



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION.

Industrial Organization.

At times, India has been a country of villages, most of them isolated and composed of houses surrounded by farm land. In some cases, a single family large community, or a group of families, forms the village, the chief industry of the country.

The principal industry in the village is usually exceedingly small, being about the size of some localities. Land is owned either individually or collectively. In the latter

case, the holdings of the whole community form a single estate and the land tax is paid the Government in a lump sum. Whatever may be the form of ownership, each cultivator has his own allotted share of farm land, the affairs of which he manages himself with the help of his family. Besides agriculture, there exist in every village such other industries as weaving, pottery making, smithing, and oil-pressing. But none of these industries is entirely separated from farming, although any one of them may be the chief occupation of the worker.

The whole industrial population of the village may be divided into two classes, the cultivators and the artisans; the former providing the food and raw materials and the latter supplying the other simple needs of rural life. Every village has as also its menials or servants, such as washermen, barbers, and scavengers. The land-lord class has appeared in the

villages of Bengal and other provinces of northern India. Priests, or Brahmins, are found in almost all Hindu villages. In addition to these principal original classes, there have grown up, in the course of time, other classes of people such as tradesmen, physicians, and scribes.

Towns began to appear among these village communities long before the Christian era. Royal residences, places of pilgrimage, and seaports rose into prominence as industrial centers. Merchants and bankers facilitated the distribution of goods to distant markets. Partnership in trade appeared, and bankers devised means for the transference of money by *hundi*, or notes of credit, from one locality to another. Generally, each town developed one highly specialized industry, such as the muslin industry at Dacca and the manufacture of calico at Calicut, although minor industries also developed to some extent. As a rule, high-priced goods were made to order, but cheaper goods found their way into domestic and foreign markets.

The commercial spirit of the Hindus dates back to the earliest times. The Malabar coast had trade relations with Babylon. In the first century B. C. India built up an extensive trade with Rome. Spices, precious stones, muslin, and other cotton goods, formed the chief articles of export, while imports consisted chiefly of gold and silver, the value of which amounted to £ 458 000¹ a year. Broach rose to supremacy as a port in the fifth and sixth centuries A. D. Chaul enjoyed the same distinction in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries until superseded by Goa and Surat, which were established by European traders in the sixteenth and seventeenth cen-

¹ Imperial Gazetteer of India, new edition, 1906, 3:258.

turies and which remained the chief exporting centers of textiles, drugs, dyes, art works, and spices down to the beginning of the eighteenth century.

It is thus evident that while the self-sufficing system of village economy existed in all rural districts, and prevails in most part of the country to-day, other industrial systems gradually grew up in towns, even before the Christian era. The handicraft system, found in the rudimentary stage in the village, became highly developed in the town and led to the formation of the caste-guild, which reached its greatest development under the rule and patronage of the Mongol emperors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

With the rise and growth of the trading classes, the domestic system came into existence, and was followed by the workshop system, which is still dominant in the industrial organisation of the town in India.

2. Rise of Modern Industrialism.

Until the end of the eighteenth century India not only supplied the limited demand of her population for manufactured goods, but also enjoyed a large export trade. With the beginning of the nineteenth century, Indian industry underwent a complete change. Instead of exporting manufactures India began to import them and to send out grains and other raw materials in exchange. This rapid change was due to the policy of the East India Company, a policy which increased the export of Indian raw materials to British mills, and the importation of British manufactured goods into India.

As a result of this change there followed a complete collapse of the industrial organization of the country. The artisan class suffered most, for its

members had to fall back on the land and to depend wholly on farming. The produce from a little piece of farm land, which had for so long only supplemented the income from their craft, now became the sole means of their support. With the decline of the craft system, engineering, architecture, and other industrial skill also disappeared and the industrial disorganization was soon followed by intellectual stagnation and moral deterioration of the people.

From this condition India has, within the last two generations, been slowly but surely drifting toward modern industrialism. The self-sufficient village economy has, in many cases, been replaced by national and international economy. Mechanical power has begun to be applied to productive processes. Native manufactures are again finding their place in the domestic and even in the foreign market.

The most important factor which has brought about this change is the increased facility for transportation. To the innumerable rivers which had always served as highways of trade in Bengal and other provinces, a large number of long roads were added by the Hindu and Mohammedan rulers. The metalled roads for heavy transportation were not constructed until within recent years. In 1850 there were only a few miles of metalled roads in the whole country, but by 1918-19, the number had risen to 56 426 miles. At the same time the number of miles of unmetalled roads increased to approximately 149 000.² The work of railroad construction began in 1854. By 1861 only 587 miles of railroads had been built. In the year 1920, 36 735 miles of railroad were recorded as having been opened throughout British India.³

² Statesman's Yearbook, 1921, p. 150. Computed.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

The agricultural industry was the first to adapt itself to modern industrialism. The small size of farms and the cheapness of labor have not permitted the introduction of machinery and modern implements on the farm, and the extreme poverty of the cultivators has also retarded the use of fertilizers. But the production, with special reference to the market has already secured a firm footing in the agricultural industry of the country. This has been mainly due to the demand for food and raw materials in England and other European countries. The cultivation of indigo increased almost simultaneously with the growth of the early British settlement in India. Coffee was introduced later on. Tea was not extensively cultivated until 1851, when the value of its export amounted to £ 133 979. It has since then enormously increased, and amounted in 1919—20 to Rs. 205 650 470. While these crops were mostly raised by the British planters, the cultivation of jute and other staples, which form the bulk of Indian exports, was taken up by the native farmers themselves. From £ 68,777 in 1849, the value of the export of raw jute alone rose to Rs. 246 994 523, and that of manufactured jute to Rs. 500 154 627 in 1919—20. The value of raw cotton exported was Rs. 586 524 010 in 1919—20.*

Mining was the next important industry to undergo a rapid change. Metallurgy as an art was highly developed in ancient India, and the Hindus even anticipated the process now employed in Europe for manufacture of high-class steel. But mining as an industry did not develop until the latter part of the eighteenth century, when gold was first mined under modern scientific methods. Coal mines were later discovered and a large quantity of coal is now

* Statesman's Yearbook, 1921, p. 146.

being mined every year. In 1919, 22 628 000 tons were produced. The output of gold was valued at £ 2 060 904 and that of coal at £ 6 017 089 in 1918.⁶ The mining of iron now plays a prominent role in the mineral production of the country.

The manufacturing industry has also made considerable progress. While factories employing mechanical power have gradually come into existence, business has also been organised after the modern system. Joint stock companies have increased in number from 886 in 1889—90 to 1 366 in 1900—01,⁷ and to 2 789 in 1919,⁸ showing a threefold increase in 30 years.

Foreign trade has similarly increased. The value of imports, including treasure, has increased from Rs. 61 541 000 in 1834—35 to approximately Rs. 3 000 000 000 in 1919—20, showing almost a fifty-fold increase. The value of exports and reexports including treasure, rose from Rs. 81 8810 000 in 1834—35 to approximately Rs. 3 500 000 000 in 1919—20,⁹ showing a forty-three fold increase. In 1919 India stood thirteenth among the importing nations and eighth among the exporting nations.

3. Development of the Factory System.

The most important progress of modern industrialism has been made in the factory system. The textile industry is the leading branch of manufacturing in India. The spinning and weaving of cotton had been known to the people for centuries, but it was not until 1851 that Bombay started her cotton

⁶ Statesman's Yearbook, 1921, p. 142.

⁷ Statistics of British India, 1915, Vol. 1, p. 92.

⁸ Ibid., 1921, Vol. I, p. 95.

⁹ Statesman's Yearbook, 1921, p. 142. Computed.

mills.* In a decade about a dozen mills had sprung up around the city. In 1879 there were 63 cotton factories employing about 51 000 persons in the whole of India; in 1918 there were 264 cotton mills employing a daily average number of 290 255 persons, of whom 212 918 were men, 50 029 women, and 27 245 children. During the same period the number of cotton spindles increased over four times, and the number of looms about eight times. In 1918—19 there were 6 510 918 spindles and 116 094 looms in the country, representing an authorized capital investment of Rs. 276 982 217.¹⁰

Next in importance to the manufacture of cotton is the manufacture of jute, fabrics of which had long formed the rough clothing of the poorer classes of the people. With the invasion of the Indian market by the cheap British cotton goods, jute fabrics fell into disuse, and their manufacture was superseded by that of gunny bags, an industry which rose in importance with the increasing exportation of grains. In 1854 the supply of flax from Russia was cut off due to the Crimean War, and the need of a substitute was then realized. In 1854 spinning machinery was brought from Dundee and the first jute factory was established at Serampore. From its start it had better success than did the cotton industry which met with strong opposition from the Manchester interests. The monopolistic character of the industry also added to its phenomenal success. In 1879—80, there were 22 jute mills at work in the country, and in 1918—19, there were 76 such mills. During the same period the number of looms increased from 4 946 to 40 043, and the number of spindles

* Imperial Gazetteer of India, new edition, 1908, 9 : 197.

¹⁰ Statesman's Yearbook, 1921, p. 142.

from 70 840 to 839 919. The capital invested rose from Rs. 27 070 000 in 1879—80 to Rs. 142 720 000 in 1918—19.¹¹

The third in the series of textile industries in India is woolen manufacture, which has met with little success against foreign competition. Rugs, carpets, shawls, and other similar goods are still made with hand looms in small workshops, but their annual production is considerable. In 1918—19, there were only 7 woolen mills worked with mechanical power. They had 42 726 spindles, and 1 344 looms, and produced 10 540 000 pounds of goods, valued at Rs. 20 015 000.¹²

Next to the manufacture of textile goods is the iron and steel industry. Only a decade ago the production of iron and steel was insignificant, but since the war it has become one of the most important and promising industries of the country. The production of iron ore rose from 28 295 tons in 1890 to 492 484 tons in 1918, all of which was consumed by the mills of the country.¹³

Besides the textile and iron and steel industries there are only a few branches of manufacture which deserve mention, so far as the employment of labor in them is concerned. Paper mills started successfully, but as soon as foreign producers introduced wood pulp into their factories, progress in India was checked. In 1918 there were 9 paper mills in the country employing a daily average of 5759 persons. They produced during that year 31 400 tons of paper, valued at Rs. 21 118 000.¹⁴ The brewing industry made a sure though slow progress and

¹¹ Statistics of British India, 1921, Vol. 1, pp. V and 74

¹² Ibid., p. 79.

¹³ Ibid., p. 81.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 77.

recorded the total number of breweries in 1918 at 16 employing 1895 persons and producing yearly 8 214 423 gallons of beer.¹⁶

Of the seasonal employments, cotton ginning, cotton and jute pressing, and rice milling are the chief. These vary in importance from year to year, according to the annual production of the crops. In 1918 there were 1 785 cotton gins and presses, 591 rice mills, and 119 jute presses.¹⁶

No reliable data regarding the number of factories are available prior to the year 1892, when the first statistics were taken and 653 factories were found to exist in the country. In 1918 there were 3 318 factories working and liable to inspection under the factory act.¹⁷

In 1918—19, 172 cotton mills, i. e., 68 per cent of the total, operating 71 per cent of the spindles and 80 per cent of the looms, were located in the Bombay Presidency, and of these 81 were in the city of Bombay and 64 in Ahmedabad. There were 14 in Bengal, 14 in Madras, 19 in the United Provinces, and 5 in the Punjab. The remaining 45 mills were scattered throughout India.¹⁸ The cotton gins and presses are located in the Central Provinces and Berar, the Bombay Presidency, the Punjab, and the United Provinces. Practically all the jute mills are located in Bengal, mostly in the neighbourhood of Calcutta. Bengal also possesses most of the silk and indigo industries. The flour mills are found mostly in the Punjab, and the sugar works in the United Provinces. The rice and saw mills are located near the seacoast in Burma.

¹⁶ Statistics of British India, 1921, Vol. I, p. 52.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁷ Statistical Abstracts relating to British India, 1921, p. 295.

¹⁸ Statistics of British India, 1921, Vol. I, p. 111.



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

1. Old Industrial Organization.

From the earliest times, India has been a country of small communities, most of them isolated and consisting of a cluster of houses surrounded by farm land. A comparatively large community, or a group of several smaller ones, forms the village, the chief industrial unit in the country.

Agriculture is the principal industry in the village. The size of farms is exceedingly small, being about an acre or even less in some localities. Land is owned either individually or collectively. In the latter case, the holdings of the whole community form a single estate and the land tax is paid the Government in a lump sum. Whatever may be the form of ownership, each cultivator has his own allotted share of farm land, the affairs of which he manages himself with the help of his family. Besides agriculture, there exist in every village such other industries as weaving, pottery making, smithing, and oil-pressing. But none of these industries is entirely separated from farming, although any one of them may be the chief occupation of the worker.

The whole industrial population of the village may be divided into two classes, the cultivators and the artisans; the former providing the food and raw materials and the latter supplying the other simple needs of rural life. Every village has as also its menials or servants, such as washermen, barbers, and scavengers. The land-lord class has appeared in the

industrial groups was very common. If, however, occasion arose for extra help, the need was met by temporarily hiring a neighbour, who was generally paid in kind at the customary rate. Labor has thus always been free in the village. In fact, it is extremely doubtful whether slavery as an economic institution had ever attained any importance in India, except perhaps in prehistoric times. There was indeed a system under which a few slaves were found in the household of the higher caste or of the rich. But the system was not widespread nor did the master live on the labor of his slaves. They were either domestic servants or personal attendants. Serfdom has also played very little, if any, part in the development of the laboring classes in India. The feudal system never obtained a foothold in India to the same extent as it did in Japan and many countries of Europe.

Industries in towns were always in the hands of craftsmen or tradespeople. They managed their affairs themselves or with the help of hired labor. The helper was a sort of apprentice, who was always on the lookout for the opportunity of becoming a master craftsman or independent tradesman himself. In most cases he realized his ambition. Even if he did not, there was no occasion for the formation of a wage-earning class. There were two principal causes which prevented a sharp distinction between master and workman: First, the workman invariably belonged to the same caste as his master, and in most cases his relative. Some times the apprentice married into the family of his master. Second, the workman generally lived in a large family group, some members of which were independent craftsmen or tradespeople. As in the village, the working people in towns were, therefore, free and independent.

Except for the caste system which was itself socio-economic in origin, there did not exist any separate class of employers and the employees. With the rise of modern industrialism there were three independent classes of people which could supply labor to modern industries:

(1) The ryots or cultivators of land, comprising those who had followed agriculture as a vocation from time immemorial, and also those who had been artisans before but who had reverted to agriculture through the destruction of the native industries.

(2) The artisans or craftsmen who, while still struggling to hold their family occupation, could not earn more than a bare living in competition with modern industries.

(3) The menials or village servants, for whom the local need had been outgrown. Even when their services were needed in the community, the customary remuneration did not suffice to satisfy their wants which had grown and multiplied in the course of time.

Although the supply of agricultural land had increased, it has scarcely been able to keep pace with the growing population. It has been mostly through the redistribution of homestead and farmland that the growing population has been accommodated.

Laborers as a class first appeared on farms as peasant farmers who hired themselves out for a part of the time. No record of such laborers was kept until the first census for the whole of India was taken in 1891, when it was found that about 6.5 per cent of the total population were peasant farmers. In 1901 there were about 20 000 000 farm servants or field laborers and in 1911 the number had risen

to nearly 26 000 000.¹ In most cases they were part-time laborers and were not sharply differentiated from the farmers themselves whose holdings did not, on the average, amount to more than 5 or 6 acres.

British plantations in India were first to demand a class of farm laborers as such. With the growth of indigo and coffee cultivation a large number of people found occupation on plantations. But it was not until the tea plantations were established that the demand for such a laboring class was keenly felt.

According to the census of 1911, there were 482 coffee plantations, 121 indigo plantations, and 1 002 tea plantations in the country, employing 57 623, 30 795, and 703 585 laborers, respectively.² Laborers on plantations are recruited from different parts of the country and work under contract for a certain number of years. Since 1863 several laws have been passed regarding recruitment, transportation, contract, and working conditions.

The demand for Indian laborers for English colonies came long before the middle of the nineteenth century, and in 1835 17 315 workers were sent out under the emigration law to Mauritius, Natal, British Guiana, and the West Indies. The number rose to 95 616 in 1910, averaging 15 766 a year for the preceding 26 years, and the number of those who returned averaged 7 343 a year during the same period. The lot of the emigrants who went out as indentured laborers was very hard, and the Indian Government was obliged in 1917 to prohibit further emigration of Indian labor as a war measure, with

¹ Statistical Abstracts relating to British India, 1913, p. 16; 1920, p. 16.

² Statistics of British India, 1919. Vol. I, p. 5.

the understanding that it would not be revived.² In 1918—19, only 7 682 laborers went out and at the same time 7 856 laborers returned to India. In 1918—19, the number of emigrants went down to 381.⁴

With the construction of railroads there appeared a new demand for labor. In 1910 there were employed 350 177 persons by the railroads in India. The number rose to 685 965 in 1918—19, of whom 6 706, were Europeans, 10 456 Anglo-Indians and 668 803 Indians.⁵

The demand for labor in the mines came with the opening of the coalfields in different parts of the country, especially in Bihar and Orissa. In 1885 there were 24 541 laborers engaged in coal mining. The number rose to 191 325 in 1918.⁶ The number of workmen in other mining industries is rather insignificant.

Thus a large class of laborers grew up in the different industries of the country. There was a total of 4 789 large industrial establishments in 1918—19, employing a daily average of 1 292 670 people.⁷ But there has not yet emerged a sharp distinction between the laboring classes and the people from whom they are emerging. Nor does there yet exist a wage-earning class in the technical sense of the term, except in a few industrial centers. Unlike the wage-earning classes of Europe and America, the majority of the laborers still retain their homesteads, and some of them even own a piece of farm land small though it may be, and they do not yet depend completely upon wages for their liveli-

² Statistics abstracts relating to British India, 1921, p. 203.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁴ Statistics of British India, 1921.^c Vol. I, p. 90.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. -11.

hood. The slow growth of the wage-earning classes in India may be accounted for on several grounds:

First, the laboring classes in India have always been freeholders and are slow to leave their old positions, whereas in the West the ancestry of the present wage-earning classes was remotely connected with serfdom and it was natural for their descendants to get away from their hard lot and humiliation at the first opportunity that presented itself.

Second, the joint family system in India holds together all the members of the family and even when some of them leave for distant towns they retain their love for home and return whenever it is possible.

Third, no opportunity has as yet been presented to the Indian laborers for successful careers and sure earnings. Although they find life miserable, owing to the very small size of their farms, they have, nevertheless, been unwilling to try to change conditions by leaving their homes and to engage in something which to them is unknown.

The first signs of a modern wage-earning class have already appeared in some industrial centers, such as Ahmedabad and Cawnpore. The number of wage-earners who have been separated from homestead and farmland and depend solely upon wages for their livelihood is increasing, though they are still few in number.*

2. Growth in Number of Factory Workers.

Records as to the number of cotton mill workers were not kept until 1879—1880 when 47 855 such persons were found in the mills of the country. La-

* *Gr. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1901, Cd. 2047, p. 216, and 1914, Vol. 58, H. of C. 106, p. 56.

borers in jute mills, recorded still later numbered 59 222 in 1889.

The first systematic record of all laborers in all classes of factories, working under the factory act of 1881, was taken in 1892 and their number was found to be 316 715. The increase since that time is shown in the table below:

Growth of Factory Labor from 1892 to 1918*

Year	Number of factories		Number of persons employed		Average number of persons per factory
	Total	Per cent of increase compared with 1892	Total	Per cent of increase compared with 1892	
1892	653	—	316,715	—	485
1900	1,207	85	468,956	48	388
1910	2,271	248	792,511	150	349
1918	3,318	408	1,123,072	254	338

The above table indicates the comparative growth in the number of factories and laborers in the 26-year period, the number of factories having increased 408 per cent and that of laborers 254 per cent.

The last column shows the average number of workers in each factory. In 1892 there were 485 persons to each factory, the number declining to 349 in 1910 and to 338 in 1918. The reason for this decline was the gradual inclusion of many smaller establishments within the scope of the factory act.

This growth of factory labor has been almost equally distributed among all classes of laborers, including men, women, and children, as shown in the table below:

* Statistical Abstract relating to British India, 1900—01, p. 265; 1909—10, p. 265; 1920, p. 235.

RISE OF FACTORY LABO.

Growth in the Number of Man, Woman, and Factory Laborers from 1892 to 1918.¹⁰

Year	Men		Women		Children		Total	
	Number	Per cent of increase compared with 1892	Number	Per cent of increase compared with 1892	Number	Per cent of increase compared with 1892	Number	Per cent of increase compared with 1892
1892	254,236	—	43,592	—	18,887	—	316,715	—
1900	372,617	46	68,610	34	27,729	46	468,956	48
1910	624,945	145	115,540	165	52,026	176	792,511	150
1918	897,619	252	161,343	270	64,110	239	1,123,072	254

Of the 316 715 workers engaged in different factories in 1892, there were 254 236 men, 43 592 women, and 18 887 children. In 1918, the total number of workers rose to 1 123 072, of whom 897 619 were men, 161 343 women, and 64 110 children. The increase in the number of different classes of employees in 1918 as compared with 1892 was 252 per cent for men, 270 per cent for women, and 254 per cent for children, showing a higher rate of increase among woman employees than among other groups. The variation in the proportion of the different groups of factory workers is shown in the following table:

Proportion of Man, Woman, and Child Laborers at Specified Periods, 1892 to 1918.

Year	Men	Women	Children	Total
1892	80.2	13.7	6.0	100
1900	79.5	14.6	5.9	100
1910	78.9	14.6	6.5	100
1918	80.0	14.3	5.7	100

¹⁰ Statistical Abstract relating to British India, 1901—02, p. 269; 1920, p. 233.

This comparison indicates the very slight change which has taken place in the proportion of woman, man, and child workers in India. There is a slightly increasing tendency on the part of women to enter into factory work. The number of male workers declined somewhat. The change in the proportion of child workers is too slight to warrant any general statement.

The proportion of boys to girls employed in Indian factories is shown in the following table:

Proportion of Boys to Girls in Factories at Specified Periods, 1892 to 1918.¹¹

Year	Boys	Girls	Number of boys to each girl
1892	16,299	2,588	6.3
1910	43,273	8,753	4.9
1918	53,184	10,926	4.8

The above table indicates that the proportion of girls employed in factory work had increased gradually in the 26-year period covered.

4. Occupational Classification.

The classification of Indian laborers according to occupation is difficult, since the majority are unskilled laborers and handymen and have, therefore, no definite line of work. The work of many laborers also overlaps that of others. Only the skilled ones have any definite trade. The statistics for even such workers are not complete because they are classified

¹¹ Statistics of British India, 1913, Vol. I, p. 40; 1920, Vol. I, p. 44.

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according to the nature of the industry and the nature of the occupation. Some rough idea may be had of the nature of their work from the classification of people employed in factories in different industries.

Average Daily Number of Factory Operatives
Employed in Different Industries in 1918—19.

Industry Year	Number of operatives in factories		Total operatives
	Worked by mechanical or electrical power	Worked by not mecha- nical or elec- trical power	
Textile	572,512	4,311	576,823
Mineral	42,388	5,835	48,223
Transport	101,988	1,753	101,741
Food, drink and tobacco ...	76,331	5,899	82,230
Chemicals, dyes, etc.	18,917	7,142	26,059
Paper and painting	23,316	740	24,056
Wood, stone, and glass works	35,738	23,539	59,277
Hides and skins	11,534	4,032	15,566
Miscellaneous	203,317	21,275	224,592
Government, local bodies etc.	—	—	132,103
Total	1,086,041	74,526	1,292,670

As indicated in the above table, the daily average number of persons employed in all the factories in India, whether or not worked by mechanical or electrical power, and whether owned by Government or local bodies or companies or individuals was 1 292 670 in 1918—19. The average was 1 236 238 in 1917—18, and 1 212 375 in 1916. Of these the number employed under the factory act was 1 123 072 in 1918, 1 076 201 in 1917, and 1 061 409 in 1916. More than half of the operatives are employed in the textile industry.

¹³ Statistics of British India, 1921, Vol. I, p. 1.

BY LABOR IN INDIA.

Jute mills are most important in textile employing, respectively, 290 300 and 1918—19. Next in importance are the transport works, who numbered 103 741—19 including laborers in dockyards and railway workshops. The third largest group of employees is found in industries connected with food and drink, such as rice mills and sugar factories, employing 82 230 persons in 1918—19. Of these laborers, about 48 277 were employed in rice mills alone.¹²

Among the miscellaneous workers are to be found the laborers in cotton ginning, cleaning, and pressing, and jute pressing, amounting to approximately 124 461 and 28 652, respectively.¹⁴

Most of the women are employed in textile factories. Of the 22 844 women employed in the Bombay Presidency in 1892, 18 335 were engaged in cotton spinning and weaving, 3 435 in cotton pressing and cleaning and 249 in other textile industries. Only 825 women were employed in other occupations.¹⁵

In certain factories women's work has been limited to reeling and winding. In the jute mills of Bengal, women's work consists of sewing and weaving. A few are employed in feeding jute and at softening machines and at carding frames. In Burma, women sew bags and cleanse rice. Some of them work as carriers. A large number of women are employed on cotton gins and presses.

The children are generally employed in the textile industry. Of the 5 946 children employed in

¹² Statistics of British India, 1921, Vol. I, p. 11.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 57.

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1892 in Bombay factories, 5 205 were employed in cotton mills. Almost all of them were doing piecing. In the same year only 276 children were employed on cotton gins.¹⁸ Most of the children employed in doffing and piecing at the present time. Of the 63 540 children working under the factory act of 1911 in India, 22 072 were engaged in the cotton industry and 27 508 in the jute industry.

People of all castes are found in the factories all over the country. Hindus and Mohammedans work side by side in the same mill. Neither does the question of caste deter the laborers from going into the mills.

Although the caste system is breaking down, each caste has a traditional preference for particular kind of work. Thus in the Bombay factories, most of the weavers come from the Zola caste, the Ghattis supply workers for heavy lifting, while in the mixing department are found the Konkani Maratha workers.

5. Geographical Distribution.

Since the establishment of cotton mills in Bombay and jute mills in Bengal, these two provinces have become the centers of the two great industries of the country. About 39 per cent of the factory workers under the act were employed in Bengal and about 26 per cent in Bombay, these two provinces employing nearly two-thirds of the factory labor of India. The following table indicates distribution of factory labor by Provinces.

¹⁸ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 57.

FACTORY LABOR IN INDIA.

Geographical Distribution of Factory Labor in 1918.¹⁷

Province	Factories			Laborers			
	Num-ber	Per cent	Men	Wo-men	Child-ren	Total	
						Number	Per cent
Bengal	558	16.8	354,389	52,062	33,510	439,961	39.1
Bombay	868	26.2	227,937	54,297	14,438	296,672	26.4
Madras	460	13.9	75,546	15,818	7,695	99,059	8.8
Burma	549	16.5	65,239	5,131	548	70,918	6.3
United Provinces	188	5.7	56,566	5,384	2,296	64,196	5.7
Central Provinces and Berar	402	12.1	30,817	15,581	2,595	48,993	4.4
Bihar and Orissa	62	1.8	36,107	5,923	1,441	43,471	3.8
Punjab	176	5.3	33,758	4,171	900	38,829	3.5
Other sections	55	1.7	17,260	3,026	687	20,973	1.9
Total	3,318	100.0	897,619	161,343	64,110	1,123,072	100.0 ¹⁸

Bombay had 868 factories or about one-fourth of the total number in the country, and had 26.4 per cent of the employees. On the other hand, Bengal with 558 factories, or 16.8 per cent of the total, had 39.2 per cent of the employees. While second in number of factories, she held the first place in number of workmen. This was due to the fact that there was a large number of cotton gins in the Presidency of Bombay giving only seasonal employment and that to a comparatively small number of employees. Bengal had also some seasonal industries, such as jute pressing, but with a comparatively large number of laborers. Madras had 460 factories, or 13.9 per cent of the total, and only 8.8 per cent of the employees. Burma ranked third in the number of factories, having only 549 such establishments, or 16.5 per cent of the total, and

¹⁷ Statistical Abstract relating to British India, 1921, p. 235.

¹⁸ Slight discrepancies in the number of the employees in this table as compared with that on p. 19 are due to different sources of information and to the exclusion or inclusion of laborers in some of the native states in the reports.

RISE OF FACTORY LABOR

only 6.3 per cent of the employees. Like Bombay, Madras and Burma had a large number of seasonal industries, with a comparatively small number of employees. As far as single localities are concerned, the city of Bombay employs the largest number of laborers in the country.

Bombay employed the largest number of female laborers having 54 297, or 33.6 per cent of all women employed in the country in 1918. Bengal closely followed Bombay, employing 52 062 women or 32.2 per cent of the total during the same year. The cotton mills of Bombay and the jute mills of Bengal offered the best opportunity for work. Madras employed 15 818 women in 1918, or 9.7 per cent of the total. The Central Provinces and Berar employed 15 581 women, or 9.6 per cent of the total. The number of woman workers was not very significant in other provinces.

There were 64 110 children employed in the factories of India in 1918. By far the largest number of children were employed in Bengal which had 33 510 child laborers, or 52.3 per cent of the total. During the same year, Bombay had 14 438 children and Madras 7 695, or 22.5 and 12.0 per cent respectively. The number of children employed in other provinces is very small.

The largest number of children employed in any one city is at Ahmedabad where 5 492 children were employed in 1918.

6. Local Sources of Supply.

The labor supply of the Bombay mills is largely drawn from the districts of Ratnagiri, Poona, and Satara, the first named contributing the largest share. Some are drawn also from the United Provinces.

The greater number of the factory workers in Bengal come from the United Provinces and Bihar, but Orissa, Northern Madras, Nadia, and other districts also share in the contribution to the mills of Calcutta and vicinity. The jute mills of Bengal are mostly worked with the labor from the United Provinces. The Punjab mills draw a large share of their labor from the United Provinces while Burma mills depend for their labor supply upon the annual incoming of a large body of immigrants from the northern Circars of the Madras Presidency. These laborers work in the mills for five or six months in the year, and then return home.

Almost all of the laboring classes, however, come from the farm. The density of population and poverty of soils which prevail in the Kankar districts, Bihar, the United Provinces, and northern Circars of Madras, drive a large portion of the workers from the farms. A large number of the factory workers still retain their farm land, however, which they themselves take care of each season or leave to the care of their relatives.

One of the interesting phenomena in this connection is the gradual decrease of Bengali laborers in the jute mills of Calcutta and the neighborhood. From the beginning of the establishment of the jute industry, until the middle of the eighties, all the laborers were Bengalese. About 1905, two-thirds of the laborers were immigrants.¹⁹ At present, about 90 per cent of the laborers are drawn from the United Provinces. There are several reasons for such an increase in immigrant labor: First, laborers from the United Provinces are stronger in constitution and can endure more physical strain. Second, they

¹⁹ Foley, Report on Labor in Bengal, 1906, p. 6.

live near the factories and are more regular in attendance. Third, Bengalese are better off than immigrant laborers of the same class and are more independent in spirit. They have more openings in other fields of labor and do not like to confine themselves to the hard work of a factory.

CHAPTER III. FACTORY DISCIPLINE.

In the foregoing chapters we have seen the growth of the factory system and the rise of the laboring classes in industrial centers. How the laborers from farms, where the work was extensive and desultory, were gradually adapted to the intensive and continuous work of factories, is an interesting study, forming the subject matter of factory discipline.

The application of mechanical power is the essential feature of the factory system of production. This has resulted in the use of heavy and expensive machinery and in the minute division of labor. A factory requires the cooperation of a large number of workers. For the economic use of machinery and mechanical power, it is necessary that the work of all laborers should be coordinated at a certain time and place. Under the factory system, each worker is a cog in the whole productive machine, including both men and machinery. Thus, the success of a factory depends, to a large extent, upon the coordination of all workers in relation to one another and to the machinery. The organization of men and machinery into a successful system of production is largely a question of discipline.

1. Admission into the Trade.

The selection of the employees is the first task of factory administration. The ground on which selection is based differs more or less in different industries. But the universal requirements for admission into a trade are health and vigor, freedom from communicable disease, and training and experience.

Full information is lacking about the conditions on which the selection of laborers is made in factories in India. The larger factories have employment agencies and a medical staff. Due to the scarcity of labor for factory work and to the absence of free public schools in India, it has not been possible to be very particular about the education and training of laborers as conditions of employment. With the prevalence of strikes in the past two years, many employers have begun to look with suspicion upon the labor organization and upon the affiliation of laborers with them.

As most of the factory workers come from the country, leaving behind them wives and children, the supply of woman and child labor in Indian factories is rather limited. Social custom also prevents a large number of women from entering into factories. Children can be employed only under certain conditions prescribed by the factory law. They must meet the requirements of age and physical fitness, both of which must be certified by government inspectors especially appointed for the purpose.

When the factory system was first introduced, employers were little interested in the age and physical fitness of children. Their indiscriminate employment led to many abuses until the government passed its regulative measures. Another requirement

for the admission into trade is that no young person should be employed as a fulltime worker until he has reached the age fixed by the law.

The employment of the under-aged children as half-timers and full-timers is one of the commonest violations of the factory law. By the appointment of a large number of factory inspectors, and by the strict enforcement of the law, the abuses have been minimized in recent years.

It has been said that factory workers have to pay tips, or *dasturi*, to the head-man in order to secure a job. The matter has not been well-enough investigated to warrant any definite statement. As far back as 1890, some of the workers in an Ahmedabad mill testified before the factory commission of that year, that they had to pay tips to the head-man for admission into the factory.¹ The existence of such a practice was admitted even as late as 1907 by a factory manager in his testimony before the factory commission of 1907 when he said that about 20 to 25 % of the hands paid tips.² There is little evidence of such practice in other parts of the country.

2. Tardiness and Lottering.

The operation of a factory where the work is dependent upon the cooperation of a large number of workers, requires punctuality of attendance. Data concerning the punctual attendance of laborers in the factories of India are not very definite. Conflicting opinions have been held by different factory authorities.

Women have been charged with tardiness. Out

¹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 74.

² *Ibid.*, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 97. Mr. C. D. Pandey, Emperor Edwards Mills, Bombay.

of 3900 women supposed to report at 7 A. M. not even 25 % were found to be present at 8 A. M., remarked the manager of a large concern.⁵ An contrary statement was given out by Mr. Baptista, a mill manager, who said that the mill workers came early to work, sometimes an hour before the proper time and were anxious for the mill gates to open.⁶

As for the tardiness of woman workers it should be remembered that women are, as a rule, piece workers, and most of them also do not like to take advantage of the hour and a half of rest at midday granted by the law. They prefer, therefore, to come late and to leave early, remaining at home as long as possible. As far as the attendance of adult male workers is concerned, it is probably true that the majority of them come too early rather than too late.

Because of peculiar circumstances attaching to factory labor in India, workers often come to the factory long before the commencement of work and are thus uselessly deprived of much-needed sleep. These circumstances are: First, the work in factories begins very early and the employees live far away from factory. Second, they have no watches or clocks. Their sole guide in attending work is the mill whistle which wakes them up long before the working day begins. Rather than pay fines for tardiness, the workers prefer to come to the mill early.

The imposition of fines seems to be the general method of dealing with the late-comers to the factory. "They are fined for being late", admitted a worker before the factory Commission of 1890.⁷ A witness

⁵ General Manager, Messrs. Greaves, Cotton & Co., Bombay. *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1909, Vol. 63. Cd. 4519, p. 72.

⁶ Morarjee Goculdass Spinning and Weaving Co., Ltd. Bombay. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁷ Bombay Silk Factory. *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 58.

before the Factory Labor Commission in 1907 brought out in his testimony the fact that many workers forfeited their wages for a quarter of a day though they were only ten minutes late.*

A charge more serious than that of tardiness among workers is that of loitering. It has been said to be their habit to work leisurely and to get out every now and then. In 1888 the Cawnpore Factory Report mentioned the existence of a pass system in certain factories which allowed 20 % of the workers in a room to be out at a time.⁷ The Indian Factory Commission of 1890 made an inquiry into the matter and reported as follows: "The operatives in all the provinces visited by us are, without exception, in the habit of going out at odd times for 5 or 10 minutes for all sorts of purposes. We have ourselves seen them engaged in drinking water, washing, smoking and looking about. The owners of most mills are liberal in regard to this point and in many instances employ extra hands to relieve the workmen who want to go out on these occasions."⁸ Questioned by the said Commission, a worker at a Bombay silk factory admitted that they had one pass for each 8 men and he himself went out about 4 times a day besides the half-hour rest at midday and was absent about ten minutes each time. * Testimony was given before the Factory Labor Commission of 1907 on this point. Mr. Greaves of Messrs. Greaves, Cotton and Co., Bombay, testified before the Commission that "owing to the idling habit he was obliged to employ from 30 to 40 % more hands than would ordinarily be required for mill purposes."¹⁰

* Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 87.

⁷ Ibid., 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 88.

⁸ Ibid., 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 14.

⁹ Ibid., 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 59.

¹⁰ Ibid., 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 63.

The general manager of the same company said that an Indian factory worker spent about 3 hours outside in a 12 hour day. No pass system was used in this mill. More conservative figures were given out by Mr. Desai of the Jafur Alee Mill at Surat, who estimated the number of loiterers at 17 % in the spinning, and 15 % in the weaving departments. The passes were always in use.¹¹ A still more elaborate statement has come from Mr. S. Meyers, Manager of the David and Standard Mills, Bombay. "They go out in the mill compound when they like", said Mr. Meyers, "for smoking, drinking and natural purposes, and stop out 15 to 30 minutes at a time. The doffer boys in all the departments of the mill and also the piecers in the ring and mule departments, as a rule, go out after every doffing, which means on an average of every 1½ hours. Besides, they take their meals during the working hours inside the mill, but never during the half-hour stoppage. All mill-hands stop from work whenever they feel inclined to do so without asking leave."¹²

It is difficult to ascertain the exact amount of time each laborer daily spends outside the mill. It varies, of course, in different mills and in different parts of the country. Nor is it the same with all the workers in the same mill. A general use of the pass system could have given us some clue to the enquiry, but only a few mills have adopted the system.

The fact remains uncontradicted, however, that Indian laborers waste a good deal of time outside the mill. Following are the two important causes which have been suggested for this idling habit: First, high temperature and bad ventilation which

¹¹ *Qt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 101.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 70.

prevail inside the mill, have been cited among the causes.

Second, long hours of work have often been associated with the idling habits of workers, especially in the cotton mills. The workers in the Calcutta jute mills work by shifts and the hours are short. They do not idle their time away to the same extent. There is practically no idling in the engineering shops throughout the country as the work does not exceed more than 8 hours a day. In some better-managed shops with strong supervision and 10 to 10½ hours' work a day, there is also little or no idling. In a wool mill in the United Provinces, where the work does not exceed more than 10½ hours a day on the average, it has been ascertained that on two selected days, one in May and another in November, about 44 % of the workers did not go out at all and the average absence from work for all workers was not more than half an hour each day. The same class of laborers loitered much more in a factory at Agra where the work amounted to 14 or 15 hours a day.¹³ Remarking on the loitering habits of workers, the Factory Labor Commission of 1907 stated: "The comparisons which we have been enabled to make convinced us that the Indian operative, while naturally disposed to take work easily, possesses considerable adaptability and that the length of day determines to some extent the manner in which he works. Where the hours are short and supervision is good, the operative can be trained to adopt fairly regular and steady habits of work."¹⁴

¹³ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 21.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

3. Absence and Turnover.

Other serious charges against the workers in Indian factories are their frequent absence from work and their high turnover rate. There are no recent authoritative data available on this point. Few factories keep statistics of absence and turnover. Such data as are available have been gathered for the most part on the occasion of special investigations into factory conditions. The latest investigation of the sort was made in 1907 and data presented at that time, therefore, are the latest available.

Complaints have been made of the frequency of absence among Indian factory workers in almost all parts of the country ever since the rise of the factory system. In 1889, there were 2450 workers in the muster roll of the Empress Mills, Bombay; out of these, about 450 were, on the average, absent.¹⁶ Three years later the Madras factory report noted that 18 % of the men on the muster rolls at a Trichinopoly factory were absent during the year on account of casual leave and other causes.¹⁷ "The percentage of absentees," continued the report, "varies greatly from mill to mill and is by no means due to sickness alone."¹⁸ Out of 900 hands, about 150 were always absent in the Jafur Alee Mills at Surat.¹⁹ "In Surat", said Mr. Desai, manager of the said mills "no laborer attends to his work more than 21 days on an average in a month".²⁰

More convincing evidence came from Bombay. The average attendance in the Khatau Makanji

¹⁶ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 54.*

¹⁷ *Ibid., 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 57.*

¹⁸ *Ibid., p. 55.*

¹⁹ *Ibid., 1900, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 101.*

²⁰ *Ibid., p. 100.*

Factory was 1 799 as against 1 950 employed, i. e., about 8% of the workers were absent each day.²⁰

Mr. T. E. Ratcliffe, manager of the Western India Spinning and Manufacturing Company, Ltd., Bombay, gave out the following percentage of absentees in the different departments of his factory, taken over a period of one month from the muster roll:²¹

Department	Daily Absentees	Department	Daily Absentee
Blowing	12 %	Rings	18 %
Carding	17 %	Doubling	76 %
Frames	12 %	Reeling	33 %
Mules	14 %		

No explanation is found for such a wide variation noted in the above table. In the reeling department in which 33 percent of the employees were absent daily, most of the workers were women. The total number of hands working in each department is not given. Neither is the name of the month mentioned. The data for one month are too meager to form the basis for any general conclusion.

Some interesting data have been furnished by Mr. N. B. Saklatwalla of Messrs. Tata & Sons, Co., Bombay, as shown in the table below.²²

Table I.
Extent of Absence in a Bombay Mill.
(for one month only)

Department	Total number of employees	Present throughout the month		Absent for 1 to 3 days		Absent for more than 3 days	
		Number	Per-cent.	Number	Per-cent.	Number	Per-cent.
Spinning and carding							
Adults	1,062	186	17.1	498	46	398	36.7
Half-timers	538	295	54.8	102	30.1	61	15
Weaving (largely men)	905	142	15.6	434	47.9	329	36.3
Reeling (largely women)	640	119	18.6	389	60.6	152	23.75
	3,165	742	23.4	1,463	46.2	960	30.3

²⁰ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 65.

²¹ Ibid., p. 81.

²² Ibid., p. 106.

This is the most comprehensive table available on the subject. The unit of time in the table, as in the previous one, is too short for any definite conclusions.

Only 23.4 per cent of the employees were present throughout the month. The percentage of the employees who were so present, varied from 15.6 in the case of men employed in the weaving departments, to 54.8 in the case of children or half-timers. Of all the employees, 46.2 per cent were absent for from 1 to 3 days, but of all the child employees, only 30.1 per cent were so absent. The same regularity of attendance of children is shown by the lowest figure of absence for more than three days. Of all the employees, 30.3 per cent were absent for more than three days, but of the child employees, only 15 per cent were so absent. If the conditions noted in this table are at all representative, the children are the most regular in attendance.

Women came next. The workers in the reeling department were women, as is generally the custom. Of these, 18.6 per cent were present throughout the month as against 17.1 per cent of all adults in the spinning department, and 15.6 per cent of weavers, who are mostly men. But 57.6 per cent of the women were absent from one to three days. The women, however, show a better record in the case of absence for more than three days, only 23.7 per cent of the women were so absent for the same period. On the whole, the women were more regular than men in their attendance.

Mr. C. N. Wadia, of the Century Spinning and Manufacturing Company, Ltd., Bombay, furnished the following interesting table showing the percentage of absent employees for the period of eleven months:

Table II.
Extent of Absence in a Bombay Factory.*

1907	Working days.	Total absentees in each month	Average no. of hands absent per day	Percentage of absentees on 3,200 hands p. day
January . . .	25	7 271	290	9.06
February . . .	25	8 351	334	10.44
March	27	8 383	310	9.69
April	25	7 114	284	8.87
May	27	9 546	353	11.03
June	26	7 686	295	9.22
July	26	8 196	315	9.84
August	26	6 784	261	8.16
September . . .	26	12 075	464	14.50
October	27	10 798	400	12.19
November . . .	25	8 604	330	10.31

The above data would indicate that the number of absences was fairly steady throughout the year. The percentage of absences for 11 months ranged from 9.06 per cent in January to 14.50 per cent in September.

Some interesting data were also furnished by Mr. A. K. Leslie, a partner of Messrs. Greaves, Cotton and Company, Bombay, who employed an average of 5 639 laborers in their different mills for a period of six months from January to June 1906. Of these, 481 workers, or 8½ per cent, obtained and availed themselves of casual leave running up to two months; 485 workers, or 8½ per cent more, absented themselves daily without leave.**

The Factory Labor Commission of 1907 itself made an enquiry into the number of absent workers taking the data from two representative mills in Bombay and furnished the following results:

** Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 94.
** Ibid., p. 60.

Extent of Absence in two Bombay Mills.²⁵
for 1905—06—07.

(Average absence per operative per year over
the 3 year period.)

Department	Mill A	Mill B
Carding	55 days	45 days
Throstle	62 "	51 "
Weaving	72 "	50 "

The Commission came to the conclusion that the average worker took two days off every month and a further holiday of from three to seven weeks every year. In addition, he receives the Sunday holiday and from four to ten native holidays during the year.

There seems to be a tendency among factory workers toward the increase of absence, as shown in the following tables:

Absences in the Buckingham Mills, Madras.²⁶

Month	1887		1897		1907	
	working days	percentage of absences	working days	percentage of absences	working days	percentage of absences
January	26	9.03	26	8.16	25	11.04
February	26	8.13	24	7.12	24	12.68
March	29	7.32	27	7.51	26	11.83
April	28	8.45	26	7.32	26	12.48
May	29	7.34	26	9.82	27	13.16
June	27	7.50	26	8.28	25	13.12
July	28	6.85	27	7.39	27	11.90
August	28	7.43	26	8.23	27	11.60
September	27	6.78	26	8.84	24 ^{1/2}	11.43
October	29	6.54	26	8.80	26 ^{1/2}	11.00
November	—	—	26	7.07	24	10.48
December	29	6.55	27	5.25	25	10.71
Average	27.62	7.39	26.08	7.79	25.5	11.83

²⁵ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1906, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 27.

Note that the table fails to mention the total number of employees and also the number of working days.

²⁶ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 309.

Absences in the Carnatic Mills, Madras.²⁷

Month	1887		1897		1907	
	working days	percentage of absences	working days	percentage of absences	working days	percentage of absences
January	24	6.0	24	15.55	25	15.0
February	26	5.0	24	12.32	24	15.0
March	29	6.2	27	11.55	26	16.0
April	26	5.3	26	11.12	26	16.35
May	29	6.6	26	13.32	27	11.00
June	27	7.1	26	12.28	25	15.50
July	29	6.5	27	10.43	27	13.7
August	28	5.2	26	10.08	27	12.80
September	28	6.9	26	14.61	24 ^{1/2}	13.0
October	29	5.5	14	15.42	26 ^{1/2}	13.40
November	26	5.8	26	13.13	24	12.79
December	29	7.2	26	8.76	25	9.55
	27 ^{1/2}	6.1	26	12.36	25.5	14.09

The above tables would indicate that laborers have not become more regular in the course of the twenty years under consideration. In the Buckingham Mills at Madras, 7.39 laborers out of every hundred were absent in 1887. The percentage of absent laborers rose to 7.79 in 1897 and to 11.83 in 1907. In the Carnatic Mills, the increase in the number of absent laborers was still greater. Their percentage was 6.1 in 1887, 12.35 in 1897 and 14.09 in 1907. In other words, the number of absent workers in factories increased 60 per cent in 20 years in the case of the Buckingham Mills, and 130 per cent in the case of the Carnatic Mills. What the conditions were in the mills and the extent to which those conditions affected absenteeism, it is impossible to say. But the figures shown here are not encouraging. Even today, the daily percentage of absences in an Indian factory is not less than ten per cent of the total strength.²⁸

²⁷ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 309.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1919, Cmd. 442, p. 37.

Another serious defect of labor is the turnover, or premature termination of the engagement of work in the force. In order to keep an adequate labor force, employers often have to engage a large percentage of extra workers every year. The significance of this upon the efficiency of labor and upon the cost of production has only recently been realized.

