making :
industry, 166.

Land :
Difficulty in obtaining, for sites of industrial concerns, 154.

Land Acquisition Act :
Difficulty in interpretation of section 40 of, 165; formula for interpreting section 40 of, 166.

Lead :
ore in India, 38.

Leather :
industry, 54, 166.

Loans :
by Government to small and cottage industries, 197, 221, 222; by Government to organised industries, 220; cost of organisation for granting, to small and cottage industries, 264, 265.

M

Machine tools :
not manufactured in India, 55.

Machinery :
Imports of, into India in 1913-14, 50; only manufactured in India on small scale, 50, 51, 55; advantages of employment of, in agriculture, 58-60; favourable railway rates proposed for imported, 207.

Macpherson Committee :
on mining education, 1913-14, 130.

Madras :
industrial policy in, 77-81; Director of Industries appointed in, 81; Pumping and Boring Department, 81; Engineering College, 120

- Madura :**
Technological institute at, 81.
- Mahajan :**
as a mofussil financier, 211.
- Manchester Steam Users Association :**
quoted as an example, 164.
- Manganese :**
Occurrence of, ore in India, 38.
- Manipulative industries :**
Organised industries classified as, and operative, 113, 114; principles of training for, 114, 115.
- Manufactured materials :**
Dohioncies in, not produced in India—metals, chemicals, other products, 52-54.
- Marine Engineering :**
Training in navigation and, 133.
- Market :**
Unsatisfactory organisation of, 5, 6; mofussil, in India, 6; provision of, for products of cottage industries, 198, 199, 202.
- Match industry :** 166.
- Matches :**
Suitability of Indian timbers for, 43; plantations for supply of wood for, 45.
- Mechanical engineering :**
Training for, 115-125; training of artisans for, 116, 117; training of foremen for, 118-120; teaching of, in the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute, Bombay, 127.
- Mechanical engineers :**
Proposals for general training of, 123-125; proposals for specialised training of, 124, 125; salary, qualifications and duties of provincial, 162, 231, 258; recurring cost of education of, 258-260; capital cost of teaching institutions for, 268.
- Member in charge :**
of imperial Department of Industries, 236, 236
- Members :**
List of, of Indian Industrial Commission, xv, xvi.
- Metal working :**
as a cottage industry, 194.
- Metallurgical :**
teaching and research institute, proposed at Sakchi, 101, 132; cost of do., 269; school for, training at Sakchi, 133.
- Mica :**
Occurrences of, in India, 38.
- Micanite :**
Manufacture of, in India, 38.
- Middlemen :**
excessive number of, in mofussil trade, 5.
- Mineral resources :**
of India, 37-39.
- Mineral rights :**
Acquisition of, 154, 173.
- Mines Act and Mining Rules :**
imperial control of, 225, 236; provincial administration of, 227; See also "Mining."
- Mining :**
wasteful methods of, 19, 171; industry of Burma, 31, 32; industry of India, See "Mineral resources"; inspection of, concessions, 171, 172; rules, 171-173; leases might be simplified in form, 172; manuals recommended, 173.
- Mining education :**
at Sibpur College, 129; in evening classes, 130; proposals of Commission for, 131, 132.
- Missionaries :**
Industrial schools founded by, 110.
- Monazite :**
Occurrence of, in India, 53.
- Montagu-Chelmsford Report :**
not at variance with Commission's scheme, 290.
- Morley, Lord :**
views regarding industrial policy, 78.
- Munitions Board :**
See "Indian Munitions Board."
- Mysore :**
Sandalwood oil distillation in, 44, 45; installation of water power in, 67; rules for hire-purchase in, 222.
- N**
- Nagpur :**
School of Handicrafts at, 81.

Maini Tal :
Industrial Conference, 1907, 76.

Navigation :
Training in, 133.

Night schools :
Not desirable as a rule for engineering apprentices, 117.

Nitrogen :
Fixation of, by electric power, 68.