The constant change of labor in Indian factories was noticed as early as 1892 when the Bombay Factory Report stated that the habit of the workers in many factories was extremely migratory.²⁷ This was more clearly brought out by the Factory Labor Commission of 1907 in its investigation into factory conditions. "Hands are continually changing", remarked the manager of an Ahmedabad mill in his evidence before the Commission. "Out of 450 one year, only 50 remained in the mill during the second year."²⁸

Mr. Leslie, employing an average of 5 639 laborers for a period of six months, as noted above, found that 2158 persons or 38 percent of the workers resigned during a period of one year. "Some eighteen months is really the maximum period for which a mill hand works in a Bombay mill at one time," remarked Mr. Leslie.²⁹

Important data on turnover have been supplied by Mr. Simpson of Messrs. Binny and Company (Limited), Madras, as shown in the following tables:

²⁷ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 55.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 11.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

workers) have little or no advantage over ordinary laborers, certainly not over employees of railway companies."

Wages in Bombay were reported by the factory inspectors to be higher on the whole than those in Madras. A spinner in Bombay, for instance, earned 20 rupees a month,³² while one in Madras earned only 15 rupees.³³ The wages of the adult workers in the cotton factories of Bombay, with the exception of jobbers, ranged from Rs. 7 to 20 in 1892.³² The wages of able-bodied agricultural workers in Bombay averaged from 7.17 to 7.6 rupees³³ a month and those of artisans, such as masons, carpenters, and blacksmiths, from Rs. 18.15 to Rs. 22.9 a month. In Madras, agricultural laborers averaged Rs. 4.18 per month while the monthly earnings of masons, carpenters, etc. averaged Rs. 13.53 to Rs. 15.41.³⁴

The first data on the rate of wages found existing in different industries in Malabar at this period appear in the table below. Unfortunately, the wages are given by industry only and not by occupation, but the data are sufficient to show that the wages in the cotton mills were on the average higher than those in other industries. In only one instance did the rate of wages of male workers reach the $4\frac{1}{2}$ annas which were paid in the cotton mill, namely the Calicut Tile Works, where in some cases the rate reached this figure. Women earned a little more in the cotton mills than in other industries except in the plantation house works. The wages of girls were highest in the cotton mills.

³² Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1893—94, Vol. 65, H. of C. 151, p. 67.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³⁴ Prices and Wages in India, 1912, p. 188.

The tables show that the largest number of laborers left work in March and April in the Buckingham Mills and in May and August in the Carnatic Mills, and the smallest number in November, December and January in both of the mills. It must be noted here that most of the mills in India depend upon the laborers who emigrate from other parts of the country. Although the men leave home to come to work at any time of the year, depending upon the nature of their work, there are some seasonal migrations of labor. Immigrants into Calcutta and the neighborhood, for example, leave Calcutta at the approach of the hot season for two reasons: First, with the end of winter, ends also the busiest season of the jute industry. Second, the climatic condition, during the early part of summer are not wholesome in Calcutta or in the vicinity. There is an annual exodus of the population from Calcutta during this season. Whether this is applicable to factory labor in Madras, it is impossible to determine because of the lack of statistics.

Mr. Bazanji Dadabhoy, manager of the Empress Mills, Nagpur, has also furnished some very interesting data on turnover for 1907 as shown below:

Number on the muster roll on Jan. 1st,	5 331
Present	4 543
Absent	788
Number employed during the year	4 915
Total number on roll for the year	10 246
Number on the muster roll on Dec. 31	6 299
Present	5 124
Absent	1 175
Leaving a deficiency of	3 947

"Thus, during the year", concluded Mr. Dadabhoy, "between 4 000 and 5 000 hands changed their employment. Among these have been those who joined for a short time and left, and others who had

left service once and rejoined." ²² According to this statement of Mr. Dadabhoy, the rate of turnover in his mill would range from 68.7 to 85.0 per cent.

It is not possible to ascertain the extent of absence and turnover in other provinces of the country, but if these data are representative of India as a whole, the rate for India does not compare unfavorably with that for other countries. Absenteeism is a more or less acute problem in almost all countries. The average of daily absences in the United States, for example, amounts to 10 per cent. "Information which I have secured", remarked Mr. S. R. Rectanus, a director of employment, "from a considerable number of necessary industries, quite widely distributed throughout the country, shows that every day about ten per cent of the men who should be on duty, are missing."²³

Not less acute is the problem of turnover in European countries. From the data of 5 factories, English and German, collected by Mr. M. W. Alexander, it has been found that at the beginning of the year there was a total of 37 242 employees and at the end of the year, a total of 44 015 employees. During the year, 40 356 new persons were hired. That is, while the average number of the employees at the beginning and at the end of the year was 40 628, the number of employees who left during the year amounted to 33 583, thus giving an average turnover rate of 82.6 per cent.²⁴ More conclusive data on turnover was found, however, in

²² Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 367.

²³ American Milling Co., Middletown, Ohio.
U. S. Bureau of Statistics, Bulletin 247, Jan., 1919, p. 29.

²⁴ „Waste in Hiring and Firing of Men“, Proceedings of the National Machine Tool Builders' Association, 1914, p. 103.

studies of the conditions in the United States. A machine works in Pittsburgh, for example, had to hire 21 000 men and women in 1906 in order to keep a force of 10,000 employees.²⁷ Ninety clothing shops in New York City had to hire a total of 4,858 workers in the course of the year ending July 31, 1913, in order to keep an average of 1,534, which is a turnover of 231.6 per cent.²⁸ While this rate may be unusually high, due to the peculiarity of the industry, in a normal year the total number of terminations of employment in different industries and localities of the United States will be found, according to Dr. Sumner H. Slichter, who has made a very careful study of the subject, "to approximate the sum of the average number of men employed," which is an average turnover rate of about 100 per cent.²⁹ It would seem, therefore, if we may judge from the incomplete data from the Indian factories that the rate of absence and turnover in India are not abnormally high.

Various theories have been advanced as to the causes of absence and turnover among factory workers in India:

First, it has been stated that due to the long hours of work, laborers suffer from "general debility" and "slow fever" and sometimes go back to their native places to recuperate.

Nothing definitely is known as to the prevalence of "general debility" and "slow fever" caused by long hours of work. Suffice it to say that they alone could not explain the absence and turnover

²⁷ Commons, John R., "Wage-earners of Pittsburgh". *Charities and Commons*, March 6, 1909, Vol. 21, p. 1054.

²⁸ Calculated by Dr. Sumner H. Slichter, *The Turnover of Factory Labor*, 1919, p. 19.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

of so many workers, the majority of whom are young and strong. But the long hours which prevailed for several years in the textile factories, added much to the sufferings of laborers. The provisions for safety and comfort also need improvement. The effect of such conditions undoubtedly tended to increase the rate of absence and turnover. The United States Public Health Department came to the conclusion, after a careful investigation, that labor turnover was directly associated with distasteful working conditions, such as long hours, low wages and undesirable physical surroundings.⁴⁰

Second, it has been said that many Indian factory workers are "peasant proprietors", who every now and then repair to their own plots of land to look after farming. It is true that most of the factory workers come from farms and many of them even possess farmland. Some of the workers may undoubtedly leave the factory and go to look after the cultivation of their land and the harvesting of their crop.

This may cause the seasonal absence of some of the workers from factories and explain the variation in the number of absentees, but the record of absence is very high throughout the year. In the Carnatic mills, for example, the lowest figure for the number of absent workers was 264 in November, and the highest figure was 397 in May, in 1907, while the average for the year was 329 per month.⁴¹ Similar difficulties arise in explaining the number of absent workers in the table given by the Century Factory.⁴²

⁴⁰ U. S. Public Health Bulletin, No. 106, 1920, p. 26.

⁴¹ Vide *Supra*, p. 39.

⁴² Vide *Supra*, p. 35.

Third, it has been observed that factory workers are "improvident" and will not work so long as they are in possession of any part of their wages, previously received. "There are from 10 to 15 % of the laborers absent on the next day after pay-day, in every mill."⁴³ It has also been said that the prevailing rate of wages in factories is more than enough to cover the average needs of the workers, and so they absent themselves for a period of time.⁴⁴

The people of India may be somewhat extravagant so far as ceremonies, e. g., marriages of their sons and daughters, are concerned. Otherwise, they are very provident. The cultivators are especially frugal and industrious, and it is this cultivating class that supplies, for the most part, labor to the factories of towns and cities. The strong affection which they bear for their families makes them work and save.

If ten to fifteen percent of the workers are absent on the day following the payment of their wages, these figures are not far above the daily absences, which have been found to be ten per cent on the average.

The allegation has, however, some element of truth in it. The ideals and aspirations of the factory workers have not been raised in proportion to the income which some of them earn. While this does not lead to extravagance, it does take away one of the strongest incentives to hard and constant work.

Fourth, it has been said that factory workers in India are "floating" and "desultory" in their habits and cannot stay in one place for a continued period

⁴³ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 17.

⁴⁴ The Times Trade Supplement, London, 1919, p. 258.

of time. "The Indian operative", observed the Factory Labor Commission of 1907, "is fond of changes; he prefers to wander from mill to mill rather than to remain settled, and the slightest causes are apparently sufficient to determine him to leave one employer for another. We have found operatives who have travelled from one industrial center to another throughout the greater part of India and statistics which we have collected show that the personnel of the workers in mills so far apart as Bombay, Madras and Nagpur, change almost completely in about a year and a half on the average. Inducements to change are occasionally pecuniary, of course, but, as a rule, the same rate of pay obtains throughout each center and in such cases the motive must be looked for elsewhere."²⁶

It is the opinion of the writer that the reflection of the Commission on the character of the people of India is inaccurate. Factory workers in India are not "floating" nor "desultory" in habit, nor are they "fond of changes" to any greater extent than are the same classes of workers in other countries as we have shown by comparison. Cases are known of individual workers who have spent 15 or 20 years in the same factory without any change. When they do change, it is generally because of dissatisfaction with hours and wages. If the conditions of work were right and the wages fair, the nature of the Indian workers would indicate that they would faithfully stick to their jobs. If the above allegation were true, it would reveal one of the most marvellous changes in the character of the Indian people. For centuries, Indian life has been static. Thousands of people have been known to suffer patiently and

²⁶ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 20.

calmly in the place of their birth and occupation rather than seek to change conditions.

Besides the above-mentioned causes which only partially explain the absence and turnover, there are other causes which have increased their rate.

First, diseases are much more common in India than in the countries of temperate climate. Insufficient diet and ignorance of hygienic measures add to the causes of frequent sickness. This helps increase the rate of absence and turnover.

Second, most of the factory workers are born in the village communities of India where life is exceedingly simple. Without being tutored or trained, Indian ryots find it a hard task to adapt themselves to the complex life of a modern factory. At any opportunity which presents itself in other fields they are, therefore, apt to quit their factory work. Moreover, uneducated and unorganized, Indian workers did not know until recently how to redress any of their grievances. The only thing they could do was to abandon the work. Often too, they exchanged factories for the prospect of better wages.

Third, a wage-earning class, in the Western sense of the word, does not yet exist in India except in a few cities. Most of the factory workers are not homeless or even landless. They do not depend solely upon factory work for their livelihood. Being always content with the simple life which their social and religious ideals have taught them to lead, Indian workers do not feel the same incentive to steady work as do their fellow-workers in other more industrially advanced countries.

Fourth, the industrial condition of the country does not call for a very high grade or special kind of work. The majority of laborers are, therefore,

unskilled. Without preparation for special work they are ready to take any kind of work that presents itself and so are much more likely to change their occupation than are skilled workers.

Fifth, with the growth of the factory system in India, there has not developed a corresponding tendency towards town life. Factories are still dependent upon migratory workers, who, after repairing to their respective homes for several weeks or even months, may not return to the same factory or even to the same town.

In whatever way we explain them, absence and turnover have serious effects upon factory labor. Their detrimental effect on the industrial efficiency and on the general character of the workers cannot be exaggerated. Moreover, the waste of hiring and firing swells the expense of production on the part of the employer, and the consumer has ultimately to pay the cost. The real remedy for such a deep-rooted evil lies in the reorganization of the moral, educational and economic character of society as a whole. So far as an immediate attempt toward the solution is concerned, much might be done by the following measures:

1) Proper selection of employees and their proper placement, 2) shorter hours and healthier and more comfortable conditions of work, 3) kind and sympathetic treatment, 4) extension of the bonus and the premium system, 5) fair remuneration. It is more economical to pay the old employees a little more than to undergo constantly the wastage of hiring and firing all the year round.

4. Keeping out Non-Workers.

A good deal of controversy has been raised as to the presence of non-working children in factories.

There are three ways in which non-workers may come into a factory: 1) Mothers may bring with them their young children or babies. 2) Children may bring food for their parents or relatives. 3) Children who work for half time in factories may be found loitering there, even when they are not at work.

The system of allowing young mothers to go home 3 or 4 times a day in order to nurse their babies, was common in certain factories of Bombay as early as 1890.⁶⁶ The same practice prevailed in 1907.⁶⁷ But in many cases it has been found hard to separate the babies and young children from their mothers, as there has been practically no arrangement by which babies could be left at home under the care of a nurse, nor could the young children be safely left alone without some one to watch over them. The Bengal Factory Report of 1892 stated that some factories allowed their woman workers to bring their children with them into the factory when no machinery was in use.⁶⁸

The wisdom of allowing mothers to bring their babies or young children into factories has been seriously questioned. Little children are liable to be injured by the machinery, and the foul air, hot atmosphere, high humidity and deadening noise, especially in the textile factories, where women are generally employed, are injurious to the health of both babies and young children.

Legislation prohibiting babies and young children from being brought into factories might, however, be a hardship both to mothers and employers. It would

⁶⁶ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 41.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 70.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 109.

prevent such women from earning a living in a factory. A witness before the Commission of 1907 stated that "if discretion is left to the factory inspectors to prohibit children from being brought into such places as are in their opinion dangerous and unhealthy, that would be sufficient".⁴⁰ Since women are chiefly employed in reeling, winding or such other light work, they are not likely to be in those parts of the factory where dangerous machinery is used. The objection with regard to the health of babies and young children is really a serious one, but it may be said that women, as a rule, work in the least unhealthy parts of the factory.

A method which has been successfully used in other countries might help Indian employers to solve this difficulty. A separate room might be set apart in one of the factory buildings as was suggested as far back as 1907, and a matron or nurse might be employed to supervise the young children and to take care of the babies.⁴¹ The cost to employers would be trifling and it would save nursing mothers the time of several trips every day to their homes. Some of the young mothers would also be relieved of vigilance over and worry about their young children now left at home.

There are also in almost every factory, some non-working children, who are not old enough to be lawfully employed in factories or who have apparently reached the legal age but whose age and physical fitness have not yet been certified to. The presence of either of these classes of children inside factories is not itself an unlawful act. These children may be present even for prospective employment. But without such purpose, the presence of such children

⁴⁰ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 11.*

⁴¹ *Ibid., p. 45.*

shows a lack of factory discipline. They are sure to disturb the half-time working children in the performance of their tasks.

Moreover, it is not advisable to admit non-working children to places where dangerous machinery is always running. The same objection may be raised in the case of underaged children. But there is an additional and a still more serious objection in the latter case. It affords a fruitful source for the abuse of child labor. In some cases, underaged children have been found engaged in the work of factories.²² Upon inquiry the mill-owners professed complete ignorance of the fact and the jobbers explained the matter by saying that such children had brought food to their parents or relatives in the factory and while there joined the half-timers in their work without any knowledge on the part of the authorities.²³ Factory inspectors have not always been satisfied with such explanations.

To prohibit children from bringing food to their parents or relatives in factories is not possible under the existing custom and habit of the Indian laboring classes. The insistence on keeping them out would also mean the keeping out of food from many workers.²⁴ The only remedy possible lies in the restriction of loafing on the part of such children inside factories and in their immediate discharge after their mission is done.

The presence of half-time working children in factories, while they are not actually at work, is undoubtedly objectionable. It is not only injurious to their health to be confined so long within the atmosphere of factories, but it also gives employers an

²² *Gr. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 56.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

opportunity to work them beyond the period limited by law. Wherever there is any definite system of shift, there is scarcely any breach of the law. But the cases on record show the existence of some abuses.

There already exist adequate laws prohibiting the employment of underaged children on the work of half-timers beyond legal hours. The only thing necessary is proper enforcement.

5. Offences and Punishments.

Some of the chief classes of offences committed by laborers in connection with factory discipline have already been mentioned. The other main offences are neglect of duty, bad work, and damage to machinery. The usual punishments for such offences are fines, forfeiture of wages and bonus, and dismissals.

The existence of corporal punishment for such offences in the case of children was noted by the Factory Commission of 1890.⁴⁴ No further investigation has been made as to the existence of corporal punishment since 1890, but that it still exists in some parts of the country has been well ascertained.⁴⁵ In fact, it was one of the causes of dissatisfaction which led to the numerous strikes of 1919. The folly of corporal punishment cannot be overemphasized. It is not only inhuman, but uneconomical as well. It has made factory work distasteful. Fortunately, the abolition of such practice has been demanded by factory workers themselves.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890-91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, pp. 75, 78, 81.*

⁴⁵ *The Tribune, Lahore, Dec. 14, 1919.*

⁴⁶ *The Bombay Chronicle, March 17, 1920.*

Other grievances of which factory workers generally complain, are the summary method by which they are dismissed whenever the employer wishes, the payment of excessive fines, and the loss of wages which they have to undergo, when absent without leave. In the year 1887 the Factory Report of Madras City stated that the workers had no leisure whatever to attend to their affairs and if absent without leave, they had to lose two days' pay for every day's absence.⁸⁷ In 1889 the Association of the mill-hands employed in the spinning mills of the City of Bombay, mentioned several of their grievances in a petition to Lord Lansdowne, then the Viceroy and Governor General of India. "A painful fact to relate", stated the petition, "is that if on account of sickness or for any other cause such as buying provisions on receipt of his wages, an operative absents himself from work, he loses for one day's absence, two days' pay, under the mill regulations; a statement which can easily be verified by reference to the muster rolls kept in the mills."⁸⁸

The Factory Commission of 1890, appointed especially to investigate into the conditions of labor in factories, recorded some interesting testimonies of several workers relating to the point in question.⁸⁹

These testimonies indicate that it was a custom in factories, especially in Bombay, to take away two days' pay for one day's absence. In some cases it was only one day's wages and an additional fine. A statement by a witness before the factory labor commission referred to its existence even as late as 1907, though not in the same rigorous form. "The

⁸⁷ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 53, H. of C. 124, p. 24.

⁸⁸ Bombay, Oct. 24, 1889. *Ibid.*, 1890-91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 107.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 1890-91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, pp. 23, 27, 58, 74, 88.

operatives", reads the statement, "took from 3 to 5 days off per month in addition to the regular holidays. If absent on account of illness, nothing was said, but if not, they formerly deducted two days' wage. Lately, owing to the scarcity of labor, this system of fines has been discontinued to a great extent."⁶⁰ Despite this statement, however, this system is still in existence and has been one of the causes of the recent strikes.⁶¹ But it is hard to determine how widespread the practice is. Labor organizations have raised a protest against such practice.

It is quite reasonable that factories should have some kind of discipline by which they can stop the wilful absence of workers. A worker is a link in the whole chain of a factory process and his absence can do more injury to the factory than he can imagine. But the difficulty of laborers in securing a leave of absence should not be minimized. They are often compelled to be absent without leave, because they cannot get it any other way. The employer can justify necessity of his disciplinary method only when he had given the employee a fair chance for its observance.

Another cause of discontent among workers is summary dismissal. This method of dismissal has been complained of by several workers in Bombay.⁶² Similar complaints have also come from Bengal.⁶³ The workers feel that dismissal without due notice is unjust. The practice seems to be widespread throughout India. The laborers contend that some

⁶⁰ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 35.

⁶¹ The Bombay Chronicle, March 17, 1920.

⁶² Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890-91, Vol. 59, H. of G. 86, pp. 25, 31.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 31, 90.

of the factories profess to follow the rule of giving 15 days' notice in case of discharge of any workman, but in reality they seldom observe this rule.

The usual punishment for a breach of factory discipline is the infliction of fines. This custom seems to have existed from the beginning of the factory system. The Cawnpore Factory Report noted in 1888 that small fines were imposed on workers for the neglect of duty or for damage done through carelessness.⁴⁴ The Bengal Factory Report mentioned, in the same year, the system of imposing fines for bad work and damage done to machinery, but the practice was not general.⁴⁵ This system is in existence even to-day.

A factory cannot exist without some sort of discipline for the conduct of its workers and the best method of enforcing discipline, as far as is known, is a judicious imposition of small fines. Correction rather than chastisement should, of course, be the aim of such a procedure. The main point at issue is not the imposition; but the disposition, of the fines thus collected. Laborers believe that in many cases all fines collected have thus far been appropriated by employers.⁴⁶

The contention of the laborers is that the method is improper and inefficient, for it affords some unscrupulous employers a chance of exploiting them. But the main objection is that it serves as punitive rather than as corrective measure, and that it causes irritation against, in stead of reconciliation toward, the factory discipline

⁴⁴ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 95.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1890-91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 32.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

and makes the already unpopular factory labor in India more distasteful. The best way to dispose of the fines would be to create a fund, the proceeds of which should be spent for the benefit of laborers some way or other. The use of these funds for compensation in case of serious or fatal accidents has been urged by the workers for over a generation. Suggestions might be received from the workers themselves, whenever possible, as to the particular method in which they would like to have money spent. This procedure would more easily reconcile laborers to factory discipline and help gain their good will.

CHAPTER IV.

HOURS OF WORK.

One of the most important questions of factory labor is that of hours of work. The length of time laborers have to work in a factory determines to a considerable extent the profits of the employers and the rate of wages of the laborers. Moreover, the health of the laboring classes is vitally affected by excessive hours of work. Working hours in factories are, therefore, closely related to social welfare.

1. Working Hours in Mills.

In the beginning of the Indian factory system the time of work extended from sunrise to sunset. In the year 1887, for which the first definite record is available, the cotton mills of Bombay worked from dawn to dusk.¹ In Bengal shift system prevailed

¹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, pp. 66, 70.

both in the cotton and jute mills, which operated for 12 hours daily, but the hours of work did not exceed 9 or 10, each shift obtaining a break of 3 hours in the course of the day.³ Some mills worked day and night, but for the greater part of the year no individual worker was employed for more than 9 hours a day. In 1888 the Broach factories worked from dawn to dusk, the workday ranging from 11¼ to 13 hours and 40 minutes according to the season.⁴ In 1892 the usual hours of work in the Northwestern Provinces and Oudh were from 6 A. M. to 6.30 P. M. In summer the work was extended an hour or an hour and a half more. The Bengal factories worked the same hours as before, 9 to 10.⁵

The first record of longer hours is found at Agra, where even as early as 1880 the working-day was 15 hours long in some seasons of the year. In the year 1898 the cotton factories of Bombay conceived the idea of working longer hours, and four years later many of the factories adopted electric light. Some idea of the long hours of work which prevailed in some of the textile factories of the country may be had from the report of the Factory Labor Commission of 1907. This commission found that in mills working daylight hours the average working time per day for the whole year was approximately 12 hours and 5 minutes; the longest day did not usually exceed 13½ hours of actual work and the shortest day was about 11 hours. In mills fitted with electric light the hours varied from 12¼ to 16 in different localities, weavers in Calcutta jute mills working 15 or 16 hours, although each 4 weavers had an extra hand

³ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1889, Vol. 53, H. of C. 124, p. 32.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1894, Vol. 53, H. of C. 108, p. 139.

for relief.* These excessively long hours, however, were unusual except in textile factories and in certain seasonal industries.

The extremely long hours of work prevailing at this time impressed upon the Government the necessity for action of some sort, and in 1905 a bill was introduced into the legislative council to amend the factory act of 1891 regulating the working hours of adult males. The bill was not passed, however, until 1911, when the hours of work for adult males in textile factories were limited to 12 in one day.

The matter of shorter hours was, however, taken up by the workers themselves. One of the demands the laborers in Bombay made for the settlement of their strikes early in January, 1920, was that the working hours should be reduced from 12 to 10 hours a day. This demand was granted by the Bombay Mill Owners' Association on January 23, 1920, and became effective on February 1, 1920.⁶ In the meantime other employers throughout India showed willingness to adopt a 10-hour day. Following the draft convention of the International Labor Conference at Washington, D. C., 1919, that the working hours in Indian factories be reduced from 72 to 60 hours a week, a resolution was passed in the Indian legislature in February 1921, ratifying the convention. The Factory Act of January, 1922, limited the working hours of all adult workers to 11 hours a day and 60 hours a week.

There is scarcely any record as to the number of hours worked by women in factories prior to 1891. As a rule their working hours were the same as those of men. At Ahmedabad many women were employed in the work of same character as that of men

* *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1908, Vol. 74. Cd. 4292, pp. 34, 82.

⁶ *The Bombay Chronicle*, February 1, 1920.

and the working hours of men and women were the same.⁷ Even in some Bombay factories women practically had the same hours as men.⁸ In 1891 the second factory act was enacted, fixing the hours of work for women at 11. No change in the length of the legal workday was made from that time to January 1922, when the fourth factory act was enacted, limiting the work hours to 11 hours a day and 60 hours a week for both men and women.

2. Working Hours of Children.

Nothing is definitely known about the working hours of children in the beginning of the factory system in India. The bill for the Factory Act of 1881 provided seven hours of work per day for children. But when the bill was passed the hours were raised to nine. The reasons given for the change were the following: First, the work was not very hard in Indian factories. Second, the children did not have to attend school. Third, shorter hours might give the chance of working in one factory in the morning and in another in the evening. After the passage⁹ of the Act, therefore, children were employed for 9 hours. They worked actually for eight hours with one hour's rest granted them by the provision of the law. There was a recess also of a few minutes in every half hour, the work of the children being to remove the bobbins from the spinning frame.¹⁰ The shift system was also used in some factories in the Central Provinces

⁷ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, pp. 67, 70.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1888, Vol. 77, H. of C. 321, p. 3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 82.

where the working hours were from 6.30 to 11 A. M. and from 12 to 4.30 P. M.²¹

In Bombay, the working hours of the children did not generally exceed 8 hours. In connection with the act of 1881 the Bombay Government resolved that no children should be employed for more than 4½ hours without a recess. This led to a complicated arrangement of hours in textile factories, and children worked 8 hours one day and 4 hours the following day.²² But there were many cases where the children worked as long hours as the men.²³

The Factory Act of 1891 reduced the working hours of children to 7 hours in one day, with a half hour of rest for every six hours of continuous work. This ruling was observed in most factories. In the Bombay Presidency, the average working time was from 5½ to 7 hours,²⁴ and in Bengal it was 6 to 7 hours.²⁵ In Agra, the Central Provinces, and in Burma, their hours did not exceed 7; but in the Punjab, Southern Madras and the United Provinces, excepting Agra, and also in the cotton mills of Bengal, children often worked as long hours as did the men, i. e., from 10 to 14 hours a day.

The abuses of the child-labor law arose generally in four ways: First, the employment of children under 14 years of age as full-timers. Second, overworking of children by the arrangement of the shift system. Third, keeping the children inside the compound under the pretext of education²⁶ and

²¹ *Gr. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 54*

²² The hours were arranged as follows: 1st day 6 to 10 A. M. & 2. 30 to 6. 30 P. M. 2nd day 10 A. M. to 2. 30 P. M.

²³ *Gr. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, pp. 40, 42.*

²⁴ *Ibid., 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 58.*

²⁵ *Ibid., p. 106.*

²⁶ *Ibid., 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 15.*

employing them whenever there was a shortage of labor. Fourth, the employment of children under nine years of age as half-timers. Out of 821 children employed as half-timers in the cotton mills of Bombay, about 14 % were found to be under 9 years of age.¹⁷

The Factory Act of 1911 made, therefore, some special provisions to regulate the time of child workers. To obviate the employment of underaged children, child workers were required by the provisions of the act to produce certificate of age and physical fitness before they could be employed. This provision also guarded them against employment as full-timers before reaching the age of fifteen. Their working hours were fixed to seven as before, but the provisions for rest periods resulted in the limitation of hours to 6 in any one day in textile factories. As most of the children in India were employed in textile factories, the working hours for children might, therefore, be regarded as six instead of seven. The recent Factory Act of January, 1922, reduced the working hours of children to six in all factories and at the same time it was also provided that no child should work continuously for more than 4 hours.

The economic conditions in India make the problem of child labor quite different from that in Western countries. Indian children are undernourished, and have no opportunity to receive even the elementary education. Their work, therefore, does not interfere with their intellectual development. Since work has an educative as well as economic value, factory work means to them the lesser evil. Since children work in conjunction with men and women,

¹⁷ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 16.*

their hours of labor should be such as would enable them to be easily adapted to the work of men and women. One of the best methods of adapting their work-hours to the factory routine is to allow them half-time labor. With the adoption of the 60 hour week for men, their hours should be reduced to 30 hours a week.

3. Working Time in Seasonal Establishments.

The chief seasonal establishments¹⁸ which partake of the nature of factories are cotton-gins, cotton and jute presses, and rice mills.

Cotton ginning is a very important industry in some parts of India.¹⁹ These factories are largely run by steam power and employ a large number of laborers, mostly old or middle-aged women, drawn from rural districts. The season varies in different parts of the country, but extends generally from November to April,²⁰ lasting only 4 or 5 months in any one region. The period of pressure lasts only a month or a month and a half.

The hours worked in cotton gins were unusually long in the beginning. In 1885 the working day was 16 or 17 hours. In ordinary seasons when the work was not very pressing, the engine started between 4 and 5 A. M. and stopped at 7, 8, or 9 P. M., running continuously during that time. The hands also worked continuously during all these hours and were relieved only by one another for meals. In busy seasons, i. e., in March and April, the gins and

¹⁸ The seasonal establishments are generally called "seasonal factories" both by the public and the government, but the term does not seem to be a happy one.

¹⁹ Most of the cotton gins are found in Gujrat, Berar, Khandesh, Central Provinces, United Provinces, and Madras.

²⁰ In Madras it begins in February and ends in August.

presses sometimes worked day and night and the same set of hands worked both night and day with half an hour's rest in the evening. The same set of hands continued working night and day for about 8 days.²¹ Such long hours of work in the gin were possible only because there were in addition to regular workers several extra workers to relieve one another whenever needed.²²

In recent years things have not radically changed in certain sections of the country, although in others actual reductions in working hours have taken place. Even at present, gins generally work 12 hours with one set of hands and 24 hours with a double shift. But as the contractors are in some cases paid by so much per unit of cotton, the working day may be 15 or 16 or even 17 hours with one shift. Where the gins are under the Factory Act, there exist apparently no such long hours.

In Khandesh a system prevails whereby women work 11 hours in cotton gins and the number of workers is regulated with a view to keeping these hours. This system, known as the "Khandesh System" operates as follows: —

$$\frac{g \times h}{11} = w$$

where g = number of gins in the establishment

h = total number of hours to be worked

w = total number of women to be employed

11 = the number of hours a woman was allowed to work.²³

²¹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1888, Vol. 77, H. of C. 821, p. 13.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 14, 15.

²³ In Berar, the Central Provinces, the United Provinces, the Punjab, and Khandesh, men worked 11 hours and women 9. In Gujrat the hours were longer and there were no regular intervals.

The requirements as to the number of women employed under this formula, however, were found by the Factory Commission of 1907 to be disregarded. "The names of sweepers and other female names of the relatives of the Mukha-Damie (foreman) appear on the registers, but these never work. So the female workers sweat and work for eighteen hours a day."²⁶ In many cases the workers were relieved by the members of their own family.

The cotton presses keep a small permanent force, the extra hands required during the busy season being supplied by contractors.²⁷

The jute presses are located mostly in Bengal. The work consists usually of sorting, cleaning and cutting the ends of the fibres. On the average, about 50 to 60 men and 10 to 20 women are employed in a press.²⁸ The presses are manned by able-bodied male workers. Occasionally, the presses work continuously for long periods, but the average day does not exceed more than 12 hours. The work is arranged by shifts and the individual laborer does not actually work more than 8 hours in any one day.²⁹

The rice mills are found in Burma only. The work lasts for 6 months in the year. The busy season begins in the middle of January and lasts until the middle of May when the work is carried on both night and day.³⁰ The hours of work may continue for 12 hours for 5½ months, for 16 hours with one or two shifts for one month, and for night and day

²⁶ *Gr. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1888, Vol. 77, H. of C. 821, p. 109.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 65.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1906, Cd. 4292, Vol. 74, pp. 12, 13, 29, 30.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 61.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

with double shifts for 1½ months. The work stops for 1½ hours at midday and for ½ hour at 6 P. M.

Of course it is always difficult to regulate hours of work in seasonal establishments. The work comes in a rush and must be done immediately. In most cases the amount of work is hard to estimate beforehand. Long hours of work are, therefore, liable to prevail. On the other hand, the working force in seasonal occupations consists of more or less casual laborers. They work hard for some time and take a long spell of rest at others. The lack of any steady and permanent job makes them work harder so as to be able to make as much money as possible in a short period to tide them over the enforced period of rest.

4. The Period of the Day for Work.

One of the great sources of inconvenience and hardship to factory workers in earlier years, was the unusually early hour at which the day's work began. Most of the mills began work at sunrise. But some began work as early as 4 30 A. M.²² The hardship of starting work at such an early hour was of course greatest in the case of women and children. The Factory Act of 1891, therefore, required that no women or children should be employed in any factory before 5 A. M. or after 8 P. M. These hours were changed, however, by the Factory Act of 1911, when the work of all employees in textile factories was limited to the period between 5 : 30 A. M. and 7 P. M. Even this regulation has not succeeded in removing the difficulties which women and children, as well as men, have to encounter in reaching work at such an early hour. Most of the

²² Jute Mills of Bengal.

laborers would prefer to begin work at 6 A. M. rather than at 5 or 5 : 30,²⁰ and to stop work a little later in the day.

First, many of the workers, have to walk a considerable distance to reach their mills. Second, children who need many hours of sleep have to rise at a very early hour. As they work only six hours in any one day in textile factories, it would seem they could just as well begin their work at a later hour. Third, the greatest sufferers from the early hours are the women, for many of them have to prepare meals before they start for the mill, and consequently must rise still earlier than do the men and children. This inconvenience of the early hours is, on the part of the women, felt to be quite unnecessary, because, being piece-workers, they could just as well begin their work at a later hour. The insistence of the employers that they reach the mills at the same hour as do the men is considered quite arbitrary. If the work was scheduled to begin at 6 A. M. many women would be more punctual than at present. Fourth, most of the workers come to the factory without breakfast. It is not customary in India to eat at such an early hour. Commencing work half an hour later would offer a better chance to those who wish to eat breakfast before they go to work.

It has been said that because of the climatic conditions of India, early hours of the day are more congenial for work than the later hours. It is quite possible, however, to have two different hours for beginning work in two different seasons. Under the provisions of the Factory Act of 1911, work in the textile industries may not begin before 5 : 30

²⁰ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 25.

A. M. This ruling might be applied to the summer season while in the winter work could be begun at six o'clock.

Some of the employers, and some of the employees, prefer to work during the daylight hours or "the natural working day" as they call it.²¹ This was the customary time for work in the earlier periods in almost all factories until artificial light was introduced. According to the daylight system, the factories have hot and cold weather seasons and the average length of the working day is less than twelve hours a day for the year.²² The argument advanced in support of this proposal is that it is the custom in India to work from dawn to dusk, and mill workers throughout the country better appreciate such an arrangement. The daylight work system would eliminate work by artificial light in winter and, therefore, would not injure the eyesight of the workers. There have been a good many complaints on the part of the laborers as to injurious effects of artificial light on their eyes.

Several objections have been raised as to the feasibility of daylight work: First, it raises the nominal hours of work in summer to 14 hours or even 15 hours in northern India. This is especially objectionable on the ground that their longest hours are worked in the hottest part of the year. Second, it prohibits the workers from enjoying even a single hour of daylight at their homes throughout the year, except on prescribed holidays. Third, it creates irregularity in habit, if the laborers must work 14 hours in some parts of the year and only 10 hours

²¹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1906, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 54.

²² *Ibid.*, the longest hours being 14½ in N. India and 13 in Bombay, i. e., 18% to 12% hours of actual work respectively.

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in other parts. Fourth, the hour from dawn to dusk is very indefinite and may be differently interpreted by differently interested parties. Fifth, the principle of working daylight hours can not be transferred properly from farm to factory where the work is intensive, organised and compulsory. The working conditions in a factory are also less favorable to the continued work for 15 hours in any one day.

The inadvisability of employing women and children in a factory during the night time has long been realized. The evils of night work in the case of women are obvious and as a rule even in the past, women were scarcely ever employed for night work in factories in India.

The Factory Act of 1911 made it illegal to employ women as well as children before 5:30 A. M. and after 7 P. M. In seasonal employments such as cotton ginning, it is usually the older women who are employed. The season of night work is very short and the rush of the work requires night work. No strong objection has, therefore, been raised against such a practice.**

5. Rest Periods and Holidays.

Scarcely anything is definitely known about the rest period that had prevailed in the factories prior to the year 1881, when the first Factory Act was passed providing for a full hour's recess for children working nine hours a day. Most of the factories adopted the system of stopping work for half an hour at midday. That this practice was not observed in all parts of India is shown by a petition of the Bombay Millhands' Association to the Viceroy, in

** Employment of women at night is not uncommon in Western countries.

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1889, which stated that "the so-called half hour's recess at midday comes to amount to from 15 to 20 minutes only. Much of this scanty recess is again taken up by the present system of delivering up tickets at the time."²⁴ The truth of this complaint was corroborated by a report²⁵ which read as follows: "Most of the Bombay mills profess to give half an hour in their rules, but in many cases the gong or whistle is sounded 10 or 15 minutes before the half hour has expired." That this practice was not universal was stated by the same report which says: "Some factories give a whole hour's recess."²⁶

In Bengal the cotton mills allowed a recess of 1½ or 2 hours to give the workers time to cook their meal. In the jute mills this recess was raised to even 3 hours by the introduction of the shift system. But the weavers in the jute mills did not enjoy any regular recess. They had instead one extra hand for every 4 weavers and worked continuously through long hours, relieved occasionally by the extra hand. In Burma, an interval of 1½ hours was usually given at midday²⁷ and another extra half hour's rest at 6 P. M. whenever the work was continued through the evening.

In 1890 the Factory Commission recommended the stoppage of machinery for full 30 minutes, and realizing the possibility of work for long hours in case of the introduction of artificial light, which some of the factories were then adopting, recommended a provision that no laborer should work for 7 hours continually without a recess of half an

²⁴ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 106—7.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 13—14.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 139.

hour.²⁸ The following year saw the passage of the second factory act providing for the stoppage of work for a full half-hour about midday in all the factories.

The Factory Act of 1911 made it compulsory to stop work for at least half an hour at the end of every six hours' work. The Factory Act of January 1922, raised this rest period to one hour which might be divided into two periods of half an hour each and provided that no man should work for more than 5 hours continuously without a period of rest.

The Factory Commission of 1884 first recommended granting women one hour's rest period for every eleven hours work. In 1890, there was an international labor conference at Berlin which favored an interval of rest for an hour and a half for every 11 hours of work. This resolution of the Berlin Labor Conference was incorporated into the second factory act of India in 1891. This long period of rest was intended to give the women "an opportunity of going home and of attending to their domestic duties in the course of the day."

The inadvisability of such a provision was felt for several reasons: First, the homes of woman employees were often too far away from their work to make it convenient for them "to go home in the middle of the day." Second, the women were generally piece workers and they could come later and go earlier without any inconvenience to the operation of the factory. They preferred to leave home later and to go home earlier than their husbands so that they might see to their household affairs. This long period of rest interfered with that

²⁸ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890-91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 14.

plan. Third, because they could not go to their homes, this period of rest would be a period of enforced idleness, as the women had nothing else to do. Fourth, the work of the women was light and they did not require such a long period of rest.²⁹

The inconvenience to woman workers arising from such a long period of enforced rest was noticed by factory inspectors as early as 1892 and one of the factory reports states that "it might be more convenient to women themselves to curtail the midday rest and let them go home earlier in the evening, but this is not allowable under the present wording of the Act."³⁰

That the evasion of such a rule was followed at the express desire of woman workers can easily be imagined, but the ruling remained unchanged until the Factory Act of January, 1922, when the working hours and rest periods for both men and women were made uniform.

The Factory Act of 1881 provided for one full hour's interval of rest for children, as noted above, for every nine hours' work. The Factory Act of 1891 reduced the working hours for children from 9 to 7 and provided at the same time for a full half-hour's rest at the end of six continuous hours of work. This practically limited the working hours of children to six hours a day in most cases. The Factory Act of 1911 reduced the working hours of children from 7 to 6 in textile factories, and did not provide any fixed period of time for the interval of rest. The Factory Act of January 1922 extended the provision to all factories and provided at the

²⁹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, pp. 68, 69.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

same time that no child should be employed continuously for more than 4 hours.

As long as most of the seasonal employments were outside the factory laws and the midday interval of half an hour couldn't be enforced in such occupations, there was no system of periodical stoppage of operation in flour, rice and ginning mills throughout India. The interval of rest at midday was "expensive and detrimental to the proper working of the mill."⁴¹ In the rice mills, the workers were usually allowed a recess of 1½ hours at times suited to the mills; but there was no cessation of work, nor any definite interval of rest. Ginning mills were run continuously for days at a time; there was seldom any interval of rest, but there were generally some additional laborers permitting the workers some intervals of rest at odd times during the course of the day. The Factory Act of 1911, and especially that of January, 1922, have brought most of the seasonal employments under the provisions of the law.

In connection with intervals of rest in factories, the objects for which these intervals are granted should not be forgotten. The two main objects of the cessation of work in a factory are refreshment and recuperation. None of these objects plays any important part in the custom of granting intervals in the factories of India. Laborers come to work without any breakfast. The hours of breakfast differ in different parts of the country, but since they are generally between 8:30 and 10:30 A. M., very few workers take meals at the midday interval. It would not be possible for them to do so, even if they would like to. In many cases their meals

⁴¹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, pp. 2, 16, 54.

are brought them from home at different times. Neither is there room enough for all of the workers to eat at the same time, since according to caste regulations, they cannot eat with members of another caste.⁴³ The main purpose of the recess becomes, therefore, recreative or recuperative. But even this purpose loses its full significance when it is taken into consideration that the workers are in the habit of going out in intervals for food, drink and other purposes.⁴⁴ The midday interval, however, has its significance from the psychological and social as well as physical points of view, for it is the only time when the machinery stops and the laborers feel perfectly free to relax, visit friends, sit, chat, or even take a nap in the hot summer time.

Suggestions were made to increase the interval of rest to one hour at midday,⁴⁵ or grant two intervals of rest for half an hour each, one for breakfast between 9 and 10 A. M. and another in the afternoon between 2 and 3 P. M.⁴⁶ The latter experiment has been unsuccessfully tried in some factories.⁴⁷ The worker would not take breakfast at a fixed time and continued as before to go out at intervals. The failure of the attempt does not necessarily mean that the two intervals are not preferable to the one now existing; it only shows the difficulty of changing the habit and custom when once formed, and of the necessity of adjustment between the social and industrial factors.

Both these suggestions for changing and increasing the rest period have been disregarded on the

⁴³ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Cd. 4519, Vol. 63, p. 12.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1890-91, H. of C. 86, Vol. 59, p. 14.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1909, Cd. 4519, Vol. 63, pp. 10, 66, 99.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

ground of the desultory habit of the workers. It is difficult to say whether the desultory habit is a result of the short interval of rest or vice versa. However, both the climate and the character of the laborers make long intervals of rest necessary in India.

The festivals have always been holidays in India. They come almost every month, differing in number and duration in different parts of the country. To the numerous Hindu festivals the Mohammedans added a few of their own, some of which were celebrated even by the Hindus. A system of weekly half-holidays on Friday afternoon also existed under Mohammedan rule, but this system hardly affected the laboring classes of the country.

The important Hindu and Mohammedan festivals naturally constituted the only holidays in the beginning of the factory life in India. The report of the Factory Commission in 1885 mentioned that "on the average only 15 holidays were given throughout the year in Indian factories, while in England, besides 10 holidays, there were 52 Sundays and 52 half-Saturdays, making a total of 88 days altogether."²⁷

The factory reports for 1887 and 1888 give some more accurate data as to the number of holidays observed in different parts of the country. In the City of Madras, there were 12 holidays annually on the occasion of the Hindu and Mohammedan festivals, besides two Sundays in the month, which were only partial holidays, as the cleaning of machinery and tools was done on Sundays.²⁸ In

²⁷ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1888, Vol. 77, H. of C. 321, p. 11.*

²⁸ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, pp. 23, 24.*

Broach, there were only 10 or 12 holidays.⁸⁰ In Bengal, Sundays were observed as holidays in addition to the local festivals.⁸¹ The same was true of Cawnpore, where the factories also stopped at 4 P. M. on Saturday for cleaning.⁸² At Ahmedabad the mills, since their foundation, observed Sundays as holidays except when a local holiday fell during the week, at which times the mills worked on Sundays to make up for the loss of the festival day on which they were closed.⁸³

Statistical data as to the number of factories granting weekly holidays were first collected in 1892, when it was discovered that out of a total of 653 factories, 493 had Sunday holidays and 36 more had other weekly holidays, i. e., 81 % of the factories working under the factory act were closed once in every week.

In 1918, there were 3,318 factories, of which 1,446 had Sunday holidays, and 1,348 holidays on Sunday or another day. 266 were exempted from weekly holiday, and 117 worked otherwise. In other words, 84 % of the factories had a weekly holiday.⁸⁴ In recent years there has been an increase in the number of factories requiring continuous process. The number of annual holidays increased from 15 in 1885 to 52 in 1892 in most of the factories and since then it has been extended to about 65 in some factories. The Factory Act of January, 1922, has pro-

⁸⁰ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 73.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 58, 88. The Emperor Mill at Nagpur stopped work every other Sunday, unless the festivals intervened, when they stopped on such holidays and worked on Sundays.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 87.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 1909, Vol. 68, Cd. 4519, pp. 71, 99.

vided that there must be one legal holiday in each week, and that no worker should work continuously for 10 days without having enjoyed one holiday.

There still remained a great defect to be remedied in Indian factories. Throughout India, except in Bombay, a certain number of laborers had to clean the machinery and tools from 3 to 5 hours every Sunday.⁸⁸ That this practice should be abolished was realized by the Millowners' Association as far back as 1890,⁸⁹ but the factories outside of Bombay did not understand the efficacy of a complete day of rest.

Whether a weekly holiday should fall on Sunday or not depends upon local conditions. As a rule, Sunday is the best choice for a weekly holiday because of the universality of its observance in all towns and cities throughout India. In some small localities, however, it has been found advantageous to close the mills on market days since free time is then needed by the factory workers for shopping.

6. Long Hours and the Physique.

The unusual activities in the cotton industry in 1905 which resulted in long hours of work, gave rise to a controversy as to their effects on the physique of factory workers.⁹⁰ This became a subject of investigation both by the Textile Factory Labor Committee of 1906 and the Factory Labor Commission of 1907. The contention was that long hours of work produced physical deterioration and general debility among factory workers, consequently they

⁸⁸ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 13.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 1890-91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 108.

⁹⁰ In the *Times of India*, an Anglo-Indian paper in Bombay, there appeared several articles against long hours of work and the abuses in 1905.

suffered from low fever, absented themselves from work, fell easy victim to diseases, became unfit for work at an earlier age, and met with premature death.

Dr. T. M. Nair, a medical man and a member of the Factory Labor Commission of 1907, made some of the above charges and tried to prove them by comparing the weight of factory workers with that of prisoners. In almost every mill a certain number of factory laborers was chosen at random and weighed. The following are the results of the comparison:⁸⁷

Province	Average weight of spinners	Average weight of prisoners	Difference
Bombay . . .	102.09	112.12	10.03
United Provinces . .	107.01	115.08	8.07
Bengal . . .	107.98	115.05	7.12
Punjab . . .	113.08	115.05	1.97
Madras . . .	113.63	114.38	0.75
Central Provinces and Berar . . .	100.92	110.45	9.53
Eastern Bengal and Assam . . .	108	110.84	2.84
Burma . . .	117.14	115.7	8.56

The above table shows that although the difference in weight in favor of the prisoners varied from 0.75 pounds in Madras to 10.03 pounds in Bombay, prisoners were heavier than factory workers all over the country.

The majority of the Factory Labor Commission came, however, to a different conclusion. "No

⁸⁷ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 91.

physical deterioration", remarked the Commission, "is observable anywhere among operatives actually at work." Major J. H. McDonald, I. M. S., medical inspector of factories at Bombay, made special investigation into the question of exhaustion and his inquiry did not substantiate the statements made by the press.⁴⁰

A question was raised about the prevalence of Phthisis among workers in factories. Two medical officers of the J. J. Hospital in Bombay, affirmed that the tuberculosis was much more common among factory workers than among general laborers. Dr. Choan, with extensive practice among factory workers, made a statement to the same effect. A slight increase of death rate from Phthisis among workers in factories was also shown by the statistics kept for 7 years, from 1900 to 1906, by Dr. Turner, the Executive Health Officer of the Municipality of Bombay, as shown in the following table:⁴¹

Average Mortality per 1000 of Population for 7 Years
(1900—1906)

	Phthisis	Other Respiratory diseases	All causes
General laborers	2.26	3.55	31.58
Factory workers	2.38	1.88	18.45

Thus it is seen that out of every 1000 persons, 2.38 % factory workers as against 2.26 % general laborers died of Phthisis.

The same table shows, however, that the mortality rate among factory workers is lower than that among general laborers. The death rate was 31.58 among general laborers and only 18.45 among fac-

⁴⁰ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1906, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 24.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

tory workers. Thus, comparing weavers and spinners in Bombay with general laborers, such as dock workers and domestic servants, factory workers were found to be healthier. This finding was attributed to the fact that factory workers received better nourishment and were less exposed to the extremes of temperature. This table is faulty, however, since it neglects to state the age of the laborers under consideration. As a rule, factory workers are young persons and while the dock workers under consideration were probably young also, since the work is of a heavy nature, this is not true in the case of the domestic servants who are persons of all ages, many of them elderly. If the factory workers were younger, as it seems fair to suppose they were, they would undoubtedly show a lower mortality. The majority of the medical witnesses before the Factory Labor Commission of 1907 held the view that there was no difference in the general health or physique of the factory workers and general workers.²⁰

CHAPTER V.

HEALTH AND SAFETY.

Health and safety are of great importance to factory workers. Safe and sanitary conditions are not only conducive to the efficiency of work, but are necessary to the preservation of the life and limb of the workers.

1. Sanitation and Comfort.

Very little is known about sanitary conditions that prevailed in the factories of India prior to the

²⁰ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 25.

year 1885, when the sanitary commissioner of Bombay reported that the condition of the mills was far from being as bad as he had been led to expect.¹ The first systematic inspection was made in the year 1892 and the reports from almost all provinces showed that the conditions in the factories were satisfactory. The buildings were periodically "lime-washed inside and color-washed outside," and disinfectants were liberally used.² As a rule the larger establishments were better kept than the smaller ones, and there was a marked difference³ between the old mills and the new mills, in favor of the latter.⁴

With the progress in the ideal of sanitation, employers have also kept pace, and have recently erected many new buildings on modern lines.⁵ Even in such a crowded manufacturing city as Ahmedabad, many new mills have been situated in open ground with plenty of space.⁶ In some cases, however, where there are no metalled roads around and between the factory buildings, the dirt roads give rise to dust in the dry seasons and to mud in the rainy seasons.⁷

"On the general question of sanitation in Indian mills," concludes the Textile Labor Committee of 1906, appointed especially to investigate the working conditions of factory labor, "it is satisfactory to report that on some points considerable attention has been given by mill owners and with very good

¹ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1888, Vol. 77, H. of C. 821, p. 7.

² *Ibid.*, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, pp. 107, 138-9, 153, 180, 65.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 2.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 8.

results. It is perhaps not too much to say that certain mills seen by the Committee leave little, if anything, to be desired. Some are not only a credit, but compare very favorably indeed with the best mills to be found in any part of the world. Unhappily the remarks are not of universal application."⁸ "One well-known mill in Madras would be a model to any Lancashire factory," added His Majesty's Trade Commissioner in India and Ceylon.⁹ "The general sanitary conditions in the Presidency," observed the Acting Chief Inspector of Factories, Bombay, in his report for 1918, were on the whole satisfactory."¹⁰

Light and Ventilation.

The necessity of providing light and ventilation in the mills was realized by employers even as early as 1888, and in Bengal, the factory rooms were "large and high and well furnished with doors, windows and skylights."¹¹ The jute mills were one-storied buildings with rooms 15 to 19 feet high, a condition scarcely found in the English factories.¹² There was no overcrowding noticeable in any buildings. A similar condition existed in Burma.¹³

The problem of maintaining proper ventilation in the textile factories is rather difficult due to the interference of the breeze with the operation of spinning. The Bombay mills met conditions of the floor and cubic space per head, as required by the rules of the Bombay Government under the Factory Act of 1891. But the requirement for 10 feet of

⁸ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1907, Vol. 59, Cd. 3617, p. 21.

⁹ Ibid., 1919, Cd. 442, p. 37.

¹⁰ The Bombay Chronicle, Nov. 26, 1919.

¹¹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, H. of C. 124, Vol. 58, p. 84.

¹² Ibid., 1891—4, Vol. 65, H. of C. 151, p. 139. C. A. Walsh, Special Inspector of Factories.

¹³ Ibid., p. 106.

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lateral openings per head could not be met.¹⁴ — the workers do not like the draught of air and keep the windows always shut. In such cases only the automatic and mechanical systems of ventilation are workable.

Speaking generally, the newer mills are very well ventilated. In recent years some of the mills have adopted the exhaust fan system of ventilation, by which foul air is extracted and fresh air is admitted through air-ducts.¹⁵ But such instances are rare and the "atmosphere in many mills is really vitiated and injurious to the operatives."¹⁶

The conditions of work for women, who are mostly reelers, vary greatly in different factories. In the modern and well-managed factories the reeling is done in a separate building which is well-lighted and ventilated. In other cases, the reeling room is a part partitioned off over the spinning room. In the latter case, neither the light nor ventilation are sufficient.¹⁷ Under such circumstances a standard of purity of air is necessary.

Ventilation in factories other than the textile is generally fair.¹⁸

Humidity and Temperature.

A certain amount of moisture is essential to the technical process of spinning and weaving in all textile factories. When the necessary amount is deficient in the air, it is supplied by either steam, steam jets, cold water spray or air current. In the latter case the effect does not seem to be injurious. At times, in the hot weather especially, the weaving-

¹⁴ *Gr. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 55.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 170.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 62.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 69.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 61.

- FACTORY LABOR IN INDIA

, where the air is artificially moistened, is the best ventilated and coolest part of the mill, while in the spinning department the moisture is never so excessive as to injure any one.¹⁹

But the effect is quite different when the humidifying is carried on by steam and the temperature is excessively high. Then the "workers are literally in perspiration".²⁰ A witness at Ahmedabad who had worked in factories for thirty-two years, stated that "the humidity of the mill is kept up by closing the windows and using steam so that they work in great heat and are exhausted so much so that at times men fainted in the hot weather and had to be carried home in carts. Some mills were especially bad in this respect."²¹ The enervating effect of such a combination of heat and moisture can scarcely be exaggerated. But there is another danger. Often times, "in stopping work and going out into the open air, the workers are particularly liable to catch serious chills and even pneumonia."²² From the standpoint of health, cold spray is undoubtedly better, though steam may be preferable for technical reasons.²³ Even with steam, "in many mills the state of things is satisfactory, in others, excessive temperature prevails."²⁴ In some weaving rooms there also prevails an excessive amount of humidity.

An important question has been raised as to whether the amount of humidity in the air could be regulated. The question is not an easy one. The

¹⁹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4591, p. 29. Mr. Bagnell, Dist. Magistrate, Broach & Factory Inspector, Bombay.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 50.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 56.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1907, Vol. 59, Cd. 3617, p. 23.

climatic conditions of India are different in different seasons and there cannot be any uniform standard for all of India. The moisture contents of the air also vary widely in different seasons of the year. In the dry season it is hard to get "such an amount of humidity as would be injurious to the health of the workers."²⁶ In the rainy season the natural humidity at times rises to 95 per cent while the English law of 1889 fixed 64 per cent to be the maximum humidity with a dry bulb temperature of 100° F.²⁶

All these difficulties led the Factory Labor Commission of 1907 to the conclusion that a standard of humidity should not legally be fixed for the air in the textile mills of India, as it would be impossible to maintain it.²⁷ The Factory Act of January 1922, has given partial effect to the recommendations and provided that the atmosphere of a factory should not be rendered so humid by artificial means as to be injurious to the health of the persons employed.²⁸

The best temperature for work lies between 55 and 70 degrees. But India is a country which generally has a high temperature. There are two methods of dealing with the problem: First, the lowering of the temperature by refrigeration. Second the increase of ventilation by fans. The higher the temperature, the higher must be the velocity of the wind in the room. The problem is how to apply this

²⁶ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1907, Vol. 59, Cd. 3617, p. 23.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 62.

²⁸ While at Bombay, the Factory Commission of 1907 made a surprise visit to two cotton weaving and spinning mills about 7:30 P. M. In one of them "the atmosphere was stifling hot and all the windows were closely shut. The temperature was 98.5 F.", and in the other "there was no ventilation, all windows were closed, and the air was hot and oppressive." The perspiring workers looked dull, listless, and exhausted, and a few children even half dazed.

principle to the actual conditions of the working-system.

Another point was raised as to the purity of the water that should be used for humidifying purposes. Generally, the water is drawn from the municipal water supply, but cases are also on record where stagnant water was used.²⁹ Such cases are, however, rare. As the use of stagnant water causes the deterioration of the humidifying plant, it is not profitable to the employer to use it.

Dust and Fumes.

Dust and fumes often affect the sanitary condition of factories very seriously. The question of fumes has not yet received attention in India. There are very few industries which have any process giving rise to fumes. But the problem of dust in some employments, mostly seasonal, is a serious one. The process of mixing cotton gives rise to a large amount of dust and fluff in the cotton presses. Some times the atmosphere is saturated with the particles of cotton. The amount of dust and other solid particles in the rice mills, flour mills and paper mills is so large as to cause serious danger to the health of operatives.³⁰

In some higher-grade occupations, the danger is greatly minimized by the use of mechanical appliances. While occupied in dusty processes, the workers use mufflers or pieces of cloth with which they cover their mouths and nostrils. The Indian workers have easily been induced to adopt this precaution, although in England it met with little success.³¹

²⁹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1906, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 62.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 62.

³¹ Ibid., 1907, Vol. 59, Cd. 2817, p. 24.

Dining-sheds and Water-supply.

One of the great sources of discomfort and even of danger to the workers is the lack of proper accommodation for rest and refreshment. A costly and comfortable building for rest is scarcely required by Indian workers, but a shed is nevertheless needed for the protection of the workers while at rest, from the scorching rays of the sun and the downpour of the rains. Lacking such a shed, workers often remain inside the mills, even when the machinery stops. The necessity of providing a place in which the workers can eat their meals is very urgent. Under the present circumstances they are often compelled to eat near the machinery while it is still going, or in some dark and dirty corner of the mill where the atmosphere has become vitiated.

The dining accommodations for Indian workers of so many castes, who will not touch one another while they eat, is rather a difficult problem. But the matter becomes somewhat simplified for the reason that workers have no regular time for eating and not all of the workers in a mill take their meals at the same time.

The suggestion of a mill-manager on this point that "the mill owners should be obliged to provide sheds capable of accommodating from one-third to one fourth of the men at a time"²² seems to be commendable.

While a dining-shed would be a comfort to the workers, an adequate supply of water is an imperative necessity. Due to the sultry climate of India and the high temperature in textile factories, workers drink daily a large quantity of water, the supply of which is derived from various sources. The

²² Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 30.

water from river, wells and tanks is reputed to be generally good, and in some factories this water is regularly filtered, but since the necessity for such a precaution has not been realized by mill-owners in general, the safest source is the municipal hydrants which exist in all cities and large towns. The trouble in this case arises from the fact that the water supply is cut off for a few hours every day. By the regulation of the factory act, factory workers are allowed two gallons of water per day. But the regulation does not clearly say that the mills should start work with that amount of water in the reserve, and in some places it is differently interpreted and workers do not get the proper amount of water supply granted them under the regulation.²³

Latrines and Urinales.

A common practice, especially among the male population of the lower classes, is not to use latrines but to resort to fields at the call of nature. In the beginning the factories situated in the country did not feel the necessity of providing any latrine accommodation. Even as late as 1892, the practice was common in Hyderabad, Khandesh and Ahmednagar.²⁴ But with the growth of factories and the increase of the working force in each factory, especially in towns and cities, the necessity for latrine accommodation was felt and regulation became inevitable. Still, the collector of Khandesh objected to the regulations especially in case of country towns as there was ample space and the factory workers followed the general custom.²⁵

²³ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 90.

²⁴ Ibid., 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 54. Bombay Presidency Report of 1893.

²⁵ Ibid., 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 54.

In other parts of the country, latrine provisions were installed long before, and by 1887 the factories in Madras had adequate accomodation. The dry-earth system was used in all these conservancies.²² About 1892 this system was introduced in Madras²³ and Malabar.²⁴ Bombay City found difficulty in adopting the new system due to the lack of space.²⁵ The least satisfactory of the Bombay factories from a sanitary point of view are the cotton presses. Bengal²⁶ and Burma²⁷ had also an adequate system about this time. But the lack of proper accommodation still remained a deficiency in Central Provinces.²⁸

The main difficulty in connection with the latrine system is the need of arrangement for proper conservancy. The problem becomes more complicated in the hot and moist climate where putrifaction sets in so quickly. In Burma, most of the factories solved the problem by building latrines over tidal creeks,²⁹ but the situation of factories in other parts of the country does not offer such an easy solution of the problem. In recent years a drainage system has been adopted in the large cities of India and the factories located in large cities enjoy the advantage of such an arrangement. But factories located in the outskirts of cities or in small towns still have an unsatisfactory condition as far as conservancy is concerned. In most cases the municipality is at fault and the mill-owners complain

²² Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 24.

²³ *Ibid.*, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 106, p. 9.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

that they "pay heavy taxes without getting proper service."⁴⁴

The ordinary scale of latrine accommodation has been one seat for every 50 workers. According to some authorities this scale is quite adequate, but others have found it insufficient. The Factory Labor Commission of 1907 made an investigation into the matter and found that this insufficiency existed only in case of small factories employing less than 200 persons. Their recommendation was as follows:

Up to 50 operatives	3 seats
From 51 to 150	4 "
„ 151 to 200	5 "

"Above this number, one seat for every 50 or fraction of 50. Where the latrines are provided with the septic tank or water-carriage system, the scale might be reduced after the first 25 seats."⁴⁵

Another question has recently been raised advocating the desirability of separating urinals from latrines. This was a point of controversy among the witnesses before the Factory Labor Commission of 1907 and the opinion was equally divided. The Commission did not see any "necessity for separate urinal accommodations". Separate accommodations are advisable from the viewpoint of better sanitation and comfort. It may not, however, be economical from the standpoint of mill-owners. Some of the old factories may even find it impracticable to spare their already limited space for such purposes. But there is apparently no reason why the newer or prospective mills should not arrange separate accommodations.

⁴⁴ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 106, p. 33.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 69.

2. Industrial Diseases.

The modern manufacturing industry in India has scarcely passed its infant stage. It is limited both in number and variety. The industries which are especially liable to give rise to serious diseases are still few in number in comparison with other occupations. The possibility of industrial diseases is, therefore, not so great in India as in other countries. Diseases to which the Indian factory worker is most likely to fall a victim, may be listed as follows:*

1. Brass Foundries: — Brassfounder's ague, dust, lead poison.
2. Foundries & Engineering Shops: — Inhalation of metallic dust in dry-grinding process.
3. Distilleries & Breweries: — Risk of inhaling dangerous fumes in refrigerating process.
4. Flour Mills: — Silicious dust in handling grains prior to washing.
5. Leather works: — Dust in certain grinding processes.
6. Cement Works: — Injurious dust.
7. Coach buildings: — Lead poison from old paint when rubbed.
8. Cotton ginning and cleaning: — Injurious dust.
9. Dye Works: — Lead poisoning where yellow chromate of lead is used; arsenical poisoning where arsenate of soda is used.
10. Brick Works: — Lead poisoning when lead is used in the glaze, dust, carbonic oxide.
11. Manufacture of Electric Accumulator: — Lead poisoning.
12. Hides etc.: — Anthrax.

* Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1907. Vol. 59, Cd. 3617, p. 25.

13. Earthen Ware and Pottery: — Dust and lead poisoning when lead is used.
14. Lucifer matches: — Phosphorous poisoning.
15. Paper Mills: — Dust during first process in handling materials.

How far these possible diseases can be avoided depends upon the precautions taken by the management and laborers. The danger from dust has been lessened by the precaution taken by Indian workers, as mentioned above.

The lack of information as regards the actual cases is a serious detriment to the correct and accurate estimation of the prevalence of industrial diseases in Indian factories. This is due not so much to the absence of cases as to the lack of proper medical examination. Workers cannot afford to go to a physician in case of ailment unless it is of a recognizably serious type. Consequently, thousands die without ever knowing the nature of the disease from which they have been suffering.

There is another way in which factories help to spread diseases, namely, through infections and contagious diseases which pass among workers from one another through exhalation and inhalation of dust and fluff which contain germs of disease. The most common disease of this sort in Indian factories is Phthisis, which is especially prevalent in Bombay.⁴⁷ The number of deaths from this disease is said to be enormous. But how far the factories are responsible for the high rate of death from Phthisis is not definitely known. The question appears to be one of general sanitation rather than of industrial diseases.

⁴⁷ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 58.

3. Provision for Safety.

The application of mechanical power to the productive processes has necessitated the use of large and complicated machines in factories. The speed at which they are often run is frequently a cause of danger to workers. The adequate provision for the fencing of machinery thus becomes an important problem in factory organization.

The importance of providing measures for safety was realized even in the early period of the factory system. The Factory Act of 1881 provided that all flyheads and hoists, and even other dangerous parts of machinery, at the option of inspectors, had to be fenced. How far this rule was observed was not definitely known until 1892 when statistics were collected for the first time.

From the very beginning, the machinery used in Indian factories were "sent out from England with precisely the latest fencing in use in that country."⁴⁸ According to the standard then existing, such guard was thought to be sufficient and when, in 1892, a general investigation was made into factory conditions, the fencing of machinery was found to be satisfactory in all parts of the country,⁴⁹ except in Khandesh where, according to the report of the collector, about one fourth of the machinery was not properly guarded. This was due mainly to the neglect on the part of the mill owners in replacing the old and original guards when worn out.⁵⁰ As newer and better machinery with safer guards came into existence, the machinery of the old type still in

⁴⁸ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 71.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, pp. 49, 110, 169, 180.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

existence was naturally found to be insufficiently fenced,⁸¹ and their defects were pointed out. The Factory Report of Bombay City in 1892 showed the necessity of remedying several defects such as "the fencing of the hoists in certain cotton presses; the covering in or making steps over shafting in engine room, which the workmen have to step over or pass under; and the boxing in of ropes or belts running immediately over a passageway."⁸² Mill owners, however, remedied many such defects whenever pointed out by the inspectors.

Since 1892 the reports from different provinces indicated that the fencing of the machinery has been satisfactory. The subject was under investigation by the Textile Factory Labor Committee of 1906 and the Factory Labor Commission of 1907. "The arrangement for the fencing of machinery," remarked the latter, "is in the great majority of cases excellent."⁸³ "In Indian textile factories" added the former, "speaking generally, the attention paid to fencing reflects great credit on the management."⁸⁴ "The fencing of machinery in all factories," observed the acting chief inspector of factories, Bombay, in his report for 1918, "was satisfactory and was generally well-maintained during the year."⁸⁵ Mr. T. M. Ainscough, His Majesty's senior trade commissioner in India and Ceylon, found need for further legislation for the fencing of machinery, especially as babies and young children were allowed within the mills with their mothers.⁸⁶

⁸¹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1894, Vol. 58, II. of C 108, p. 70.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 63.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 1907, Vol. 59, Cd. 3617, p. 27.

⁸⁵ *The Bombay Chronicle*, Nov. 26, 1919.

⁸⁶ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1919, Cmd. 442, p. 37.

The risks of injury by fire may arise when there are insufficient exits or when those present cannot be opened easily, or when staircases are inadequate for those working upstairs. The danger from the first source is rather rare in Indian factories. The exits are sufficient and doors remain wide open during working hours. The suggestion has been made that the doors be so arranged that they can be opened outward. This would be an improvement and may be adopted in the new buildings. But the provision for the escape of those working upstairs, if there is any danger from fire, is very inadequate. The staircases are narrow and steep and the same staircases serve for both entrance and exit. The danger is greater in cotton factories which are generally more than one story high. The importance of making better provision for the egress of the workers in case of fire was emphasized by the Factory Commission of 1907.⁶⁷

Some of the main sources of danger deserve special attention in order to conceive adequately how dangerous accidents can be prevented.

(1) The work of replacing belts or moving pulleys is not a dangerous task in itself, but sometimes the worker's clothing is caught between the pulley and the belt. Some cases have been recorded of workers being whirled around and dashed to the ground from a height. The following suggestions showing the possibility of preventing such injuries were made to the Millowners' Association even as early as 1892.⁶⁸

- a. Only an experienced person should be allowed to replace the belt or quick-moving pulleys.

⁶⁷ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 68.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 70.

- b. The worker employed for such purposes should wear only his loin cloth (la ng o t i) or tight-fitting trousers.
- c. Only especially-made ladders provided with hooks and spurs should be used.
- d. The important pulleys should be provided with belt-hangers whenever possible.

How far these suggestions have been considered, it is not possible to ascertain.

(2) The stop-gear for softening jute was a source of danger to the workers. In 1910 the use of an automatic machine was made compulsory and since then there has been no accident from that source.**

(3) Great danger arises in the ginning and pressing mills due to unguarded machinery and the risk of injury by fire. A constant source of danger in cotton presses is the "opener", a cylinder filled with projectile spikes of wood and iron,** and used to clean cotton and to mix different qualities of cotton into one uniform grade. There are three kinds of danger from the opener: (a) the air is usually thick with dust beaten out of the cotton; (b) stones mixed with raw cotton are sometimes hurled out with great force, injuring the workers directly in front of the machine; (c) matches or stones coming in contact with the exposed portion of the metal inside the opener cause an explosion, setting a whole room on fire in an instant. Many laborers, especially women, have thus been burned to death. As most of the seasonal employments were outside the scope of

** Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1912-13, Vol. 61, H. of C. 147, p. 63.

** Ibid., 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 64.

the factory act, no preventive method was devised or made compulsory until 1911 when the third factory act was passed, prohibiting the employment of women and children where cotton-openers were at work. The recent Factory Act of January, 1922, has widened its scope to include still smaller establishments.

(4) The attempt to clean up machinery while in action instead of having stopped for the purpose,^a has been a cause of many accidents in factories. Most of these accidents are preventable, or at any rate their number can be greatly reduced. The only thing necessary is a stricter observance of factory regulation by workers.

(5) The commonest source of accidents to the worker is the running gear. Through carelessness his fingers are occasionally drawn in and sometimes badly injured. No remedy seems to exist in such cases since there is a limit to which fencing is possible.

A few other sources of danger, though not strictly connected with the fencing of machinery, still remain unprotected for. The most important of these are unprotected openings of upper stories, openings in the floor, and defective flooring, and beaking of steampipes. The Factory Act of January, 1922, has made provision for the safety of workers against such dangers. The inspectors of factories have been given authority to compel the repair of buildings or machinery which is in a condition dangerous to the safety of workers. In the case of immediate danger, they may even prohibit the use of machinery or plant until it is duly repaired.

^a Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 110.

4. Industrial Accidents.

One of the greatest evils of the factory system of production is the injury to the life and limb of workers. It has been a necessary evil varying in degree and frequency in different factories according to the character of the industry and to the precaution taken by employers and employees or to the regulation imposed by the Government.

The statistics as to accidents in Indian factories were scanty prior to the year 1892. Only fragmentary data for a few provinces can be collected from local reports of the earlier years. From 1883 to 1888 there were reported 4026 cases of accidents in different parts of India.²² Of these, there were 2099 cases in the Bombay Presidency, of which 53 were fatal, 1568 in Bengal, of which 73 were fatal. 27 accidents were reported in the Central Provinces and 80 in the Northwestern Provinces. 247 accidents were reported in the Madras Presidency during the years 1885—88. Lacerations, contusions, fractures and minor amputations seemed to be the most common form of injury. Machinery and falls were the most common causes. The accidents were ascribed in most instances to carelessness on the part of the worker, and in a few instances to insufficient fencing of machinery.²³

From 1892, more complete records of accidents are available. The averages of the quinquenniums from 1892 to 1916 show an increase in the absolute number of accidents of all kinds in the factories of

²² Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 30.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 35—47, 91—92.

India, but a decrease in the proportion of accidents to the number employed.

Increase of Accidents in Factories
(Quinquennium from 1892 to 1916)⁸⁸

Year	Fatal	Accidents		Total	Average total no. of workmen employed	Proportion of the employed to each accident
		Serious	Minor			
1892-96	47	389	1434	1870	356,517	191
1897-01	71	636	1909	2402	450,018	185
1902-06	94	574	2517	3185	508,390	188
1907-11	123	808	2995	4016	773,256	196
1912-16	138	988	3068	4969	864,504	198
1917-18	144	887	3061	4992	1,176,201	216
1918-19	180	1108	3775	5063	1,123,072	221

The table gives the quinquennium averages of accidents for 25 years from 1892-93 to 1915-16 as well as the number of accidents in 1917-18 and 1918-19. The accidents increased from 1870 in the first five years to 5063 in 1918-19. During the same period the number of employees increased from 356,517 to 1,123,072. That is, while the accidents increased 270 per cent, the number of employees increased 315 per cent.

In proportion to the number employed, the largest number of accidents reported in the year 1918 occurred in Bihar and Orissa, where there was an accident to every 48 laborers. The smallest number of accidents were reported in Bombay, where there was one accident to every 340 laborers. Bengal ranked second to Bombay with one accident to every 310 laborers. The following table shows the distribution of accidents by provinces in 1918.

⁸⁸ Compiled. Statistical Abstracts, related to British India, 1901-02, p. 269; 1906-09, p. 263; 1916-17, p. 235; 1921, p. 236.

Distribution of Accidents in 1918.⁶⁶

(In principal provinces only)

Provinces	Laborers	Total Accidents reported	Proportion of total accidents to laborers
Bengal	439,961	1,418	310
Bombay	296,672	865	340
Madras	99,059	409	242
Burma	70,918	294	241
United Provinces	64,196	728	88
Central and Berar	48,993	200	244
Bihar and Orissa	43,471	899	48
Punjab	38,829	158	245
Rest	20,973	92	217

All the accidents may be classed under two heads, preventable and unpreventable. It is the former class that deserved special attention. Unfortunately, the method of collecting data on accidents is far from being satisfactory. On several points, complete information is necessary, such as: (a) The machinery or part of the machinery immediately causing the injury. (b) Nature of the injury and degree of disability. (c) Date, time, age and sex of the injured. (d) The effects.

In many cases the accidents have been attributed to the carelessness of the workers. The workers feel, however, that reports coming from the managers can not be taken at their face value.

The lack of provision for immediate medical help is a serious consideration. In some factories in which medical service is not available, the injured persons are carried to a hospital situated at a long distance,

⁶⁶ Adapted. Statistical Abstracts related to British India, 1921, p. 235.

before they receive treatment.⁶⁶ The serious effect of such a practice is too obvious to need any comment.⁶⁷

5. Liability and Compensation.

There does not yet exist in India any law by which the employer can be made liable to compensation for an injury sustained by an employee in the performance of his work. But some sort of voluntary compensation has long existed in many factories. The Factory Commission of 1890 found in their investigation that in most of the large factories the injured employees were allowed either the whole or half of their wages during the time they were under treatment. A provident fund was also started in a few of the factories, created out of the unpaid salaries and the fines realized from the employees. The employees disabled by injury or disease were supported out of this fund.⁶⁸ This system, of course, was neither compulsory nor universal.⁶⁹

Long ago, some of the employees, or at least some of their leaders, realized that they were entitled to compensation for injury sustained in many cases through no fault of their own, and in 1889 factory workers of Bombay asked in their petition to the Government, that workers, injured either temporarily or permanently in the factory, should be provided for by factory owners. In 1910 the Indian Workmen's Association of Bombay also drew the attention of the

⁶⁶ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86. p. 110.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 92, 100, 91, 72, 64, 101, etc.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 64, 91, 92, 100.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

Government to the necessity, of accident insurance.⁷⁶ But no attention has as yet been paid to the petition and the need of compulsory compensation on the part of the employer has not yet been realized. More recently, labor unions have taken up the matter and in several recent strikes the workers made a demand for accident insurance as one of the conditions of strike settlement.⁷⁷

That voluntary philanthropic work for the help of the injured exists in some factories of India can not be doubted. Unfortunately no data is available. But it can safely be said that philanthropic work is rarely adequate to take the place of a compulsory compensation act, such as has been enacted in almost all the advanced countries of the world.

The Factory Act of January, 1922, has, however, provided that the court may pay compensation to injured persons or their families out of fines enforced upon employers convicted for the breach of factory law. This provision, however inadequate, makes the beginning of a new era in the labor and social legislation of India.

CHAPTER VI INDUSTRIAL EFFICIENCY.

Industrial efficiency is an element of the highest importance in the productive system. It implies the most effective method of utilising natural resources and human efforts in order to produce the greatest possible return. Efficiency in production largely determines the prosperity of a nation and affects both the profits of the employer and the wages of the

⁷⁶ The International Socialist Review, Chicago, July 1910, p. 25.

⁷⁷ The Tribune, Lahore, December, 14, 1919.

employee. The success of a given industrial organization depends on the efficiency of both management and labor.

1. Administrative Efficiency.

The prime motive of modern business enterprise is profit, which is the difference between the production cost and the market price. As price is mainly determined by competition, it is, as a rule, beyond the control of the business man. Business success, therefore, lies in the reduction of cost which can be achieved by the economy of production, or industrial efficiency and is, in the final analysis, a question of efficient administration.

The efficiency of labor depends upon administrative efficiency to a great extent. Administrative efficiency involves the introduction of the right kind of machinery and other technical processes, an adequate supply of suitable raw material, and the provision of congenial working conditions. Without these, laborers cannot put their best efforts, both physical and mental, into the productive process. Laborers too, must be selected according to their ability to perform each separate operation. While these constitutes the condition, the main incentive to efficient work comes from a fair rate of remuneration.

These conditions have been but partially met in Indian factories. How far the machinery and other technical processes have been kept up to date, it is not possible to determine. As most of the machinery is not made in India but is imported from a long distance, Indian manufacturers do not have the same facilities as the British or the American manufacturers in installing up-to-date machinery. Complaints have been made by factory workers of in-

ferior materials used in factories. Although safety to workers has been fairly well provided for, a good deal remains to be done for sanitation and comfort in many factories. The wages might be said to be fair according to the general rate of wages among laborers of the same class in other industrial fields of India, but when compared with the wages of the same class of workers in other countries with whom they have to compete, they are very low. Discipline has not yet been well established, although in certain points, it has made considerable progress. Nor is it easy to determine without careful investigation the degree of adjustment of the worker to his operation. Scientific management, which has been successfully introduced into many factories in the United States and other countries, has apparently not yet made much headway in India.

As early factories in India were initiated for the most part by European enterprise, the management was naturally in the hands of the Europeans. Some of the non-textile factories are still managed by them. The jute industry in Bengal was started by European capital and has been kept under European control and management even up to the present day. But the cotton mills, which form the most important industry in India, are chiefly controlled and managed by Indians themselves. In earlier days, some of the cotton mills employed European managers. In 1888 practically all the factories at Ahmedabad employed European managers¹ and those at Cawnpore were both financed and supervised by the Europeans.² But gradually Indian managers, especially Parsis and Gujratis, have replaced them.

¹ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 71.

² *Ibid.*, p. 71.

In 1888 the Factory report from Bombay stated that the management of the mills in Bombay was fairly good, even judged by the English standard. "This is so," continued the report, "whether the system be viewed from the standpoint of production or economic efficiency, or from that of humanity and benevolence."² But times have changed. Competition has become greater and it requires more efficient administration to bring about business success today than it did a generation ago.

The lack of strong supervision is one of the great defects in most of the Indian factories. Workers have not yet passed the stage where they can be left alone and supervision is urgently needed for the successful operation of factories.

2. Labor Efficiency.

Although the organization and management may create favorable working conditions, and fair wages may offer the guiding motive to work, yet it rests with the will and ability of laborers to put forth their energy for productive purposes.

There are two conditions on which strength and vigor necessary for factory work depend: — proper nourishment and freedom from disease. In both of these essentials the workers in India are at a great disadvantage.

The diet of the majority of the Indian population is very poor and although factory workers may get a little better nourishment than do the people of the same class in other industries, yet their food is perhaps the poorest of all the factory workers in the world. Diseases, such as

² *Gr. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 64.*

malarial fever, plague and dysentery, are constant companions of the laboring classes, as, in fact, they are of the whole population in India. Although these diseases are common in tropical climates, they are, in most cases, preventable if poverty and ignorance do not stand in the way. Poverty prevents the people from having wholesome food, adequate clothing, and proper housing, and thus from preserving the general vitality which is the best antidote to all sorts of diseases. Poverty alone stands in the way of their securing medical advice. Through ignorance they are unable to adopt hygienic methods for safeguarding themselves against disease.

The possession of strength and vigor alone does not lead men to acquire industrial efficiency. They must have an aptitude for the kind of work they undertake and must adapt themselves to new industrial conditions. The physical and social environment in which Indian laborers are born and reared, scarcely gives them an impulse to take to factory life. But the workers, though conservative, are susceptible to change and they are surely, though slowly, adapting themselves to the new industrial conditions.

Aptitude may determine the choice of occupation, and adaptation may hasten a man's acquisition of technical processes and accustom him to his environment, but steady application is necessary for successful accomplishment. Both application and persistence are essential to industrial efficiency, and in both, Indian operatives are weak. "The Indian factory worker is, in general," reports the Factory Labor Commission of 1907, "incapable of prolonged and intense effort; he may work hard for a comparatively short time, but even in such cases the standard attained is much

below what would be expected in similar circumstances in any European country. His natural inclination is to spread his work over a long period of time, working in a leisurely manner throughout, and taking intervals of rest whenever he feels disinclined for further exertion."⁴ "No employee works more than two hours at a stretch", observed the manager of a Bombay mill.⁵ "The operatives seem to have improved very little in their application," according to the managers of several factories.⁶

"As a class, mill hands improved in skill, but not in application," said Mr. Ramji of Bombay.⁷ That there was an improvement in the work although he was sure there had been no improvement in their habit, was the statement of Mr. Wadia, also of Bombay.⁸ That he had observed an improvement in skill, but not in application, was the opinion of Mr. Screwalla. While Mr. H. R. Greaves, after 27 years of experience in the well-known Messrs. Greaves, Cotton & Co., stated, on the other hand, that not only had there been an improvement in their work, but that the operatives as a class applied themselves more steadily now⁹ than formerly.

Precision and accuracy are also essential elements in industrial efficiency. They insure the quality of the work. Factory workers in India generally come from the agricultural classes and are scarcely trained to precise and accurate work. But the artisan class of India has been famous for its precise and accurate manipulation of delicate and highly-priced articles, such as shawls, jewelry work and ivory carving.

⁴ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 20.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 70.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 78, 94, 65.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

Their ornamental work of various kinds was also once well known all over the world. The introduction of machinery has altogether changed the character of precision and accuracy required in factories and nothing is definitely known as to the aptitude of Indian workers for the kind of accuracy and precision required under the factory system.

While precision and accuracy of workers add to the quality of goods, speed and dexterity add to the quantity, and are, therefore, essential factors of industrial efficiency, especially in modern times. Speed and dexterity depend upon the physical constitution of the body, especially the nervous system, but they can be developed by practice, especially in youth.

In speed and dexterity, workers in India compare very favorably with those in other countries. "The doffers in jute mills," remarked the Factory Labor Commission of 1907, "work with wonderful rapidity."¹⁰ According to the opinion of several factory managers and owners, Indian workers have improved both in speed and dexterity. "The Madras workman is steadily increasing in dexterity and efficiency," stated Mr. Simpson, after 21 years of experience in factory management, "but in attendance and application there is no improvement."¹¹

Speed and dexterity are more or less a question of habit and can be acquired with practice. Skill and ingenuity, on the other hand, imply native intelligence. Skill results from the training of intelligence in a special occupation. Ingenuity is the ability or power to meet a certain situation which arises in the process of production. Both are the highest virtues in industrial efficiency.

¹⁰ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1906, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 44.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1906, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 316.

The skill of Indian workers, especially in highly artistic work, has been traditional, under the handicraft system. But they have never been trained for work in factories except by virtue of the knowledge which they have secured through experience in such work. The general consensus of opinion of the managers and owners of factories is that factory workers have made considerable progress in skill.

That Bombay mill operatives as a class had improved in skill, was the opinion of Mr. Greaves.²² Mr. Ramji made practically the same statement.²³ Messrs. Naranji and Baptista, each with thirty years of experience in the cotton industry, also corroborated the above observations.²⁴ Mr. Fuzulbhoj Currimbhoj Ibrahim, Vice-Chairman of the Bombay Mill Owners' Association, noticed improvement in the skill of workers in the course of ten years.²⁵

Nothing is definitely known of the ingenuity of factory workers. Although ingenuity depends upon originality rather than upon training, workers must nevertheless have some fundamental education and must be thoroughly familiar with the processes of their work. Invention results from inspiration, but inspiration itself is the result of education and training.

3. Comparative Efficiency.

Industrial efficiency, like all other virtues, whether social or individual, is a relative term. In order to form an adequate idea of the efficiency of the laborers in Indian factories, we must compare it with some standard. Unfortunately precise data as to production in Indian factories is meagre and a com-

²² Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 63.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 102, 84.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

parison of efficiency of Indian factory workers with those of other countries is, therefore, difficult.

The political relation of India with England, and the appointment of a large number of Englishmen in the factories of India as well as the world supremacy which Great Britain holds in the textile industry, have often led to the comparison of Indian workers with English workers.

"For a mill with the same number of spindles quite twice as many hands are employed in Bombay as in England," was the finding of the Bombay Factory Report in 1888.¹⁶ "It takes two natives (or according to some well informed English managers, three) to do the work of one English hand," added the Ahmedabad report in the same year.¹⁷ "It takes just 72 hours' work in India", continued the report, "to get the same outturn as 60 hours' work at home (England)".¹⁸ "There are 100 per cent more hands employed in every jute mill in Bengal than is required to work a similar-sized mill in Dundee", observed the special inspector of factories in Bengal, a few years later.¹⁹

A special attempt was made by the Textile Labor Committee of 1906 and the Factory Labor Commission of 1907 to estimate the comparative efficiency of the Indian and English operatives. "So far as spinning was concerned, one Englishman could do as much as two Indians," was the observation of Mr. Leslie of Messrs Greaves, Cotton and Co., Bombay, in his evidence before the Commission.²⁰ That an English operative would do three times as much work as an Indian operative was the opinion of Mr.

¹⁶ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 66.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*,

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 109.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 62.

Shepherd, general manager of the same company.²¹ Mr. Brady considered that one English operative was equal to three Indian operatives.²² Mr. Cooper, another factory manager, was of the opinion that the English weaver got more out of each of his four looms than the Indian weaver did out of his two looms.²³ Mr. C. N. Wadia stated that they had²⁴ three times the number of men required in an English factory of similar capacity and even with this surplus of hands the owner did not obtain the efficiency from the machines that he was entitled to expect. He estimated that they did not get more than 60 per cent efficiency as compared with English looms.

Many other similar statements could be cited on this point. While they show clearly the inefficiency of Indian workers in comparison with the English workers, the proportion of efficiency between the two classes of workers is difficult to determine precisely.

A mill manager in Bombay prepared the following table showing the comparative efficiency of the Indian and the English operatives in the spinning and weaving departments.²⁵

Indian v s. English Spinners.

	Indian	English
1. Operative per 1,000 spindles . .	28	4.2
2. Number of times Indian hands employed for a given unit to English	6.6	1
3. Hands up to a spindle point . .	21	3.7
4. Number of times Indian hands to English up to spindle point . .	5.67	1
5. Hands per 1,000 in a mule mill without reeler	17	2.5

²¹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 72.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 150.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 148-49.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1907, Vol. 59, Cd. 3617, p. 71.

	Indian	English
6. Number of times Indian hands to English for same	6.8	1
7. Hands per 1,000 spindles in a ring mill	32	6
8. Number of times Indian hands to English for same	5.3	1
9. Annual outturn of yarn per operatives	4,000 w	7,736 w
10. Annual outturn of yarn per spindle	112 w	32.6 U
11. Hourly production per spindle	(oz).43	(oz).18
12. Indian Weight to English per hour & spindle	2 2	1.
13. Production per 1,000 per hour spindles	25.62w	11.25w
14. Average approximate counts	20 s	40 s
15. Length of yarn turned out per hour	430 yds	378 yds
16. Indian length to English	1.2	1
17. Working days in the year	309	300
18. Working weeks in the year	51 1/2	50
19. Working hours per week	80	55 1/2
20. Working hours per year	4,120	2,775
21. No. of times Indian working hours to English	148	1
22. Monthly wages per operative	Rs 13	Rs 70
23. Annual wages per operatives	156	840
24. Payment per operative per hour	Pies 7.2	Pies 58
25. Payment per operative per 1000 spindles monthly	364	294
26. Payment per 1000 spindles per hour	As 16.8	20.3
27. Number of times English hourly wages to Indians per operatives	1	8.

Indian v s. English Weavers.

	Indian	English
1. Hands employed per loom	1 1/4	.43
2. Length turned out per loom annually	15,450 yds	16,500
3. Length turned out per loom weekly	300 yds	330
4. Length turned out per loom Hourly	3.75	5.94
5. Proportion of English yards turned out to Indian hourly	1	1.58
6. Weight turned out per loom yearly	w 4,120	3,900
7. Weight turned out per loom weekly	w 80	78
8. Weight turned out per loom hourly	w 1	1.4
9. Length turned out per operative per week	Yd 240	787

	Indian	English
10. Proportion of length turned out per operative per week	1	3.11
11. Weight per operative per week	lb 64	181
12. Proportion of weight per operative per week	lb. 1	2.82
13. Monthly wages per operative	15	72

No detailed account of the preparation of the above chart is available and a fair comparison cannot be made. A good many conclusions have been drawn from a few items. In item 19 of the spinning department, for instance, the working hours in Indian mills have been put at 80 as against 55½ in English mills. The case in India was exceptional. Granting that it is true, efficiency does not increase, nor does it remain even steady, with longer hours. In fact, the longer a man has to work, the less will the amount of efficiency per hour after a certain period.

A more comprehensive study was made under the supervision of Mr. C. R. Simpson, giving figures to show the comparative efficiency of the Indian and English operative, as shown below:²⁶

Comparative statement of staff employed in a mill in Madras and that employed in a mill in Lancashire.

(35 000 ring spindles, 800 looms, average counts 16 s, Madras 67½ hour per week, Lancashire 54½ hrs.)

I. Engine Department	Madras	Lancashire
1. Engine drivers	1	1
2. Firemen	12	4
3. Ash shifters and window screeners	7	1
4. Coal shifter	4	—
5. Boiler cleaners	12	2
6. Engine oilers and cleaners	4	2
7. Oilers in mill	12	2
8. Writer, fitter and reserve men	12	—
Proportion 5.88 to 1	64	12

²⁶ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, pp. 313-14.

II. Carding Department	Madras	Lancashire
1. Carder	1	1
2. Under-carder	—	1
3. Head Maistries and writers	10	—
4. Assistant Maistries	8	—
5. Fitter and carpenter	2	—
6. Strap piecers	2	—
7. Bobbin carriers	7	—
8. Roller coverers	3	1
9. Mixing	44	10
10. Blow room	36	8
11. Cards	40	14
12. Drawing	57	15
13. Slubbing	13	13
14. Intermediate	20	10
15. Roving	134	38
16. Roving, half-timers 84 =	42	—
Proportion 3.70 to 1	419	113

III. Spinning Department	Madras	Lancashire
1. Spinning master	1	1
2. Assistant spinning master	1	1
3. Spinners	384	70
4. Gaiters	36	24
5. Jobbers and oilmen	41	7
6. Bobbin carriers	20	4
7. Doffers & Sweepers, half-timers = 300	150	40
8. Writers, carpenters, & fitters	4	—
9. Bonding	7	2
Proportion 4.92 to 1	644	149

IV. Doubling Department	Madras	Lancashire
1. Doublers	15	4
2. Doffers, half-timers 28 =	14	4
3. Jobbers	1	1
Proportion 3.33 to 1	30	9

V. Winding Department	Madras	Lancashire
1. Winders	54	48
2. Laborers	10	1
3. Spare hands, half-timers 86 =	18	—
4. Jobbers and writers	4	1
Proportion 1.72 to 1	86	50

VI. Color Winding Department	Madras	Lancashire
1. Winders	130	84
2. Winders, half-timers 150 =	75	2
3. Laborers	4	1
4. Jobbers & assistants	10	1
Proportion 2.48 to 1	269	88

VII. Color Pirning Department	Madras	Lancashire
1. Pirn winders	100	96
2. Pirn winders, half-timers, 100 =	50	2
3. Laborers	1	—
4. Jobbers and assistants	9	—
Proportion 1.63 to 1	100	98

VIII. Warping Department	Madras	Lancashire
1. Warpors	19	12
2. Laborers	—	1
Proportion 1.46 to 1	19	13

IX. Sizing Department	Madras	Lancashire
1. Sizors	20	10
2. Laborers	11	3
3. Jobbers	1	—
4. Writers, pitters & carpenters	6	2
Proportion 2.53 to 1	38	15

X. Reeling	Madras	Lancashire
1. Reelers	100	50
2. Laborers	7	1
3. Spare hands, half-timers, 50 =	25	—
4. Jobbers and writers	5	—
Proportion 2.69 to 1	137	51

XI. Twisting & Drawing	Madras	Lancashire
1. Full-timers	33	33
2. Laborers	1	1
3. Jobbers	1	—
Proportion 1.03 to 1	35	34

XII. Weaving Department		Madras	Lancashire
1. Head Maistry		4	1
2. Warp Maistry		1	—
3. Loom Maistry (jobbers)		34	10
4. Weavers		800	320
5. Learner & spare hands		100	15
6. Strap piecers		4	—
7. Carpenters and fitters		8	3
8. Weft and beam carriers		12	1
9. Sweepers		8	—
Proportion 2.77 to 1		971	350

Summary

	Madras	Lancashire
1. Engine Department	64	12
2. Carding	419	113
3. Spinning	644	149
4. Doubling	30	9
5. Winding	86	50
6. Color Winding	219	88
7. Color Pirning	160	98
8. Warping	19	13
9. Sizing	38	15
10. Reeling	137	51
11. Twisting and Drawing	35	34
12. Weaving	971	350
Proportion 2.67 to 1	2 622	932

From the above table it would appear that one English laborer can do the work of 2.67 Indian laborers. It should be remembered, however, that Mr. Simpson included in his list a number of men in the Indian mill for whom there is no corresponding occupation in the English mill. Among them are coal-shifters and sweepers. In his oral evidence, Mr. Simpson stated that there would be a deduction of ten percent of extra hands from the figure 2,622. The proportion would, therefore, be 2.40 to 1. Coal shifting is not a factory process. Sweeping may be due to bad flooring and bad materials used. There are 34 laborers in the Indian mill compared with 8 in

the English. It seems improbable that 8 ordinary English laborers could do the work of 34 Indian laborers, unless the English laborers were equipped with necessary labor-saving tools and implements, and in that case, the large number of men employed in the Indian mill might be due to the fact mill-owners find it cheaper to employ labor than to invest money in labor-saving devices. This policy doubtless leads to the employment of many extra laborers in India, mills. Mr. Simpson also puts 100 learners and sparehands in the Indian mill and fifteen in the English. Whether or not the 10 percent which Mr. Simpson deducts is sufficient to cover the whole number of extra and spare hands, is uncertain.

A comparative study of actual and possible production has been made by Mr. Ratcliffe as shown below:²⁷

"Calculated for a 42" loom running at a speed of 160 picks per minute, and making long cloth of the following particulars: — 36", 37½ yards, 52 reed, 50 picks, 22s warp, 36s weft, 9 lbs.

(1) The actual production from this loom when kept properly working for a period of two hours, under ordinary conditions, including the drawing in of all broken warp threads, is 2 lbs. 6 ounces.

(2) The actual production obtained from the same loom, under present conditions, in two hours' working is 1 lb. 12 oz.

(3) The calculated production of the same loom, without any stoppages whatever, for a period of two hours, is 2 lbs. 8.6 oz.