Non-official agency :
Necessary for welfare work among industrial labourers, 192.

Non-official workers :
Lack of, for industrial co-operation, 201.

O

Oil :
Fields in Burma, 31; fields in India, 64; uses of mineral, as fuel, 66.

Oil extraction :
Economics in vegetable, by use of small power plants, 62.

Oil milling :
Possible developments of, industry, 33, 36; Government pioneering of, industry at Channore, 77; technical assistance to, industry, 166.

Oil seeds :
Industrial possibilities of, 33, 36, 62; adulteration of, 168.

Ootacamund :
Conference at, on industrial policy, 1903, 78.

Operative industries :
Organized industries classified as manipulative and, 113, 114; principles of training for, 114.

Ordnance factories :
Government, 26; might be controlled by Imperial Department of Industries, 237.

Organisation of finance :
Lack of, in mofussil; 210, 211; See also "Banking facilities."

Organized industries :
of Burma, 31, 33; industrial schools for cottage, not for, 112; general principles of training for; 112, 113; classed as manipulative and operative, 113, 114; small, especially promising in India, 167; technical assist-

Organized industries—cont.
ance to large, 162; technical assistance to small, 162.

P

Paper :
Manufacture of, at Punalur, 81.

Paper pulp :
Failure to manufacture, in India, 43.

Partnerships :
Registration of, 176, 177; transitory or single-venture, 177; Hindu joint family, an obstacle to registration of, 176, 177.

Patents :
Position of, and Patent law in India, 175 to be controlled by Imperial Department of Industries, 236.

Pencils :
Necessity of plantations to supply wood for, 45; manufacture of, in Madras, 81.

Petroleum Act :
to be controlled by Imperial Department of Industries, 236.

Pig iron :
Regular production of, in India only since 1875, 49; production of, as a basis for industries of civilised countries, 49.

Pioneer :
factories required for forest products, 43-45; factories in United Provinces, 76, 77; factories in Madras, 77, 78; when Government should undertake, factories, 159.

Pioneering :
Explanation of term, 159.

Plantations :
required to provide cheap wood for special industries, 45; for fuel, 65, 66.

Poona :
College of Engineering, 121.

Pottery :
Existence of suitable clay for, 39; industry, 166.

Power plant :
See "Electro motors"; "Gas engines"; "Irrigation"; in jails, 167.

Primary education :

Necessity of, for artisans and industrial labourers, 109, 110, 180; in Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, Madras, 109, 180; by employers of labour, 109, 110.

Production :

Statistics of, 142.

Provincial Departments of Industries :

Respective shares of, and imperial Departments of Industries in technical assistance to industries, 165; cost of administration of, 257; See "Department of Industries."

Provincial industrial organisation :

Total cost of, 269-272.

Public health :

Importance of improvement of, 179, 190, 191.

Public Works Department :

Engineering training in India too largely influenced by needs of, 121, 123.

Pumping and Boring Department :

Madras, 81.

Pumping plants :

for irrigation, 59, 60; technical assistance in setting up, 166.

Punalar :

Manufacture of paper at, 81.

Punjab :

Director of Industries appointed in the, 81; land law affecting purchase of sites for industrial concerns in the, 154.

Purchase of stores :

See "Stores."

Purchasing staff :

Cost of stores, 253.

R**Rail-borne trade :**

of Calcutta, 13, 14; of Bombay, 14; of Delhi, 27; of Cawnpore, 28.

Railway Board :

Representation of industrial interests on, 207, 208; commercial member of, proposed, 207.

Railway Conference :

Representation of commercial and industrial interests at, 208; Director

Railway Conference—contl.

of Commercial and Industrial Intelligence should have right to attend meetings of, and Goods Classification Committee, 208.

Railway questions :

Consideration of commercial and industrial aspect of, 207, 208.

Railway rates :

especially low in case of traffic to and from ports, 204, 205; low, on hides to Calcutta, 205; to and from ports and internal, to be as nearly as possible equal, 205; individualistic bias of railway policy as affecting, 206; effect of 'block', 206; method of calculating 'scale' or 'tapering', 206; effect of, on industrial congestion in port towns, 207; principles which should govern, on imports, 207; special concessions of low, to new industries, 208.

Railway workshops :

Description of, 25, 26; facilities for training presented by, 116; apprentice artisans in, 114, 117; apprentice foremen in, 118-120; apprentice engineers in, 124, 125; in Bombay, 189.

Railways :

Effects of, on Indian economic conditions generally, 2, 4; effects of, on Indian agriculture, 3, 3; lack of, in forest areas, 41; purchase of stores for, how to be dealt with, 152; effect on rates of competition of water transport with, 204.

Recruitment :

for Chemical Service, 93; for Industrial Service, 243, 244; temporary measures for, for Industrial Service, 244; Indians as chief source of, for Industrial Service, 244.

Refractory materials :

Manufacture of, at Kumardhubi, 21.

Report :

Scope of, of Indian Industrial Commission, xviii, xix.

Research :

into Indian forest products, commercial utilization of results of, 41-44; necessity of, and scientific advice for industrial development, 84, 85; a necessary function of Government, 85; in India, 97-101; abroad, how far necessary, 102, 103; imperial, and demonstration factories to be controlled by imperial Department

- Research—contd.**
of Industries, 237; cost of chemical, 255, 256; cost of Imperial, and demonstration factories, 256.
- Research institutes :**
Location of, 100, 101; advantages of specialised, 101.
- Research officers :**
Receipt of fees by Government, 98, 99.
- Resin and Turpentine :**
Government factories for, 44.
- Rice :**
Mills in Calcutta, 13, in Rangoon, 31; cultivation in Burma, 30, 31; flour and rice-milling industry, 166.
- River trade :**
of Calcutta, 13.
- River transport :**
Recommendations regarding, 208, 209.
- Reserve's :**
Engineering College, 120.
- Royalty owners :**
Coal, 19; wasteful working encouraged by, 171.
- Rubber :**
Exports of, from Indian forests, 40; not manufactured in India, 54; exports of raw, from India, 54.
- Rupce capital :**
for Government-aided industrial undertakings, 221.
- Rural India :**
Description of, in pre-British times, 1.
- S**
- Sakchi :**
Iron and Steel Works, 20, 21; Metallurgical teaching and research institute at, 101, 133; proposed metallurgical school at, 133.
- Saltette :**
Site for future industrial extension of Bombay, 168.
- Salt :**
as a basis for chemical manufactures, 53; controlled by Imperial Department of Industries, 228; estimated cost of, department, 248, 249; proposed chemist for, department, 248.
- Saltpetre industry :**
in India, 39, 166.
- Sandalwood oil :**
distillation in Mysore, 44, 45.
- Sann hemp :** 35.
- Sardars :**
Jute mill labour recruited by, 11.
- "Scale" rates :**
Method of calculating, 206.
- School of Mines :**
at Dhanbaid proposed, 130-132.
- Schultz-Delitsch :**
Urban artisans may be helped by bank of, type, 201.
- Scientific advice :**
Research and, necessary for industrial development, 84.
- Scientific and technical societies :** 126, 127.
- Scientific knowledge :**
Lack of, impeded attempts to introduce western manufactures, 1, 82.
- Scientific officers :**
Possible lines of classification of, 87-91; in the Education Department, 95, 96; serving under Local Governments, 96, 97.
- Scientific services :**
Need for organization of, 86-86; present lack of organization in, 86; possible classification of, as affecting Local Governments, 90; classification of, proposed by Commission, 91, 92; Indian Universities as recruiting grounds for, 93, 95; proposals regarding administration of, 97.
- Sea-borne trade :**
of Calcutta, 13; of Bombay, 17.
- Seasonal demand for money :**
in mofussil, 212.
- Secretary :**
to provincial Board of Industries, 228; to Indian Industries Board, 239.
- Sericulture :**
as a cottage industry, 194.
- Servants of India Society :** 191.
- Shifts :**
Proposed system of split, for half-timers, 180.
- Ship-building :**
Possibilities of, in India, 55.