(4) The calculated production of the same loom, with 10 percent stoppages, which is rather more

²⁷ Manager of Western Indian Spinning and Weaving Co., Ltd. Bombay. *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1909, Vol. 68, Cd. 4519, p. 91.

than what would obtain in a well managed English mill, is 2 lbs. 4 oz. This width of loom in England would run at a speed of at least 185 picks per minute, and this would give a production of 2 lbs. 8 oz. with 10 per cent stoppages.

Mr. Ratcliffe obtained the 2 lbs. 6 oz by keeping the loom going under direct supervision and preventing any unnecessary stoppages. The 1 lb. 12 oz. was the result of leaving the man to himself and taking the production for two hours. The weaver did not know that his production would be measured. An average for a week's work was taken, and came to about the same. This showed that there was 26 per cent less production when the operatives were working the looms than might be expected. On an average an English workman would attend to four looms and an Indian to two. In spinning the actual production of 22s warp for a day of 12 hours was 5.83 ounces, compared with a possible maximum production of 7.1 ounces. On the theoretical figures, Mr. Ratcliffe allowed 5 per cent for stoppages. The 5.83 ounces were ascertained over a period of two weeks for the whole mill. With the same counts in England he would say the production would be about 7 ounces. The actual production in India was 18 per cent below the theoretical amount. When spinning 20 s, he estimated they required two and a half hands in India to one in England.

Mr. Ratcliffe's results in weaving are inconclusive. It is clear that the operative produces 26 % more when properly supervised. But this does not offer the proper basis of comparison. The figure 5.83 oz. may more or less correctly be taken as a standard for the mill concerned. His estimate of production in England at 7 oz. is not substantiated. His conclusion in the test case with 20 s warp is without supporting

data. The most significant point of this experiment is that the actual production in India was 18 % below the theoretical.

Mr. Parekh made a comparative study of the actual and theoretical production in textile factories. Although laborers in three divisions of the spinning and weaving departments spent 42 hours in aggregate, or 14 hours each, on the average, their actual work did not amount to more than 24 hours, i. e., the actual working period was 8 hours out of 14.²⁶

Mr. C. N. Wadia of the Century Spinning and Manufacturing Company Ltd., Bombay, has furnished us with the following interesting data concerning actual and possible machine production:

Statement Showing Loss in Production,
or Efficiency of Labor.²⁷

Name of Machine	Engine	Less a fair allowance for doffing, etc.	Net time machine ought to run	Net production of machine if kept running properly	Actual production	Efficiency of machine in percentage
	H. M.	H. M.	H. M.			
Scutcher	13.10	2.30	10.40	130 laps	100 lps.	77
Carding engine	"	1.10	12.0	225 lbs.	190 lbs.	84
Drawing frame	"	4.0	8.10	1600 "	1200 "	75
Slubbing	"	3.30	8.40	1600 "	1200 "	75
Intermediate frame	"	3.0	10.10	1300 "	1100 "	85
Roving frame	"	2.50	10.20	670 "	470 "	70
Ring frame	"	0.25	10.45	170 "	155 "	91
Loom 28 "	"	2.0	11.10	88 yds.	63 yds.	72
" 40 "	"	2.0	11.10	73 "	56 "	77
" 54 "	"	2.0	11.10	61 "	41 "	67

A more recent statement as to the relative efficiency of Indian factory labor has been made by Mr. Thomas Ainscough, O. B. E., His Majesty's

²⁶ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 5.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 95.

Senior Trade Commissioner in India and Ceylon. "I am informed," says Mr. Ainscough, "that in Cawnpore, nine men are still required to work a pair of mules of 800 spindles, whereas it is said only three would be necessary in a Lancashire mill. A Lancashire weaver usually minds four looms by himself, or six with the assistance of a boy or girl, whereas in India, about 50 percent of the weavers will mind only one loom, and in no case, has any weaver been known to attend to more than two looms."²⁰ Mr. Ainscough gives no data to substantiate his statement.

In estimating the comparative efficiency of Indian factory laborer as shown by the data given above, several arguments have been put forth questioning the reliability of the comparisons.

First, it is argued that these data have been collected for the most part by Englishmen and that there is a possibility of error because of race prejudice. The possibility of error becomes still greater in the present case, due to the political relation between England and India.

Second, these estimates were made either by the English managers or by their assistants, who are, at best, experts only in the practical branch of their occupation. The breadth of vision and the power of observation necessary for such comparison are not easy to acquire without proper education.

Third, the circumstances which led to the preparation of the data also deserve careful consideration. The primary object of the Textile Factory Labor Committee of 1906 and the Factory Labor Commission of 1907 was to restrict long hours of work. Mill owners could not deny the charge of

²⁰ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1919, Cmd. 442, p. 38.

working their laborers for long hours, but defended themselves on the ground that factory laborers in India worked rather leisurely, and were unsteady and inefficient, a fact which necessitated the introduction of longer hours; otherwise, they argued, they could not carry on their business in the face of foreign competition. They tried to prove the inefficiency of Indian labor with these arguments. Undoubtedly the defects mentioned by them do apply to Indian factory laborers, but herein lies a possibility of exaggeration.

Fourth, the efficiency of the laborer depends upon a number of fundamental conditions within the industrial organization, conditions which differ in different countries and even in individual mills in the same country, to such a degree that comparison is exceedingly difficult.

It must be remembered also that the efficiency of the laborer is dependent upon the efficiency of the management which is the relative adjustment of labor and machinery so as to reduce the cost of production to the lowest possible level. The cost of machinery is much higher in India than in England. All machinery is imported from the latter country. On the other hand, labor is three or four times as cheap in India as in England. This determines the adjustment of production cost in Indian factories in a manner quite different from that in England.

This is a machine age and the productive efficiency of labor depends largely upon the use of proper machinery. None of the investigators quoted above have fully recognized the fact. In some cases the machinery used in India was the same as that used in England, but machinery is being improved upon every day and it is extremely doubtful whether

Indian mill-owners keep their machinery as up to date as those in England. The mill hands of Bombay complained even as early as 1889 that they had inferior machinery to work with.²¹

The quality of the raw materials is a big item in the efficient working of a factory. The cotton used in Indian mills is, as a rule, inferior to that used in Lancashire. It is much harder to work with inferior cotton than with good cotton. "The breakage in the thread, for instance," complained the factory workers of Bombay in 1889, "is so continuous here on account of the bad quality of cotton, that mill-owners are compelled to employ more men."²² Mr. Wadia, a mill-manager in Bombay, mentioned above, used good quality cotton and the men turned out as much work in twelve hours as a mill that worked thirteen and fourteen hours with inferior stuff.²³ Mr. Taylor, manager of another mill, argued that a better quality of cotton is used in Lancashire and that this was one of the reasons why fewer men were needed there.²⁴

An important element in textile factories is the condition of the atmosphere. In the textile industry a moist climate is essential, and English factories have that natural advantage. In India the proper condition has to be artificially created for the greater part of the year. How far Indian mills have attained the ideal condition has not been discussed by any of the investigators.

A proper working environment is necessary for

²¹ Petition to the Governor General, Bombay, Oct. 24, 1889. *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890-1891, Vol. 59, H. of C. 96, pp. 106-107.*

²² Petition of the Mill Hands to the Governor General, Bombay, Oct. 24, 1889. *Ibid.*

²³ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 114.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

efficient work. It is pretty nearly certain that the conditions in Indian mills are inferior to those in English mills. Even the Factory Commission of 1907 admitted this fact. Some of the witnesses before the Commission were of the opinion that the vitiated air in the mills was largely responsible for the careless habit of the operatives and for their frequent absences from the working rooms, and that the conditions in some mills were such as to preclude any display of energy, and to necessitate frequent absences in order to obtain a breath of pure air. "Our observations have convinced us," observed the Commission, "that those statements are justified by the conditions obtaining in some cotton textile mills."⁸⁵ "Insufficient ventilation reduces both muscular activity and mental alertness", was the conclusion arrived at by the U. S. Public Health Service.⁸⁶

Long hours of work is another factor that should be considered in connection with the study of efficiency. Factory workers in India had to work for twelve or thirteen hours instead of ten and a half as in England at the time of this comparison. The significance of such a difference in hours becomes clearer when we take into consideration the climatic conditions without, and atmospheric conditions within, the mills of India. The short interval of rest, which is only one half hour in the Indian

⁸⁵ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, pp. 61-62.

⁸⁶ The outstanding feature of the 8 hour day is steady maintenance of output. The outstanding feature of the 10 hour day is the decline of output. Under the 8 hour system, work with almost full power begins and ends approximately on schedule, and lost time is reduced to a minimum. Under the 10 hour system, work ceases before the end of the spell and lost time is frequent. U. S. Public Health Bulletin, 106, 1920, p. 26.

mills, instead of one and a half hours as in the English mills, heightens the hardship of the workers. It causes desultory habit and, therefore, necessitates the appointment of a larger number of laborers. "It is the custom in many mills", says the Factory Labor Commission of 1907, "to employ additional hands, roughly proportional to the increase in running time, when the mill changes its system and works for longer hours."²⁷

But the main reason why so many laborers are employed in Indian mills is the cheapness of labor. Employers here follow their best interests, like business men in other industries. The main object of all business enterprise is to make profits. The employer is interested in reducing the cost of production as much as possible. When labor is cheap he buys more of it and avoids the purchase of machinery as much as possible. The dearness of the one leads to the more lavish use of the other. The comparative cheapness of labor does not lead to its utilization to the utmost capacity. The principle is the same as in the case of extensive agriculture. Cheap land leads to more extravagant use of it. In fact, the adjustment of the relative use of machinery and labor in business depends upon the relative expenditure of the two commodities.

The number of extra hands varies in different factories, but on the whole, they run from 18 to 20 per cent, as noted above. There are several reasons for the extra hands in India which are not needed in English factories. First, savings of an investment of capital in many small machines and tools. Second, the nature of the materials used. Third, the bad

²⁷ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 37.

conditions of the buildings. Fourth, the cheapness of labor. Fifth, the irregular and unsteady character of the laborers. Sixth, the lack of efficient management. In fact, with a fair regularity of attendance, shorter hours of work, as well as proper management, a large body of factory workers could easily be dismissed.

In his oral testimony Mr. Simpson stated that he did not mean to say that if 982 Lancashire workers came to India they could run a mill now worked by 2622 Indian workers,²⁸ thus recognizing the injustice of a comparison of efficiency of the whole staff of one mill with that of another without due consideration for the different conditions prevailing in them. A much more satisfactory method would have been the comparison of the actual production with the ideal. This would have given the percentage of efficiency of an individual or a group of individuals which could more correctly be compared with the efficiency of another individual or group of individuals in other countries.

Whatever may be the proportion, the inferiority of the standard of efficiency in Indian mills, as compared with that in the English mills, cannot be denied. India, however, does not compare unfavorably with Japan, for instance, which is India's greatest competitor in the Far East. "In Japanese factories, the aggregate of employees is still fully threefold of what would be considered necessary for the same work in England."²⁹ Dr. G. von Schultze remarked in 1895, "up to this time the number of operatives has been five or six times as many as in the English mills; today (1895), in the best

²⁸ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 316.

²⁹ The Evolution of New Japan, Cambridge Manual Science Series, 1913, p. 99.

spinning mills in Bombay the number is only three and a half times as high, i. e., does not stand far behind the German."⁴⁰ This remark seems to indicate that Indian factory workers were not far behind the Germans in 1895, although recently Germans have superseded them.

If the social, political and economic conditions of India and of the class of people who supply factory labor, are taken into consideration, there is every reason to be optimistic. The hereditary artisan class, whose efficiency is well known, has not entered into the factory as yet. The future supply of labor will come from both the artisan and the agricultural classes. As to the efficiency of the latter, Dr. Voelker says: "At his best, the Indian ryot or cultivator is quite as good as, and in some respects the superior of, the average British farmer; while at his worst, it can only be said that this state is brought about largely by an absence of facilities for improvement which is probably unequalled in any other country; and the ryot will struggle on patiently and uncomplainingly in the face of difficulties in a way no one else would."⁴¹ That the agricultural classes in India compared well with similar workers in England, was also the opinion of Mr. Kier Hardie who made a long tour throughout India.⁴²

When this industrious class of people is educated and trained, a higher standard of efficiency will surely be attained in the factories of India. The possibility of efficiency of the Indian operatives is evident from Mr. Shepherd's statement before the

⁴⁰ Quoted by Dr. Nair, *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1903, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, pp. 84-85.

⁴¹ *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, new ed., 1908, 3 : 6.

⁴² *The Bombay Chronicle*, Dec. 1, 1919, Quoted.

Indian Factory Commission. "Out of 500 ring boys, there would be 150 absent every day and consequently that number had to work double sides."⁴² If 150 boys taken at random can work double sides, most of the boys will also be able to do the same under efficient management and improved working conditions.

4. Achievement of Efficiency.

Time and motion study are practically unknown in India. The common method of securing efficiency is the system of piece-rate wages. The piece-rate system has sometimes led to overwork and has often been to benefit the employer without a corresponding increase of remuneration to laborers. But when the employer recognises the due share of labor in production and adapts a wage scale in such a way that every extra effort put forth by the laborer benefits as much the laborer as the employer, high efficiency is generally the result. How far the Indian piece-rate system has been adopted with this special end in view, it is impossible to determine without further data.

Another method of securing efficiency in Indian factories is promotion, which includes an increase in the rate of remuneration. Promotion is better adapted to the case of the higher classes of labor, including the officials. This system exists, however, in Indian mills and cases are on record where the laborers have worked their way to higher positions.

A third method is that of granting bonus in connection with the piece-rate system. There is a system of granting bonus for regular attendance

⁴² Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 72.

in India. But whether the bonus is also granted to stimulate the quantity of production or to secure quality of product, is not known.

Besides these direct methods for securing efficiency, there are also the indirect methods which more or less work towards the same end. The most important of these is imparting education to children. As there is no public-school system in India, some employers feel it necessary to educate their workers. This education lasts two or three hours after the work in the mills is done. Night schools have also been conducted by some factories. Due to the lack of compulsion the success of such education is still in doubt. The general need for national education can scarcely be met by development of sporadic outbursts of benevolent spirit. But as something is better than nothing, the importance of such attempts should not be minimized.

While all these devices are certain to bring forth some results, the problem of industrial efficiency is a very complex one and must be approached from a broader viewpoint.

The various causes which have led to the inefficiency of factory labor in India have already been suggested. The most important of these are as follows:

First, there is no social background in India for the development of industrial efficiency. Traditions, customs and the standard of living do not move the Indian worker "to shine" in some industrial line as a means of social recognition to the same extent as they do in Europe and America.

Second, as a class, laborers in India are illiterate, and have no knowledge of things in general and technical processes in particular, which form the foundation of efficient work.

Third, neither at home nor in any other institution have they any chance of receiving training in those qualities such as application and steadiness, which are the first requisites for acquiring efficiency in organized industry.

Fourth, there is no such class exclusively devoted to factory work except in a few trades. Thus lacking in specialization, they also lack in efficiency.

Fifth, efficiency of labor implies efficiency of management. There must not only be a class of strong and intelligent persons offering their labor, but also a manager who can organize men, material and machinery into a dynamic force in the productive process. He must know what is to be done and see that it is done with the least amount of time and trouble.

Sixth, factory work is comparatively new in India. Although some of the factories started about two generations ago, yet they did not become important until recently. Even now it has touched only the fringe of the industrial life of India. However efficient they might have been in the old industrial processes, the people in India have not been able to adapt themselves to the modern system of production and to develop aptitude and energy in the new technique.

Seventh, up to the present time the labor in factories has been drawn from the farm. Occupation always determines the mode of activity and results in the formation of habit. The extensive and comparatively independent work on the farm can not very well prepare the people for factory work, which is rather intensive and requires more or less direct supervision.

It is not possible, neither is it desirable, in this treatise, to offer any solution of the problem. But

a few phases require discussion for the clear understanding of the problem.

First, there must be a social background for the development of efficiency. The efficiency of factory labor is a part of the general industrial efficiency of society as a whole and can only be maintained through a general social progress. The most important element in social progress is education. In a society in which 94 per cent of the people can neither read nor write, it is simply foolish to expect a high degree of social or industrial efficiency. Education is the most needful thing in India today.

Second, there must be a wage-earning class which would include the factory workers. This is an age of minute division of labor and specialization. Division of labor is at the root of modern industrial progress. Specialization alone gives a man the chance of developing his faculties in a certain direction and thus attaining high efficiency. As long as a man is only a casual laborer in the factory, there is scarcely any chance for him to develop his efficiency. Although a factory labor class cannot artificially be produced, it can come into existence when favorable conditions are provided.

Third, the health of the laboring classes must be improved. This improvement of health can be brought about by prevention of disease, dispensation of medicine, free medical advice in case of sickness, and provision for better nourishment. As we shall see later on, no people among the civilized nations live on so poor a diet as do the Indians. They are also more subject to tropical diseases than are other races.

Fourth, industrial education must be introduced. In addition to general education, the working people of India should be given industrial and vocational

training both in schools and workshops. This especially should be the case with the half-time workers who must spend a part of their time in such educational institutions.

Fifth, the conditions of work must be improved. Devices must be installed for the reduction of heat and for the improvement of ventilation, lack of which affect production very perceptibly. According to the report of the Industrial Fatigue Research Board in Great Britain, there is a distinct seasonal variation in the output of workers. The output decreases as the season grows warmer, and the degree of variation is mainly dependent upon ventilation. In a factory where a good system of ventilation was effected by means of vertical fans and paddles, the mean output in the summer months, i. e., from May to September, was only 2.9 per cent less than in the winter months, i. e., from December to March. "It is probable", concluded the Report, "that thoroughly efficient ventilation may increase the average output of an unventilated factory by 12 per cent or more."⁴⁴

Sixth, hours of work should be shortened. But with the shift system, Indian factories can work 16 hours a day with 8 hours for each shift. Even the Bombay Mill-Owners' Association realizes the importance of reducing working hours. The working period should also be divided into two parts of four hours each with an interval of rest for at least half an hour. The same Industrial Fatigue Research Board, quoted above, found that the total output of a tin-plate manufacturing plant was increased by 8.3 % when 6 hour shifts were substituted for 8 hour shifts; and by 11.5 % when 4 hour shifts were substituted for 8 hour shifts.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Gt. Brit. Industrial Fatigue Research, Report 1, 1919, p. 29.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 7/8.

Last, the skill and ingenuity of the people should be developed in those industries in which India has both aptitude and advantage. Due to the physical constitution and industrial traditions, each nation has a preference for certain kinds of industry. On the other hand, natural resources also give a country a certain advantage in some lines of industry. It is along these lines that the industrial skill and genius of each nation should be developed.

CHAPTER VII REMUNERATION.

Upon the rate of wages depends the welfare of the factory worker as well as that of his family, and consequently of the society of which he is a part. Consideration of remuneration is, therefore, essential for a thorough understanding of the conditions of factory labor.

1. Basis of Rate Making.

There are several standards, according to which the rate of wages is fixed in the factories of India. The oldest basis of measuring work is the time unit. The day is still the common unit of time by which the wages of general laborers are fixed all over the country. But this system is used in the factories only to a limited extent. The system of counting wages by the week, while not yet popular in India, has, however, been introduced in some of the factories.¹ A more common unit of time in measuring work is the month. This has been the basis of rate making in many operations in factories.

¹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 54. Ibid., 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 98.

In the majority of cases, however, the rate of wages is based on piece-work, the piece rate basis having existed from the beginning of the factory system. The contract rate of wages also exists in some factories, especially in seasonal establishments.² But this is rather exceptional.

The bonus system has long existed in Indian factories, but its purpose has been to secure regularity of attendance rather a method of compensation for work. In 1890, the Union Jute Mill of Calcutta, for instance, paid two annas a week for regular attendance and the Victory Cotton Mill, also of Calcutta, paid eight annas a month for the same purpose.³ The bonus system for securing regular attendance is in existence in different parts of the country. During the war it was universally adopted by the factories of India. The object was to make up the difference between the rising cost of living and the existing rate of wages. This helped the employer keep his old rate of wages fixed either on the time basis or piece basis, and at the same time removed the grievances concerning wage increase on the part of the workers.

2. Mode and Time of Payment.

The prevailing system of payment on the farm was in kind, and this system still exists to some extent. But it is not applicable to the factory system of work. The payment of wages in money has, therefore, become a rule in all factories. There is also a system somewhat like the truck system, which has come under our notice. A mill director testified before the Factory Commission of 1907 that he had

² E. G. in Messrs. Greaves Cotton Co. Crescent Mills etc. Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, pp. 68, 72, 74.

³ *Ibid.*, 1890—91 Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 88.

established a depot where grain could be bought at 10 per cent below the market price and that the depot had been highly patronized by workers. The payment of wages was, therefore, made partly in ticket and partly in cash.

The soundness of the truck system has been seriously questioned. A benevolent employer may occasionally help his employees to reduce the cost of living in this way. But there is danger in its misuse. Employers sometimes use it as an ingenious way of making a side profit. The workers, having received their wages partly in the form of tickets, and partly in cash, are compelled to buy their goods in the company's store and sometimes at a monopoly price.

The practice in some Indian factories of buying grain or other necessary commodities and selling them to laborers at cost price is in great favor with the mill workers who even asked for its continuance during the recent strikes.* In such cases the laborers are paid in cash and are free to buy grains and other commodities at their option.

A common abuse from which many laborers suffer is the practice by which employers keep in hand a portion of their wages. That the existence of such a practice was known even in 1888 is shown by the various reports of the local governments. "All the mills in Madras pay their servants 15 days, in arrears," stated the Madras report.* "The practice with regard to the payment of wages varies in the factories of the district; in one cotton mill, payment is made on the 15th of each month for the preceding month" says the Bengal report.* "All factories pay their hands 15 to 20 days after the close of the month

* The Bombay Chronicle, Nov. 29, 1919.

* Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 24.

* Ibid., p. 33.

for which the work has been done," reiterated the Cawnpore report.⁷ Two years later, Mr. K. M. Lokhanday, in a letter to the Factory Commission of 1890 stated as follows: "It is proper that a day should be fixed for the payment of wages to the mill hands. To retain two months' wages in the hands of the owners is in my opinion a great hardship."⁸ This practice still prevails in many factories. Witnesses before the Factory Labor Commission testified to it. On October 23, 1909, the factory laborers of Bombay held a meeting in which, among other things, this practice was strongly condemned. It was one of the principal causes of the grievances of workers during the recent strikes.

The period of time for which the wages are retained, varies in different places according to the prevailing mode of payment. Where the payment is made every week, as in the jute mills, in Bengal, one week's wages are left with the employers.⁹ In the case of monthly payment, the period varies from 10 or 15 days¹⁰ to 22 or 25 days,¹¹ and sometimes even 30 days.¹² But generally it is 15 days.¹³

The inconvenience to the workers arising from such a practice is really great. Because of this practice, they have to pay higher prices for their goods and also to pay interest on the money which they must sometimes borrow until for pay-day. "While the mill-owners save 5 or 6 per cent per annum

⁷ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58 H. of C. 124, p. 89.

⁸ Ibid., 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 89.

⁹ Ibid., p. 88.

¹⁰ Foley, Report on Labor in Bengal, p. 80.

¹¹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 90.

¹² Ibid., p. 29.

¹³ Ibid., p. 67 & Ibid., 1909, Vol. 68, Cd. 4519, p. 106.

on the money which they retain, the operatives lose from 50 to 100 per cent on the wages they have actually earned."¹⁴

The main arguments in favor of this practice of withholding wages are: First, it prevents the laborers from leaving work without notice. When the employers keep a portion of the pay of laborers in hand, they have a hold upon them. Second, the initial inconvenience is felt only during the first month. If the employers desire to retain a hold on the employees so that they may not desert, "the necessity of the cause may be fully met by retaining in their hands, a fortnight's pay of the men in arrears."¹⁵ In their petition to the Government, the mill hands of Bombay asked that they should be paid on the 15th of the month following that for which the pay is due. The Factory Commission of 1890 considered it a "moderate and just request."¹⁶

Several years ago the charge was made against employers that they withheld the wages of laborers who left their employment. Occasional withholding of wages by a Gujrat mill was reported as far back as 1887.¹⁷ In 1889 the special magistrate at Kurla, in the district of Thana, heard several complaints from the laborers that wages had been withheld.¹⁸ In 1889, the petition of the Bombay mill hands to the Governor General mentioned the existence of such evils. "Speaking of the wages," the petition stated, "your petitioners feel constrained to remark passingly that cases in which the employers illegally withhold

¹⁴ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890-91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 15.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 67.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

the hard-earned pay of the poor are so frequent that a reference to the Court of Small Causes will convince the Government that wages are in many cases recovered only by recourse to the courts. But hundreds of operatives forego their wages on account of the troubles involved in appealing to the judges. The many strikes in the mills will, on inquiry, be found attributable either to the withholding of the wages in this manner or to threatened reductions in them."¹⁹ In 1890 a laborer in Bengal testified that he knew of instances where the laborers resorted to courts for their wages and won their cases.²⁰

The charge against the Gujrat mill was inquired into and reported to be untrue. The reports of the Local Governments from all parts of the country denied the existence of such a practice or minimized its abuse.²¹ The charges probably originated from the fact that wages were withheld if the men failed to give 15 days' notice when they left their work.

A point deserving consideration is the period of time, at the end of which payment should be made. There is no uniform time unit for making payment in India. It depends more upon the local custom than upon any general principles. Payment is made either daily,²² weekly,²³ fortnightly,²⁴ or monthly. Daily payment is not common. Weekly payment is prevalent at Ahmedabad²⁵ and in the jute mills of Bengal.

¹⁹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 107.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1890—91, H. of C. 86, Vol. 59, p. 90.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, pp. 67, 74, 76, 80, 89, etc.

²² *Ibid.*, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 74.

²³ *Ibid.*, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, pp. 88, 98.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

Fortnightly payment is rather rare. In most parts of the country, payments are made each month. A factory inspector in 1888 recommended paying wages twice a month.²⁸ For factory workers on small wages, the system of weekly payment is probably the best.

Several arguments have been put forward against the payment of men by the week: First, that a weekly payment, which is generally made on Saturday, leads to indulgence on the part of the workmen on Sunday. Second, that it causes an unnecessary loss of time on the part of the employer. Third, that the introduction of a new system will cause some disturbance in the factory administration.

In answer to these charges, it has been pointed out that monthly pay puts in the hands of workers a still larger sum of money for dissipation, and that the danger of paying on Saturdays can be easily avoided by payment on Mondays: that by efficient management, the employer would be able to overcome to a great extent the waste of time; and that once adopted, workers and management would be accustomed to the change. Since the practice of weekly payments has been successfully carried on at Ahmedabad and Calcutta, it seems probable that it would meet with equal success in other localities.

The advantages of such a practice are many. First, it helps the laborers to pay cash for their purchases. One of the greatest hardships from which the workers suffer is that they have to buy on a small scale, which means that they have to pay higher prices than other people for the same commodity. By cash payment over-transaction can also be avoided. The very feeling that he is buying on

²⁸ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 24.

credit, makes a man much more liberal in his purchase than his means would generally allow. He figures out the possibility of payment on a future income which is generally larger than he will really get, owing to the inherent quality of human nature to paint the future in more glowing colors. As far as the consumption of goods is concerned, this is a ruinous method.

Second, weekly payments will help laborers to remember the amount of money which should be deducted from their wages in case of fines, etc. Under the system of monthly payments, they forget about their absences and in case of any deduction, suspect the employers of cheating.

Third, the majority of laborers desire that their payments be made weekly.

Fourth, weekly payments help the laborer to keep out of debt and hence to avoid paying interest on loans. Once in debt, it is hard for him to get out of it. Debt is universal among the factory workers of Bombay, and in spite of the fact that they earn comparatively fair wages, they live from pay-day to pay-day upon the advances in grains of the bania or graindealer and of the money lender.²⁷

Fifth, weekly payments would help distribute the expenses more uniformly throughout the month than is the case at present. In the case of monthly payment of wages, especially among the classes of people with limited income, a relatively large amount is spent during the first part of the month, leaving little for the latter part. This is a cause of much distress among these classes of people.

²⁷ The Times, London, Feb. 7, 1920, 11 b.

3. Rate of Wages.

Only fragmentary data are available concerning wages paid in Indian factories in the earlier years of the factory system. Such data as are available are contained for the most part in reports of Indian factory inspectors and cover only certain districts. No figures are available for India as a whole.

Wages paid in factories at Ahmedabad in 1888 are reported by the factory inspector as follows:

Wages at Ahmedabad in 1888.²⁰

(Monthly)

Muccadem (foreman) . . .	Rs. 15 to 20
Reelers	" 7 to 9
Carders	" 7 to 9
Winders	" 6
Warpers	" 10

Factory employees worked from sunrise to sunset, the number of hours varying with the season. During the summer months the mills operated for 13 hours. Four Sundays a month were allowed, and on these the workers were required to spend from 3 to 5 hours cleaning machinery.²¹ Unskilled laborers outside of factories received from 3 to 3½ annas a day, or about 5 rupees a month.²² An able-bodied agricultural laborer earned Rs. 7.5 a month.²³ The average wages of postal-runners in this locality ranged from 8 to 11 rupees per month in 1885.²⁴ Skilled laborers such as masons, carpenters, and blacksmiths were earning about Rs. 18.75 a month.²⁵ "Beyond the fact that they are regularly paid, they (factory

²⁰ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 71.

²¹ Prices and wages in India, 1912, p. 198.

²² Ibid., p. 205.

²³ Ibid., p. 198.

kers) have little or no advantage over ordinary workers, certainly not over employees of railway companies."

Wages in Bombay were reported by the factory inspectors to be higher on the whole than those in Madras. A spinner in Bombay, for instance, earned 15 rupees a month,²² while one in Madras earned only 15 rupees.²³ The wages of the adult workers in the cotton factories of Bombay, with the exception of jobbers, ranged from Rs. 7 to 20 in 1892.²⁴ The wages of able-bodied agricultural workers in Bombay averaged from 7.17 to 7.6 rupees²⁵ a month and those of artisans, such as masons, carpenters, and blacksmiths, from Rs. 18.15 to Rs. 22.9 a month. In Madras, agricultural laborers averaged Rs. 4.18 per month while the monthly earnings of masons, carpenters, etc. averaged Rs. 13.53 to Rs. 15.41.²⁶

The first data on the rate of wages found existing in different industries in Malabar at this period appear in the table below. Unfortunately, the wages are given by industry only and not by occupation, but the data are sufficient to show that the wages in the cotton mills were on the average higher than those in other industries. In only one instance did the rate of wages of male workers reach the 4½ annas which were paid in the cotton mill, namely the Calicut Tile Works, where in some cases the rate reached this figure. Women earned a little more in the cotton mills than in other industries except in the plantation house works. The wages of girls were highest in the cotton mills.

²² Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1893-94, Vol. 65, H. of C. 151, p. 67.

²³ Ibid., p. 11.

²⁴ Prices and Wages in India, 1912, p. 183.

Daily Wages at Malabar in 1892.²⁵

Factory	Men			Women			Boys			Girls		
	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.
Cotton Mill	0	4	6	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	1	9
Coffee Works (Karaparamba)	0	4	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	1	0
Plantation house works	0	2	6	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
		to			to			to			to	
	0	4	0	0	3	0	0	1	6	0	1	6
Kallai works	0	4	0	—			0	2	0			
							to					
							0	2	6			
Mercantile mission tile works	0	3	6	0	2	0	—			—		
Calicut tile works .	0	1	3				—			—		
		to		0	2	0	—			—		
	0	4	6									

In many factories the laborers were paid by contract and the earnings varied from Rs. 2—8 to Rs. 25 a month.²⁶ "The wages in the factories of Bengal were higher than those obtained by other handicraft not requiring special skill."²⁷ The wages at Nagpur, Jubbulpore, and in the Central Provinces, were higher in the factories than outside.²⁸ The collector of Dharwar reported that "the wages (of factory workers) are higher than those earned by persons of the same class in other work."²⁹ In Madras, the factory workers earned more than ordinary laborers outside,³⁰ while at Lahore the wages were slightly less than the

²⁵ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, pp. 40—41.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

ordinary wages of other laborers of their class, but the work was steadier and paid in cash instead of in kind.⁴¹

The only available data regarding the rate of wages in seasonal employments are those furnished by cotton gins and presses. In 1885 the daily wages in Khandesh were from 3 to 4 annas a day for 17 or 18 hours of work. Most of the laborers were women.⁴² In 1892 the cotton presses at Rewari, Gurgaon District, paid the following daily wages:

Men	3 annas
Women	2 annas
Children	1½ annas ⁴³

In 1907 it was found that daily wages were at Broach from 3 to 5 annas for women, and from 6 to 12 annas for men.⁴⁴

The Indian Factory Labor Commission of 1907 reports the earnings of operatives in cotton factories as follows, the rates varying according to the locality and within the specified limits: —

Wages in the Cotton Factories of India
in 1907⁴⁵

(Monthly rates in rupees.)

1. Half-time children	Rs. 2½ to 4½
2. Full-time boys (between 14 & 17)	5 to 13
3. Ordinary hands in the card and frame departments	7 to 18
4. Head spinners (mule)	25 to 35
5. Mule piecers	10 to 16

⁴¹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 154.

⁴² Ibid., 1888, Vol. 77, H. of C. 321, p. 14.

⁴³ Ibid., 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 153.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 69.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 22.

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- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| 6. Weavers minding one loom . | 10 to 15 |
| 7. Weavers minding two looms . | 18 to 35 |
| 8. Women (reeling and winding) | 5 to 12 |

No data as to number of employees is available; it is, therefore, impossible to determine the average monthly rate for the industry.

Wages in jute mills were apparently somewhat higher.

Monthly Wages in Bengal Jute Mills
1905—1906²

Occupation	Ordinary	Trained
1. Weavers	Rs. 17.3	Rs. 28.1
2. Spinners (boys)	11.37	14.7
3. Sewers (men and women)	10.83	13.00
4. Winders (men)	13.00	17.3 _j
5. Unskilled labor (men)	9.75	11.90
6. Women	5.04	8.90
7. Shifters (children)	3.90	5.32

These data were obtained from the President of the Jute Mills' Association in Bengal. It is not known whether it represents the average rate or the actual rate of a particular factory. But the figures indicate the difference in the wages between the "ordinary" and the "trained", or the inexperienced and the experienced workers. In 1905—06 the average weekly wages for the inexperienced workers were Rs. 2—6 and for the skilled, Rs. 3—5—1, i. e., the wages of the skilled laborers were about 39.6 per cent higher than those for the unskilled laborer.

It is impossible to compare with any precision the rates of wages or the earnings of factory workers for this period with those in other industries because of the lack of comprehensive data. We find, for example, that coal miners in a certain colliery in

² Foley, Report on Labor in Bengal, 1906, p. 9.

Bengal earned 6.38 rupees monthly;⁴⁷ that the monthly pay of postal runners ranged from 5.25 to 8 rupees in the different provinces;⁴⁸ that agricultural laborers earned in 1906 from 3.52 to 16 rupees, the rate varying in the various provinces,⁴⁹ but there are no comparable data for any industry for the country as a whole. The Factory Commission of 1907 says, however, that the wages of operatives in textile factories varied from place to place, but were everywhere considerably higher than those earned by the same class of men in other employments.

Some idea of the present wages in the textile factories may be had from the following data from a representative cotton mill in Bombay in January, 1920.⁵⁰

Average Wages paid in a Bombay Factory,
January, 1920.⁵¹

Classes of Labor	Wages Rs.
Card Room:	
Scutchers	14 to 15
Grinders	16
Card tenders	12
Lap carriers	12
Fly carriers	9.5
Sweepers	8
Drawer	15 to 21
Slubber	17 to 23
Intermediate	17 to 23
Rover	17 to 24
Spare hands	14
Doffer	11.5 to 12
Ring Throstle Room:	
Side minders	15.5 to 17
Doffer	11.5 to 12
Doff carrier	13 to 14

⁴⁷ Prices and Wages in India, 1919, p. 183.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1912, pp. 202—3.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1912, pp. 190—191.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1920, pp. 217—18.

⁵¹ Exclusive of war bonuses of 15 per cent and 20 per cent in 1918 and 1919 respectively.

Classes of Labor	Wages
Reeling Room:	
Reeler	10 to 12
Bundling Room:	
Presser	19 to 20
Dresser	15 to 16
Sizing Department:	
Winder	9.5 to 17
Drawer	20 to 35
Warper	25 to 38
Sizer	38 to 55
Back sizer	19 to 27
Reachers	10 to 16
Weaving Department:	
Weaver	25 to 60
Jobber	45 to 75
Felder and bundlers	16 to 20

4. Movement of Nominal Wages.

There has always been a controversy as to whether the wages of the factory workers have undergone any change. "The rate of wages changed very little for many years past," remarked the Bombay Factory Report of 1892.⁶² In 1905 Mr. Foley, in discussing the wages in the jute factories of Bengal, expressed a doubt as to whether there had been any increase in wages. He stated, however, that in the opinion of most managers, the rise had not been more than 10 per cent in the last twenty years, though some estimated a greater increase. He ascribed the apparent increase to the increased working hours of the laborers, which was made possible by the introduction of electric light.⁶³

The question became a lively one in 1907 when it drew considerable attention from the witnesses before the Factory Labor Commission. Some denied altogether that there had been any such increase. On the other hand, "the increase in wages

⁶² Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 103, pp. 67-68.

⁶³ Report on Labor in Bengal, 1906, pp. 9-10.

has been gradual," remarked the manager of a mill who testified that during the 35 years he had been in the industry wages had increased from Rs. 7 to Rs. 11.⁸⁸ "Since 1903," stated another, "the daily wages have increased by 1/12 i. e., 8.3 per cent."⁸⁹

The rate of wages in 1892 and 1907, quoted above, give us no basis for calculation, because the data for the former years refers to Bengal, Madras and the Punjab, and the data for the latter refers to the whole of India. Some idea of the movement of wages in several industries and localities in the factories of India may be had from the following tables: —

Table 1 shows the movement of wages in a cotton mill of Bombay for the last 29 years. The wages are the averages for the month of January of each year. For the sake of simplification we have taken the average monthly wages for each tenth year. The movement of wages is shown in the increase of wages for all workers varying from 10 per cent in the wages of the drawer in the sizing department.

Table 1.

Movement of Wages in a Bombay Cotton Mill,
1892—1920.⁹⁰

Index numbers showing monthly average in January
of each year.

	1892 Rs.	1902	1912	1920
Card room:				
Scatcher . . .	11 (100)	91	100	132
Grinder . . .	14.5 (100)	97	103	110
Card tender . .	8 (100)	100	106	150

⁸⁸ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Cd. 4519, p. 102.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 85.

⁹⁰ Index numbers here presented have been computed from data in Prices and Wages in India, 1919, p. 188; 1920, p. 217.

	1892 Rs.	1902	1912	1920
Lap carrier . . .	9 (100)	111	122	133
Fly carrier . . .	6 (100)	117	125	142
Sweeper	7 (100)	100	107	114
Drawer	14.5 (100)	93	86	127
Slubber	16.5 (100)	82	82	121
Reeling room:				
Reeler	8.2 (100)	100	104	134
Bundling room:				
Presser	13 (100)	123	138	150
Dresser	10.5 (100)	114	124	148
Sizing Department				
Winder	7 (100)	107	143	186
Drawer	12.5 (100)	92	152	220
Warper	16 (100)	100	172	197

Table 2 shows the movement of wages in a woolen mill at Cawnpore from 1895 to 1920.

Table 2.

Movement of Wages in a Cawnpore Woolen Mill from 1895 to 1920.⁴⁷

	1895	1905	1915	1920
Card room:				
Head mistry . . .	34.3 (100)	103	167	146
Card cleaner . . .	6.9 (100)	136	267	312
Spare hands . . .	5.5 (100)	129	173	255
Mule room:				
Head mistry . . .	34.5 (100)	112	175	204
Winder	6.6 (100)	136	317	292
Spare hands . . .	5.4 (100)	130	181	259
Weaving department				
Mistry	18.8 (100)	113	140	170
Healder	6.3 (100)	143	167	237
Weaver	9.8 (100)	103	143	218

Table 3 shows the movement of wages in a jute mill in Bengal from 1892 to 1920. The wages shown represent the weekly wages in January of each

⁴⁷ Statistical Abstracts relating to British India, 1920, p. 215.

tenth year. The wages increased in each instance, the increase varying from 76 per cent in the case of weavers to 224 per cent in the case of winders.

Table 3.

Movement of Wages in a Bengal Jute Mill,
1892—1920.⁸³

(Weekly averages in Rs. in January of each
tenth year)

	1892	1902	1912	1920
Carding	1.34 (100)	107	112	205
Rovers	2.06 (100)	109	133	262
Spinners	2.25 (100)	133	142	192
Shifters75 (100)	133	164	267
Beamers	2.50 (100)	120	128	235
Winders	2.25 (100)	144	152	324
Weavers	4.75 (100)	111	119	184
Mistries	^a .75 (100)	116	133	176
Coolies	^a .28 (100)	111	154	218

Table 4 shows the movement of wages in the brewing industry in the Punjab. Taking the rate of wages for 1893 as base, the index numbers are shown for each decennial period. The data shows an increase in wages of all classes of workers, varying from 59 per cent in the case of head coopers to 131 per cent in the case of heavy-work coolies.

⁸³ India. Prices and Wages in India, 1919, p. 194; 1920, p. 223.

a) Daily rate.

Table 4.

Movement of Wages at a Brewery in the Punjab
from 1893—1920.⁸⁰

(Monthly average wages in January of each tenth year.)

	1893	1903	1913	1920
Head coopers . . .	22. (100)	116	145	159
Coopers	14 62 (100)	98	137	166
Smiths	19 (100)	116	110	170
Masons	16 (100)	94	81	156
Coolies (light work)	6.5 (100)	105	114	185
Coolies (heavy work)	6.5 (100)	105	130	231
Maltmen (head) . .	8.5 (100)	106	129	188
Maltmen (coolies) .	7. (100)	100	114	171

Table 5 shows the movement of wages in the paper industry. Taking the rates of wages for 1893 as the base, the index numbers are shown at the end of every ten years and the changes in wages show a great deal of variation.

The wages of blacksmiths, and engineers and stokers increased 115 and 106 per cent respectively, and the wages of the carpenters show an increase of only 25 per cent.

Table 5.

Movement of Wages in the Paper Industry.⁸⁰

(Monthly wages in January of each tenth year)

	1893 Rs.	1903	1913	1920
Coolies	6.5 (100)	100	185	185
Machinemen	17 (100)	112	176	159
Boys	3.25 (100)	123	—	—
Women	4.5 (100)	100	156	156
Bricklayer	14 (100)	114	121	136
Vice-men	16 (100)	108	188	188
Blacksmiths	13 (100)	104	223	215
Carpenters	16 (100)	102	113	125
Engineers and stokers	8 (100)	113	188	206

⁸⁰ Prices and Wages in India, 1919, p. 181; 1920, p. 210.

⁸⁰ Prices and Wages in India, 1920, p. 209.

Table 6 shows the movement of wages in a rice mill in Rangoon for 27 years. The increase in this case is somewhat less than that in the textile and other mills noted above. The relative stability of the rates of wages is probably due to the fact that Burma is a new country, as far as modern methods of production are concerned, and the labor supply at the time the factories were started was scarce and, consequently, the wages were higher than those prevailing in other parts of India. With the increase of transportation facilities a larger number of laborers entered the field of competition and thus checked the upward movement of wages.

Table 6.

Movement of Wages in A Rangoon Rice Mill.⁶¹

(Monthly average in January of each tenth year)

Nature of work	1893	1903	1913	1920
Head blacksmith	55 (100)	100	91	109
Filter	50 (100)	100	110	130
Carpenter	60 (100)	100	117	125
Engine driver	55 (100)	100	100	118
Turner	50 (100)	100	110	140
Mill tindal	60 (100)	100	125	133
Stone mistry	55 (100)	100	100	118
Mill coolies	15 (100)	100	100	150

The greatest fluctuations in prices took place during the war. It is, therefore, essential to take into consideration the movement of wages for this period.

⁶¹ Prices and Wages in India. 1919, p. 194; 1920, p. 223.

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Movement of Wages from 1914 to 1918.⁶²
 (The wages of 1914 as the basis shown in
 Index number)

Industry	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918
Cotton, Bombay	100	103	103	106	129 ⁶³
Wool, Cawnpore	100	112	108	117	118
Brewing, Punjab	100	102	109	121	130
Jute, Bengal	100	101	100	101	103
Paper, Bengal	100	99	99	99	100
Rice, Burma	100	100	100	100	100

The above table shows the variation in wages during the war as compared with wages in 1914. The average wages for January, 1914, have been taken as the base and the wages in January of the subsequent years have been used for index numbers as shown in the table. Except in the paper industry of Bengal and the rice mill at Burma, there was a general tendency towards an upward movement in the wages of the general industries. In comparison with the prewar wages of 1914, the wages in 1918 increased by 30 per cent in the brewing industry in the Punjab, 18 per cent in the woolen industry at Cawnpore, and 3 per cent in the jute mills in Bengal.

In addition to these wage increases which are more or less permanent, as far as is known, an all-round increase of wages was granted as a temporary war allowance in almost all industries. In addition to the 14 per cent increase in the permanent wages in the cotton industry of Bombay in 1919, for example, a temporary war allowance of an additional 35 per cent was granted, thus bringing up the total advance in 1919 over the 1914 rates to 54 per cent.⁶⁴

⁶² Prices and Wages in India, 1919, p. 15.

⁶³ Includes 15 per cent temporary bonus for the year.
 Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1919, Cmd. 442, p. 85.

⁶⁴ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1919, Cmd. 442, p. 87.

In 1920 a further increase of 20 per cent was granted to persons working on fixed wages and 40 per cent to those working on piece work. The total allowances since 1918 then amount to 53 per cent in the case of fixed wages and 75 per cent in that of piece workers.²

How far this increase of nominal wages as shown in the above tables has been accompanied by a corresponding increase in real wages is the most important consideration in the study of the problem of wages.

In considering the wages of laborers, especially of factory laborers, several points must be kept in mind: First, the greater number of factory workers come from the country, where they have homes and sometimes even farms. The income from their farms supplements the wages paid them in factories, although the latter forms the major part of the total income.

Second, a large number of factory laborers, such as jute workers in Bengal, live in houses built by their employers, either free of rent, or at nominal charge, and thus the cost of living is lowered somewhat. This accounts for the rate of wages being a little lower in Bengal than in the city of Bombay where most of the factory workers live in chawls and pay rent. In most of the tea gardens, the wages of which we have used for comparison, the workers are also supplied with houses.

Third, the hours of work differ in different industries. Although the total amount of wages may be higher in one industry than in another, the rate of wages per hour or per day of equal length may be lower.

² Prices and Wages, Calcutta, 1920, p. 217.

Fourth, the common laborers in the country often get one or even two meals a day besides their regular wages. This is an important factor to be considered, especially when the wages of urban workers are compared with those of rural laborers.

The above discussion on the rate of wages over a period of thirty years leads us to these conclusions:

First, the rate of wages varies considerably in different parts of the country and in different industries.

Second, the rate of wages for male workers, both adults and children, is higher than for female workers.

Third, the rate of wages is much higher in the textile industries, especially in the cotton industry, than the rate of wages for the same classes of people in other industries.

5. Movement of Real Wages.

The prime object of all economic activity is the satisfaction of material wants. The sum total of this satisfaction is the real income of man. A part of this real income comes to a man without any economic exertion on his part, or for which he makes no direct payment. This part of the real income is a variable quantity, differing in different countries according to the social conditions. But the most important part of the real income comes from real wages, i. e., the amount of goods a man receives in exchange for his money wages, or money income. As the amount of goods a man can buy with his wages depends upon prices, the movement of prices becomes an important consideration in determining the welfare of the working people.

There are no adequate data available on the cost of living in India. Fragmentary data on retail prices of commodities, however, indicate the trend in living costs.

Wages of most workers had pretty nearly kept pace with the rise in prices in the period prior to the war, but during the war period "the rise in prices in India for all commodities, including the necessities of life, was of the most serious character. In the case of food grains, the prices in 1919 generally rose by an average of 93 per cent since the commencement of the war, while the increase in piece goods was just under 190 per cent for imported goods and just over 60 per cent for Indian made goods."⁶⁶

The inadequacy of the average increases in wages paid during the war to all kinds of labor, skilled and unskilled, in various industries, is shown in the following data:

Average percentages of increases paid during the war to all kinds of labor, skilled and unskilled, in the various industries.⁶⁷

Cotton spinning and weaving industry	54	per cent (including 35% temporary war allowance)
Cawnpore woolen industry	19	per cent.
Coal-mining industry (Bengal)	16	per cent.
Tea industry (Assam)	19	per cent.
Jute industry (Bengal)	13	per cent.
Railway locomotive workshops (Punjab)	39	per cent.
Engineering workshops (United Provinces)	28	per cent.
Army boot-factory (Cawnpore)	19	per cent.
Paper industry (Bengal)	No	change.
Brewing industry (Punjab)	30	per cent.
Rice industry (Rangoon)	No	change.

The average of these increases is 21½ per cent.

⁶⁶ Statement exhibiting the moral and material progress and condition of India during the year 1919, London, 1920, Cmd. 950, p. 63.

⁶⁷ Report on the conditions and prospects of British trade in India at the close of the war. London, 1919, Cmd. 442, p. 112.

CHAPTER VIII. STANDARD OF LIVING.

In the foregoing chapter we have seen the fluctuations in real and nominal wages. How far these fluctuations of wages affect the daily life of factory workers is an important factor in the study of social welfare.

Consumption is the prime object of all production. The material welfare is measured not by how much a man produces, but by how much he consumes. One's prosperity is best indicated by the standard of living.

For centuries the people of India have lived more by thoughts and feelings than by material goods. "Plain living and high thinking" has been the ideal of Hindu life and this ideal has been followed as literally as possible by the people. The ideals of ascetism and self-renunciation have reduced the number of wants to a minimum. What the social ideals have started, economic necessity has accomplished. By far the majority of the people live in extreme simplicity and poverty.

The spread of knowledge and culture among the masses has given rise to new ideals and aspirations, resulting in an increased number of wants. On the other hand, the progress of science and art has given man an unprecedented control over nature and has been conducive to an increased productivity. There has, therefore, been a gradual rise in the standard of living all over the world, especially in Western countries, within the last hundred and fifty years.

While other countries were taking rapid strides in social development, India made very little progress. Owing to the loss of her political and economic independence, the country finds herself to day with

94 out of every 100 of her population illiterate, and the industries in which she has natural advantages still undeveloped. The productive power of her people as well as the produce of the country have not kept pace with the growing population. A large share of her meagre produce goes out of the country as the "Home Charge" of the British Government, and for this there is no return. When not actually subject to famine, the majority of the Indian people are on the verge of starvation. The standard of living of the masses, to which the factory workers belong, is, therefore, extremely low, as can be seen from a study of their housing conditions, and of their food and clothing.

1. Housing Conditions.

The necessity for sanitation and comfortable houses in industrial centers was realized even in the early days of the factory system. According to the factory report of 1888, regular mill workers in Burma were well housed and cared for. But the lot of the seasonal employees was quite different. "Nothing could be worse", continued the report, "than the insanitary conditions in which these people are herded together".¹ The Bengal factory report of 1892 pointed out the necessity for some improvement in the "coolie lines" near Calcutta and Howrah, even though they were well laid out in squares, and had plenty of space between them".² The danger to the public health in these huts arose from over-crowding. Provisions for proper water supply, latrines, and disposal of refuse or garbage were badly needed.

The Factory Labor Commission of 1907 also made investigation into the housing conditions in the different parts of the country and found that in

¹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 61.

² *Ibid.*, p. 155.

the case of the textile mills in Calcutta and in some cities in Upper India, commodious settlements had been built near the mill premises, where workers were "comfortably housed" at rents which averaged only twelve annas a room per month. But in Bombay, where available land was scarce, little had been done by the mills in this direction. Workers were, as a rule, herded together for the sake of economy. The rooms were over-crowded and there was little privacy and no home life.⁸ One of the objects of the Industrial Commission of 1916—18 was investigation into the housing conditions. After a thorough examination, the commission made several suggestions for improvement.

The present housing situation in industrial centers of India may be described as follows: —

First, where the factories are located in the country, laborers are generally drawn from the villages, or, if immigrants, are housed in the surrounding villages. The dwellings in the latter case are built on single-story lines consisting of single room suites, with either a veranda or in some cases a small enclosed courtyard.⁹ Such conditions approximate those of ordinary village life.

Second, in cities like Madras, Cawnpore, Nagpur and Ahmedabad, where land is rather cheap, accommodations usually consist of "single-story huts in groups known as bustis, erected by persons other than owners of the mills and rented by mill workers on fairly reasonable terms."¹⁰ In Rangoon and other parts of Burma, some 10, 20 or 30 men are housed free of rent in a single large room of a barrack: the sanitation is much less satisfactory than in the

⁸ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 22.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1919, Cmd. 51, p. 152.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 154.

case of the *bustis*. Several jute factories near Calcutta have built houses for their own employees. In some cases rooms are rented free or at a rate below the cost. The object of such a venture is to secure sure supply of labor.

Third, in the city of Bombay, where space is limited and prices high, there exist houses, called "*chawls*", which are provided by private enterprise. A *chawl* is a two or three-storied building, with single room units, either placed back to back or separated by a narrow gully, two or three feet wide, usually traversed by an open drain."⁶ The rooms, which are generally 10 feet by 10 feet with a small veranda, are in most cases pitch dark, especially is this true of those on the ground floor. All have very little facilities for ventilation. They are dirty and insanitary. Their condition is made still worse by over-crowding. Laborers coming from the country, where there is no system of paying rent for rooms, do not like the idea of paying from Rs. 3 to Rs. 7 a month, and generally reduce their rent by taking in lodgers. Fortunately, most of these lodgers sleep outside on the verandas, and the room is used only for cooking and eating. The *chawls* of this type, however, do not "constitute more than 10 per cent of the whole, although many of the remainder are distinctly insanitary."⁷ Most of the laborers in Bombay are housed in *chawls* built by the municipality and the Improvement Trust Company. Here the conditions are different and sanitary arrangements are satisfactory. But even these are likely to be over crowded.

The housing of industrial workers is a very complex problem in India today. It is the concern, not

⁶ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1919, Cmd. 51, p. 153.*

⁷ *Ibid., 155.*

of the laboring classes alone, although they would be the immediate beneficiaries, but of the whole nation.

The housing question received some consideration from the Industrial Commission of 1916—18, but it is beyond the scope of this treatise to go into a detailed discussion of their report. The present problems as realized by the commission are, how to improve existing conditions and how to avoid future congestion. The first problem is largely a question of sanitation and should be handled by municipalities. The building of new chawls should be undertaken by organizations such as the Improvement Trust Company in Bombay and should be rented to working people at a reasonable rent. The second is not to encourage or permit the growth of new factories in the already congested areas, such as Bombay. This does not mean interference with industrial development. New industrial centers or towns should be created for the expansion of factories.

There are, however, some general features of the problem which require discussion. In the first place, the problem of housing arises rather indirectly from the factory system. Since an industry is of benefit to society, the State should try to remedy any defects that may arise in the process of its growth. Compelling employers to build houses for their employees may be detrimental to the growth of the factory system itself. The Indian industrial commission reported in 1918 that "the Indian industrialists, in spite of large profits which they have in many cases been able to earn under war conditions, are in a less strong position than their Western competitors, both in respect to accumulated resources and financial facilities, and owing to the lack of traditional skill

among operatives and to the absence of a competent supervising class.⁹ To impose upon individual concern what must in many cases be a heavy financial burden would be undesirable and unjust."¹⁰

In the second place, the effect of housing employees by the employers is anything but salutary. The situation is not so serious at present since the worker lives in a tenement without his family, and still has a home in the country to go to whenever he likes. But when he loses his homestead in the country, which the majority of factory workers in India are bound to do under economic pressure, and brings his family in the city, he will be practically immovable. When the employee has to work in the employer's shop or factory during the day and dwell in the employer's tenement at night, from which he cannot move at will, sooner or later there is bound to grow a feeling of dependence and helplessness and consequently of inferiority in the employees so housed.¹¹

In the case of seasonal establishments the problem is different. If the establishment is in out-of-the-way place, and immigrant labor must be accommodated under proper sanitary conditions, owing to the shortness of the season and the migratory nature of the labor employed, housing by the employers cannot have the same injurious effect on the worker.

The best suggestion made for the solution of the problem is to build industrial towns on the cooperative or some similar plan where laborers could be induced to live permanently near the factories. At present, the laborer is only a temporary lodger in

⁹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1919, Cmd. 51, p. 157.

¹⁰ Threats of eviction have prevented the formation of labor unions even in the United States where the labor classes are educated and where the mobility of labor is much greater than in India.

the town. He lives without his family and repairs to his home in the country frequently. As soon as he can hire a house for a reasonable rent, he will prefer to live in the town and depend upon factory work solely. In other words, he will thus become a wage-earner in the strict sense of the word.

This proposition is fraught with danger. First, when the laborer loses his land he loses one of the most salutary influences on his character. But property in buildings can also be had in towns.¹⁰

Second, it will lead to more complicated problems of housing, sanitation and city-planning. These problems already exist. Moreover, no progress can be achieved without meeting some sort of problem.

Third, if factories have to depend upon local sources for their labor supply, they will be deprived of obtaining a fresh supply of physically strong working people from elsewhere. But with the modern knowledge of sanitary sciences and with better provision for food and clothing, this danger can be avoided, for the general health of the workers can be maintained and even improved.

Nevertheless, there may be pointed out many advantages in the proposal:

First, as said before, the laborer will bring his family to town and some of the members may find employment in the factories. This will partly solve the problem of the scarcity of labor.

¹⁰ One of the best attempts towards the solution of the housing situation is found in the following notice:—

The Deccan Real Property and Home Building Company, Ltd., was started in May 1920 with a capital of Rs. 3,000,000 divided into 60,000 shares at Rs. 25 each, with a view to acquire, develop and turn into account, land and buildings in the Madras Presidency and Native States. The intention of the company is to build dwellings on the most modern lines and to afford facilities to the poor and middle classes to possess their own up-to-date homes.

Second, the presence of his family will act as a check upon the laborer and prevent him from indulging in drink and other vices.

Third, the earnings of the other members of the family will more than balance the increased cost of living in town with the family.

Fourth, the presence of his family in town will make the laborer more steady in his attendance in the factory.

Fifth, the devotion of his time exclusively to factory work will enable the laborer to specialize in certain operations and to acquire efficiency in his work. This is the most important gain under the proposal.

Sixth, it will be a step toward the solution of the problem of national economy. Agriculture is still the most important industry in India. One of the greatest detriments to the agricultural progress is the small size of farms. Land has been divided and subdivided in such small patches that it is not profitable to introduce even improved tools, not to mention of machinery. Agriculture is, therefore, still in its primitive stage. In fact, scientific agriculture cannot be introduced until a portion of the cultivators leave the country for the cities and thus permit of the enlargement of the size of the farm. The improvement of agriculture goes hand in hand with the growth of manufacturing.

2. Food and Clothing.

Clothing in India has been reduced to the decency point among the lower classes, and it is not much more among the middle classes. In towns things are gradually changing and people are becoming accustomed to wear more clothing, especially shoes. But in the country, people still go barefooted. Most

of the factory laborers use shoes and have more garments than the people of the same class in other industries.

The majority of the people live on two meals a day which, in times of famine or scarcity, are reduced to one. The working people add a light meal in the morning. Rice, millet, and wheat supply most of the carbohydrates or starchy foods. A little meat is occasionally taken by the Mohammedans and by some classes of the Hindus. Fish is the daily food of the Bengalees. Vegetables, oils and spices are the chief accompaniments of daily food. Fresh vegetables and fruits are used when the income permits.

Some idea of the quality and quantity of the food which an Indian laborer gets may be had from a comparison of his diet with that of a Japanese or American laborer, as in the following tables.

Food Consumption per Man per Year.
(Quantities in pounds)

Articles	United States ²¹	Japan ²²	India ²³
Meat	140	21.5	0
Fish	21	50.5	0
Eggs	30	2.1	0
Legumes	28	35.4	114
Bread and cereals	340	309.4	456.4
Vegetables	420	459.4	148.2
Sugar	63	14.1	0
Fruit	200	29.7	0
Other foods	33	0	22.8
Total	1275	902.8	741.4
Milk	500	2.2	0
	1775	905	741.4

²¹ Figures for U. S. are adopted from Monthly Labor Review, June, 1920, p. 3.

²² The Annalist, New York, Sept. 6, 1920, p. 296.

²³ The Hindu, Madras, Nov. 11, 1920, p. 3.

The items and figures for diet in the above table are only approximate. The diet of different countries consists necessarily of different foodstuffs, with varying proportions of protein, carbohydrate and fat. The quantity of food alone does not, therefore, give an accurate idea of the comparative nutriment.

The diet in the case of the United States is that for a workman. The diet of the nation as a whole amounts to 2,664 pounds per head per year, which includes 1904 pounds of solids and 760 pounds of liquids or milk.¹⁴

The figures for Japan represent the national diet. Figures for India represent the diet of a Madras prisoner.

The diet of the Madras prisoner consists of rice and ragi for cereal, and dhal or pulse for legumes. While no accurate data are available of the diet of the laboring classes, it is commonly known that the diet of an average common laborer is worse than that of a prisoner. The diet of the prisoner is simple, but sufficiently nutritive to keep body and soul together. The average worker does not eat enough to maintain his strength and vigor. The factory worker may occasionally enjoy better food, since his income is a little higher than that of the common laborer. But even his food is not much better than that of the prisoner in India. In fact, he weighs less than the prisoner.

In the above table it is further seen that while the American worker consumes about 1775 pounds of foodstuffs a year, and the Japanese worker about 905 pounds, a Madras prisoner does not get more than 741.4 pounds. The diet of the Indian prisoner is not only less in quantity, but is inferior in quality.

¹⁴ The Annalist, New York, September 6, 1920, p. 296.

Meat, fish, eggs, milk, and sugar are the most concentrated foodstuffs, the first four containing protein in more available form than is found in legumes, and the last being a very economical source of carbohydrates. Assuming as we have done, that the food of the factory laborer is approximately that of prisoner in India, we shall not be far from the truth in stating that the food of the Indian worker in the factory is the poorest in the world.

Since the primary group of society is the family, which is an economic unit so far as consumption is concerned, it is essential to ascertain the income and expenditure of the family in order to estimate social welfare.

It is not easy, however, to estimate the income of a family since wages differ so much in different kinds of work. In the family of a highly skilled worker, the earnings of a man and one child may be taken to represent the family income. In the case of unskilled laborers, the earnings of a woman may also be added in order to have a fairly accurate idea of the family income.

An attempt was made in 1892 to estimate the income of the factory workers by the collector of Surat. He reported that the earnings of a family consisting of a man, his wife, and a child of working age, would be Rs. 23½ a month. In Bombay it would be about Rs. 25 or 26. At Dharwar it was much less. Assuming that a man is employed as a card-tender in a Bombay mill, his wife as a reeler, and his son as a doffer, the income of this family would amount in 1918 to Rs. 34.5 (Rs. 12, plus 11, plus 11.50) a month.²⁸ But such a combination can scarcely be found. About Rs. 30 might have been

²⁸ Prices and Wages in India, 1919, p. 186.

the average income of a family. The income of a coolie, his wife and a child would amount to Rs. 25 (Rs. 12, plus 7, plus 6) a month. This figure was ascertained in 1918 in the paper industry in Bengal.¹⁶ In both cases there must be added 10 to 25 per cent of bonuses granted during the war.

The cost of living of a factory worker was estimated in 1892 to be Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 per month in Gujrat. Five rupees were also reported to be the cost at Ahmedabad and Surat, and also in the district of Thana, while in Bijapur and Dharwar, the estimate was Rs. 4 a month.¹⁷ At Bombay, the cost of food and lodging alone amounted to Rs. 5 for a young person and Rs. 6 for an adult¹⁷ in 1908. In 1917 the cost of food alone for a manual worker at Madras was estimated at Rs. 5 per month, on the basis of the rations given to the hard-working prisoner. In the same year, the total expenditure was also estimated for a worker's family in Madras, consisting of a man, his wife and two children. Following are the items in the budget: —

	Rupees	Annas	Pies
Food for man	5	0	0
Food for wife	4	0	0
Food for two children	5	0	0
Rent	1	0	1
Clothing	0	8	0
Fuel	1	0	0
Miscellaneous	0	8	0
Total	17	0	0

In the year 1920 prices rose considerably so that the goods mentioned in the table would then cost about Rs. 23.¹⁸ In this estimate, the family has been

¹⁶ Prices and Wages in India, 1919, p. 180.

¹⁷ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 57.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 22.

¹⁹ See *Supra*.

estimated at four members, although, as a rule, the family is larger. The table also shows that very little is laid aside for such items of expenditure as illness and recreation.

Another point in connection with the standard of living is the proportional expenditure on each item, or group of items, such as food and clothing. A day laborer in India spends about 95.4 per cent of his income on food, a carpenter spends about 83.5 per cent and a blacksmith about 79 per cent.²⁰ Although there are no available data regarding the percentage of the income spent by a factory worker on food, we may safely say that he spends at least as much as a carpenter or a blacksmith, i. e., over three-fourths of his total income. Yet in quality and quantity, his food is the poorest. The average Japanese, on the other hand, spends only 60 per cent of his income on food, and the average working man in the United States spends only 43 per cent of his income.²¹

3. The Drinking Habit.

Drinking and gambling were practically unknown to India before the British came. Mohammedans were prohibited from drinking by religious injunction, and the use of intoxicating liquors was also tabooed by Hindus except among the lower classes, who prepared a drink of fermented palm juice for home consumption. With the introduction of liquor into India, the liquor business became a profitable source of revenue and licensed liquor-shops began to spring up, especially in the poorer districts. At present, factory workers indulge frequently in

²⁰ Mukerjee, Radhakamal, "The Foundation of Indian Economics", 1916, p. 57.

²¹ The *Annalist*, New York, Sept. 6, 1920, p. 296.

drinking and what was formerly unknown has now become a common vice.

How extensive the habit has become and how much is spent by laborers on liquor, is a matter of conjecture. "The majority of the men spend one and a half annas a day in drink", remarked a factory manager in Bombay.²² "The hands spent 10 per cent of their salary in drink", observed another manager.²³ "Consumption of liquor among factory workers is, we consider, undoubtedly greater than among men of the same rank in life engaged in other occupations, but we have no reason to think that this points to excessive drinking,"²⁴ concludes the Factory Labor Commission of 1907. In recent years drinking has apparently increased. Drunkenness has become a public menace, especially in times of strike. In 1919, for example, the magistrate at Bombay had to order closing of liquor shops at the time of the strike.²⁵

The effects of this new vice have been numerous. First, it has brought about a great number of cases of indebtedness among factory workers. Even as early as 1892, the collector of Surat reported that the Dheds were in debt almost to a man due to drinking habit.²⁶ The reports of indebtedness because of indulgence in liquor have been numerous in recent years. Second, irregularity of habit has been brought about by excessive drinking. In many cases there is so much drinking on pay-day that many laborers absent themselves from work on the following day. Third, inefficiency of work is another

²² Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 85.

²³ Ibid., p. 86.

²⁴ Ibid., 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 23.

²⁵ The Bombay Chronicle, May 5, 1919.

²⁶ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 57.

result of the drinking habit. Constant drinking interferes with application and steadiness, which fact has been noted in the cases of workers frequently.²⁷ Loss of health has been traced to drinking.

Various theories have been advanced in explanation of the drinking habit among workers in India. First, it is said that the long hours and the exhaustive nature of their work necessitate the use of some stimulant to keep up workers' strength.²⁸ Second, the monotonous nature of work leads workers to seek diversion in drink. Third, the comparatively high rate of pay is said to be a further inducement. Fourth, the location of grog shops in the vicinity of mills and of the residential quarters serves as a temptation to the majority of workers.²⁹ Fifth, poverty and lack of home life send a large number of workers from their lodgings to grog shops.

A considerable number of factory workers in India have already fallen victims to the habit of drinking. With the growth of modern industrialism and the immigration of people from the country to the city, an exceedingly large number of workers, and even their wives, are subjected to the contaminating influence of this vice. Both the Mohamadan and Hindu law makers and religious teachers realized the evil effects of intoxicating liquors and discouraged, or prohibited, the use of any except as medicine. In recent years, a nation wide campaign has been launched by Mr. M. K. Gandhi to eliminate this evil. The vitality of the nation and wel-

²⁷ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4514, p. 103.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 99, 103.

fare of the workers are involved in the movement. Its progress and resulting benefits remain to be seen.

4. Low Standard and National Life.

In the foregoing pages we have seen that a considerable number of factory workers dwell in most miserable houses and practically all of them live on a very poor and insufficient diet. Besides, a large number of them indulge in drinking. The evil effects of such a low standard of life upon the whole society cannot be exaggerated.

First, the most obvious effect of a low standard, especially of poor diet and insanitary housing, is injury to health. Undernourishment and insanitary housing are liable to sap the vitality of a nation, and without strength and vigor, the population may gradually lose ideals and aspirations, leading to the retardation of the progress of society as a whole.

Second, the dissemination of infectious diseases is another serious phase of the question of low standard, especially of insanitary housing. This is particularly true of India because of the climatic conditions. Epidemics occur frequently in large cities like Bombay. At the first serious outbreak of epidemics, panic-stricken laborers flee to the country and thus spread the disease throughout the entire province. Business comes to a standstill, the population is terror-stricken and many lives are needlessly lost.

Third, a serious feature of the low standard, and especially of miserable housing conditions, is its effect upon the home. A house is the physical basis of home. As mentioned before, the lack of housing facilities is partly responsible for the fact that the greater number of mill workers leaves their

wives and children in the country. Without wife and children, a factory worker is deprived of the most salutary influence on his character and the greatest source of happiness in life.

Of course, the family in the old sense cannot exist in an industrial city. The country is much more favorable to the development of the joint family system, such as obtains in India. Under this system several relatives live together as members of the same family. The cost of housing is rather negligible in the country. The income from the farm or the small workshop is collective and can be regarded as the joint income of the family. In the city, rent and other expenses are higher. Wages are earned individually. Differences in earning power become sharply defined, leading to jealousy and dissention within the family. Moreover, the movement of laborers in search of suitable employment often makes it impossible for relatives to live together. The old family organization is, therefore, breaking down, and a reorganization is taking place.

Fourth, the question of moral degradation under such conditions is also an important one. After hard and prolonged work in a factory, the workers need a home where they can find not only food and rest but recreation and amusement as well. But the ill-lighted and congested rooms of the chawls and bustis can scarcely afford the recreation or amusement, especially since the families of the men are absent. Without being obliged to stay home for the sake of the family, men generally repair to saloons and gambling houses. When a large number of men live in a town without a corresponding number of women, there also arises the danger of sexual vices and venereal diseases. In Calcutta, for instance, there are about 365,000 male workers to

only 131,000 female workers between the ages of 15 and 40.²⁰

Fifth, the last and not the least effect of the lower standard of living is the effect on the growth of population. Where the desire for higher intellectual or economic attainment is absent, the lower standard of living leads to early marriages and consequent prolongation of the reproductive period, resulting in a higher birth rate. Under the insanitary conditions and undernourishment which accompany a lower standard of comfort, a very large number of children die before reaching maturity, and the physical and moral vitality of those who survive is impaired.

It must also be borne in mind that the dangers involved in the existence of the conditions just enumerated, are not limited to the present generation. As sources of disease and vice, the industrial centers are bound, sooner or later, to undermine the vitality of the whole nation.

It is the prevention of this condition which is one of the most vital problems in India today. How to improve the standard of living of the workers is the question which demands immediate attention. In fact, the main object of the study of the problem of labor is how to improve the moral and material conditions of the workers, and thereby insure the progress of the society of which they form the major portion.

CHAPTER IX.

FACTORY LEGISLATION.

In the foregoing chapters, we have discussed the conditions under which laborers have worked in the factories of India. Machinery, mechanical power

²⁰ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1919, Cmd. 11, p. 469.

and the division of labor have made the factory system of production much more economic than the handicraft system, but at the same time it has given rise to several problems of vital importance to society. To solve some of these problems, the State in all industrially advanced countries, has enacted law after law. Factory legislation has thus become one of the most important institutions of modern society.

1. Legislative History.¹

Following the establishment of the steam-power factory at Bombay in 1863, the cotton industry made rapid progress and aroused the rivalry of the Lancashire manufacturers who had a large market for their goods in India. In 1874, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce sent a deputation to the Secretary of State for India to urge the application of British factory law to India. In 1875, the Government of Bombay appointed, as a consequence, a commission to inquire into the conditions of factories. This commission failed to see the necessity of factory legislation and the Government of Bombay refused to take further action in the matter. This refusal of the Government of Bombay to regulate factory work in India led to a strong agitation in England, which resulted in the moving of a resolution in the House of Commons in 1879, praying to Her Majesty for immediate regulation of child and woman labor in Indian factories. At last the Government of India introduced a bill into the Indian Legislative Council in 1879 which was passed in 1881.

The provisions of this act were not considered sufficiently restrictive, however, and no sooner was the act passed than agitation was again started for

¹ Cf. Author's Factory Legislation in India.

its amendement. In 1882, a Manchester inspector of factories came to Bombay and made several suggestions for the improvement of factory conditions. In 1884, the Government of Bombay appointed another commission to consider these suggestions in all their bearings. The commission made several recommendations which were forwarded to the Government of India, but the latter took no action. In the latter part of the eighties, the cotton industry of India made still more rapid progress. In 1888, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce sent another deputation to the Secretary of State for India to urge further regulation of child labor as well as legislative restriction on woman labor. An attempt was also made to apply to India some of the resolutions of the International Labor Conference of Berlin held in 1890. In the same year, the Government of India appointed a commission to inquire into labor conditions, and adopted a bill, some of the provisions of which were dictated by the Secretary of State for India. This bill was passed in 1891.

After the passage of the second factory act, the cotton industry in India met with several misfortunes. In 1904—05, it underwent, however, a complete revolution. Unusual activities prevailed in the factories and were soon followed by excessive hours of work. The question of factory legislation was reopened and a bill was introduced in 1905. In 1906, a deputation of the Factory Workers' Association of Lancashire waited upon the Secretary of State for India urging the regulation of male factory labor in India. On the advice of the Secretary of State, the Government of India appointed in 1906 a committee to inquire into the conditions of factories. This committee was followed by the Fac-

tory Labor Commission of 1907. Both the committee and the commission advocated the regulation of adult male labor in textile factories, but the latter was strongly opposed to any direct legislation for the purpose. In 1909, the Government introduced a bill which was passed in 1911. The Act became effective January 1, 1912.

The third factory act was soon followed by the outbreak of the Great War which changed the political and industrial conditions of India. The movement for the attainment of S w a r a j, or the national government, became a powerful force. A new constitution was inaugurated creating a better means for the expression of public opinion on national questions. India entered into a period of unprecedented industrial development which was accompanied by a change in the policy of the British Government and by the growth of a well-organized capitalistic class among the Indian people themselves. An industrial commission was also appointed in 1916 to report on the possibilities of further industrial development. Among other things, the commission investigated into the conditions of labor especially related to health, housing and education and made several recommendations for improvement.

In the meantime, in order to meet heavy expenses of the war, India had to reform her tariff and revise her import duties including those on cotton goods from Lancashire. The Manchester interests raised a storm of protest, but in vain. At the close of the war the international labor conference formulated at its first meeting at Washington, D. C., some draft conventions and recommendations for protective labor legislation for all nations. India was accordingly to reduce the number of working

hours from 72 to 60 a week and raise the minimum age for employment of children from 9 to 12 years. Meanwhile, Indian labor organizations became powerful and through strike after strike achieved, among other things, a reduction in the number of working hours. The Government introduced the conventions and recommendations of the Washington Conference into the legislature where they were ratified. At last a bill, based on the recommendations of the Industrial Commission and of the conventions of the first International Labor Conference, was introduced into the legislature and, after some amendments, was passed early in January, 1922. The law comes into force on July 1, following.

2. Development of the Law.²

Since the enactment of the first factory act in 1881, the factory law in India has been considerably amended by subsequent legislations. Some of the essential changes in the provisions are as follows:—

Definition of a Factory.

By the first factory act of 1881, the term "Factory" was applied to all manufacturing premises using power-driven machinery, employing 100 or more persons, and working more than 4 months in the year. Indigo, tea and coffee plantations were exempted from the provisions of the act. The act of 1891 included under its jurisdiction all manufacturing premises using power-driven machinery and employing 50 persons. By the third act of 1911, the provisions were extended to those premises employing even 20 persons at the option of the local

² Act No. XV of 1881, Act No. XI of 1891 and Act No. XII of 1911, of the Government of India. The Times Trade Supplements, London, April 8, 1922, p. 65.

governments. By the act of January, 1922, the term factory has been defined to include premises using mechanical power and employing 20 persons and may be extended by the local governments even to premises employing 10 persons or more and working with or without power.

Age Limits for Children.

The factory act of 1881 fixed the maximum and minimum age of children for employment at 7 and 12 years respectively. These age limits were raised by the act of 1891 to 9 and 14 years respectively. The certification of the age of children was also made compulsory. The act of 1911 made no change regarding the age limits, but required all children to have their physical fitness for work certified. They had to carry the certificate of their age and physical fitness on their person. By the act of 1922, the minimum age of the children has been raised to 12 and the maximum age to 15. Transitional regulations are also to be made regarding children between the ages of 9 and 12 lawfully employed in the factories on or before July 1, 1921. By the act of January, 1922, the inspector has been given wider power. Whenever he finds a child unfit for work, he may require re-examination as to his physical fitness for the continuance of work.

Regulation of Hours.

The act of 1881 limited the hours of work for children to 9 in any one day with an interval of one hour of rest. Children were also granted four monthly holidays. The act of 1891 reduced these working hours to seven and the interval of rest to half an hour for every six hours' continuous work. The act of 1911 restricted the working hours of children to six in textile factories. The act of 1922

does not make any distinction between the textile and non-textile factories and the work of all children has been reduced to six hours in any one day, but no children can be employed for more than 4 hours at a time without an interval of rest.

It was the act of 1891 which first restricted the working hours of women to eleven in any one day, with an interval of rest for an hour and a half for every eleven hours' work, or proportionately less for a less number of hours' work. The act of 1911 did not make any change in this provision. The working hours of male laborers in textile factories were restricted to this period by the factory act of 1911. By the recent act of 1922, the working hours for both men and women have been reduced to 11 hours a day and 60 a week in all factories. Certain factories may be exempted from the application of this provision. In that case, the overtime should be paid for at not less than $1\frac{1}{4}$ times the normal rate.

The act of 1891 first limited the hours of work for women and children between the period of 5.30 A. M. and 8 P. M. The act of 1911 still further restricted work to the period between 6 A. M. and 7 P. M.

The act of 1891 made it compulsory to stop work for a full half hour about midday. It also granted one weekly holiday, either on Sunday or any other day in the week. By the act of 1911, all factories were required to stop work for about half an hour after every six hours of work. The recent act of January, 1922, the period of rest has been raised to one hour period for all work exceeding 6 hours. The factory act of 1911 prohibited all textile factories from using any mechanical or electrical power for more than twelve hours in any one day. This

restriction has been eliminated by the new act of 1922.

Provisions for Health and Safety.

By the act of 1881, engine fly-wheels, hoists and other dangerous machinery at the discretion of the inspector, had to be fenced in. Accidents had to be reported by the inspector. By the act of 1891 the local governments were given power to make rules regarding measures of sanitation and comfort. The act of 1911 made it compulsory upon factory owners to make arrangements for safety and sanitation, such as ventilation, lighting and fire-escapes. Women and children were also prohibited from employment in certain dangerous work. By the act of January 1922, the employment of women and persons under 18 years of age is prohibited in zinc and lead works, in the manufacture of alloys containing more than 10 per cent of lead, or in mixing or posting in connection with the manufacture or repair of accumulator. A new provision prohibits the atmosphere of a factory from being rendered so humid by artificial means as to be injurious to the health of the persons employed. The Governor-General in Council is empowered to make rules for the adequate disinfecting of wool for the prevention of anthrax.

Provision for Inspection.

The local governments were empowered by the act of 1881 to appoint special inspectors, otherwise district magistrates became *ex-officio* inspectors in their own respective jurisdictions. By the factory act of 1911, this power was largely given over to special inspectors. By the new act, the inspectors were given the authority to prohibit the use of machinery or plant which is in any way dangerous to human life or safety, until proper repair or alteration is made.

Miscellany.

The fine for the breaches of the act is raised from Rs. 200 to Rs. 500, and the court is given power to pay compensation to injured persons or their families out of the fine.

Similarity between British and Indian Laws.

The act of 1911 made the provisions of the Indian factory law more or less similar to those of the British law. There are several reasons why the factory law of India resembles so much that of Great Britain. First, Great Britain has been the pioneer in factory legislation, and India, like other countries, has naturally modelled her laws after the British. Second, India is politically dependent upon Great Britain, and her laws are made by British officials, who, in enacting Indian factory laws, have formulated the provisions according to those of their own country. Third, India is also economically dependent upon Great Britain, and the provisions of the Indian factory act were enacted under the influence of Lancashire manufacturers, who demanded the application of the British factory law to India.

There are, however, some essential differences between the provisions of the laws in the two countries, of which the most important are: —

(1) The British law recognizes between children and adults a class of workers called, "young persons", the working hours of which are regulated by legislation. There is no direct restriction on the working hours of men. The Indian law, on the other hand, regulates the hours of work of all adults, including both men and women, by direct legislation.

(2) Unlike the British law, the Indian law applies to a country much larger in area with much more varied industrial conditions. The local governments

have, therefore, been granted greater power to make rules for dealing with local conditions.

The enactment of the recent act of January, 1922, the provisions of which were more or less based on the draft conventions of the first international labor conference, has given the factory law of India an international character.

3. Administration of the Law.²

The efficiency of a law lies in its administration which is intimately connected with the general administration of a country.

The general administration of India is divided into three parts — First, the Home Government with the Secretary of State for India located in England.³ Second, the Government of India or Central Government with a Governor General, an Executive Council and a Legislature of two Chambers. Third, the Provincial or Local Governments which are divided into districts. These districts are the political units of India. The department immediately concerned with the administration of factories is the Department of Commerce and Industry to which has been added a Central Bureau of Labor.

All the laws in India are passed in the legislature of the Central Government. A law as passed is general and applicable to all parts of the country. But the local governments are given power to modify these laws according to the climatic and industrial conditions of each province.

Under the Factory Act of 1881, the local governments were empowered to appoint special inspectors

² Cf. Author's Factory Legislation in India.

³ Since this writing, there have been some changes in the constitution of the Home Government.

or to entrust the work of inspection to the magistrates or other officers of the district. Only the Governments of Bombay appointed a special inspector in 1883, but even this position was abolished in 1887. In 1892 two such inspectors were appointed. The importance of appointing special inspectors for securing efficient work was realized by several local governments and the Factory Act of 1911, made provisions for the appointment of special inspectors. Since 1914, there have been 14 such inspectors appointed throughout the country. The act of January, 1922, extended the power of the inspectors, as noted before. Besides special inspectors, there are also boiler inspectors and certifying surgeons in each district. District magistrates are still retained as *ex-officio* inspectors, but their duties generally consist of ascertaining if orders passed by inspectors are observed.

The enforcement of a law implies the application of penalties in case of its violation. A rough estimate of how well the factory act is observed may be had from the number of persons convicted for a breach of the act. Statistics prior to the year 1892 are not available. In that year 6 persons were convicted for breach of the factory law. In 1919, there were 132 convictions. Convictions were for such offenses as irregular employment of women and children and failure to send in prescribed returns. On other points, the laws are fairly well observed.

4. Legislative Principles.

The main object of law in the past was to control some social situation which was detrimental to the welfare of society. This negative aspect is still its most important function in all countries. With the growth of self-consciousness, however, society

has become more or less self-directive. Social ends are now consciously apprehended in all advanced countries and public opinion is expressed in all matters concerning the social welfare. In a democratic country, law is now the transformation of the potential force of public opinion into the energy of public will. In its positive aspect, law is thus the co-ordination of social forces for the realization of social ends, or the expression of social life in a desired direction. Law has thus become a means of social achievement.

In order to achieve its end, a law must meet some definite situation in a society. There is no such thing as an absolute or universal law, applicable to all countries alike, without reference to the stage of their development. The law of one country may afford an example to another. But the enactment of a law should take into consideration the social and economic conditions of the group to which it directly applies, also of the society of which such a group is a part. The control of the abuses which may arise in factories is, at best, only the secondary object of factory legislation. The primary object is so to direct the normal development of the factory system that it may not be a means to the exploitation of the employees by their employers, but that it may become the source of satisfaction for the material needs of both employers and the employees and thus lead to the wealth and welfare of society as a whole.

Due to the political and economic dependence of India, factory legislation has not been able to achieve its aim. As previously pointed out, it was the spirit of rivalry among the Lancashire manufacturers, and not the welfare of Indian factory laborers, which was the motive force of the factory legislation in India; even the provisions of some of

the acts were framed under the influence of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce.

Two of the most important effects of this interference were: First, the factory system was checked in its progress, e. g., by the imposition of 3.5 per cent excise duty on the manufacture of cotton goods of certain counts, and the rigidity with which the third factory law of 1911 limited the use of mechanical and electrical power in textile factories. Second, woman workers were practically barred by the Factory Act of 1891 from working in those departments of textile factories where machinery was used.

Thus, the factory legislation, while restricting some of the abuses common in factories all over the world, became a hindrance to the development of the factory system in India. In recent years there has, however, grown up a new political and industrial consciousness among the people which has been accompanied by the rise of an intelligent public and well organized capitalist and labor classes which are alive to their rights and interests.

CHAPTER X.

LABOR ORGANISATION.

1. The Historical Growth.

The labor movement in India falls into three distinct periods according to the dominant forces which influenced the course of its development. The first period started with the object of regulating child and woman labor in factories and lasted from 1875 to 1891. The abolition of the indentured system was the main purpose of the second period, which lasted from 1891 to 1917. The third period began in 1918 with the principal aim of organising the workers into

trade unions and is still in the process of growth. These three periods might be conveniently called as the regulation, abolition, and organisation periods.

The Regulation Period.¹

The underlying cause of the labor movement was the presence of women and children in growing cotton factories of India. But the initial cause was the rivalry of Lancashire manufacturers, whose agitation resulted in the appointment of a factory commission by the Government of Bombay in 1875, as noted before. As the same time the philanthropists in Bombay started agitation for legislation, which formed the nucleus of the labor movement in India.

Subsequent agitation both in England and India resulted in the enactment of the first factory act and in the regulation of child labor in 1881. But the failure of the act to regulate woman labor led to agitation for its amendment. Out of these agitations emerged the first labor leader in India, Mr. Narayan Meghajee Lokhanday, who started life as a factory laborer and worked for the cause of labor until the end of his life.

A second commission was appointed in 1884 to consider the desirability of amending the factory act. Mr. Lokhanday at once organised a conference of the workers which met at Bombay from September 23 to 26, 1884, and drew up a memorial, asking for the redress of their grievances. It was signed by 5,500 workers and presented to the commission. On October 24, 1889, the workers in the spinning and weaving industries of Bombay submitted a petition to the Governor General asking for the amendment

¹ Cf. Author's *Factory Legislation in India*.

² *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890-91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 106.*

of the factory act.³ On April 24, 1890, there was held at Bombay a mass meeting of factory workers numbering upwards of 10 000 persons. Two women addressed the meeting and demanded a weekly holiday which was granted by the employers.⁴

In 1890, Mr. Lokhanday founded the Bombay Millhands' Association, the first organisation of its kind among the working people of India, and started a labor paper, called the *Dinabandhu*, or the friend of the poor. Many laborers came to the headquarters of the association for advice and the organ became the clearing house of the grievances of the workers in the city of Bombay.

In the same year another factory commission was appointed. Mr. Lokhanday became the local member and represented labor. On November 8, 1890, as President of the Millhands' Association, Mr. Lokhanday also submitted an address to the commission. In 1891, the second factory act was passed regulating the labor of women and increasing the minimum and maximum ages of children. The main object of the first period was thus realised, and it gradually lost its vitality.

The Abolition Period.⁵

The second period of the labor movement was a protest against the indentured system by which Indian laborers were sent out to British colonies to take the place of the Negro slaves emancipated in 1834. The system was introduced into Mauritius and Trinidad in 1834 and later on into Natal, Fiji, and other colonies.

³ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, pp. 106—07.

⁴ Parl. Debates, 1890, Vol. 344, pp. 810—11.

⁵ Cf. Mahatma Gandhi, Ganesh & Co., Madras, 1921 and the Indian Year Books.

Discriminating laws against the Indians were passed by the Transvaal Government as early as 1883, but the Transvaal being outside of the British Empire at the time and the number of Indians being small, no notice was taken of the matter. In 1891, Natal inaugurated a series of repressive measures, which made the condition of the indentured Indians very severe and brought the question to the public notice. With the introduction of repressive measures by the Natal Government began the movement for abolition.

Mr. M. K. Gandhi, who happened to be in Natal in the legal capacity at that time, protested against these measures and organised the Indians for the preservation of their interests. In 1903 he started a paper called the *Indian Opinion*, to present the views of the Indians to the colonists. In 1906, the Transvaal Government brought about a new bill against the Asian immigration, which was passed in 1907. The Indians strongly protested against the measure and, refusing to obey the law, started passive resistance. As a consequence, over 2,500 Indians were sentenced to prison within the next two years.

The news of the sufferings of the Indians in South Africa had already reached India, but the events of 1907 aroused a strong indignation among the people. Protest meetings were held all over the country. In 1910 a resolution of Mr. G. K. Gokhale was passed in the Legislative Council authorising the Governor General in Council to prohibit the emigration of Indians as indentured laborers to Natal. Early in 1912, Mr. Gokhale again moved a resolution for the abolition of the system altogether, but the Government opposed the motion.

In the meantime a new complication had arisen. The Union Government of South Africa declared the

marriages of the Indians null and void. Indian women inaugurated agitation against the law. Most of them were arrested and imprisoned, but they had succeeded in starting strikes among Indian workers in mines and plantations. About this time the Transvaal Government prohibited the entry of Indians into its territories. As a protest against this order, 3000 Indians under the leadership of Mr. Gandhi began an "invasion" into the Transvaal. Most of the Indians including Mr. Gandhi were arrested and imprisoned.

This treatment of Indians in South Africa again aroused strong resentment throughout the length and breadth of India. At the request of the Government of India, the South African Government appointed a commission, the recommendations of which were put into effect in the Indian Relief Act of 1914. A temporary peace was restored. In 1917, it was rumored that the Government of India intended to extend the indentured system and protest meetings were again held all over the country. The Government of India was consequently obliged to prohibit the emigration of all Indian laborers as a war measure. By the Act of March, 1922, the system was finally abolished.

The Organisation Period.

The growth of industrialism in the country and of solidarity among employers on the one hand and the rise of class-consciousness among workers on the other, were the fundamental causes of the movement for organisation. Although the first labor union was founded in 1890 and the second in 1910, it was not until 1918 that the movement for trade unionism started. In that year an industrial union was organised among the textile workers in Madras.⁶ By 1919 there

⁶ The New India, Madras, Nov. 18, 1920, p. 66.

were 4 unions in the Presidency of Madras with a membership of 20 000 persons. From Madras the movement spread to the other parts of the country, and similar unions were founded in Bombay, Calcutta, Ahmedabad and other industrial centres. In a short time, there was scarcely any industry in India, which was not organised in some form or other.

The general unrest of the country and the higher cost of living brought about a spirit of restlessness among the workers. They wanted to assert their rights and to improve their conditions by industrial warfare. In December 1919, a conference of Bombay factory workers was held and about 72 factories were represented. They drew up a memorandum demanding the reduction of hours and the increase of wages.⁷ The employers failing to meet these demands, the workers revolted and organised strike after strike until the industrial organisation of the whole country was completely paralysed.

Meanwhile the movement went on its course with a more constructive policy. It assumed its national importance in 1920, when the first All-India Trade Union Congress was held at Bombay from October 31 to November 2, with Lala Lajpat Rai as President and Mr. Joseph Baptista Vice President. The second All India Trade Union Congress was held at Jharria, a small coal town in Bengal, from November 30 to December 2, 1921. There were 10 000 delegates from 100 unions representing about 1 000 000 members. Mr. Baptista was elected chairman, and the congress was given a constitution.

2. Trade Unionism.

In the first period, the labor union like that of the Bombay Millhands' Association was only a loose

⁷ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1920, Cmd. 950, p. 70.

ly organised body. There was no definite aim and constitution. The officers worked mostly in the advisory capacity. But their function in the labor movement cannot be minimised. They brought the labor question to the attention of the Government and the public, and attempted to formulate the grievances and sentiments of laborers in definite shape.

The second period being a movement of and by the intellectuals did not give rise to any labor union. Many social and political organisations, however, took active part in the movement and the press for the first time became champion of labor and started campaign against the indentured system.

In the third period, the movement divested itself of the social and political domination of the first two periods and assumed its economic nature. It has become a movement for and by the workers, although for leadership, it still has to depend upon outside. Due to the active interests of the workers themselves, various unions have sprung up all over the country.

The present labor organisations may be divided into the following groups: First, craft or trade union or an organisation of the workers of the same craft or trade, such as the spinners' union and the weavers' union. Second, crafts or trades union or a federation of unions in different crafts or trades, such as the Bombay Central Labor Board and All-India Trade Union Congress. Third, industrial union or an organisation of the workers in the same industry, such as the printers' union and the railway workers' union. Fourth, labor union or an organisation of the workers irrespective of their trades, such as the Bombay Millhands' Association, and the Workers' Welfare Association.

Almost all the unions are well organised. They

have such officers, as presidents, vice-presidents, treasurers, and secretaries, many of whom are chosen from the workers themselves. There is also an advisory body drawn mostly from the workers. The membership fees vary from one anna per person for children to a higher sum for the adults.

In large cities like Bombay or Ahmedabad, all the unions are federated into one or more organisations. The city of Bombay, for instance, has two organisations, the Central Labor Board and the Central Labor Federation, the latter being affiliated with All-India Trade Unions Congress.

The outstanding feature of labor organisations in India is that the majority of them are industrial unions. Recently there has been, however, a tendency toward craft unions. As the skill of the workers develops, and as they become more and more class-conscious, there is every likelihood that such unions would grow larger in number. Along with the growth of craft unions, there is, however, growing also a tendency for federation. Craft unions with their conflicting interests might split up the labor camp and hinder the progress of the movement. But when federated, they become all the more powerful. The federation of labor unions into provincial and national organisations is the most significant feature of the Indian labor movement at present.

3. Disputes and Settlement.

Strikes and lockouts on a small scale took place in factories and plantations in India even in the early days of modern industrialism. There is scarcely any record of them. The earliest strikes, for which authentic data are available, took place at the Golam Baba Spinning and Weaving Company Ltd. in 1882. Between the years 1882 and 1890, there were 25 im-

portant strikes recorded in different factories of Bombay and Madras, but minor strikes were more frequent.⁹

In the recent years strikes have increased tremendously both in number and intensity. In 1905, for instance, there were several strikes in the mills of Bombay owing to the introduction of electricity and to the excessive hours of work. In 1907, some of the strikes in Bombay started on the question of wages and lasted over a week. The first important and widespread strike took place in 1908, when the mill workers of Bombay left work out of sympathy for Mr. Tilak, a national leader, who was sentenced to prison for sedition. About the three fourths of the workers were on strike, but they returned after a day or two.⁹

Strikes increased greatly during the war. In 1917, several strikes took place in important industrial centres, such as Ahmedabad, Madras and Bombay, and the workers obtained some concessions. During 1918, strikes for the increase of wages were frequent, but most of them were amicably settled with the workers receiving an increase of wages. One of the largest strikes took place in Bombay in December, 1918, and by January 7, 1919, about 125,000 workers were out.¹⁰ It was, however, in the latter part of 1919 and in the first part of 1920 that the dispute between labor and capital became most acute. During the first six months of 1920, there were about 200 strikes involving 1,500,000 men, women, and children.¹¹ From July to December.

⁹ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1892, Vol. 36, C. 6795, p. 121.

⁹ *The Times*, London, Trade Supplement, Feb. 8, 1919, p. 2856.

¹⁰ *The Times*, London, Jan. 9, 1920, p. 9 c.

¹¹ *The Bombay Chronicle*, Oct. 30, 1920.