- Bilpur :**
Engineering College, 121; mining education at, 129-131; mining classes at, should be improved, 132.
- Silk weaving :**
as a cottage industry, 195.
- Single-venture partnerships :**
Transitory or, 177.
- Sites :**
Difficulty in obtaining land for, of industrial concerns, 154, 181, 182; land law affecting purchase of, for industrial concerns, 154; See "Housing of industrial labour."
- Soap-making industry :** 166.
- Social Service League :** 191.
- Special concessions :**
of low railway rates to new industries, 208.
- Specialisation in cropping :**
due to railways, 3.
- Specialised industries :**
special steps required by Government to introduce, into India, 56.
- Standard of comfort :**
low, of industrial labour, 179.
- Statistics :**
should be collected and commented on by experts, 139, 140; how to be dealt with by Director of Statistics, 141, 142; of production, 142; of employment, 142; suggested methods of collecting, 143, 144; Department of, to remain under Commerce Department, 238.
- Steam-boiler Acts :**
Administration of, by provincial Departments of Industries, 226; to be controlled by imperial Department of Industries, 236; See also "Boilers."
- Steel :**
Produced in India continuously since 1914, 49; See "Iron and steel."
- Stores :**
Supply of Government, under control of Munitions Board in war time, 148; supply of Government, through India Office has affected Indian manufacturers, 148, 149; Indian, department proposed, 151, 152; purchase of, may be centralised or local, 149, 150; committee required to decide degree of decentralisation in purchasing Government, in India, 150; working of proposed Indian, Department described, 151, 152; Controller-General of, proposed, 151, 152; work of Directors of Industries in purchase of Government, 151, 152; for railways, how to be dealt with, 152; inspection of Government, purchased in India, 152; supply of Government, to be controlled by imperial Department of Industries, 236; estimated cost of proposed Indian, department, 250-253; cost of Government, purchased in England in 1913-14, 250; use of testing house at Alipore for inspecting Government, 252; decentralisation of purchase of Government, 252; cost of, purchasing staff, 253; cost of, inspecting staff, 253.
- Stores—contd**
- Subjects :**
under provincial Departments of Industries, 223, 226; under imperial Department of Industries, 236-238.
- Suez Canal :**
Effect on India of, 2.
- Sugarcane :**
Industrial possibilities of, 34; economies in production and preparation of, by use of machinery, 61, 62.
- Sulphuric acid :**
Recovery of, in zinc smelting, 52; as a basis for important manufactures, 53.
- Survey :**
Hydro-graphic, 68-70; cost of hydro-graphic, 254, 255.
- Surveys :**
Industrial, 82.
- Swadeshi movement :**
73, 74; success of Japan as a stimulus to, 74; reasons for failure of, 74.
- Swadeshi Stores :**
successful working of, Bombay, 199.
- Sydenham College of Commerce :**
Bombay, 134.
- Synthetic :**
Prospects of natural as against, indigo, 25; comparison of, and vegetable dyes, 195.
- T**
- Tanning industry :**
Prospects of, 37; technical assistance to, 166.