1920, there were 119 strikes involving 211,478 employees in the province of Bengal alone. By the end of the year, there was scarcely any industry in the Hooghly Basin in which strikes did not occur.¹³

Detailed statistics are available for the Presidency of Bombay since April 1, 1921, when the Labor Office was first created. In 12 months from April, 1921, to March, 1922, there were 164 strikes and lockouts involving about 230,000 persons.¹⁴ In the last quarters of 1921, there were in the whole of India 164 strikes and lockouts involving 230,000 workers.¹⁵

The underlying cause of the industrial disputes was class-consciousness among the workers. But immediate causes were economic. Low wages were the most important cause. The employers failed to increase wages with the increasing cost of living. Among the other causes which were also economic in origin, but peculiar to each industry and locality, were long hours and bad housing. Among the contributing causes the lack of provision for compensation, the ill-treatment of the workers by foremen and managers, and the sympathy of one group of workers for others were the chief.

The most obvious effect of a strike is the loss of working days. Complete figures for the working days lost in the disputes prior to the year 1921 are not available. In the second half of 1920, the number of working days lost through disputes in Bengal alone has been estimated to be 1,052,261. The total loss of working days for 12 months from April,

¹³ The Journal of Indian Industries and Labor, Feb., 1922, p. 73.

¹⁴ Bombay Labor Gazette, April, 1922.

¹⁵ The Journal of Indian Industries and Labor, Feb., 1922, p. 73.

1921, ending March 31, 1922, amounted to 1,639,667 in the Presidency of Bombay.¹⁵

The tangible results of industrial disputes are to be noted in their settlement. Of the 164 strikes and lockouts in the Presidency of Bombay for a year ending March, 1922, 54 per cent were settled in favor of the employers, 15 per cent in favor of the employees, 13 per cent were compromised, and 18 per cent were still in progress without definite results.¹⁶ Of the 132 disputes in the last quarter of 1921 in all India, 49 were successful, 16 partially successful, 54 unsuccessful, 2 indefinite, 4 unknown, and still in progress.¹⁷

Immeasurable and irreparable as some of the losses from industrial disputes are, they are the inevitable results of the modern system of production and distribution, and should be considered in relation to the corresponding gain to the industrial classes or to the society of which they are a part. If strikes are the only means by which they can promote their cause, establish their industrial status, and improve their social conditions, they must be regarded as a method of social amelioration.

CHAPTER XI

PROBLEMS AND CONCLUSIONS.

The factory system of production was so phenomenal in its rise, so rapid in its development and so revolutionary in its character, that society was not only unprepared for it, but failed for a long time to

¹⁵ Bombay Labor Gazette, April, 1922.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ The Journal of Indian Industries and Labor, Feb., 1922, p. 77.

adjust itself to the new conditions which it created. Out of this maladjustment have arisen several problems, such as those related to hours of work, health and safety, and unemployment. These problems more or less directly affect the welfare of the working people who form the majority of the industrial population of a country.

Since these problems are the direct results of the modern industrialism, they are somewhat similar in nature in almost all industrially developed countries. Still they are more or less influenced by local conditions prevailing in each country. In order to have a comprehensive view of the problems of factory labor in India, it is, therefore, essential to understand the conditions which form their background.

1. The Background.¹

India is a country of abundant potential wealth. Still her people are extremely poor. There are several causes assigned to this condition, namely, the systematic destruction of the indigenous industries by the East India Company, the rack-renting of the ryots by the present British Government, the annual drain upon the country for "home charges" in Great Britain, and the increase of population beyond the productive capacity of the country.

The fundamental cause of India's poverty lies, however, still deeper. Although the population has greatly increased, India has not yet reached that stage where she is unable to produce enough for the welfare of her people. The truth is the productive capacity of the nation has not kept pace with the

¹ Cf. Author's article on the background of the labor problem for the *Modern Review*, Calcutta, June, 1922.

growth of its population. It is the lack of power to utilise her resources most efficiently, that is the essential cause of India's poverty.

It is the age of world economy. The facilities for communication have brought all the regions of the world into one industrial and commercial organisation. No geographical distance or economic barrier can keep a country away from the international market. A country that can not compete with others in the international economy must remain poor. Just as with the growth of national economy, those classes of people that have not been able to acquire efficiency in the modern system of production have become relatively poor, so with the rise of international economy, those nations, which have not adopted modern industrialism and acquired efficiency in the modern productive system, have remained poor and have even become poorer.

Inefficiency is noticeable in every department of the industrial organisation of India. The prevailing systems of utilising her vast resources are still very primitive. The farm operation is of a kind which has been in existence for thousands of years. Scientific agriculture is practically unknown. The domestic system is still the chief method of supplying manufactured goods. Thus, with obsolete tools and antiquated systems, Indian farmers and artisans have to compete with European and American farmers and artisans, who are equipped with the machinery of the latest invention and with the methods of the most recent scientific discovery. In other words, India exchanges her rough and unskilled labor for the skilled and efficient labor of Europe and America, and is, therefore, at a disadvantage in the international market.

The remedy for India's poverty lies in the mo-

dermisation of her industries. India must devote her whole-hearted energy to the application of science and invention to the productive processes and adopt modern industrialism, especially the factory system, which has evolved as a productive system through the gradual conquest of nature by man, and is, therefore, the most efficient method known up to this time.

Owing to the climatic conditions, the national traditions, and the character of the natural resources, the line of industrial development may not be the same in India as in Europe or America. But the economic soundness of the factory system in India can not be questioned. She has all the essential elements for its success, namely, iron and coal, raw material, market for finished goods, and a potential supply of both skillful labor and adequate capital. No less significant are some of the social effects of the factory system. Even in a short period, it has brought about beneficial results in certain sections of the country. When well developed, the factory system will undoubtedly affect some of the social institutions of India, such as the casté system, child marriage, and the *zenana* or the seclusion of women.

For the development of modern industrialism and for the achievement of industrial efficiency, India must reorganise her society. Industrial efficiency being an expression of social life in the most economic satisfaction of its material desires, is, in fact, only the result of efficient social organisation, and, as such, is invariably connected with traditions and institutions of the country. India must realise that the aim of life is not only to be happy in the next world, but also to achieve a richer and nobler expression here on earth, that industrial career is a means not

only to the satisfaction of material wants, but also to the development of character and the realisation of self, and that one of the conditions of social progress is national prosperity, which can be achieved by directing social forces toward industrial efficiency.

A still more important requirement for the development of modern industries is the favorable attitude of the State. No nation has developed modern industrialism without a policy of national economy. It is to such policy that Great Britain owes her industrial and commercial supremacy. The aim of the State will be the introduction of the modern technique for the most economic utilisation of those resources in which India has natural advantage, even with the help of protection and subsidies, if necessary.

In the background of the labor problem in India, which is largely a question of distribution, or the apportioning of the dividend of industry between labor and capital, lies the question of production or the increase of the national dividend itself. The question involves two conditions, namely, the adoption by Indian society of a new philosophy of life, and by Indian State of the policy of national economy.

2. Principal Problems.

The essential features of the factory system may be enumerated as follows: — First, the use of machinery and mechanical power. Second, the minute division of labor and the cooperation of a large number of employees at a certain time and place. Third, the ownership of the means production and the control of industries by a few individuals. Fourth, large scale production and an international market.

The problem of factory labor is directly or indirectly the result of one or more of these factors.

Excessive Hours.²

The continuous and intensive nature of work in factories as contrasted with work on farms, and the determination of the working time by an employer to whom longer hours generally mean more profits, have given rise to the problem of excessive hours. A needy and single handed employee can not bargain advantageously to secure shorter hours from an employer, nor can an employer afford to work his factory shorter hours when his competitors work longer hours. The regulation of working hours has thus become a problem. This is especially true, since interference by the State infringes upon the freedom of individual contract, which is still one of the fundamental principles of modern government. The work of women and children has, however, been regulated in all countries under the protective power of the State. The Government of India first regulated the working hours of children in 1881, of women in 1891, and of men in textile factories in 1911. The hours of work of all laborers were still more restricted by the Factory Act of January, 1922, as noted before.

The proper length of a working day should be determined by several principles underlying all social and economic activities:

In the first place, the satisfaction of wants and the maintenance of a respectable standard of life. There are several elements which should be considered in applying this principle to India: First, owing to the climatic conditions, laborers in India need longer

² Cf. Author's article on hours of work in the Indian Review, Madras, October, 1921.

hours to accomplish the same amount of work done in fewer hours in the countries of colder regions. Second, the comparative inefficiency of labor and management would make the hours of work longer in India than in the industrially advanced countries. Third, the extreme poverty of the people requires rapid expansion of modern industrialism, and the hours of work should not be so short as to be prejudicial to the industrial growth of the country. Fourth, India is a free trade country and her industries are subjected to the competition of such countries as England and Germany. The reduction in working hours should be accompanied by proper protection against her rivals.

In the second place, the maintenance of body and mind in such a condition that a man may become the most economic producer in the longest period of time, i. e., for life. The interest of the employer often lies in extracting the largest amount of energy or services in the shortest period of time. But if by overwork a man becomes industrially incapacitated at 40 instead of at 50, his services for 10 years are a loss to himself as well as to the society. A man should not, therefore, put forth more energy in a day than what could be recuperated by ordinary rest and refreshment.

In the third place, sufficient leisure for moral and intellectual development. Man is not merely a producer and consumer. He must have time for the exercise of civic duties and for the enjoyment of social privileges. Social progress depend upon the opportunity for the realisation of cultural ideals by the masses.

Sickness and Accidents.

The factory system necessitates work to be done at certain times and places, which are not always

congenial and sanitary. Infectious diseases from the material used and contagious diseases from the persons employed have been found in many factories. Machinery and mechanical power also often endanger the life and limb of workers. The factory system has thus given rise to the problem of sickness and accidents.

Measures for the preservation of the health and safety of workers can be undertaken only by the State. Employees and even employers are not often in a position to know the sources of danger. Both for ascertainment of the facts and for the enforcement of the preventive measures, legislation by the State is, therefore, absolutely necessary. The Government of India has already enacted some measures for this purpose: First, the establishment of the minimum requirements for sanitation. Second, the fencing-in of some dangerous machinery. Third, the prohibition of women and children from employment in certain unhealthy and dangerous work. The weakest point of the factory law in India is the absence of any provision for compensation. Some diseases and accidents in industry are unavoidable. They form, therefore, a part of the modern productive process. The expenses for compensation should be included in the expenditure of an industry, and the payment should be enforced by the Government. It is a very satisfactory sign that both the labor organisation and the public opinion are in favor of compensation law.

Low Wages.

The rise of the factory system in India created a new demand for labor, and as the supply for the new industry was scarce, the laborers in factories were able to secure wages higher than those of the same class of people in other industries. Even these higher wages of factory workers are too low in com-

parison with the wages of similar workers in Europe and America. During the war, the wages did not rise in the same proportion as the cost of living. The workers, however, succeeded in securing increased wages and bonuses by strikes.

The wages of a class of workers cannot rise very far above those of other classes, unless a monopoly can be maintained. As long as the national dividend of India is small in comparison with the population, and consequently the general level of wages low, there are scarcely any prospects of appreciable and permanent increase in the wages of factory workers.

Wages are largely determined by the economic laws and the State cannot very well increase wages by a fiat without interfering with the development of industries. There are, however, several ways by which the wages can be increased in India: First, the extension of the scope of the old industries and the establishment of the new ones, especially in manufacture. Second, an increase in the efficiency of laborers by improving their health and skill. Third, an increase in the standard of living which may tend to lower the birth-rate and eventually to limit the supply of labor. Fourth, unionization of laborers so that they may demand and secure a larger share of the increasing national dividend.

Unemployment.

Another serious problem of modern industrialism is unemployment. There is no question that a very large number of the people in India remain unemployed during some period of the year or the other. Owing to the lack of proper statistics, it is hard to estimate the exact number. There are two important reasons why the evil effects of unemployment have not appeared to the same extent in India as in the Western countries: First, a large number of the

factory workers still have homes, and sometimes even farms in the country. In case of unemployment in the city, they go to the country and find something else to do. Second, most of the workers live in the joint family system, where the incomes of all earning members are pooled together for the household expenditure. Thus, mutual help often tides some members over periodical unemployment. But gradually, the working classes are losing their homesteads and farmlands, and the joint family system is also breaking down. Sooner or later, unemployment will be as serious a problem in India as in other countries.

No solution has yet been found for unemployment. It is the greatest defect of modern industrialism. Great Britain has adopted the system of insurance for the relief of the unemployed. This measure is not yet applicable to India — a country where most of the industries are still unorganised.

Child Labor.*

The minute division of labor and the mechanical and simplified nature of many operations have made the utilisation of child labor both possible and profitable in the modern productive system. Children always used to assist their parents in the household, in the workshop, or on the farm. As the parents went into the factories, their children naturally followed them.

The presence of children in factories has given rise to several serious problems. Both the nature of the work done and the physical and social environment are detrimental to the physical, intellectual and moral development of children, especially in India,

* Cf. Author's article on the problem of child labor in the *Modern Review*, Calcutta, January, 1922.

where children begin work at the age of twelve and remain in factories for five or six hours a day. But even factory work would appear as the lesser of two evils for children of so tender an age, when it is taken into consideration that millions of children are born in India without provision for sufficient food for the growth of their bodies, or of educational facilities for the development of their minds. By going into the factories, children can at least get some nourishment and training.

That the minimum and the maximum age limits of children are too low, cannot for a moment be denied. The age limits must be raised, but at the same time, proper provision should be made for education and training. The minimum age limit for employment should begin where the maximum age limit for education ends. These age limits should be raised together and fourteen should be the immediate objective toward which they should move, until the time when child labor can be abolished altogether.

Woman Labor.*

Modern industrialism has taken a good deal of work away from homes to factories and women have naturally followed it. The employment of women in factories has also given rise to several difficult problems. The nature and conditions of work have subjected them to moral and physical deterioration on the one hand, and their continued absence from home has affected the home life and especially the welfare of children on the other. The regulation of woman labor has, therefore, been undertaken by the State in all industrially advanced countries. The Government

* Cf. Author's article on the problem of woman labor in the *Modern Review*, Calcutta, February, 1922.

of India restricted the work of women to eleven hours in any one day and barred them from night and dangerous work. By the recent act, the working hours of all adult workers have been reduced to 60 a week.

No where else in the world are women in greater need of industrial opportunities than they are in India, where millions of people live in poverty and destitution. As women are silent sufferers of family misfortunes, the misery of the majority of women in India knows no bounds. Many of them work on farms in order to add just a little to the meagre income of the family. Under these circumstances, factory work was a real boon to Indian women, both because it improved their economic condition and because it raised their social status. But the Factory Act of 1891 compelling women to take an hour and a half rest out of every eleven hours' work, while men were allowed only a half hour's rest, disorganized the cooperation of male and female workers in the same occupation and led to the discharge of a large number of woman workers. At present, women are employed only in reeling and winding departments. The provision making a distinction between the work of men and women has been, therefore, a great handicap to the growth in the numbers of female workers in India.

Under the factory system, the different operatives of a productive process are a coordinated whole, and all laborers should begin and end work about the same time. If women are not allowed to work the same number of hours as men, the possibility is that they will not be employed in many departments where men generally work. The hours of work and the intervals of rest should, therefore, be the same for both men and women.

3. Remedial Measures.

The rise of labor problems, some of which have been discussed in the foregoing pages, has been followed by several movements for remedy. These movements may be classified under three heads: first, the philanthropic movements; second, the legislative movement; and third, the labor movement.

The Philanthropic Movement.

The importance of undertaking charitable work as a means of mitigating the sufferings of laborers, was realized almost simultaneously with the rise of the factory system. Charity is a part of religion in India and the inhabitants of a locality are supposed to take care of their dependent members. As the need for helping laborers arose, charitable associations also began to appear in the industrial centers of the country. Their main activities consisted of education, medical help and agitation for temperance. Some of the important charitable or welfare work was undertaken by employers themselves. Most of the large factories provided free medical advice and dispensary. Some of them had even day and evening schools for halftime workers.

Under modern social conditions, philanthropic work is necessary. The misery and sufferings of a large number of working people need immediate attention and there are no other organizations to undertake such work. But philanthropy as a method of solving labor problems is quite inadequate. It is only a palliative measure and fails to deal with fundamental causes. It cannot meet with better success in India than it has in other industrial countries.

The Legislative Movement.

A more important movement towards the solution of labor problems is that of legislation. Under

the protective function of the State, almost all governments have regulated the general conditions of factory work, especially the labor of women and children. As the regulation of work in factories implies the collection of accurate data, a uniform principle, and enforcement of the law, involving punishment whenever necessary, this can be undertaken only by a supreme authority which is the State. The Government of India has already passed four acts for the regulation of factory labor. But many factory problems remain unsolved and there is necessity for further legislation.

The field of activities by the government in solving labor problems, is rather limited. The government is based on old theories and institutions, while labor problems arise from new conditions and ideals. As the custodian of the "sacred right" and "inalienable laws", the government is conservative and unable to fully understand the ideals and aspirations of the laboring classes which are new and sometimes even revolutionary.

Moreover, the privileged or capitalistic classes of people are generally in the control of governmental machinery and they naturally oppose the enactment of any law which may go against their own interests or undermine the capitalistic system. This essential incapacity of any government to cope adequately with some of the labor problems, becomes still more true in the case of India, where the government is in the hands of a foreign nation and where the larger portion of the employers are foreigners.

The Labor Movement.

The most important movement for the solution of labor problems, has been taken up by the laborers themselves. As they are the real sufferers from the consequences of modern industrialism, they are the

right body of people to take an active and prominent part in the solution of their problems.

They may solve some of the problems by their own initiative or by direct negotiations with employers. Even in the case of legislation, they can effect certain fundamental changes. Like the laborers in other countries, Indian laborers have also made their voices felt in the solution of their problems.

From the earliest time, the labor movement has been guided by two distinct doctrines. The first is that the iniquities of modern industrial society, of which labor problems are a part, have resulted from the capitalistic system and cannot be remedied without breaking down the system itself. This is the doctrine of the revolutionary wing of the labor movement and consists of several phases, from philosophical anarchism to state socialism. The second is that the present iniquities have been caused by the inability of employees to make a better bargain with their employers and can be remedied by labor organization which will give laborers the same advantage as the employers have. This is the doctrine of that wing of the labor movement which aims at the solution of labor problems through collective bargaining. It accepts modern socio-economic institutions and attempts only at equalizing the bargaining power of labor with that of capital. The labor movement in India in the present stage of its development is a movement for collective bargaining.

The labor movement in India is rather new. Although it started almost a half a century ago, yet it was not until 1919-20 that it became a power in the industrial life of the country. The object of this movement is to combine all the laborers into one federated association. The immediate aims of the movement are — better conditions, shorter hours and

an increase in wages. Although the labor movement in India has been influenced by idealistic doctrines, it has not yet adopted any revolutionary program. What will be the future course of its action is uncertain.

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that although these three movements are distinct in the scope of their activities, they are by no means contradictory. In fact, they are more or less complementary. Philanthropy is necessary under the present condition of India. There is no doubt that some of the charitable work will be taken up by the State and the Municipality in the form of old-age pensions, sickness and accident insurance and maternity allowance. Legislation is also dependent upon philanthropy and unionism for guidance, suggestion and initiative in many fields of its activities. It is often the measures of experimented and proven value, generally undertaken by advanced factories, and the effective demands made by the workers or the public, to which government gives its legislative sanction. On the other hand, the labor movement, in spite of its growth in strength and scope, will have recourse to legislation for the achievement of some of its aims. Even the democratisation of the industrial society depends upon legislative action by the workers.

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FACTORY LEGISLATION IN INDIA

By

Rajani Kanta Das, M. Sc., Ph. D.

Late Lecturer in Economics, New York University;
Former Special Agent, United States Department of Labor.

With an Introduction

By

John R. Commons, M. A., LL. D.

Professor of Economics, University of Wisconsin;
Former Member Industrial Commission of Wisconsin and
United States Commission on Industrial Relations.



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TO MY MOTHER

INTRODUCTION.

By Dr. John R. Commons.

Mr. Das came to the investigation of Indian factory legislation as a part of several years' investigation of the forces that make for national efficiency. Deeply impressed by the famine reports of 1900—01 and the abject poverty of the people of India, he devoted himself to the improvement of economic conditions by prolonged study of the causes. Seeing that the majority of the people of India depended upon agriculture for a living, he came to America to prepare himself for the study of agricultural production. While pursuing these studies at Ohio State University, the University of Missouri and the University of Wisconsin, it became clear to him that national prosperity depended more upon the industrial efficiency of the people than upon the natural resources of the country. The real cause of India's poverty was her industrial inefficiency. The solution lay in becoming industrially efficient.

This conclusion led Mr. Das to the study of the human element in the production system — the labor problem. This he followed at the University of Chicago and the University of Wisconsin, working betimes in American factories as an employee, and travelling extensively in England, France, and the United States, besides in India on a return visit.

This unusually extensive preparation for the study of Indian factory legislation, has given to the book an unusual value, not only as a study of a single country, but especially by way of the comparative legislation and actual factory practice which he has had always before him.

It is difficult for a Westerner to appreciate and weigh all of the facts which Mr. Das has marshalled in this im-

portant study of Indian industry, but certainly at no time in history is it more necessary to do so. For India is nearer to us than before, and the problems of the British Empire are becoming the problems of America. To the understanding of these economic, political and legislative problems this book is a valuable contribution.

University of Wisconsin.

John R. Commons.

PREFACE.

"Factory Legislation in India" is a study in the legislative institution relating to Indian factories with special reference to the social, political and economic forces which led to its origin and growth and influenced its nature and function. Originally, it constituted only a chapter of the treatise on factory labor in India in 1913 and was elaborated into the present treatise in 1916 as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Wisconsin. Except for the addition of a chapter on the Factory Act of 1922 and for a few other minor additions and alterations, the present treatise is practically the same as the original dissertation of 1916. A summary of the first three legislations was published in the *Modern Review*, Calcutta, January, 1921.

In presenting the treatise to the public, the author is conscious that it is far from being exhaustive. Some of the Indian documents, periodicals and newspapers, which could very profitably have been consulted, were not available in this country. There was, however, full access to the most important sources of information on the subject, namely, the British Parliamentary Papers and Debates, the Proceedings of the Indian Legislative Council and the Debates of the Legislative Assembly and of the Council of State of India, and a complete file of the *London Times*. Moreover, since the main object of the investigation was not so much the collection of the detailed information on the history of factory legislation as the analysis of the underlying forces, the author is satisfied that although a few details might have been added and some of the points elaborated, they would not have made any essential difference in the fundamental character of the treatise.

In conclusion, the author takes this opportunity to express his deep gratitude to Dr. John R. Commons, Professor of Economics, University of Wisconsin, who has,

as his teacher, not only supervised the preparation of the treatise, but has also generously written an introduction to it. He is also indebted to Mr. Jay Bowman, Chicago, Ill., and to Mrs. Victoria B. Turner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, for reading the manuscript and offering valuable criticisms. He also takes this occasion to express his thanks to the Library of the University of Wisconsin and the Economics Division of the New York Public Library for assistance in locating and collecting some of the documents consulted in the preparation of this volume.

New York, August 1, 1922. Rajani Kanta Das.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION.

An institution is a means through which social life finds specific expression. Since an institution arises out of the need for such expression, new institutions appear whenever social, political and economic forces bring about a situation requiring a new expression or direction of social life. The application of mechanical power in production revolutionised the industrial organisation and gave rise to the factory system. The institution of factory legislation appeared primarily in response to the social condition of the people under the present system of production and so came to form an integral part of the modern industrial society.

The prime object of factory legislation is the amelioration of some of the conditions affecting injuriously the workers under the factory system. Changes in the productive technique, such as the use of machinery and of mechanical power and the employment of a large number of people in a certain time and place, have subjected the workers to the dangers of disease and accident and created other similar problems. It has, therefore, become the function of the State through its legislative and administrative organs to regulate some of these conditions in the interest of public health and morals.

The origin and growth of factory legislation has been subjected to the influences of various forces arising from conflicting interests. The first and foremost of these conflicts is that between labor and capital. The chief purpose of a business enterprise under the modern system of production is to make profit. Any change or improvement in the conditions of employment, such as shorter hours of work or accident compensation, if it tends to decrease profits, is inevitably opposed by capitalistic interests. The

laborer, on the other hand, under the present wage system, is not interested in working longer or producing more than what is absolutely necessary to insure himself a living wage, while leaving the employer a profit just sufficient to induce him to continue in business. The demands of labor are, therefore, sometimes higher than business conditions warrant.

The progress of labor legislation is also affected by the conflicting interests of conservatives and reactionaries on the one hand, and of reformers and "uplifters" on the other. The former have been accustomed to existing institutions or are direct or indirect beneficiaries of modern economic organization. They resist, therefore, any innovation or restrictive measures on the privileges of the capitalists or of their own. As some of them wield great political power, they exert an important influence on labor legislation. The latter, on the other hand, are inspired by the conception of a new order of society to be achieved, in part, by bettering the conditions of labor, or with the vision of a millennium to result from the emancipation of the masses. They have, therefore, espoused the cause of labor and demanded progressive legislation.

There is still another set of forces which have a bearing upon factory legislation. In enacting restrictive measures, such as those related to child and woman labor, legislators have always taken international competition into consideration. Commercial rivalry has been a detriment to the achievement of progressive labor laws in many countries. On the other hand, the common understandings and agreements arrived at in the international conferences, such as those at Berlin and Berne, and especially those lately inaugurated under the auspices of the International Labor Office of the League of Nations, have promoted the standardisation of the labor laws of different countries.

In addition to the above forces more or less common to all countries, the problem of factory legislation in India is complicated by several special factors. India's political and economic dependence upon Great Britain has given

rise to conflicting forces in so far as factory laws are concerned. The manufacturing and commercial interests of Great Britain look upon India as a market where they can buy and sell at their pleasure. They do not look with favor upon the growth of manufacturing in India, and insist that the British factory laws be applied to Indian factories. The British capitalists, on the other hand, who have invested money and started factories in India, regard domestic British manufacturers as rivals and resent any interference by the latter with manufacturing industries and labor legislation in India. As the interest of the Indian capitalists is the same as that of the British capitalists with investments in India, the former always side with the latter. The pride and patriotism of the Indian public are also wounded by outside interference with affairs over which it thinks it is entitled to having exclusive control. It protests, therefore, against outside interference.

How these divergent forces arising from conflicting interests led to the origin and growth, and determined the nature and function of factory legislation in India, is the subject matter of this treatise.

CHAPTER II.
FACTORY ACT OF 1881.¹

Rise of the Cotton Industry.

The first steam power factory in Bombay was started in 1868. In 1871—72 there were no less than 11 spinning and weaving companies in that city, working 404,000 spindles and 4,294 looms by means of 19 steam engines. There were also 3 such factories in other towns of the Presidency.² In 1872—73 the 18 cotton factories of Bombay, Kurla, Broach, Surat and Ahmedabad, were found to employ 10,000 laborers and to turn out 100,000 lbs. of yarn daily.³ The following year there was a still more rapid increase. No less than 9 jointstock companies were registered during the period and the value of the exported cotton piece goods from Bombay increased from £ 191,336 to £ 254,571.⁴ The number of factories in the city of Bombay alone increased to 28, while those in the interior of the Presidency to 8. The importation of heavier and coarser kinds of cotton goods practically stopped, while on the other hand, the Indian cotton products found a ready sale in Russia, America, and China.⁵

While Bombay was taking such rapid strides in her manufacturing career, Bengal was not far behind. During the same decade, along the banks of the Hooghly, below and above Calcutta, 15 great factories for the spinning and weaving of cotton and jute arose. In the meantime the importation of machinery into India was also increasing rapidly. In 1870 India imported from England

¹ This act is officially called the "Factories" Act. But it has also been referred to as the Factory Act. The latter designation seems to the author to be more appropriate and has been used throughout the book.

² *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1873, Vol. 50, H. of C. 172, p. 92.

³ *Ibid.*, 1874, Vol. 49, H. of C. 196, p. 109.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1875, Vol. 54, H. of C. 406, p. 16.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1876, Vol. 56, H. of C. 406, p. 49.

machinery to the value of £ 300,000, while the value of the machinery so imported in 1875 was £ 1,500,000.⁶

Agitation in England for Regulating Indian Factories.

This phenomenal growth of Indian manufacturing industries could not long continue without eliciting the notice and protest of the British commercial interests, which had the privilege of an almost unrivalled market in India. Considerable apprehension was in fact felt in England, when the Statement exhibiting the moral and material progress and condition of India during 1872—1873 announced, in 1874, the existence of 18 cotton factories in the midst of the cotton growing regions of India and added that the weekly consumption of cotton was 1,500 bales, or only 6.5 per cent of the average cotton crop of the country and that this was likely to increase rapidly. It was also remarked that many cotton printers had settled in Bombay and much of the cotton manufactured in the factories was dyed in the vicinity.⁷ On August 7, 1874, there was an article in the *London Times*⁸ from its own correspondent, who gave a glowing description of the rise of steam-power factories near Calcutta, and remarked that ghauts, wharves, jetties, warehouses, and embankments were fast making the left bank of the Hooghly at Calcutta another Liverpool. "The spirit of manufacturing enterprise," added the correspondent, "has a very important bearing on our native subjects. If, in Bengal, at least, they do not yet supply the capital or start new projects, the upper classes must in time learn the advantages of associated labor in the production of manufactures".⁹

About this time Major Moore, inspector-in-chief of the cotton department in Bombay, stated in his report that

⁶ Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates, 1877, 235 : 1091. According to Mr. Jackson of Blackburn, in 5 years ending in 1874 England exported 60 per cent less cotton goods into India than she did in 5 years ending in 1856.

⁷ Gt. Brit Parl. Papers, 1874, Vol. 49, H. of C. 196, p. 109.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3, c. 3.

⁹ *L o c. cit.*, p. 3, c. 3.

the Bombay mills employed a large number of women and children, who derived great benefit from the work, but that the advantage carried with it a corresponding disadvantage: the working time was long; the labor fatiguing; and the weekly day of rest, lacking. In his opinion, it was useless to expect that women and children in Indian factories would be shown a consideration greater than that accorded to similar classes of employees in English factories prior to government regulation.¹⁰ In his report on British factories for the half year ending October 31, 1874, Mr. Alexander Redgrave, inspector of factories, referred to the rapid growth of cotton factories in India and pointed out the necessity for factory regulation, due to the fact that a large number of children was employed in them. "It is clear, therefore, concluded Mr. Redgrave, "that this is a progressive industry, and looking to what factory legislation has achieved in this country, may we not hope that the native workers of India may be spared the ordeal which our cotton operatives went through in former days, and that they may be permitted to enjoy the blessings of moderate labor, of ample time for rest and meals, and of protection to children of tender age."¹¹

One of the results of the publication of the statistics regarding textile industries in India was that they gave rise to general discussion among the British public. On May 7, 1875, one Mr. Helms read a paper on "The Growth of the Factory System of India" at the Society of Arts rooms in London. In the discussion which followed the reading of the paper, Mr. Hugh Mason argued, apparently with convincing reasons, that India was destined to become a great manufacturing country. He admitted that India had disadvantages, but asserted that they would soon be overcome. First, the efficiency of the employee would gradually increase, as had been the case in other countries. Second, the Indian manufacturer with the growth of competition would buy machinery as cheaply

¹⁰ *Gr. Brit. Parliamentary Debates*, 1875, 222 : 76. *India, Legislative Council Proceedings*, Calcutta, 1879, 18 : 239-40.

¹¹ *Gr. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1875, Vol. 16, C. 1184, p. 30.

as did the English operator. Third, the quality of Indian cotton had been improving and Egyptian cotton would also be delivered as cheaply at Bombay as at Liverpool. India, moreover, had a certain advantage over England. Due to the proximity of the cotton growing regions, Indian factories could use unpressed cotton, which could be spun several hanks finer per pound than the pressed cotton of the same quality. If the reported discovery of coal suitable for steam were real, he added, there was nothing wanting in order that India might successfully compete with English manufacturers.¹²

In the *Times* of the same issue, a writer pointed out that nothing short of choking down the rising manufacturing industry of India by a prohibitive excise duty, could possibly arrest its natural growth. Whatever might be the difference of wages between the two countries, India, with a population of 250,000,000 would successfully compete with England, which had a population of only 30,000,000. "In conclusion, let me add", continued the writer, "that English and also European manufacturers must similarly be affected by the competition with the cheap labor of the East; and, unless some unlooked-for convulsions should arise, it is plain that all the wool of the Cape and our Australian Colonies will one day be made up in India for exportation to Europe."¹³

The most important effect of the reports on the growth of the cotton industry in India was, however, the rise of the spirit of rivalry among Lancashire manufacturers, who were afraid of losing their market in India, where they sent about one-fourth of their annual export.¹⁴ They, therefore, started a strong agitation. Their immediate object was twofold: First, they intended to have the Indian market free from any import duty on their goods, whether fiscal or protective. Second, they intended to apply the British factory law to India, so that their competitors, some of whom were English capitalists, could not enjoy any "un-

¹² *The Times*, London, Sept. 22, 1875, p. 6, c. 4.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates*, 1877, 235:1091.

due" privilege over them. The agitation was taken up by their representatives, both in and out of Parliament. The press and the philanthropists also joined the clamor for reform.

The first and most effective attack was made on the revenue duty, which in India was imposed on all importations, including cotton goods. The duty was rather insignificant and had existed even under the rule of the East India Company, at the rate of 5 per cent *ad valorem*. This rate was, however, raised to 10 per cent after the Indian Mutiny of 1857, but was reduced again to 7.5 per cent in 1864. Lancashire manufacturers had already made several attempts, not altogether without success, to abolish or at least to materially reduce the duty on the importation of their cotton goods into India.

Early in January of the year 1874, Mr. Fairweather, Ancoats, Manchester, wrote to the Premier showing the effect of a 5 per cent duty on Manchester goods imported into India. A manufacturer in Lancashire, for instance, investing £ 88,000 in a cotton mill and producing £ 140,000 worth of cotton goods per annum had to pay £ 7,000 as duty, or 8 per cent on his capital invested. Mr. Fairweather contended that this iniquity needed a speedy remedy at the hands of her Majesty's Government. As an excise duty on manufactures might be resented by employers in India, he suggested the introduction of a license system, by which a manufacturer in India would have to pay a tax of 3 shillings per spindle and 21 shillings per loom before he could start a cotton textile factory. In reply Mr. Fairweather received the following note from her Majesty's Government: "Mr. Gladstone will communicate with the Secretary of State for India on the subject".¹⁸

About this time a deputation from the Manchester Chamber of Commerce was also sent to Lord Salisbury, Secretary of State for India, to urge the abolition of the duty on their cotton goods imported into India. The

¹⁸ The Times, London, Jan. 5, 1874, p. 11, c. 4.

deputation stated that Indian manufacturers were rapidly increasing the number of their factories, that they could also import, free from duty, Egyptian and American cotton, and thus compete with Lancashire manufacturers in the production of finer goods; and that it would, therefore, be expedient, in the interest of Indian consumers and in justice to English manufacturers, to remove the import duty levied by the India Government.¹⁶

Having promised the Lancashire people what they wanted,¹⁷ Lord Salisbury, in his dispatches, first on March 26, and then on October 28, 1874, advised Lord Northbrook, Governor General of India, to consider the representation of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. In the meantime, he also took up the question of factory legislation and, on April 30, 1874, commended the subject to the best attention of the Government of Bombay. Shortly before this time he had received an unofficial representation regarding the evil effects of the system of work that was in force in Bombay factories.¹⁸

The discussion on the necessity of factory legislation for India was first opened in the House of Commons on Feb. 8, 1875, when Mr. Anderson, Glasgow, asked the Under Secretary of State for India whether he was aware that an extensive factory system was growing up in India without any Government supervision for the protection and health of the women and children employed and whether the Indian Government would adopt some such factory legislation as then prevailed in Great Britain for the prevention of such evils before they had attained greater proportion.¹⁹

In the same month, the Secretary of State, whose attention had also been drawn by Miss Carpenter, the well-known English philanthropist in India, to the prevalence of long hours of work in Indian factories, again directed an inquiry for the purpose of ascertaining

¹⁶ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1876, Vol. 56, C. 1515, p. 4.

¹⁷ *Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates*, 1876, 227: 1951.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1875, 222: 76.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

whether any cause for legislation existed and, if so, what course might be adopted.²⁰

The question of repealing the import duty was renewed in the House of Commons by Mr. J. K. Cross, Bolton, who on March 9, 1875, asked the Under Secretary of State for India whether there was any probability for an early abolition of the protective duties then imposed by the Indian Government upon the importation of cotton goods; if not, whether there would be any material reduction of them. In reply, the Under Secretary said that the subject of import duties, especially of those referred to, was under consideration by a tariff committee then sitting in India. The Under Secretary pointed out, at the same time, that these duties were imposed for revenue purposes, and could not correctly be called "protective".²¹

About this time the Tariff Committee appointed by the Governor General finished its investigation. The Indian Government could not spare the amount of revenue derived from the duty on cotton goods and any substitute was found to be objectionable. On March 13, 1875, the committee submitted its report recommending the retention of the import duty on Manchester goods.²²

With reference to this decision, the Secretary of State pointed out, in his dispatch of July 15, 1875, to the Government of India, that the duty on imported cotton goods was not oppressive, though it might act as a protection, but it was objectionable on political grounds. The gradual transfer of the Indian trade from the English to the Indian manufacturer, which appeared likely to happen, would make the interests of England antagonistic to those of India, and create a feeling of animosity on each side. It should, therefore, be repealed at the earliest possible time.²³

The problem of legislation for Indian factories was soon taken up in the House of Lords by the Earl of Shaftsbury, the well-known philanthropist and undaunted

²⁰ Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates, 1875, 226 : 212.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 222 : 1484—85.

²² *The Times*, London, March 13, 1875, p. 5, c. 2.

²³ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1876, Vol. 56, H. of C. 56, pp. 3—4.

champion of factory legislation for over forty years. On July 30, 1875, Lord Shaftsbury drew the attention of their lordships to Mr. Redgrave's remark on Indian textile industry, noted above, and described how rapidly it was growing. Pointing out the necessity of regulating labor in factories, he urged that factory laborers in India be saved, while the industry was still young, from the difficulties and complications to which British laborers had been subjected in the past. "There is also a commercial view to this question"; continued Lord Shaftsbury, "we must bear in mind that India has raw material and cheap labor; if we allow the manufacturers there to work their operatives for 16 or 17 hours and put them under no restrictions, we are giving them a very unfair advantage over the manufacturers of our own country, and we might be undersold even in Manchester itself by manufactured goods imported from the East".²⁴

In reply, Lord Salisbury expressed his satisfaction that the noble lord, whose philanthropy was above suspicion, had taken up the cause of Indian factory laborers. The proposal to limit the hours of labor in India, he said, was looked upon as a great conspiracy for the purpose of promoting British manufactures and of stifling Indian manufactures under the guise of philanthropy. Referring to the future of cotton manufacture in India, which he thought, was very bright due to the natural advantages, and referring also to the great prejudice of the Indian people against any reform, the Secretary of State assured their lordships that in spite of all obstacles, the Government of India would show no shortcoming in the discharge of its high duties and would do its best to apply to the people of India the legislation which had been so beneficial to England.²⁵

Meanwhile the proposal of Lord Salisbury for the repeal of the import duty was again under consideration by the Government of India. But no way was found to give effect to it. Finally, it was decided that there should

²⁴ Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates, 1875, 226 : 211.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 213-14.

be some reduction of the duty, and on August 5, 1875, a new Tariff Act was passed at Simla. It was signed by the Governor General and became effective on the same day. By its provision the general rate of 7.5 per cent *ad valorem* on imports was reduced to 5 per cent. The tariff valuation on cotton goods was lowered to an extent which incurred to the Government of India, a loss of revenue amounting to £ 88,000 per annum. On the other hand, a duty of 5 per cent was also imposed on long staple raw cotton imported into India.²⁶

The act did not meet the approval of Lord Salisbury, as it did not give any assurance that the import duty would be repealed in a definite period of time. In connection with this act the India Government also violated the established principle that the Secretary of State should be kept in touch with the nature of all important measures brought before the Indian Legislative Council. In a dispatch on November 11, 1875, he strongly attacked the provision of the act imposing 5 per cent import duty on long staple raw cotton. It was undoubtedly intended as a protection to the English industry against competition in the finer articles of manufacture, but the effect of this duty might be to retard, and even perhaps, to prevent, the growth of an important branch of Indian industry and he was, therefore, unable to sanction it. Referring to his dispatch of July 15, 1875, Lord Salisbury again pointed out the importance of repealing the import duty for political reasons and showed that it was also wrong economically, as it offered a false encouragement to Indian manufacturers, which tended to divert them from the effort by which alone their success could be permanently secured. "The entire removal of the duty should, however," concluded Lord Salisbury, "not be adjourned for an indefinite period, but the provision should be made for it within a fixed term of years."²⁷

The demand of the Secretary of State on the Government of India that the import duty on cotton goods should

²⁶ The Times, London, Sept. 6, 1875, p. 10, c. 1.

²⁷ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1876, Vol. 56, H. of C. 56, pp. 69-71.

be repealed at the instigation of Manchester manufacturers, aroused discussion and criticism both in India and in England. The Indian press strongly criticised Lord Salisbury's policy. Mr. J. M. MacLean, later on an advocate of the Lancashire interests in the House of Commons, wrote, on Feb. 28, 1876, in the *Bombay Gazette*, of which he was then the editor, as follows: — "Give Manchester what she wants or go — that is what Lord Salisbury demanded of the Viceroy. What can be more scandalous, to avail ourselves of Lord Salisbury's own words, than for an English Minister deliberately to sell India to Manchester? Yet this is what the Secretary of State proposed to do. In return for the support given by Lancashire to the conservatives at the last election, and with an eye to the future favors of the same kind, Lord Salisbury intends to deprive India of a revenue of three-quarters of a million sterling a year, to make a present of it, in the first instance at all events, to the English manufacturer of cotton goods".²⁸

But the real test for Lord Salisbury came in the House of Commons on March 14, 1876, when Viscount Halifax, a former Secretary of State for India, severely criticised his insistence on the repeal of the import duty in spite of the India Government's inability to do so, and especially his conduct towards Lord Northbrook in this connection.²⁹ In reply, Lord Salisbury reiterated the reasons for the policy given in his dispatches quoted above, and said that he would not consent to look upon Lancashire interests with contempt. But he added, it was the Hindoo, the first necessities of whose life would be cheapened and not the Lancashire manufacturer, who would be benefited by the remission of the duty.³⁰ This explanation did not absolve Lord Salisbury from the attacks of Viscount Halifax and some other members of the House, who, on several other occasions, brought up the matter for comment and criticism.³¹

²⁸ *Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates*, 1889, 338: 284—5. Quoted by Lord Stanley in his speech in the House of Lords.

²⁹ *Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates*, 1876, 227: 1951—60.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 1960—1975.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1976—2007.

After this time the question of the abolition of the import duty was again and again taken up in both Houses of Parliament. At last, on July 10, 1877, Mr. H. Birley, Manchester, moved a resolution in the House of Commons, which being amended passed as follows: — "That, in the opinion of this House, the duties now levied upon cotton manufactures imported into India, being protective²² in their nature, are contrary to sound commercial policy, and ought to be repealed without delay, so soon as the financial condition of the country will permit."²³

The Bombay Factory Commission of 1875.²⁴

During the time when the tariff controversy was going on between the Secretary of State for India and the Governor General, the Governor of Bombay, on the advice of the former, appointed, on March 23, 1875, a commission for the investigation of factory conditions, with Mr. F. F. Arbuthnot, Collector of Bombay, as chairman. The commission was composed of eight members, some of whom represented the interests of the cotton industry. The principal subjects to which the commission paid special attention were as follows: (1) danger from machinery and the necessity of protection; (2) age of employment of children; (3) hours of work; (4) holidays; (5) sanitation; (6) ventilation; (7) education; (8) the necessity of legislation. The commission held 10 meetings, took the evidence of 26 witnesses including employers, employees, and physicians, and made their report on July 2nd of the same year.²⁵

The condition of factory labor in the city of Bombay as revealed by the investigation and the recommendations

²² It will be remembered that, on March 9, 1875, the Under Secretary of State for India objected, in the House of Commons, to the use of the words "protective" to the duties levied by the Government of India, which were really for revenue purposes only. Cf. *Supra*, p. 10.

²³ *Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates*, 1877, 235 : 1123.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1875, 224 : 158 and 1876, 227 : 301.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 227 : 301, and the *Times*, London, Sept. 24, 1878, p. 3, c. 6. Report, Bombay Factory Commission of 1875, p. 2.

of the witnesses may be summarised as follows: — First, all the machinery was on the whole well protected, but some parts needed improvement. Second, the minimum age of the employment of children was 8 on an average, but some 6 and 7 year old children were also found working in the factory. The recommendation for minimum age varied from 7 to 14 years. Third, the hours of work generally extended from sunrise to sunset. The majority of witnesses recommended 10 hours for men and women, while, the general opinion on the working time for children varied from 4 to 10 hours. A few of the witnesses recommended fixing it to half the time of work for men. Fourth, on the average the factories worked from 300 to 320 days in the year. There was no fixed day for holiday. One holiday out of seven was the general recommendation. Fifth, the necessity of regulating ventilation in a factory was realized by all.³⁶

The commission's report showed a division of opinion. The majority report consisted of the following conclusions: — First, in spite of apparently long hours of work, the physical condition of factory employees was good. This was probably due to the fact that they earned higher wages in the factories and were thus able to procure better and more substantial food than nine-tenths of the people of the same class employed as day laborers. Second, employees themselves would like to have their hours of work reduced, provided that their wages were not decreased at the same time.³⁷ Third, women and children, unlike their fellow workers in Lancashire, worked in a more or less natural atmosphere and, therefore, did not suffer any hardship, and lastly, that legislation for the regulation of factory labor was uncalled for.³⁸

The minority report of two members, the President and Dr. Blainey, recommended, on the other hand, that the enactment of a simple law regulating the hours of work of children and requiring the proper fencing of machinery would be beneficial both to employers and employees, and

³⁶ The Times, London, Nov. 14, 1880, p. 13, c. 2.

³⁷ Ibid., Sep. 24, 1878, p. 3, c. 6.

³⁸ Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates, 1877, 236: 814.

that such an act should be passed by the Supreme Government and be applied to the whole of British India.³⁹

Upon the receipt of the report, the Government of Bombay decided to make further inquiry outside the City of Bombay and directed the collectors of Broach and of Surat to gather evidence.⁴⁰ But sufficient evidence was not available to make out a case for factory legislation and Sir P. Wodehouse, Governor of Bombay, declined to take any further action in the matter on the ground that unnecessary interference would do more harm than good to the rising industry. Sir R. Temple, who soon succeeded Sir P. Wodehouse, concurred in the opinion of his predecessor, and for the time being, no further step was taken by the Government of Bombay.⁴¹

Agitation in India for Factory Legislation.

In the meantime, agitation, similar to that in England, was going on in India. While the public was apprehensive of the agitation of Manchester interests and of the official support they received at the India Office, looking upon it as an attempt to strangle the infant industry of India, the manufacturers were awakened to the necessity of protecting their interests. Philanthropists also were not lagging behind. Agitation was, therefore, started both by Indians and Europeans, for the regulation of labor in factories. Mr. Sorabjee Shapoorjee Bengalee played the leading role in this movement. Mr. Bengalee intended to bring the question of factory legislation before the Bombay Legislative Council and, with that object in view, drafted a bill with the following provisions:⁴²

- (1) No child should be employed in a factory before the age of eight.
- (2) Daily hours of work for children between the ages of 8 and 14 should be limited to 9; for adult women over 14, to 10; and for adult men over 14, to 11;

³⁹ India, Legislative Council Proceedings, Calcutta, 1870, 18:240.

⁴⁰ *Gr. Brit. Parliamentary Debates*, 1876, 227:301.

⁴¹ *The Times*, London, Sep. 24, 1878, p. 3, c. 6.

⁴² *Ibid.*, Sept. 18, 1878, p. 9, l. 4.

from these hours of work there must be set off an allowance of one hour for rest and meals for all classes of operatives.

- (3) No child should be allowed to work for more than six days a week.⁴³
- (4) A register should be kept of the name, sex, and age of each person employed in each factory, the age to be certified by a surgeon appointed for the purpose by the Governor in Council.
- (5) The chief police officer of the town or district should be charged with the duty of seeing that the provisions of the measure were duly obeyed.

After drafting the bill, Mr. Bengalee asked permission of the Bombay Government to introduce it into the Legislative Council. But he was informed by the Under-Secretary to the Government that such a bill could not be introduced into the local council and that the Bombay Government was unable even to report it to the Government of India, as the majority report did not show the existence of a case for even such limited legislation as proposed.⁴⁴

Upon the rejection of his proposal by the Bombay Government, Mr. Bengalee appealed to Manchester for support. He sent 100 copies of his draft bill to Mr. John Croft of Manchester and requested him to distribute them among such people in England as were likely to take an interest in the matter. "I have, therefore," added Mr. Bengalee in a letter to Mr. Croft, and referring to the above refusal, "no remedy left but to try what can be done through the English influence which, as a matter of course, is so potent with our governing classes."⁴⁵

Revival of Agitation in England.

The refusal of the Bombay Government to take any action towards factory legislation revived the agitation of Manchester interests and their sympathisers. The publication

⁴³ Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates, 1879, 245:362.

⁴⁴ The Times, London, Sep. 18, 1878, p. 11, c. 2.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Sep. 13, 1878, p. 10, c. 1.

of Mr. Bengalee's appeal to Manchester in the *Times* of September 13, 1878,⁴⁶ was followed by several criticisms, rejoinders, and appeals. "Every member of that commission was more or less financially interested in Indian mills," humanity was "grossly outraged by the mill system of Bombay",⁴⁷ each mill in India was "a garrison", the laborers in an Indian factory looked like "a wretched crowd",⁴⁸ were some of the expressions used by the agitators. This subject was committed by others to the *Times* with the hope of eliciting its powerful aid "to do away with the iniquity", and "to press the matter upon the Government of India".⁴⁹ The condition of the new mills in India was considered by still others as a "scandal" to English civilization and a "reproach to the English name". On the other hand, defence of the conduct of the Bombay Government was not lacking even in England. Mr. A. Rogers, a former member of the Bombay Council, stated that as the children worked in pairs, the one off and the other on, the actual work did not amount to more than half of the nominal length of time. "Factory work is to them", concluded Mr. Rogers, "in fact, a well paid enjoyment".⁵⁰

The *Times*, in commenting on the drastic character of Mr. Bengalee's bill, pointed out that embroidery work had exacted from the Indian woman long hours of listless toil for the poorest pay, while by working in a factory, she had her labor better paid and her existence penetrated by new light.⁵¹ To the Hindu child, a meal earned by factory work was to be substituted for basking in the sun. Its life was monotonous and dull without the friction of new ideas and without mental development. Nursing and feeding a machine was a more liberal education than a Hindu child had received for thousands of years. While pointing out the importance of factory legislation, the

⁴⁶ The *Times*, London, Sept. 13, 1878, p. 10, c. 1.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Sept. 28, 1878, p. 11, c. 4.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Sept. 13, 1878, p. 11, c. 2.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Oct. 1, 1878, p. 8, c. 6.

⁵⁰ *Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates*, 1879, 245:353.

⁵¹ The *Times*, London, Sept. 13, 1878, p. 9, c. 4.

editor remarked that it would be as unjust to Hindu women and children as to Bombay manufacturers to legislate in such a way as to banish female and child labor from the mills.⁵²

At last, Lord Shaftsbury again appeared on the field, and in a letter to the *Times*, on October 2, 1878, offered his services, even at his extreme old age, to the cause of Indian factory laborers. "The remedy of the evil", continued the noble lord, "is a matter both of humanity and of justice, of humanity to the oppressed women and children and of justice to the mill owners of Lancashire, who are laid under restrictions from which the Indian mill owners are entirely free".⁵³

On April 4, 1879, Lord Shaftsbury reopened the discussion on Indian factory legislation in the House of Lords, Describing at length, as before, the rapid growth of Indian factories and commenting on the report of the factory commission, Lord Shaftsbury tried to show the existence of abuses in Indian factories by quoting several expressions and passages of sensational character from different sources, some of which have been quoted above, and with an earnest appeal to their lordships to redress the misery of the "wretched" women in Indian mills, moved "That an humble address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that Her Majesty will be graciously pleased to instruct the Viceroy of India to take into immediate consideration the necessity of passing a law for regulating the labor of women and children in the mills and factories throughout Her dominions in India".⁵⁴

In reply, Viscount Cranbrook, who had succeeded Lord Salisbury as Secretary of State for India, said that the subject of factory legislation had never been lost sight of by the Government of India. The delay in that direction had been due to two main causes: — First, the report of the commission, appointed for the purpose, was not favorable to any legislative measures; and second, the time for legislation was not opportune; owing to the prevalence of

⁵² *The Times*, London, Sept. 18, 1878, p. 9, c. 3—5.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Oct. 3, 1878, p. 6, c. 4.

⁵⁴ *Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates*, 1879, 245 : 358.

famine during the years just preceding, the people were in distress and needed all the employment they could get. But the necessity of immediate legislation had already been realized by the Indian Government and a bill had also been prepared. Giving the assurance that he would do his utmost to impress upon the Government of India the urgency of legislation for the protection of women and children in factories, Lord Cranbrook requested their lordships not to address the Crown on this subject. The motion was, therefore, withdrawn by the leave of the House.⁵⁶

In the meantime, several attempts had been made to reduce the import duty on cotton goods. Lord Northbrook had resigned and Lord Lytton had succeeded him as Governor General of India. As early as May 31, 1876, the Secretary of State in Council sent a dispatch to the Government of India in the following terms: — "The interests of India imperatively demand the timely removal of a tax which is at once wrong in principle, injurious in its practical effect, and self-destructive in its operation".⁵⁶ Afterwards several dispatches were exchanged on the subject between the Home Office in England and the Government of India. Early in 1879 Lord Lytton received a confidential dispatch from the Secretary of State and immediately after he reduced the duty, though the opinion of his Council was strongly opposed to such a course.

The reduction of the duty by the action of the Governor General, overruling his Council, especially at a time when the expenditure was to be met by the Government during the Afghan War, was strongly resented by the people of India. Fresh attacks were also made in the House of Commons on the conduct of Lord Lytton.⁵⁷ But representing Manchester interests was extremely successful in Parliament and, on April 4, 1879, Mr. W. E. Gladstone, succeeded in passing another resolution

⁵⁶ Parliamentary Debates, 1879, 245 : 358—63.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 3—84.

deprecating the import duty and asking for its complete removal.⁵⁸

Introduction of the Bill into the Legislature.

In addition to the question of the import duty that of factory legislation had also been under consideration by the Government of India, as the Secretary of State assured the House of Lords. Even as early as April of 1877, and long before Mr. Bengalee's appeal reached England, the Government of India had come to the conclusion that legislation for some sort of restriction on labor in factories was necessary.⁵⁹ But the publication of Mr. Bengalee's letter probably had some effect in consequence of which his bill received more favorable consideration. The Government of Bombay approved of its provisions, and even the Government of India used it as a groundwork for the preparation of a new bill.⁶⁰ As it was decided by the Government of India that one act should be passed for the whole of India, the draft of the bill was first submitted to the different local governments. Early in 1879, the Governor of Bombay and the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal expressed their concurrence in the principle of the bill.⁶¹ The views of the other local governments having gradually been collected, the motion for leave to introduce the bill into the Legislative Council of India was at last made on October 17, 1879.

In making the motion Mr. B. W. Colvin stated that the inquiry sent to all local governments in order to ascertain the condition of labor in factories located in their districts, showed that the factory workers were, as a body, practically as well off as most persons of their class, who were not employed in factories, and in many respects they were better off. But the employment of children and the use of machinery furnished occasion for abuses, which had already appeared, and which were likely to increase with

⁵⁸ Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates, 1879, 245:375.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1877, 236:815.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 1879, 245:362.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 363.

increasing competition not only in Bombay but in other provinces as well. A good case had thus been shown to exist for the enactment of a legislative measure regulating labor in the factories of the whole country. The act would be of a permissive but uniform character, applicable largely at the option of the local governments. The scope of the act would include two main objects: — First, the protection of children and of young persons who had not attained the age when they could protect themselves; and second, security to all employees from dangerous machinery. For the realization of these objects, a system of factory inspection would be introduced by the local governments and reports on accidents would be required from managers of factories, whenever they occurred.

Mr. Colvin urged that in the enactment of such an act three important things should always be kept in view: — First, there should be no interference with the freedom of employers and employees; they should be left at liberty to make any arrangements which they thought most conducive to their own interests. Second, the climatic and social differences between England and India were so great that the English law would not only be inapplicable but might be actually injurious to India. Third, nothing should be done which would check the growth of the manufacturing industry in India. From every point of view it was highly desirable that such industries should be given the utmost range of development in order to relieve the pressure of the agricultural population upon the land. Agriculture being practically the sole occupation of the people, the earning of a livelihood was becoming harder every day with the growth of population. The danger of such overcrowding became evident during the famine that had lately afflicted such large parts of the country.

Consideration by the Select Committee.

The bill was introduced into the legislature on November 7, 1879, its text consisting of the following principal points: —²²

²² British Medical Journal, Jan. 3, 1880, p. 28.

- (1) Determination of the age at which children might be employed.
- (2) Limitation of the hours of labor for children and young persons.
- (3) Prohibition of the employment of children and young persons in certain dangerous work.
- (4) Fencing of dangerous machinery.
- (5) Reporting of accidents.
- (6) Appointment of Government inspectors.

On the same day the bill was referred to a select committee.

The permissive character of the bill, however, gave rise to some sectional disputes in the country. The causes for factory legislation first appeared in Bombay, where a large number of women and children were employed. A permissive law would naturally have been applied to Bombay, whether other provinces adopted it or not. The people of Bombay, therefore, protested against this provision. The *Sarvajanik Shabha*, or the people's association, at Poona, raised objection on the ground that the measure, if sound in principle, should be made obligatory upon all provinces of India and that, if it was necessary to regulate labor in a particular province, the matter ought to be left to the local government concerned. But the worst feature of a permissive act, the *Shabha* contended, would be to put one province at a relative disadvantage as regards other provinces of the Empire.⁶³

The bill was objected to for the further reason that the restrictions on the age would throw many children out of the factories and disorganize the whole factory work. In a memorial to the Under Secretary to the Government of Bombay, the Bombay Millowners' Association stated, on September 6, 1880, that the interests of the factories and of the children themselves would be best conserved by beginning the restriction at a comparatively low age which should be raised afterwards and that nothing would justify so high a maximum age limit for

⁶³ India, Legislative Council Proceedings, Calcutta, 1881, 20: 100.

children as 14 years, which was contemplated in the bill. But even if 12 years were fixed as the ultimate proper limit for the maximum age, the association would suggest that it should at first be placed at 10 years, and raised in the future as necessity arose.⁶⁴

These and similar objections were taken into consideration by the select committee in coming to conclusion. The bill as submitted by the select committee had the following notable provisions: —

(1) A factory was defined to mean any premises where work was carried on for not less than four months in the year, with the aid of steam, water or other mechanical power, and where not less than one hundred persons were employed at one time.⁶⁵

(2) The minimum age of children in industry was fixed at 8 years and the maximum at 14, and their daily working hours at 9 instead of at 6, as originally proposed after the English law. The reasons for such a change in the working hours were: — First, the factory work in India was neither so severe nor so continuous as that in England. Second, an English child worked in a factory for six hours and attended school for three hours, which meant nine hours' work altogether; but the Indian child, as a rule, did not have to go to school. Third, the limitation of work to six hours might lead a child to work six hours in one factory and six hours more in another. Nine hours were not too long provided one hour's interval was given during the time for food and rest.

The hours of work for children being raised to nine, there was no necessity of creating a young person class with working hours of eight as originally proposed.

(3) The time at which the intervals of rest from labor should be given as well as the length of each interval itself, should be fixed by the local government for each factory after ascertaining, as far as possible, the existing

⁶⁴ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1886, Vol. 77, H. of C. 321, p. 9.

⁶⁵ India, Legislative Council Proceedings, Calcutta, 1881, 20: 88. The Crown factories were also to be brought under the Act, as in Great Britain. The power to exempt them temporarily in case of need was, however, to be reserved by the Government.

practice in such factory and the wishes of the manager thereof.

(4) The bill gave the local governments power to require a register to be kept of children employed in a factory.

There was no provision regarding sanitation, though the Governments of Bombay and Madras gave their opinion that such provision was needed. The committee thought that no necessity for such a provision had been shown to exist. Some municipal acts, like that of Bombay, allowed the government sufficient power in these matters. Moreover, the subject might be taken up by the local government, if necessary.

One of the principal recommendations of the select committee was that the act should be made compulsory for the whole of India. Otherwise, it would put the factories of one province at a comparative disadvantage over those of others, thus creating ill-feeling among the provinces.

Passage of the Bill.

On March 11, 1881, the report of the select committee was taken into consideration by the Legislative Council. The main point at issue in the discussion was the compulsory character of the proposed act. The necessity of such a measure for regulating labor in factories was first questioned by Maharaja Jotindra Mohan Tagore. He maintained that the authoritative intervention between labor and capital in a country where the manufacturing industry was still in its infancy was quite undesirable. European capital and energy were gradually being drawn into the country. Any uncalled for legislative interference resulting in the check of industrial development would be a great misfortune to the country. But he directed his main attack against the decision of the select committee of which he himself was a member, for a compulsory and uniform law applicable to all British India. He pointed out that there was a difference of opinion as to the necessity of such a measure even in Bombay where the abuses were alleged to exist. India was a vast country and the conditions in different parts were so different that what might

be good for one part might not be good for another part. If the peculiar condition of one province called for some particular law, it was unjust to extend that law to another province where there was no need for it. In Bengal, compulsory labor legislation not only was unnecessary, but would be positively injurious. Owing to the absence of any great competition and to their unity of interest, the capitalist and the laborer in that section of India worked in harmony. Forced legislation of the kind contemplated might, on the contrary, create friction and discord by tempting both classes to stand too rigidly on their respective legal rights and thus perhaps strangle a young industry, which had opened the means of livelihood to thousands of the poorer classes.

Mr. Kennedy also opposed the compulsory character of the bill and said that the evils, real or supposed, had sprung up in the treatment of the children who were employed in the cotton factories of Bombay. The factory owners in Bengal had not given any occasion for these restrictive measures. Industries other than the cotton manufacture conducted in this country were not likely to interfere with the interests of any great and powerful body of English manufacturers, who undoubtedly looked upon the cotton manufacture of India with a by no means friendly eye. He, therefore, made a motion to exempt Bengal from the operation of the proposed act.

Mr. H. J. Reynolds, in defending the conclusions of the select committee, of which he was a member, pointed out that if the act were permissive, its application to one province and not to another would cause strong resentment. He also added that there was another argument, which had seemed to him to point in the same direction. "There is", he said, "a very general opinion, at any rate outside the Council Chamber, that this legislation has been urged upon the Government of India from two very different and opposite quarters — the voice is the voice of Exeter Hall, but the hand is the hand of Manchester. If there is any foundation for this belief, it will follow that the instigators of the measure will not be satisfied with the mere passing of a permissive bill; but will put pressure on the Govern-

ment to enforce the Act in every part of the country in which a mill or a factory can be found".⁶⁶

Before the discussion proceeded further, the Government proposed to amend the bill as reported by the select committee. The main object of the amendment was to change the restrictive character of the bill in order to meet the reasonable wishes of those who objected to the stringency of the measure, and at the same time to maintain the contention of the Government that some kind of legislation was necessary to protect those who could not protect themselves. The amendment brought about two principal changes: First, the minimum and maximum age limits of children were reduced from 8 and 14 to 7 and 12 respectively in order to remove some difficulties in giving effect to the law.⁶⁷ It had been represented to the Government that the age of 7 was more in consonance with the practice of the employment in India. Second, the obligatory character of the provision dealing with the appointment of special inspectors was also changed and it was left to the discretion of the local governments either to appoint a special inspector or to invest the magistrate of the district with necessary power for supervision. The Bengal Government contended that it would be hard to find a properly qualified person for such a position and that the Bengal employers were opposed to such an idea. On the other hand, added the Bengal Government, the casual inspection of a factory by the highest official of a district could scarcely be objected to by any person.

After other changes of minor importance, such as the exclusion of tea and coffee plantations and indigo works from the operation of the proposed act were made in the bill, it was passed on April 15, 1881, and the new act was called the "Indian Factories Act, 1881", being Act No. XV of 1881 and came into force on July 1, 1881.

⁶⁶ India, Legislative Council Proceedings, Calcutta, 1881, 20:144. The Governor General informed the Council that the above opinion was unfounded.

⁶⁷ India, Legislative Council Proceedings, Calcutta, 1881, 20:95-96.

Chief Provisions of the Act.

1. It was to apply to all manufacturing premises using power driven machinery, employing 100 or more persons and working more than four months in the year, indigo, tea and coffee plantations being exempted from the provisions of the Act.

2. The age limits for the employment of children were fixed at 7 and 12 years. Their hours of work were limited to 9 in any one day with an interval of rest for one hour. They were also granted four monthly holidays.

3. Engine flyheads and hoists, and other dangerous machinery at the option of the inspector had to be fenced.

4. Accidents had to be reported to the inspector.

5. The local governments could appoint special inspectors, otherwise district magistrates would become inspectors in their respective jurisdictions.

6. The local governments also had power to make rules for carrying out the provisions of the Act.

CHAPTER III.
FACTORY ACT OF 1891.

Agitation in England for Amendment.

The most significant feature of the Factory Act of 1881 was the establishment of the fact that the Government would interfere with the industrial relations of the people, whenever a class or a party, was unable to protect its own interests. This resulted in the regulation of child labor in Indian factories. The measure was, of course, inadequate to meet all phases of the problem, but a beginning was made and a principle was established for the subsequent development of the regulative function of the Government regarding factory labor. But the establishment of a theoretical principle could neither satisfy the matter-of-fact commercial interests of Lancashire, whose spirit of rivalry was goaded by the rising manufacturing industry in India; nor pacify the idealistic mind of the philanthropists, who had been striving to redress the actual misery of the working people in Indian factories. The agitation, therefore, continued both in England and in India as before, though in varying degrees.

In the very year the act was passed, Lancashire manufacturers sustained a still further loss of their trade with India. The import of cotton twist and yarn into India declined from 45,877,000 lbs. in 1880—1881 to 40,762,000 lbs. in 1881—1882, and of cotton piece goods, from 1,776,507 yds. to 1,624,452 yds.¹

The former market for cotton twist and yarn was not regained until the year 1885—1886. But even then the trade for cotton piece goods was far below that of 1880—1881.² During the same period of five years from 1880—1881 to 1885—1886, the number of cotton factories in India increased from 62 to 89 with a corresponding increase in the number of spindles from 1,550,944 to 2,198,545 and, of looms from 14,386 to 16,548. On the

¹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1894, Vol. 59, H. of C. 43, p. 311.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

other hand, the Indian export trade greatly extended during the period. The export of cotton twist and yarn increased from 26,901,000 lbs. to 78,242,000 lbs. and of cotton piece goods from 30,385,000 yds. to 51,528,000 yds. as shown on the table below:—

Growth of the Cotton Industry
from 1880—1881 to 1885—1886.

	1880—1881	1885—1886
Factories	62	89
Looms	14,386	16,548
Spindles	1,550,944	2,198,545
Twist and Yarn exports	26,901,000 lbs.	78,242,000 lbs.
Piece goods exports	30,385,000 yds.	51,528,000 yds.

In short, at the end of five years, when England was just regaining her export trade in cotton goods into India, India herself was increasing her export trade into foreign markets by 190.9 per cent in cotton twist and yarn and by 69 per cent in cotton piece goods.* Under these circumstances it was not probable that Manchester interests would feel at rest until the import duty on their goods was totally abolished.

On November 10, 1881, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce sent a deputation to the India Office for an interview with Lord Hartington, who was then the Secretary of State for India, again to urge the repeal of the import duty on cotton goods by the Indian Government. Lord Hartington assured the Chamber that the question had never been lost sight of and that both the Indian Government and the Home Government were fully alive to the fulfillment of the promise given before.† The promise was soon carried out. In 1882, the Indian Government completely repealed the import duty.‡ The Manchester interests thus won the first object of their agitation.

* Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1894, Vol. 59, H. of C. 43, p. 311.

† The Times, London, Nov. 12, 1881, p. 11, c. 1.

‡ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1903, Vol. 46, H. of C. 249, p. 190.

Agitation in India for Amendment.

It has already been observed that the provision of the Factory Act of 1881 was too inadequate to meet the demand of the philanthropic agitators. Even the Governor General is said to have expressed a doubt as to the wisdom of reducing the minimum age of children from eight to seven and, in the circular issued to the local governments regarding the administration of the new act a few days before it came into force, directed the local authorities to watch this provision very closely.⁷ No sooner was the act passed than agitation was started afresh in Bombay for its amendment. Both Europeans and Indians soon joined the cause under the championship of Mr. Bengalee.⁸

Sir James Ferguson, who was then the Governor of Bombay and who had been personally advised by the Secretary of State for India to carry through the Indian factory legislation before he left for India, warmly supported the agitation,⁹ and made an application for the temporary services of one of the British factory inspectors in order to supervise and report on the working of the factory act in Bombay. Mr. Redgrave, chief inspector of factories in Great Britain, who a few years before had suggested the enactment of legislation for Indian factories, recommended Mr. Meade-King, an inspector of cotton factories in the district of Manchester, for the work.¹⁰ Mr. King arrived at Bombay early in 1882, and, after about six months' investigation made his report on July 7, 1882.¹¹ He found many inadequacies in the existing law and made several recommendations, of which the following were the chief:¹²

(1) That no child under 8 should be employed in a factory and that 13 was quite old enough for an Indian child to commence full-time work.

⁷ The Times, London, June 13, 1881, p. 7, c. 1.

⁸ Gl. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1888, Vol. 26, C. 5328, p. 113.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 1883, Vol. 18, C. 3488, p. 11.

¹¹ Ibid., 1888, Vol. 77, H. of C. 321, p. 13.

¹² Ibid., pp. 6—11.

(2) That all children should be examined by-certifying surgeons regarding their age and physical fitness previous to employment in factories.

(3) That a young person class above 13 and below 16 should be created.

(4) That women and children should be allowed to work only between 6 A. M. and 6 P. M., and that during that period they should have an hour's period for food and rest, either a full one hour in the middle of the day, or two half-hours with a convenient spell of work between them.

(5) That cleanliness and ventilation should be secured in all factories.

Bombay Factory Commission of 1884.

With a view to ascertaining the advisability of extending Mr. King's suggestions to textile and other factories, and to considering the subject in all its bearings,¹³ the Government of Bombay appointed a commission on May 23, 1884; and, in order to facilitate the work of the commission, a medical committee was also appointed on September 3, 1884. The medical committee was advised to inquire into the general health and physical condition of mill workers as compared with that of other laborers in the city of Bombay and to place the results of their investigation before the commission. On October 16, 1884, the sanitary commissioner of Bombay was also authorized to examine into the sanitary condition of factories and workshops in that presidency and to give evidence before the commission.¹⁴

The commission which was organized soon after its appointment consisted of eight members, including Mr. W. B. Mulock, collector of Bombay, as president with a casting vote. The Bombay Chamber of Commerce and Mill-Owners' Association each had two representatives. Mr. Bengalee, chief advocate for factory legislation, and

¹³ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1888, Vol. 77, H. of C. 321, p. 8.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Dr. Thos. Blainey, a member of the factory commission of 1875, who voted in favour of factory legislation, were also nominated as members of this commission.¹⁶

The medical committee¹⁶ was organized when the commission was sitting. The members of the committee closely examined 265 male laborers, after carefully ascertaining their height and weight,¹⁷ but found no evidence of the alleged deterioration in the health of factory operatives as compared with that of other laborers in the city of Bombay. They suggested, however, some changes in the existing law as a precautionary measure, and advised fixing the minimum age of children for employment in factories at 10 years and granting four holidays in a month to all operatives, irrespective of age or sex.¹⁸ The sanitary commissioner, in his exhaustive report, also stated that the condition of factories was generally far from being as bad as he had been led to expect. He was nevertheless of the opinion that they needed some better arrangement regarding ventilation, latrine accomodation, etc.¹⁹

But the most significant thing in connection with the commission was the calling of a labor conference by the Bombay factory operatives. The prime mover of this conference was, of course, Mr. Bengalee but it was organized by Mr. N. M. Lokhanday. The main object of the conference was to present the grievances of factory workers to the commission. The conference held its meetings on September 23 and 26, 1884, and drew up a memorial to the commission,

¹⁶ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1888, Vol. 77, H. of C. 321, p. 3. Messrs. G. Cotton and J. L. Symons represented the Bombay Chamber of Commerce and Messrs. Nanabhoy B. Jeejibhoy and Muncherjee Nowrajee Banajee, the Bombay Mill-Owners' Association. The other member was Khan Bahadur Muncherjee C. Nurzaban.

¹⁷ The committee consisted of Surgeons Majors I. B. Lyon, W. Gray, and G. Waters, and also of Mr. N. H. Chokshi, L. M. S. Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1888, Vol. 77, H. of C. 321, p. 3.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1907, Vol. 59, Cd. 3617, p. 19.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1888, Vol. 77, H. of C. 321, p. 12.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

which was signed by 5,500 employees and contained the following resolutions:²⁰

(1) That all mill-hands be allowed one complete day of rest every Sunday.

(2) That half an hour's recess be allowed them at noon every working day.

(3) That work in mills should commence at 6.30 A. M. and close at sunset.

(4) That payment of wages should be made not later than the 15th of the month following that for which they have been earned.

(5) That a workman sustaining serious injury in the course of his work at the mill, which might disable him for the time being, should receive full wages until he recovers, and that in case of his being maimed for life, suitable provision should be made for his livelihood.

In the meantime the members of the commission also finished their investigation. They had held 27 meetings, examined 34 witnesses, including employers, employees, and factory inspectors, and had personally inspected several mills and workshops. They had duly considered the reports of the medical committee and of the sanitary commissioner as well as the memorial of factory operatives, and, after fully discussing Mr. Meade King's suggestions, they forwarded the results of their investigations to the Government of Bombay on January 10, 1885.²¹ The principal recommendations of the commission were: —

(1) To raise the minimum age of the children from 7 to 9 and the maximum from 12 to 14, except in the case of children with some educational attainments, under which circumstances the age limit might be 8 and 13 respectively. These changes were necessary for several reasons: — First, the higher temperature in Indian mills and the weaker physical development of the people as well as the small practical value of the labor of children were sufficient reasons why the minimum age should be raised to nine.

²⁰ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 106.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1886, Vol. 47, H. of C. 321, p. 18.

Second, the medical committee recommended raising it to 10. But the commission thought that such a change would be too sudden and would throw many children out of employment. All changes should be made gradually, as in the case of the English factory law. Third, the Bombay Millowners' Association in their memorial to the Government of Bombay in 1880 foresaw,²² and calculated on, such an increase of age for children. Fourth, an earlier admission into the first employment and an earlier transition into adult employment, permitted on the condition of educational attainments, would result in furthering the interests of both employers and employees since Indian operatives would be trained in a way similar to that which proved successful in England.

(2) To require all children to be certified of age and physical fitness before employment, as suggested by Mr. Meade King.²³

(3) To limit the time of the day, during which a child could work, to the period between 7 A. M. and 5 P. M. with an hour's interval for meal and rest. Until school accommodation could be supplied and general arrangements could be made for educating working children and obliging them to attend school for a portion of the working day, or on alternate days, the only way to force the statutory limitation of nine for a child's labor was to fix a period of employment, as suggested above.²⁴

(4) To raise gradually the age limits of children, thereby avoiding the necessity of creating a young person class under sixteen, as suggested by Mr. King. Sufficient difficulty had already been experienced in determining the ages of children. The creation of a young person class would complicate still more the situation in a country, where there was no system of birth registration.²⁵

(5) To incorporate several provisions of the British factory act into the Indian factory law and to improve the sanitary condition of factories, e. g., ventilation, lime-

²² *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1888, Vol. 77, H. of C, 321, p. 9.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-10.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

washing, etc. The commission observed that the condition of the factory exercised a marked influence on the character of its operatives. Furthermore, it recommended that standard plans for the construction of mills should be carefully prepared so that future mills could be built according to such plans.²⁶

(6) To grant four monthly holidays to women and children. The existing law granted such holidays only to children. The commission recommended the extension of this provision to women. These holidays should be on Sundays, whenever possible. On the occurrence of an important native holiday during the week, preference should be given to it for rest, work being done on the following or preceding Sunday.²⁷

Mr. Bengalee and Dr. Blainey differed from the majority of the commission on this point. They recommended that all operatives, male or female, should be entitled to one day of rest each week in addition to their 15 native holidays. They based their recommendations on the following grounds: — First, there was a consensus of opinion among the witnesses regarding such statutory holidays for all operatives. Second, the working people themselves prayed for this reasonable boon in their memorial to the Government of Bombay. Third, the prohibition of work for women and children on Sundays would not secure these holidays to adult male operatives in India. Those who relied on such a result had, of course, in mind the system in England. But the conditions in the two countries were different. Women and children formed only 25 per cent of the total operatives in India as against the 74 per cent of the same classes of operatives in England. Moreover, women worked only in reeling and winding departments, which could be easily separated from the main part of the factory.²⁸ Fourth, the *laissez-faire* doctrine, under the influence of which the majority of the commission declined to recommend legislation on behalf of adult males, was not observed even in Great Britain as

²⁶ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1888, Vol. 77, H. of C. 321, pp. 5—6.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 10—11.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

far as legislation in the cause of humanity and morals was concerned.²⁹

(7) To extend the scope of the Act to factories employing 10 or more women and children and using mechanical power. The commission had collected a large amount of evidence which proved that gross abuses existed in seasonal employments, especially in cotton gins and presses in the district of Khandesh, Bombay. These establishments employed mostly women and children, who worked in insanitary and ill-ventilated buildings from 4 or 5 in the morning till 8 or 9 in the evening. Sometimes the gins worked day and night for seven or eight days together. The commission recommended that women and children in such establishments should be allowed to work for 16 hours with two hours' interval for rest and food. Any strict legislation, it was thought, would "deprive these wretched women of their employment"³⁰ or lower the small pittance they already received.

The other recommendations were of minor importance.

The Government of Bombay acted very favorably on the report of the commission. But it failed to perceive the advisability of permitting children to be employed one year earlier on an educational test, its objection to such employment of children being based on physical, and not educational, grounds.³¹ The Government of Bombay, however, forwarded the report to the Government of India with the hope that the Governor General in Council might see fit to amend the existing law, as proposed by the commission;³² but the Government of India declined to take any action in the direction of general legislation.³³

Revival of Agitation in England.

Shortly after, Mr. Jones, former inspector of British factories, who had been appointed, in September of 1883, by the Government of Bombay to take the place of Mr.

²⁹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1888, Vol. 77, H. of C. 321, p. 18.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³³ *Ibid.*, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 63.

Meade King, and who had served as secretary to the factory commission,²⁶ resigned his post and arrived in England, in May 1887, where he was reappointed as inspector of factories in the district of Manchester, Blackburn, Oldham, etc., with his headquarters at Manchester.²⁷

After the resumption of his duties, Mr. Jones, at the request of Mr. Redgrave, chief inspector of British factories, who has been referred to twice before, made a statement on the condition of Indian factories, which appeared in the report on British factories and workshops,²⁸ and which criticised the Indian factory system on four main points: — (1) Long hours of work and few holidays. (2) Occasional withholdings of wages from employees. (3) Incompetency of mill managers and dangerous character of many mills. (4) Ill-ventilated and filthy state of many work rooms.²⁹ "The question of factory legislation", concluded Mr. Jones, referring to the decision of the Government of India on the report of the factory commission, "has been shelved, and sometime must elapse before another effort will be made, unless pressure be brought to bear upon the Home Government".³⁰

Some of Mr. Jones' allegations were not based on facts, as will be shown later, but they did not fail to produce their effect. On May 3, 1888, not long after the publication of Mr. Jones' statement, Lord Cross, then Secretary of State for India, directed the Government of India to report on the following points: — (1) Working of the Factory Act; (2) working of the system of inspection by district magistrates; (3) accidents in factories; and (4) the defects pointed out by Mr. Jones. Agitation was also immediately started in Parliament. Messrs. Samuel Smith and James MacLean, the latter member representing

²⁶ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1888, Vol. 77, H. of C. 321, pp. 22—23. It was proposed to the Government of India to grant Mr. Jones an honorarium of 500 rupees in consideration of the services rendered by him as secretary to the commission, but the Government of India declined to sanction the grant.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1888, Vol. 26, C. 5328, p. 10.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 162, p. 2.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1888, Vol. 26, C. 5328, p. 114.

Oldham, drew the attention of the House of Commons to the absence of provision for regulating the hours of work and other shortcomings in Indian factories, and asked whether it was not advisable to apply the English factory law to India.³⁸ These interrogations resulted in a further dispatch, on July 26, 1888, by the Secretary of State who directed the Government of India to consider whether or not it was expedient to regulate by law the working hours of women and to grant a legal weekly holiday to all factory operatives.³⁹ The Government of India consequently issued orders, on June 21 and August 28, 1888, to all local governments to report on the inquiries made by the Secretary of State.⁴⁰

Meanwhile India was making still further progress in her new industrial career. In the five years from 1885—86 to 1890—91, the number of cotton factories rose from 89 to 125, and the number of spindles increased from 2,198,545, to 3,197,740, and of looms from 16,548 to 23,846, as shown in the table below:

Growth of the Cotton Industry
from 1885—86 to 1890—91.

	1885—86	1890—91
Factories	89	125
Looms	16,548	23,846
Spindles	2,198,545	3,197,740

During the same period, while her imports of twist and yarn rose from 45,915,000 to 50,971,000 lbs., and of cotton piece goods from 1,743,378 to 2,014,443 yds., her exports of cotton twist and yarn rose from 78,242,000 lbs., to 169,275,000 lbs., and of cotton piece goods from 51,528,000 yards to 67,639,000 yards, as shown in the table below:⁴¹

³⁸ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 162, p. 2.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 60.

⁴⁰ Ibid., H. of C. 124, p. 3.

⁴¹ Ibid., 1894, Vol. 59, H. of C. 43, p. 311.

Comparative Growth of Imports and Exports in
Cotton Goods from 1885—86 to 1890—91.

Cotton Goods	Imports		Exports	
	1885-86	1890-91	1885-86	1890-91
Twist and yarn . . . (in pounds)	45,915,000	50,971,000	78,242,000	169,275,000
Piece Goods (in yards)	1,743,378	2,014,443	51,528,000	67,639,000

The period between January 1888 and June 1889 was one of marked expansion of the cotton industry in the Presidency of Bombay. While the export of cotton yarn to China and Japan kept pace with the increase in production, the export of cotton piece goods in 1888 exceeded that in 1887 to the extent of 13,500,000 yards.⁴³

This rapid growth of the cotton industry in the latter half of the eighties, especially that of the year 1888, again gave Manchester interests cause for considerable anxiety. To their amazement, they found that in the course of six years the export of Indian cotton yarn to China and Japan had increased by 300,000,000 lbs., whereas the export of English cotton yarn to those countries had decreased by about 30,000,000 lbs.⁴⁴ They had already secured a market in India free from any import duty and on equal terms with the local manufacturers, but they had not yet been able to enforce the English factory law on India and it was to this phase of their agitation that they now turned their attention.

A meeting of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce was held on November 5, 1888, and a resolution was carried by a vote of 38 to 28 to the effect that in view of the excessive hours of labor in the cotton mills of British India, the British factory acts, so far as they related to

⁴³ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890, Vol. 53, H. of C. 384, p. 179.

⁴⁴ The Times, London, March 23, 1889, p. 5, c. 4.

the employment of women, young persons, and children, should be extended to include the textile factories of India.⁴⁵ The resolution was proposed on the ground of humanity towards Indian operatives. But Mr. Stuttard, who seconded the resolution, disclosed the real motive in his letter to the *Manchester Courier*, "Surely it will be better for the physical welfare of the Hindoo to remain in agricultural employment and give us plenty of cotton, rather than be attracted to the ranks of mill operatives".⁴⁶

On March 22, 1889, a deputation representing the Lancashire factory operatives waited on Lord Cross, the Secretary of State for India, and Sir John Gorst, the Under Secretary, at the India Office, in reference to "the condition of their fellow work people in India".⁴⁷ The deputation was headed by Mr. J. M. MacLean, and accompanied by Mr. Sidebottom and three other members of Parliament. In introducing the deputation, Mr. MacLean made the following complaints: — (1) that the British work people rightly considered that they had a real grievance in having to compete with Indian mill operatives, who were employed for perhaps 80 or more hours a week, (2) that this matter could not safely be left to the Government of India, as that Government never acted on the report of the Factory Commission of 1884, until his lordship being moved by the report of the chief inspector of British factories, asked what the view taken by that Government on the question was; (3) that the object of the deputation was to convey to his lordship the attitude of a considerable body of public opinion of the country on the question and to let his lordship know the feeling of the working people of Lancashire; and (4) that if the Indian mills were to be allowed to work night and day, Sunday and weekday, it was obvious that the British working men must be placed under very great disadvantage in competition in the markets of the world. Mr. Sidebottom added that mills in India were being built on a colossal scale, while there was only one mill in course of construction in the whole

⁴⁵ *Gr. Brit. Parliamentary Debates*, 1889, 333 : 232.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 332. Quoted by Lord Stanley of Alderley.

⁴⁷ *The Times*, London, March 23, p. 5, c. 4.

cotton district of Lancashire, and that the export of Indian cotton yarn was rapidly increasing and that of the English yarn was decreasing. He also urged that these things should be borne in mind in considering the question. In reply, Lord Cross assured the deputation that the Indian factory law would be amended to remedy the defects complained of.⁴⁸

Counter-agitation in India.

The resolution of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce and their agitation to enforce the British factory law on Indian factories awakened a strong feeling of apprehension and resentment in India. The subject was extensively discussed in the press and severe criticism was directed against Manchester interests.⁴⁹ Even the *Times of India*, an Anglo-Indian Journal at Bombay, devoted to the British interests in India, writing on the resolution of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, on November 30, 1888, said: — "We have to thank this minority for so clearly exposing the motive behind this ingenious attempt to lift the people of India." But it was the manufacturers who felt their position most insecure. The success of the Manchester agitation regarding the Indian import duty brought home to them the belief that the Manchester party might again succeed in forcing the British factory law on India and thereby retard the growth of the industry in which they invested millions of their capital. They, therefore, made a strong protest against the new Manchester movement.

Mr. D. Rasbotham of the Madras Chamber of Commerce, in a letter to the Government of India, on December 5, 1888, protested against the assertion by Manchester of a claim to have Indian labor regulated by the labor rivalry elsewhere. "The proposed extension of the British factory regulations to India", continued Mr. Rasbotham, "is not prompted by disinterested concern for the well-being of Indian operatives. The success which rewarded

⁴⁸ *The Times*, London, March 23, 1889, p. 5, c. 4.

⁴⁹ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1890, Vol. 53, H. of C. 384, p. 179.

the previous agitation was well calculated to encourage further interference with legislation in this country, such as never be proposed with regard to Canada or Australia; and this chamber apprehends that the opposition offered in Manchester to such interference is more likely to diminish than increase unless the Government of India takes an early opportunity of assuring the Secretary of State, that the assertions about the length and severity of hours of labor in this country are greatly exaggerated. The alleged desire to lift up the poor people of India and to improve their condition has so little to do with the demand for justice for Indian operatives that it may be eliminated from the consideration of the subject; whereas 'dictates of jealousy', the wish 'not so much to benefit a class in India as to recover the China market', 'self-interest', the discovery that 'competition in India was too severe', 'the interest of Lancashire trade' and not 'the interests of humanity' to which allusion was made at the meeting under notice, may be reasonably supposed to have exerted some influence on the supporters of the motion'.⁵⁰

On December 19, 1888, the Bombay Millowners' Association also protested against the resolution of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce by a counter-resolution. They pointed out that they worked only during the daylight hours, which did not allow them more than 13 hours and 13 minutes in summer and 11 hours in winter. Sixty-five per cent of the operatives in Lancashire were women; and work such as they did was done by men in India. For the same amount of work three and one third as many operatives were employed in India as in Lancashire. Moreover, Indian operatives took a long vacation every year.⁵¹

Meanwhile, in reply to the orders issued by the Government of India, on June 21 and August 28, 1888, the local governments submitted their reports and expressed their opinion. The Government of Bombay advocated the restriction of hours of labor for women and children and the granting of four legal monthly holidays to them; as in

⁵⁰ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, p. 29.

⁵¹ Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates, 1889, 333:232-33.

their previous resolution. In reply to the charges made by Mr. Jones, the Government of Bombay, against which the attack was mainly directed, said that the gentleman himself showed that the grievances or defects which he deemed most noticeable were, in the main,⁵³ either imaginary, or had full compensatory advantages as a set-off; that the hours of work in Indian factories were rather long, but the work was neither as heavy nor as intensive as that in English factories; that payment of wages was often delayed, but they were never withheld from operatives; that sanitary conditions were not bad considering the climate of the country and the habits of the people; and that the mill managers were fully competent for their work.⁵⁴

The reports of other local governments also corroborated the statement of the Bombay Government. "The mills in this Presidency", reported the Government of Madras, "are in the hands of competent managers and are in good sanitary condition; machinery is adequately fenced, and no abuses in the way of withholding wages from the hands are found to exist".⁵⁵ With the exception of the Bombay Government, all other local governments were opposed to further restriction on factories by legislation. "It appears to the chief commissioner", replied the Government of the Central Provinces, "that no case exists, so far as these provinces are concerned, for further legislation".⁵⁶ "All officers deprecate", added the Government of Burma, "the modification of the factory act of 1881 in the direction of additional severity".⁵⁷ The replies of the Punjab Government and of the divisional officers of Lahore, and other localities were practically the same.

The Government of India submitted these reports to the Secretary of State on March 5, 1889, and added that the application of the English factory act to India was not expedient, and that the system of inspection by district

⁵³ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, pp. 63-64.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

magistrates was quite adequate and satisfactory. The Government conceded the extending of the scope of the Indian factory act to cover smaller factories, the raising of the age limits of children from 7 and 12 to 9 and 14 respectively, the reducing of the working hours of women to 11 hours a day, and the bringing about of some other minor changes, but refused, at the same time, to grant four holidays a month to women and children by legislation.⁵⁷ On May 14, 1889, the Secretary of State accepted in a telegraphic dispatch, the proposal of the Governor-General but advised him to provide four holidays in a month for women and children by statutory enactment and also to make some other minor changes.⁵⁸

Labor's Demand for Legislation.

In the agitation, which was going on in India, the exact wants of the employees were often misrepresented by employers and it was also said that employees themselves were indifferent to "any direct measure of protection against their employers" or did not feel the necessity of it. In order to show the real nature of their grievances, the labourers employed in the spinning and weaving mills of Bombay, submitted a petition to the Governor General of India on October 24, 1889. The petition originated among philanthropists like Mr. Bengalee and Mr. Lokhanday who had been agitating for the amendment of the factory act, and contained the resolutions of the employees passed at the conference in 1884 with some additional observations. Regarding the Sunday holiday, the petition stated that:⁵⁹ —

(a) It would contribute to the health and energy of employees, which would result in better work, both as to quality and quantity, and would thus benefit employers as well.

(b) It would afford workmen the much needed opportunity of attending to their household duties, especially

⁵⁷ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, pp. 2—5.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86 pp. 106—107.

shopping, which for lack of time, they were obliged to do with hawkers at exorbitant prices.

(c) The loss to the millowners from overtaxing the energy of their employees by the unnatural system of incessant work for nearly 13 or 14 hours a day, was far greater than they were aware of.

(d) In the whole of British India, Sunday was considered a privileged holiday. Factory workers who did not obtain leave on that day could not afford to meet their relatives and friends, who were otherwise employed on week days.

(e) Employees did not enjoy more than 11 holidays in the year on account of religious festivals, though it had been alleged in certain quarters that their work did not amount to more than 300 days in the year.

(f) Under the existing system, workers were compelled to absent themselves from factories to attend to household duties and, for doing so, they had to lose two days' wages for one day's absence. This statement could be easily verified by reference to the muster-rolls kept in mills. As to the half hour's recess at midday, the petition called attention to the fact that actually it did not amount to more than 15 or 20 minutes. Much of this scanty recess was again taken up by the system of delivering up tickets at the time, an inconvenience which could be avoided by the time-keeper going around among employees while they were at work, and checking the ticket number off the musterroll.

With regard to the commencement of work in the morning, the petition said that uncertainty then prevailing with regard to the hour for starting work was very embarrassing and was the source of great inconvenience and discomfort to employees. A fixed and uniform hour of attendance was, therefore, greatly needed.

As to the payment of wages, the petition pointed out that the great delay in payment caused a good deal of inconvenience to the employees, and added that if the millowners desired a sort of hold on their employees to prevent desertion, the necessity of the case would be fully met by retaining in their hands a fortnight's wages of the

men in arrears. In this connection, the petition also stated that cases in which employers illegally withheld the hard-earned wages of the poor workers were so frequent that a reference to the court of small causes would convince the government that wages were in many cases recovered only by recourse to the court. Hundreds of operatives had to forego their wages on account of the trouble involved in appealing to the judges. Most of the strikes in the factories would on inquiry be found to be attributable to the withholdings of wages in this manner; or to the threatened reduction in rates.

"It has been said", continued the petition, "that an Indian mill operative is not as hard working as an English workman and that a mill operative in England does the work of three men employed in the same work in an Indian mill. The real cause of this is the bad machinery and bad material used in mills. It is true that three men are required to manage the machine in Indian factories, but these three men, it should be borne in mind, do their work for longer hours without intermission in a more enervating climate and on poorer wages. The operatives in Indian factories have to perform their tasks without many facilities afforded in England and calculated to lessen the burden of workmen and to preserve their constitution against breakdown. The breakage in the thread, for instance, is so continuous here on account of the bad quality of cotton, that millowners are compelled to employ more men. If the cotton were of good quality and the concessions, which were given, in England were granted here, one man could manage a machine as well as an English operative."

The claims for compensation for accidents, the petition said, were made in the interests of humanity. The distress brought about upon persons being maimed for life, or even for a few months, was appalling, and some relief to mitigate the sufferings and hardships seemed needed, and the petition asked whether the amount of fines and forfeited wages could not advantageously and with propriety be appropriated for this humane purpose. The necessity for a provision of this character had already

been recognized in some mills, where sufferers were adequately provided for. Among the people not yet alive to the advantages of provident funds and mutual benefit societies, some arrangement affording relief to the injured was much needed.

The petition finally prayed that the interest of operatives should be carefully watched in the course of the amendment of the Factory Act of 1881.

Introduction of the Bill into the Legislature.

In the meantime, the Government of India prepared a draft bill in accordance with the advice of the dispatch of the Secretary of State on May 14, 1889. The Secretary of State gave his approval to the bill on January 14, 1890,⁶⁰ and a motion was made in the Legislative Council of India, on January 31, 1890, for its introduction.

In moving for leave to introduce the bill, Mr. A. R. Scoble said that the provisions for the Act of 1881 were limited strictly to those points for which legislation had been shown to be necessary, and the provisions of the proposed measure also embodied only those additions and alterations which had been proved to be desirable through the experience of about a decade. Referring to the report of the Factory Commission of 1884, to the statement of Mr. Jones, and to the various questions asked in the House of Commons regarding Indian factory labor, Mr. Scoble said that the extension of the English factory acts to India was quite inexpedient, as stated by the Government of India in the dispatch of March 5, 1885, to the Secretary of State. In accordance with this opinion and taking into consideration the various suggestions made and the evidence submitted, the bill was prepared with eight proposals:

- (1) To extend the operation of the act to factories in which not less than 20 persons were employed.
- (2) To raise the minimum age at which children might be employed in any factory from 7 to 9 years.

⁶⁰ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 224, p. 2.

- (3) To limit the hours of employment for women to 11 per day.
- (4) To secure to women as well as to children proper intervals for food and rest during the day, and not less than four holidays in each month.
- (5) To secure a proper supply of water for the use of operatives.
- (6) To insure proper ventilation and cleanliness in factories.
- (7) To prevent overcrowding which might be injurious to the health of the operatives.
- (8) To give local governments greater power to obtain reports and make rules for the purpose of carrying out the objects of the act.

The bill was introduced on the same day.⁶¹

The bill, as submitted, did not contain any provision for reducing the hours of work for children, which were 9 hours under the existing law, nor attempt to interfere with the hours of work for adult males.

Revival of Agitation in England.

On February 3, 1890, a telegram was sent from Calcutta to the London Times epitomizing the proposed factory act for India.⁶² Two days later, the Blackburn and District Chamber of Commerce held its annual meeting and discussed the draft bill for Indian factory legislation. On the following day, the secretary of the Chamber wrote a letter to the Secretary of State for India, showing the discrepancies between the proposed Indian factory act and the existing British factory act and requesting him for further and fuller consideration of the matter.⁶³

On February 17, 1890, Mr. Samuel Smith, Flint-shire, in the House of Commons, informed the Under Secretary of State for India that great indignation existed among the Lancashire operatives at the competition to which

⁶¹ India, Legislative Council Proceedings, Calcutta, 1890, 29: 19.