- Tanning materials :**
Investigation of, 37, 45.
- "Tapering" rates :**
Method of calculating, 200.
- Tata :**
Hydro-electric Supply Company, 16, 67; Iron and Steel Company, 20, 21; Indian Institute of Science established at Bangalore by late Mr. J. N., 100; Industrial Bank, 214, 217.
- Taxation :**
of employers to finance industrial dwellings, 189.
- Tea :**
Cultivation introduced into India, 23; districts of North-East India, 23, 24; Indian, trade, 24; recruitment of labour for, gardens, 24.
- Technical and industrial education :**
Control of, 112, 136-138; inspection of, by imperial visiting officers, 137, 253, 254, 262; to be controlled by Imperial Department of Industries, 230; cost of, 258-263.
- Technical assistance :**
to cottage industries, 161; to large organised industries, 162; to small organised industries, 162; to industries of national importance, 164; respective shares of provincial and imperial Departments of Industries in, 165.
- Technical education :**
Attempts to establish, in India, 100, 106.
- Technical scholarships :**
State, 106; difficulties regarding, 107; Morison Committee on, 107; revised rules regarding, 108, 109.
- Technological institute :**
at Madura, 81.
- Technological training :**
Control of collegiate education, 125, 126, 137; to be given in engineering colleges, 125; cost of, 259, 260, 267-269, 271.
- Technologists :**
Training and development of private, 163.
- Temperance measures :**
for welfare of operatives, 101.
- "Terminal" charges :**
Effect of, 206.
- Testing house :**
at Alipore, for inspecting Government stores, 252.
- Thermo-electric :**
industries, 68.
- Tin :**
Occurrence of, in Burma, 38; plates not manufactured in India, 54.
- Trade :**
found more profitable than industry by business houses in India, 6, 61; and by Indians, 71, 72.
- Trade-marks :**
Registration of, 176.
- Transitory :**
or single-venture partnerships, 177.
- Tungsten :**
Occurrences of, ores in India, 38; smelting in India necessary for production of "high-speed" steel, 52.
- U**
- Unions :**
Need for co-operative, 200.
- United Provinces :**
Industrial policy in, 76, 80; Director of Industries appointed in, 80.
- Universities :**
Indian, as recruiting grounds for scientific services, 93, 95; relations of, with engineering and technological colleges, 125, 126, 137; with commercial colleges, 134, 135.
- Uplift of labour :**
Work for, 191.
- Urban artisans :**
may be helped by bank of Schultze-Delitsch type, 201.
- V**
- Vegetable dyes :**
Comparison of synthetic and, 105.
- Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute, Bombay :**
founded in 1887, 105, 106; teaching courses at, 127, 128; teaching of mechanical engineering at, 127.
- Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute, Madras :**
197.

W

Wages :

General rise in, 5; of jute mill labour, 11; in cotton mill industry of Bombay, 15; in jute districts, 23; of operatives in Cawnpore, 29.

Water power :

in Western Ghats, 16, 67, 68; in India, 67-70; installations of, in Kashmir and Mysore, 67.

Waterways Trust :

Proposal for, 203, 209.

Watt, Sir George :

Dictionary of economic products of India, 81.

Weaving :

Importance of hand-loom, 191; See "Hand-loom."

Weaving School :

Amarapura, 161.

Welfare of labour :

Work for, 191.

Western Ghats :

Hydro-electric works in, 16; installations of water power in, 67, 68.

Wheat :

Adulteration of, 168.

Wind power : 67.

Wire ropes :

not manufactured in India, 53.

Wolframite :

in India, 38.

Women :

Part played by, in cottage industries of Burma, 32; household work of, lessened by establishment of flour and rice mills, 193.

Wood distillation :

Failure to take up question of, 43, 44; by-products of, 66; industry, 166.

Wood fuel :

experiments required in use of, 65.

Workmen :

Case for and against compulsion of employers to house their, 187, 188; proposed compulsion of colliery owners to house their, 188; See also "Housing of industrial labour."

Workmen's dwellings :

Types of, 181, 182.

Workshops :

See "Laboratories"; "Railway workshops."

Y

Yarn :

Trade in, with China, 73.

Z

Zinc :

Ore in India, 38; as a source of sulphuric acid, 52.

Zoological officers : 86.

Zoological Service :

suggested, 94.

Zoological Survey :

requires strengthening by addition of ichthyologists, 48.