⁶² Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890-91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 120, p. 3.

⁶³ Ibid.

they were exposed by laborers working 80 hours per week in one part of the Empire, while they were restricted by law to 56 hours, and that the factory managers in Bombay, who had had experience with slavery in South Africa said that such slavery was mild in comparison with that which existed in the factories of Bombay,⁸⁴ and that young children were employed 80 hours per week to the extreme detriment of their health. The Under Secretary replied that no child in India could be employed by law for more than 54 hours. Mr. C. Graham, Lanmark, N. W., also asked whether it was in the power of the Under Secretary of State for India to advise the Indian Government to introduce some law where by Her Majesty's subjects in different parts of the Empire should not be reduced to slavery.

On March 13, 1890, the Secretary of State for India, who had already given his approval of the bill, as introduced into the Indian Legislative Council, changed his mind and ordered some further changes. In reply, the Governor General informed the Secretary of State, on March 25, 1890, that he had postponed the bill till the receipt of replies from the local governments and administrative bodies.⁸⁵ This sudden postponement of legislation could not but arouse some suspicion, and on July 15, 1890, Sir George Campbell asked in the House of Commons whether or not it was suggested by the Secretary of State.⁸⁶

The International Labor Conference at Berlin.

In the meantime a movement was going on in Western Europe to find a solution to the problem of the excessive hours and other adverse conditions under which the wage-earning classes suffered through the competition of the more advanced nations for the command of the world's market. Switzerland, with that object in view, twice made unsuccessful attempts, first in 1881 and then in

⁸⁴ *Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates*, 1890, 341:1320—22.

⁸⁵ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 224, p. 2.

⁸⁶ *Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates*, 1890, 346:1720.

1889,⁶⁷ to reach a common understanding among different advanced countries. At last, Germany became interested in the idea, and on February 8, 1890, Prince Bismark made a proposal to the several nations of Western Europe that they join in an International Labor Conference at Berlin,⁶⁸ the principal object of which should be to bring about "an agreement among various governments to obviate the common dangers by the adoption of general measures of prevention."⁶⁹ The less advanced nations were, of course, to join the conference for the sole satisfaction of having taken part in a civilizing work,⁷⁰ as M. Villori Ellena, Deputy Councillor of State and Delegate from Italy at the conference, put it.

Accordingly, the conference was convened at the Palace of the Imperial Chancellor at Berlin from March 15 to March 29, 1890, under the presidentship of Baron de Berlepsch, German Minister of Commerce and Industry. There were representatives from 15 States and the Vatican.⁷¹ Great Britain was represented by Sir John Gorst, Under Secretary of State for India, Mr. Charles S. Scott, C. B., Minister at Berne, and other two ordinary and four expert delegates.

The subjects of discussion in the conference were grouped under six heads: Labor in mines, Sunday labor, child labor, labor for youths, female labor, and the means of putting into force the provisions to be adopted by the conference. The work of drawing up provisional resolutions was entrusted to the different commissions appointed by the conference.

Regarding labor in mines, it was resolved to fix the minimum age at which a person could enter a mining career at 14 years, in order that he might have time to acquire a sufficient physical and intellectual development.⁷²

⁶⁷ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1890, Vol. 81, C. 6042, p. 9.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, C. 5914, p. 1.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, C. 6042, p. 10. Presidential Speech.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁷¹ Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, Switzerland, France, Spain, Portugal, Great Britain, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg, Denmark, Sweden and Norway.

⁷² *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1890, Vol. 81, C. 6042, p. 51.

At the request of the delegates from Spain and Italy, where the legal age limits were 9 and 10 years respectively, the minimum age was fixed at 12 years for Southern Europe. England declared, however, that she could not take the responsibility of depriving the children of those countries of the benefit to be derived from raising the age limits to 14 years.⁷³

In the discussion in connection with Sunday labor, M. Ellena, Italian delegate, said that the countries which had almost completed laws for the protection of labor, made hardly any concessions when they consented to invest their laws with an international character, and that, on the other hand, those countries, which undertook to pass new laws in order to introduce more effectual protection hereafter, made real concessions. Whatever might be the scope of the international agreement which was being proposed, it was impossible to imagine that all countries represented at the conference could have uniform laws of labor; for

(1) the physical and intellectual development of working classes depended on climate, race, etc.

(2) According to the principles which governed public law in different countries, the legislation in question must be confined to the protection of children; otherwise it might be applied also to the regulation of the work of adult men and women.

(3) There were certain industries, notably silk spinning in Italy, which, competing as they did with countries which were not represented at the conference, and in which the conditions of labor were very primitive, could not, without considerable reservation, be made subject to an international agreement.⁷⁴

Regarding Sunday labor, the conference resolved that it was advisable to grant one weekly day of rest, which should be on Sunday to all work people. Exceptions were made in the case of continuous industries and seasonal

⁷³ Cf. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890, Vol. 81, C. 6042, p. 52.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 42-53.

occupations, where one day of rest for every two weeks should be granted.⁷⁵

M. Jules Simon, president of the commission on child labor, proposed to fix the minimum age for admission into factories at 12 years. Mr. Scott, the English delegate, said that there was progressive diminution of the employment of children under 12 years in England, especially in textile industries, but English legislation allowed the employment of children from 10 to 12 under certain restrictions, and gave his vote ad referendum in favor of the proposal.⁷⁶ M. Boccardo, the Italian delegate, said that the age for admission of children into factories might not be the same for all countries. Geographically, Italy was differently situated and her silk industry competed with the extra European countries of China and Japan. Italy had, therefore, the right to demand a special treatment. "The position of Italy is quite different", argued M. Boccardo, "from that of other States represented at the conference, not only because of the natural development of labor laws, but also on account of the geographical, demographical, and economic conditions of the different countries. On this head, it is evident that the population of Italy cannot be subjected to the same rules as the people of Northern Europe. One must consider, first of all, the precocity of the southern races due to the effect of climate, to their geographical situation, and to the race itself; to fix the same limit of age for admission to factories in all countries, and to settle the protective action of the State over children and youths everywhere in the same way, would be losing the principle of equality, as far as industrial legislation is concerned, which it is the object of the conference to uphold, and imposing stronger restrictions on the southern countries than on the

⁷⁵ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890. Vol. 81, C. 6042, p. 181.* The legal prohibition of work on Sundays existed only in Germany, England and Switzerland, while other countries prohibited Sunday labor only for youths under 16 and girls under 21. Some countries did not allude to Sunday work, but restricted work to six days in the week.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

northern. Moreover, the manufacturing industry of Italy is still in its infancy; it is far from having attained the degree of development of the great productive countries of Europe. Under these circumstances there could be no question of exacting from Italy a legislation similar to that which protects the interests of the children and young people in other countries".⁷⁷

M. Santa Maria, the Spanish delegate, supported the claim of M. Boccardo. The commission then fixed 12 years as the minimum age for admission into factories for northern Europe and 10 years for southern countries.

When the report of the commission was considered at the conference, Sir John Gorst, in the name of the delegation of Great Britain said: — "The delegates of Great Britain are of opinion that the conference should not take on itself the responsibility of admitting that the limit of age, for the work of children in southern countries, be fixed at 10 years. The limit of 12 years has been generally adopted by the conference in consideration of the demands of physical, moral, and intellectual development of the children. It is especially because lesser restrictions would not be sufficient for the necessary primary instruction, nor for the making of good citizens, that these first years of life should be consecrated to education. If the southern countries are of opinion that under their special circumstances it is possible to abridge this time for children, they should themselves adopt measures of this kind, and not put upon the conference the responsibility of an international sanction".⁷⁸

The conference finally decided to take a separate vote on the question. The proposal for 12 years as the minimum age was carried unanimously with the exceptions of three abstentions.⁷⁹ The proposal for 10 years as the minimum age for southern countries was passed by a majority of

⁷⁷ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1890, Vol. 81, C. 6042, p. 60.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 151. Denmark, Spain and Switzerland.

eight against two.⁸⁰ Five countries abstained from voting.⁸¹

The second proposition with regard to child labor discussed by the conference was the necessity of having primary education as a condition for admission into factories. The British delegates could not agree to the proposal, for such a provision could be adopted only in an educational measure, and not in a factory act. In support of this attitude, Sir John Gorst said in the conference that by the provision of the British factory act, children were allowed only to work half time in factories, that is, half a day out of 12 hours, or one day only out of every two and make up their studies even while in factories. The resolution was carried by a majority of eleven votes against two.⁸²

When the proposition to limit the actual work of children to 6 hours a day with an interval of at least half an hour came up for discussion, the Hungarian and Italian delegates declared themselves in favor of eight hours of work a day, which was in accord with the spirit of their laws. The Belgian delegate could not agree to the fixing of a maximum day's work for children of from 12 to 15 years of age to less than 12 hours divided by intervals of rest of one hour and a half at least. In the Netherlands, the maximum day for children of from 12 to 16 years of age consisted of 11 hours and the Dutch delegate voted against the proposal. So the proposal was passed by 11 against 4.

When this proposal was made in the conference, Sir John Gorst said that British children did not work more than 60 hours in a fortnight in any industry and in the textile industry for 56½ hours only. But it was possible for a child over 13 to acquire before his time the status of a young worker, if he had satisfied the conditions of primary education. The resolution was passed in almost

⁸⁰ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890, Vol. 81, C. 6042, p. 151.* Great Britain and Switzerland.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 151. Belgium, Denmark, France, Sweden and Norway.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 151—52. Denmark and Great Britain.

the same way as before by a vote of 11 against three, the Hungarian delegate abstaining from voting.

The fourth proposition before the conference forbade night work and work in dangerous industries in the case of all children.

As regards their protection, young working people were divided into two classes: — Those of from 14 to 16 years of age of either sex, and those of from 16 to 18 years of age of male sex only. The commission proposed to fix 10 years as the period of actual work for young persons of from 14 to 16 years of age and at least two hours of rest. As there was a close connection between the work of young persons and of adults and as both classes began and ended work at the same time, objection was raised to this proposed reduction of work for young persons. Austria wished to have the period of labor fixed at 11 hours, as adults were allowed to work the same period in that country. The Netherlands also desired an 11 hour day and Belgium a 12 hour day. Spain and Italy abstained from voting. Four countries stood for two hours of rest, seven countries including Great Britain for an hour and a half, and two countries for one hour only. The resolution was passed by 10 votes against two, three abstaining from voting. The conference adopted the resolution of the commission.

Against the resolution of work for youths between the ages of 16 and 18 years, a strong protest was raised. But a resolution was at last carried by 8 votes against 6, one abstaining, to the effect that protection be given to this class regarding maximum hours of labor and work at night and in the dangerous industries, and this resolution was also adopted by the conference.

The commission on woman labor fixed the daily period of labor for women at 11 hours to be broken by rests amounting to a total duration of at least two hours. Mr. Scott, the British delegate, proposed a 10 hour day for women, stating that the system was in force in Great Britain and that she reserved the right to abide by it. "Should the commission not accept it," added Mr. Scott, "or should it not fix the day's work at a maximum of 10 hours, the

British delegate would agree to 11 hours".⁶³ M. Boccardo, the Italian delegate, raised objection to the definite limitation of work for women above 12 years of age. The only thing possible in this case was the fixation of a maximum and a minimum periods. Even girls below 12 years of age should be excluded from any definite limitation; he argued, when employed in trades, which like silk industry, required a longer working day at particular seasons. Germany and Austria contended for an 11 hour day under the existing state of manufacture and the existing social conditions. The necessity of exceptions regarding seasonal occupations was admitted by Germany.

In the conference, the resolution for an 11 hour day was carried by a vote of 9 against 2 including Belgium and Italy; Denmark, Spain, Hungary and Portugal abstained. Great Britain while voting in the affirmative, regretted that the resolution was not of a sufficiently protective character. The resolution prohibiting night work was passed by a vote of eight against five, while Denmark and Sweden abstained. The period of rest was reduced to an hour and a half, exceptions to be made in certain industries. Women were also prohibited from going to work for four weeks after childbirth.

Several resolutions were also passed regarding the execution of the prohibition adopted by the conference. But the power of the conference did not extend beyond the expression of opinion, the underlying principle of which was given out by the president of the conference himself. "Each country should give to the working classes", said he, "either by legislation or by custom, all that is not incompatible with security of existence for, and development of, national industry, on which the well-being of the workmen depends".⁶⁴

Fresh Agitation in England.

After the Berlin conference, Manchester interests found a new basis of agitation. This time not only the cause of humanity but also the honor of Great Britain, as a

⁶³ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1890, Vol. 81, C. 6042, p. 72.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 78

signatory to the resolutions of the conference, was shown to be at stake in the matter of the regulation of labor in Indian factories. While some still insisted on the enforcement of British factory law in India, others took the decided position that India must adopt the resolutions of the Berlin conference in the enactment of her factory law. In order that India might faithfully conform to their proposal, they also demanded that the Indian Government should submit the draft of the bill to Parliament before it was introduced into the Legislative Council of India.

"How can this solemn agreement", wrote Mr. J. M. MacLean, referring to the resolution of the Berlin conference on the Sunday holiday, "be forced in Europe, if the Indian rival of the European workman is permitted to go on working seven days in the week instead of six".⁸⁶ Mr. Holt. S. Hallett also took up the agitation to enforce the resolution of the Berlin conference on Indian factories, and proposed that Parliament should fully discuss the draft bill of the Indian Government before it was made a law. He thought it would be an absolute disgrace to Great Britain, the acknowledged pioneer of factory legislation in Europe, if Indian manufacturers were still suffered to practise the barbarities which British representatives at the conference fancied themselves able to denounce from a position of unusual security.⁸⁶

On May 5, 1890, Mr. Howorth, Salford, S., asked in the House of Commons, whether Her Majesty's Government proposed to take steps to bring Indian factories into conformity with the Berlin standard. On the same day, Mr. Mundella asked whether the proposal of the Indian Government to amend the factory act would be brought to the House of Commons before it was enacted by the Indian Legislative Council.⁸⁷

On July 15, 1890, Sir George Campbell, Kirkcaldy, asked the Under Secretary of State for India in the House of Commons whether owing to the fact that the Berlin

⁸⁶ The Times. London, April 5, 1890, p. 4, c. 3.

⁸⁶ Ibid., April 2, 1890, p. 8, c. 2, and April 10, 1890, p. 6, c. 4.

⁸⁷ Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates, 1890, 344:145-46.

conference was held primarily for European States and, even in that case the southern countries were given concessions, the case of still more southern tropical and semi-tropical non-European and non-Christian countries was considered at the conference; if not, whether the Government of India would be left free to deal with the matter with reference to the situation and feelings of the Indians without being hampered by the example of European countries.⁸⁸ On August 14, 1890, Sir George Campbell again took up the question in the House of Commons. "The principles affirmed at the Berlin conference", said Sir John Gorst, the Under Secretary of State for India, in reply, "are being, and will be, observed in India".⁸⁹

In the meantime, Lancashire manufacturers themselves were not inactive. On April 5, 1890, the Secretary of the Blackburn and District Chamber of Commerce again addressed a letter to the Secretary of State for India, in which the Chamber urged: — (1) That under the amended law the hours of work for women and young persons and children would be very much longer in India than in England; (2) That the temperature in Indian factories was more trying than that in English factories; (3) That in the discussion and during the legislation on the subject, the views of employers chiefly had been heard; (4) That the Indian operatives were unable to combine and make their views felt; (5) That it was, therefore, more incumbent on the Government of India to consider the interest of laborers, and that a number of authorities more or less conversant with the question had reported that the hours of labor in Indian factories were too long for women and children, if not for men. According to the Chamber, the proposed amendments to the Indian factory act were framed without consideration for the well-being of the operatives. "It (the Chamber) cannot too strongly express its opinion", concluded the letter, "that in the matter of factory acts, there should not be one law for England and another for India, but that the Indian operatives

⁸⁸ *Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates*, 1890, 346:1720.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 348:968.

should receive in full the same protection which is granted to their fellow operatives in England".⁸⁰

On May 15, 1890, the Secretary of State for India sent a copy of the correspondence with the Blackburn and District Chamber of Commerce to the Government of India. "As the bill is still under discussion", added the Secretary of State, "the considerations urged in the enclosed papers will have to be weighed by your Excellency's Government and by the legislature."⁸¹ A suggestion was also made for the appointment of a commission consisting principally of Indians with an intelligent operative among its members, which should visit some of the factory centers in order to ascertain the views of factory workers and submit a report for the consideration of the Indian Government and the legislature. In this dispatch the Secretary of State also laid down the following principle upon which the Indian legislation should be based: "The general principle of all factory legislation, as already adopted in this country and in India, is that life and limb must be protected, and that the health of all women, young persons and children, must, so far as possible, be assured. To this principle Her Majesty's Government have recently, in the Berlin conference, declared their adhesion, thus recommending it for adoption by other powers of Europe. How far this general principle has already been applied in India is a matter for your consideration. As regards any additional factory legislation in India, due regard must be had to the circumstances of that country, which are in many respects different from those of any European nation. But the same general principle is nevertheless applicable and the object of any such legislation must be to secure without fail for the various classes of operatives in India, an amount of protection for life and limb and an amount of security for the health of women, young persons, and children not inferior to that which is afforded by the law of England".⁸²

⁸⁰ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 120, p. 7.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 2—3.

On July 3, 1890, the Secretary of State forwarded the proceedings of the Berlin conference to the Government of India. About the middle of August,⁵³ the Government of India referred the bill to the local governments for their opinion in connection with the resolutions of the Berlin conference and, by the end of the month,⁵⁴ decided to appoint a commission to inquire into factory conditions.

Counter-Agitation in India.

While such agitation was going on in England, India was not free from similar movements, but most of the activities in India were started to offset the agitation of Manchester interests and to preserve India's interests against their rivalry. Public opinion throughout the country was strongly opposed to the bill.⁵⁵ The strongest opposing body in India was the manufacturers. They were opposed to any further stringency regarding factory legislation, especially as it was being imposed on India by the British manufacturing interests. Early in April of 1890, the Calcutta Trades Association addressed the Government of Bengal on the subject of the proposed bill pending before the Indian Legislative Council. Its members complained that no information had been given them as to the necessity of the proposed legislation. They objected to the clause raising the age at which children could be employed and maintained that children were invariably given work of the lightest description. They also pointed out that children were brought to factories by their parents, who were not likely to overtax their capabilities. As regards the regulation of women's work, they stated that women were not overworked in factories nor did they need more protection than their sisters in other occupations. Strongly deprecating any measure that might injure the manufacturing industry of India, they prayed

⁵³ The Times, London, Aug. 15, 1890, p. 3, c. 1. Calcutta telegram of Aug. 14.

⁵⁴ Ibid., Aug. 29, 1890, p. 3, c. 1. Calcutta telegram of Aug. 28.

⁵⁵ Ibid., April 7, 1890, p. 3, c. 3, and April 21, 1890, p. 5, c. 4.

the Lieutenant Governor to recommend the withdrawal of the bill.⁶⁶

Two weeks later, the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, the Calcutta Hydraulic Press Association and the Indian Jute Manufacturers' Association also protested against the bill. Criticising in detail its provisions, they intimated that the restrictions on the work of women and children would result in their elimination from factories and in the employment of men in their place. The proposals for compulsory holidays were not workable and not necessary, because a system of shifts existed and the operatives were accustomed to taking a long vacation every year or every 18 months.⁶⁷ On July 24, 1890, the Upper India Chamber of Commerce also protested against legislation on European lines, as it would likely hamper the Indian manufacturing industry.⁶⁸

Workers' Agitation for Amendment.

Side by side with the manufacturers in India, who protested against the attempt of Manchester interests to enforce British factory law and the resolution of the Berlin conference on India, and who, therefore, very often minimised the existence of any grievances on the part of the employees, philanthropists were also working, as before, for the amendment of the Indian factory law and were striving to bring about the real issue between employers and the employees. This time, they organized an association, called the "Millhands' Association". Mr. N. M. Lokhanday, who was the moving spirit of the agitation among the laborers in Bombay and was working in conjunction with Mr. Bengalee, became its president and Mr. D. C. Athaide, its secretary. Mr. Lokhanday also started a paper, called the *Dinabandhu*, or friend of the poor.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ The Times, April 7, 1890, p. 3, c. 3.

⁶⁷ Ibid., April 21, 1890, p. 5, c. 2-4.

⁶⁸ Ibid., July 25, 1890, p. 5, c. 2.

⁶⁹ The association did not have any regular membership and Mr. Lokhanday acted only as an advisor to the employees, whenever they sought his advice, and took an active part in the betterment of their condition.

The most important activity of the philanthropists at this time was a mass meeting of factory employees numbering upwards of 10,000 persons, held at Bombay on April 24, 1890. Two women workers addressed the meeting and complained of being forced to work on Sundays. A memorial was sent from the meeting to the Bombay Millowners' Association asking for a weekly holiday.¹⁰⁰

The Bombay Millowners' Association held a general meeting on June 10, 1890, at which the memorial of the employees was duly considered. The members of the Association came to the conclusion that the mills should be closed for one day in every seven, such day to be Sunday in each week, unless some native festival intervened, when it was to be observed as holiday in lieu of Sunday, and that on the day preceding the weekly holiday, the mills should be closed two hours earlier than on the ordinary working day for the purpose of cleaning machinery.¹⁰¹ It was, of course, a great victory for the laborers, and especially for Mr. Lokhanday.

The Factory Commission of 1890.

According to the proposal of the Secretary of State, the Governor General of India appointed, on Sept. 25, 1890, a commission to inquire into the conditions of factory labor, with Surgeon Major A. S. Lethbridge, C. S. I., inspector general of jails, Bengal, as president. There were three regular members in the commission, namely, Mr. Sorabjee S. Bengalee, C. I. E., a member of the Factory Commission of 1884, Raja Peary Mohan Mukherjee, C. I. E., a landholder of Bengal; and Mir Muhammad Hussain, assistant director of land records and agriculture, North Western Provinces and Oudh. The commission was assisted by three local members, who did not have the power to prepare or sign the report. The Bombay Presidency was locally represented by Mr. N. M. Lokhanday, president of the Bombay Millhands' Association. Bengal and the North Western Provinces and Oudh were locally

¹⁰⁰ *Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates*, 1890, 344: 810—11.

¹⁰¹ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 108.

represented by Babu Rasik Lal Ghose and Mr. Framji Manakji respectively, the latter being a foreman of the Cawnpore Woollen Mills.¹⁰²

The points upon which the commission was to report were as follows: — (a) limitation of woman labor to 11 hours in any one day; (b) creation of a young person class and the definition of the same; (c) limitation of the work of children to 9 hours; (d) holidays for women and children, and the advisability of granting holidays to adults; (e) fixing of a general working day for male adults; (f) laborers' attitude toward compulsory stoppage at midday.

The commission began its work at Bombay on Oct. 4, 1890, and visited Ahmedabad, Cawnpore and Calcutta. It held 28 meetings, visited 34 factories and examined 96 factory operatives, comprising men, women and children. Before the completion of the report, it received an address, dated Nov. 8, 1890, from Mr. Lokhanday, president of the Millhands' Association and the local member of the commission. In this address, Mr. Lokhanday discussed the importance of the amendment of the factory act and asked for the inclusion of several provisions in the proposed amendment of the factory act, which he called "the demands of the Millhands' Association." A summary of the resolutions he sent to the commission was as follows: —

(1) Millhands should get one complete day of rest on Sundays.

(2) The working day should be included within the period from 6 A. M. to 5.30 P. M.

(3) If practicable, one hour's rest should be given during the day, half an hour between 9 and 10 and half an hour at 12 noon; if not, at least fully half an hour's complete rest at 12 noon.

¹⁰² Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 3. The Times, London, Oct. 9, 1890, p. 5, c. 1.

The commercial community was not satisfied with the composition of the commission. The President, a jail inspector, was not an authority on the question of factory labor, while Raja Peary Mohan Mukherji had no commercial experience. Mr. Bengalee was identified with restrictive measures. The local members were not men of position and influence.

(4) Payment should be made on the 15th of each month, and the suggestion was also made that weekly payment was preferable and would benefit the employees.

(5) Children from 9 to 14 years of age should work half time; from young persons 15 years of age and over, full time might be exacted.

(6) Women should work from 7 A. M. to 5 P. M.

(7) Provision should be made for injured and sick persons. A suitable dispensary should be attached to every mill and a school should be maintained by every mill for the education of the children employed therein, in case they were permitted to work one half time.

"If the above points are fairly attended to," concluded Mr. Lokhanday, "in the factory act now to be amended, I think the millhands will have no cause to complain".¹⁰⁸

The report of the commission, which was submitted on November 12, 1890, consisted of the following recommendations: — (1) The proposed limitation of working hours of women to 11 a day was proper and sufficient. Woman workers were found generally in textile factories. They were employed with moving machinery to any appreciable extent only in jute mills, where the work was done in shifts and did not exceed 9 or 10 hours a day. In cotton industries, about 80 per cent of the female employees were reelers and winders, working 11 hours a day. The remaining 20 per cent of the women working with moving machinery were liable to overwork. But in Bengal, owing to the shift system, the working hours of even such women were less than 11 hours.

While proposing the limitation of working hours of women to 11, the commission recommended that exception should be made of the women who were working with moving machinery at Ahmedabad; otherwise they were liable to be replaced by male operatives. The reasons for such fear on the part of the commission were that factory owners did not want to diminish the hours of work for the whole factory and the difference in wages between male and female workers was in most cases small. In support of its

¹⁰⁸ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 110.*

recommendations, the commission cited the resolution of the Berlin conference, making exceptions for certain industries even in Europe. Mr. Bengalee, who was not present at the Ahmedabad meetings, did not agree with the majority of the commission regarding such exceptions, on the ground that it would lead to the spreading of the evil to other parts of India and result in the procrastination of the administration of the law. He argued that female operatives did not desire the present hours shortened; on the contrary, most of them were strongly against any interference which might subject them to male and losing their means of livelihood.

(2) The commission after careful consideration recommended that there should not be any child recognized by law as such and that the examination be met by raising the maximum age of children and 14 years. The existing maximum limit of age for a child that it was often impossible to guess, and the age of a child who might be over 10 and under 14. The law was consequently violated and many children were employed as full-timers. Whereas the age of 14 would be more easily known to medical officers due to the signs of approaching adolescence and puberty. The commission supported its recommendation on this point by those of the Factory Commission and Medical Committee of 1884 and by the resolutions of the Bombay Government.

(3) Regarding the hours of work for children, the commission was of the opinion that 9 hours' work except for the shift system was too long. But 9 hours in shifts for 4 days, as in Bengal, could not be considered as overwork. Even 9 hours of work for children working on the shift system would reduce wages. In the mills outside of Bengal, where the shift system did not exist, half time was the only solution of the question. Children should not work in those mills more than 6¾ hours in any one day.

The interval of rest granted to the children under existing law was one hour. In case they were employed for half time, the commission believed there was no necessity for any fixed interval of rest by law. The reasons for such recommendation as given by the com-

mission were: — First, to give an interval of rest to children while the machinery was moving and while other operatives were at work, would be so great an inconvenience to millowners that they would certainly try to dispense with the services of children, or the law would be evaded; second, the commission's inquiry had proved beyond all doubts that it was the practice for Indian operatives of all classes to go out of the factory at odd times for smoking, drinking water, and other purposes, and to stay away from 5 to 15 minutes. The taking of casual intervals of rest was possible in India because more employees were employed than in Europe for the same kind of work.

(4) Women and children should have one holiday in every seven, preferably on Sundays, as should male adults also, except where continuous production was necessary. The reasons for this recommendation of holidays for adult males were: — First, it was the unanimous desire of the operatives. Second, most of the factories gave a weekly holiday and the remaining ones gave at least two holidays every month. Third, the factory commission of 1875 and the minority party of the commission of 1884 as well as the Medical Committee of 1884 had recommended such holidays. Fourth, the mill owners of Bombay had accepted the proposal. This holiday should preferably be on Sunday, for it would give the workers a chance to meet their friends, who were employed on week days. Factories might work on Sunday following a native festival holiday; but if two such holidays occurred in one week, the two following Sundays could not be working days.

(5) Operatives desired that the present working day from daylight to dusk should be continued and there was nothing in the conditions of factory labor which called for more legislative restrictions upon the hours of labor of adult males.

(6) There should be a compulsory stoppage of work for full thirty minutes between hours of 12 and 1 P. M. for all adult male operatives not employed on the shift system. This favor had been asked for by mill operatives in their petition to the government.

The commission also made some minor suggestions for the consideration of factory owners: — First, the Bombay factory operatives should be paid monthly on the 15th of the month following that for which it was due. Second, most of the mills around Calcutta and some in Bombay, Ahmedabad and Cawnpore, provided medical advice and treatment for their operatives and those employers who had not yet adopted this dispensary system, should favorably consider the subject. Third, provident funds for operatives disabled by accident or disease should be established in all factories. In some factories, such a system was already in existence. All fines realized and all wages unpaid for any cause, should be credited to this fund. Fourth, some means of instruction of the children, when they were off work, should also be provided. Local governments and municipalities should meet the owners half way and contribute half the cost of teaching factory children. The expenditure for such purposes would be trifling.

“In conclusion”, remarked the commission, “we hope we may be allowed to say that we have been profoundly impressed with the vast and far-reaching benefits which the people of India are deriving from the development and prosperity of the great industries which we have seen in our tour through the country. It would, in our judgment, be a great calamity if by any injudicious recommendations or unnecessary restrictions the prosperity of those industries was endangered”.¹⁰⁴

The report of the commission was very favorably received by the Indian public. While it affirmed the necessity of further legislation for Indian factories, it also conclusively proved that the conditions of factory labor in India were radically different from those in England.¹⁰⁵ Its recommendations somewhat allayed the apprehension which clouded the minds of the Indian manufacturers regarding the outcome of the Manchester agitation. The Indian press throughout the country expressed approval

¹⁰⁴ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 18.

¹⁰⁵ The Times, London, Dec. 8, 1890, p. 5, c. 2.

of the report and looked upon it as a crushing retort to what it described as "an interested attempt on the part of the Lancashire millowners to check Indian competition".¹⁰⁶ The Upper India Chamber of Commerce described it as a "fair and impartial review of the evidence".¹⁰⁷ The Bengal National Chamber of Commerce representing the Indian commercial community expressed to the government their hope that no legislation would be undertaken which would endanger the prosperity of the manufacturing interests.¹⁰⁸

Further Agitation in England.

But the recommendations of the commission were not at all satisfactory to the Manchester interests. Even when the commission was investigating the labor conditions in Indian factories, Mr. Holt S. Hallett wrote an article that appeared in the *Times*, London, in which he described the evil effects of standing for long periods at factory work on the physique of operatives, especially of youths under eighteen and of women. "I would urge," added Mr. Hallett, "that a surgical examination of the operatives in one of the native factories should be undertaken by a medical committee".¹⁰⁹ Again on October 27, 1890, he urged, as before, in another article that the principles of the Berlin conference should be applied to Indian factories and the bill for Indian factory legislation should be laid upon the table of the House of Commons and debated before it was enacted into law.¹¹⁰ Sir George Campbell strongly criticised, on November 10, 1890, the last proposal of Mr. Hallett, whom he called the "advocate of Manchester commercial interests." He pointed out that questions between the English interests and those of the Indian people could not be discussed in the House of Commons, where one side was represented and the other side was not. "But it curiously enough happens," observed

¹⁰⁶ The *Times*, London, Dec. 25, 1890, p. 3, c. 1.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Jan. 9, 1891, p. 3, c. 1.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Jan. 28, 1891, p. 5, c. 1.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Oct. 15, 1890, p. 3, c. 4.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Oct. 27, 1890, p. 4, c. 4.

Sir George, "that philanthropic gentlemen who are actively moved in the matter are invariably the representatives of English manufacturing constituencies to whose trade the Indian manufacturers threaten rivalry."¹¹¹

On February 17, 1891, Mr. MacLean, Oldham, disappointed with the recommendations of the commission, asked the First Lord of the Treasury in the House of Commons, for assurances that the Government of India would pass the bill to amend the Indian factory act before the Viceroy left Calcutta for Simla, and that the provision of the bill would include as a minimum the rules adopted by the international labor conference at Berlin regarding age, hours of labor, and hours of rest and refreshment. The First Lord of the Treasury in reply gave the required assurances but said that it had been proposed to fix the minimum age for children at 9 years. Mr. MacLean insisted that as the minimum age for employment of children in some European countries was fixed at 10 years by the conference at Berlin and as Indian children were weaker physically than children in European countries, the Right Hon. Gentleman should impress upon the Indian Government the importance of fixing the minimum age at 10 years instead of at 9: "I have no hesitation in saying," said the First Lord in reply, "that the Secretary of State is impressing that view upon the Government of India, and will continue to do so."¹¹²

Sir George Campbell asked whether the recommendations of the Berlin conference were applicable to the case of a tropical country, and whether they were consistent with the desire of the people of India or whether they were only urged upon the Government by a few Lancashire members. "I am not aware of the limitation," replied the First Lord of the Treasury, "to which the Honorable Member refers, but I am under the impression that the sole object the Government of India and the Secretary of State have in view is that the regulation of labor in

¹¹¹ The Times, London, Mar. 10, 1890, p. 13, c. 5.

¹¹² Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates, 1891, 350 : 844-45.

factories in India is consonant with humanity and in the interests of the Indian people themselves".¹¹²

Controversy between the Secretary of State for India and the Governor General.

In the meantime the report of the commission was under consideration by the local governments, to which the Government of India had sent it for their opinion. But before all their opinions had been taken into consideration, the Government of India received three cable dispatches between January 23 and February 10, 1891, from the Secretary of State for India urging expedition of its views on the report of the commission and its legislative proposals. On February 12, 1891, the Government received another dispatch from the Secretary of State asking for assurance that the bill would be passed during the session then in progress, and that the act would include as a minimum the rules adopted at the Berlin conference regarding age of employment, hours of labor, and rest and refreshment.¹¹⁴

In reply, the Government of India notified the Secretary of State on Feb. 13, 1891, of the following conclusions which had been reached on the report of the factory commission:

(1) Eleven hours' actual work was to be prescribed as the maximum for women, with one hour's interval of rest; in addition, the Government of India was to reserve power to exempt certain industries, as resolved at the Berlin conference, but not individuals, as suggested by the commission.

(2) Nine and 14 were to be fixed as the minimum and maximum ages respectively for children; no separate class of young persons was to be made for reasons indicated by the commission.

(3) Half time work not exceeding the maximum of 7 hours was to be fixed for children defined as half-timers;

¹¹² *Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates*, 1891, 350:844-45.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1891, 356:1270.

with this provision in force, no interval of rest for children would be necessary.

(4) Sunday holiday was to be adopted for all factories, excluding continuous industries and seasonal occupations, which would be exempted by the Government of India according to the second resolution of the Berlin conference. Sunday labor was to be allowed only when a native festival was given within the week.

(5) Midday stoppage of half an hour was to be made compulsory in all factories subject to the same exceptions as Sunday labor.¹¹⁵

On Feb. 17, 1891, the Secretary of State informed the Government of India that the resolutions of the Berlin conference had a great weight with Her Majesty's Government and had attracted increasing attention, and in accordance with the recommendation made by that conference he insisted (1) that children's actual hours of work should be 6 with half an hour's interval of rest, (2) that women's interval of rest should be extended from one hour to one and a half, and (3) that employment of women and children at night should be prohibited, but this need not prevent work in cool hours of early morning. Finally, the Secretary of State also asked the Governor General whether he was satisfied that the minimum age for children at 9 instead of at 10 was safe and in accordance with the views of employees.

The Government of India in reply, on Feb. 20, 1891, informed the Secretary of State for India that in its opinion the conclusions, stated in the reply of Feb. 13, followed the resolutions of the Berlin conference as far as was reasonable, due regard being had to the difference in the conditions between India and Europe. The Government was, however, prepared to accept the second and the third modifications, regarding the period of rest for women and night work for women and children. "We must strongly object," continued the Governor General, "to your modifications of our conclusions relating to hours and interval

¹¹⁵ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890-91. Vol. 59. H. of C. 224, p. 3.

of rest for children. Anything less than half time according to season will very prejudicially affect the mills".¹¹⁶ In support of its position, the Government of India pointed out that casual absences were allowed in all Indian factories, that such a modification was uncalled for and would give rise to great dissatisfaction in the country. Moreover, so great a change in the bill at that time would necessitate further consultations with interested bodies and would thus result in the postponement of the bill for the session. The Government of India further showed that the Berlin conference, according to the resolutions of which the Secretary of State tried to regulate the hours of labor in India, provided 10 hours for young persons between 14 and 16 years of age. As 12 and 14 in India corresponded respectively to those ages in Europe, the Government decided not to create any separate young person class. "If, therefore, your Lordship's proposal as to hours for children is pressed," affirmed the Governor General, "we shall have to reconsider our decision as to young persons." To the last question of the Secretary of State, the Government replied that the minimum age of 9 in India corresponded with 10 in southern Europe and that it was safe and in accordance with the wishes of factory laborers.

In the dispatch of Feb. 21, 1891, the Secretary of State for India insisted on the statutory recognition of the interval of rest for children and on the passing of this bill in the same session. "Her Majesty's Government," asserted the Secretary of State, "have considered your telegram of the 20th instant and have decided that bill must be proceeded with and passed this session without fail".¹¹⁷ On February 24, 1891, the Government of India accepted the order with the condition that such an interval of rest for half-timers would be so arranged as not to necessitate the stoppage of machinery. On the same day, the Secretary of State approved of this modification.

On March 6, 1891, the report of the select committee on factory bill was submitted to the Legislative Council of India. The principal amendments proposed were: —

¹¹⁶ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 224, p. 4.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

(1) Any factory employing 50 persons should come under the act. Local governments were to be empowered to extend this measure even to a factory where only 20 persons were employed.¹¹⁸

(2) The minimum and maximum ages of children were to be fixed at 9 and 14 years respectively.

(3) All operatives were to enjoy complete rest on Sundays; unless a holiday intervened during three days before or after, when the work should be done on the previous or following Sunday.

(4) The labor of women was restricted to 11 hours and to the period between 5 A. M. and 8 P. M. except where the shift system was enforced. They should get one and a half hours' rest for every 11 hours' work or a proportionate rest for a less amount of work.

(5) Factories not worked on the shift system must stop for half an hour at midday.

(6) Children were only to be employed for 7 hours unless in shifts when they might work two shifts of 4 hours each, provided that an interval of two hours was given. Children were not to be employed under any circumstances between 8 P. M. and 5 A. M. An interval of, or intervals aggregating to, at least half an hour, was to be given to children working for 6 consecutive hours.

On March 7, 1891, the Government of India informed the Secretary of State of the two following important changes made in the bill:¹¹⁹ —

(1) Women were permitted to work at night when work was arranged on the shift system. Night work was uncommon, but where it prevailed, the Government saw no reason to debar women from it. In hot weather it was less fatiguing and the people in India were accustomed to sleep at any hour.

(2) Where the shift system prevailed, children were allowed to work two shifts, each not exceeding four hours, with minimum intervals of two hours.

¹¹⁸ This provision was made to enable the Bombay Government to bring within the act the small ginning establishments which were reported to be in objectionable condition.

¹¹⁹ *Ct. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890-91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 224, p. 5.*

According to the Indian Government these concessions were fair and consistent with the health of the operative and essential for the passing of the bill immediately.

In reply, the Secretary of State, on March 9, 1891, did not object to the permission of night work for women, provided the actual hours of work did not amount to more than 11 hours in any one day and that one hour and a half of rest was granted. Regarding the second concession, the Secretary of State affirmed that Her Majesty's Government could not agree to any such modifications; but children could work two shifts of four hours with intervals of two hours, and one shift of four hours on alternate days, provided no child's labor exceeded 12 hours in any two consecutive days.¹²⁰

Passage of the Bill.

On March 19, 1891, the factory amendment bill was finally taken into consideration by the Indian Legislative Council. It was the result of three sets of recommendations, viz., those of the Bombay Factory Commission of 1884, those of the Berlin Labor Conference of 1890, and those of the Indian Factory Commission of 1890, and, as such, was materially different from the original bill, which was formulated on the recommendation of the Commission of 1884 only and introduced on January 31, 1890. The point was, therefore, raised whether the opinion of the local governments and commercial bodies should not be secured before it was taken up for final consideration by the council. It was pointed out in the course of discussion that though the select committee on the bill was appointed about a year before, its services were not called into requisition until the second of March, 1891, and that the report of the select committee was not published until

¹²⁰ This final telegram was sent as urgent under the Section 26 of the 21 and 22 Victoria Chapter 106, which makes provision for urgent cases. This provision empowers the Secretary of State in extreme urgency to override the opinion of the Government of India and also of the members of the Indian Council. Parl. Debates, 1891, 356:1268. See also Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890-91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 224, p. 5.

the 7th of March; that is, 13 days before the bill was taken up by the council. Distant parts of the country had not had sufficient time to express their opinion. In reply Mr. P. P. Hutchins, C. S. I., said for the Government that the main provisions of the bill had been telegraphed all over the country immediately after its publication and the opinion of all parties concerned had been secured.

The chief points at issue in connection with the provisions of the bill were the increased stringency on child labor and the introduction of restriction on woman labor. As regards child labor, the main objection was raised against the provision that a child employed continuously for six hours must have half an hour's interval of rest. The objection was based on the following arguments:— First, such compulsory rest was unnecessary in consideration of the fact that children henceforward were going to be half-timers. Second, it would not be possible to grant them such a leave of absence from moving machinery at which they were generally employed. This provision would only serve to militate against the employment of children in factories, and be, therefore, injurious.

In reply, the government pointed out that this was not a novel feature in the provision; for the act, then in force, allowed one hour's rest for 9 hours' work, which, if maintained in the same proportion, would give 45 minutes instead of 30 for 6 hours' work. Where such interval was already in use, it would not be hard to adjust the work in rotation, or otherwise, for the stated intervals. Moreover, all employees were accustomed to taking occasional leave of absence for a few minutes, even though employed on moving machinery, and there were always some extra hands to meet such cases. Neighbors were also always ready to help one another. The new provision only made statutory recognition of the existing practice. Regarding the provision for barring children from night work, the government said that children had never worked at night and it was better that they should not start doing so.

The most important feature of the bill, as indicated above, was the provision for the regulation of woman labor in factories. Three members of the council compared the

labor of women in the field and in the factory and showed that the work of the latter was much easier and more remunerative than that of the former. In the field, the women had to work longer hours, at times in rain and at times in the burning sun. Mr. H. W. Bliss, Madras, official member, said that, owing to higher wages earned in the factory, there had been created new wants and higher standards of comfort among female employees. Mr. J. Nugent, official member, objected to the limitation of the hours of labor for women to 11 by legislation, though they actually did not work longer hours. It interfered with a woman's exercise of her own discretion and the disposition of her own labor. But his stronger objection was to the prolonged compulsory grant of intervals of rest, amounting to one hour and a half for every 11 hours of work. This he insisted went beyond the recommendation of the factory commission and was drafted from the resolutions of the Berlin conference. The effect of this provision would be; — The decrease of wages of women during the winter months in all the factories except a few where artificial light had been introduced, and stricter discipline which would prove harmful to them. Referring to the fact that the Bombay millowners were willing to accept this provision, Mr. Nugent doubted seriously whether they realized the full significance of its consequences. Mr. Bliss said that if 12½ hours were taken as an average working day, this provision would shorten women's work by one hour in comparison with men's. The question which he raised was how far it would result in the disorganization of the industry. Mill owners agreed to the provision on the belief that they would be able to dispense with the services of female tenders of moving machinery. Mr. J. L. Mackay, president of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce, said that if an act were passed to this effect, it would certainly drive many women from factory labor and result in disaster to them. They earned four times as much in the factory as in the field. "As regards the relative hardships of the two conditions of labor," added Mr. Mackay, "I feel sure if a Lancashire philanthropist had to choose between working on the

roads under an April sun and tending a spinning frame in the shelter of a factory, he would rapidly run from the road and make for the mill".¹²¹

Discussing the question of night work for women, Mr. Nugent pointed out that in cotton gins and presses, it would be found disastrous to exclude women from night labor during the busy season, when the work must be done within a definite time. This period of work was short and no harm could arise from such seasonal work, though the hours were rather long. Mr. G. H. Evans, non-official member, said that conception of night in Europe differed from that in India. Work requiring little light was more congenial at night in India than during the day.

In reply, the government said that the 11 hour day would not affect more than 20 per cent of woman factory workers. This would not apply to Bengal where the shift system was in force. The provision was based on the recommendation of the factory commission and might be taken as unanimously agreed upon. The government admitted that the interval of rest had been raised from one hour to one hour and a half following the resolution of the Berlin conference. But 11 hours' work with a period of rest for an hour and a half would constitute a 12½ hour working day, usually found in factories. Under this arrangement, women could attend and leave factories at the same time as the men, the only essential point being to arrange the work so as to give them the appointed rest. Generally two persons worked together, as at Ahmedabad, and one of them could easily take leave for some time and they generally did take such periodical spells of rest. What difference would it make, if such intervals were arranged for beforehand?

One of the most irritating points in connection with the proposed act was the attempt on the part of the officials in the India Office and of the Manchester interests to impose on India the resolutions of the Berlin conference. Almost all the members deprecated it on the ground that

¹²¹ India, Legislative Council Proceedings, Calcutta, 1891, 30:161.

India was not represented at the conference at least not directly, that no representative who attended the conference had any practical knowledge of India and of her conditions of labor, and that conditions in Asia and in Europe were quite different. It was pointed out that the one and a half hour's compulsory interval of rest for women had been adopted from the resolutions of the Berlin conference. But the protocol of the conference had never been laid before the public of India in such a way as to invite attention, or to raise suspicion, that their essence would be incorporated in the factory law of India. "I must lodge a protest," said Rao Bahadur Krishnaji Lakshman Nulkar, C. I. E., non-official Indian member, "at the attempt which appears to have been made by Parliament through the India Office to force on India some of the conclusions of the Berlin conference, which had exclusive reference to European conditions, and in arriving at which Indian interests have not been properly represented".¹²²

The most heated part of the discussion on the bill was centered on the origin of the measure. All the members, official and non-official, referred more or less plainly to the belief, which prevailed throughout the country, that the bill was introduced not because that there was any proven necessity for it, but because it was demanded by Lancashire manufacturers.

Mr. Mackay remarked that there had been for the past years a sense of insecurity caused by the feeling that there was a risk that interests of India were being sacrificed on the altar of English party politics. It had again been brought to their recollection by the fact that not long before the Indian import duties were abolished for the benefit of Lancashire manufacturers and replaced by a direct tax upon income entirely unsuited to the conditions of the country, and it was apprehended that Lancashire influence and Oldham agitation might again carry the day.¹²³

¹²² India, Legislative Council Proceedings, Calcutta, 1891, 80:179.

¹²³ Ibid.

Mr. Nugent said that this measure regulating the labor of women and children in factories was only a prelude to the imposition of further restrictions which would result in the exclusion of all women and of nearly all children from employment on moving machinery, as feared by the commission. The interests of another class of people who, at a great risk and by investment of millions of pounds sterling, had built new industries, adding immense wealth to the country and providing means of livelihood to thousands of poor people, should also be taken into consideration. "We should, I think," concluded Mr. Nugent, "protect the Indian operative within all reasonable limits, but we should not protect out of existence him and the industry which is his livelihood, nor should the protection of the Indian mill-hand be converted into a device for the protection of the British manufacturer against the Indian mill-owner".¹²⁴

Rao Bahadur Krishnaji Lakshman Nulkar, expressed the opinion that the British philanthropists could not expect India to believe that their feelings of humanity were really shocked at the hardships under which the Indian factory laborers worked when they imposed the measure for their speedy removal; for not long ago the same philanthropists had worked successfully for the abolition of the cotton duties and thereby compelled the Government of India to enhance the salt duty to make up the financial deficit. And he suggested that the Government should publish unreservedly the entire official correspondence between England and India and let the people solve their doubts on a matter which had caused so much irritation all over the country.

Mr. Bliss drew the attention of the council to the general question of Indian factory legislation, the impulse for which was undoubtedly not indigenous but came from England. He was not afraid of being guilty of injustice to some of those who professed anxiety to save Indian operatives from oppression and overwork, if he suggested

¹²⁴ India Legislative Council Proceedings, Calcutta, 1891.
30 : 171.

that, in some cases, the underlying motive of that impulse was the hope that restriction imposed on Indian factory labor would lead to the profits of the mill owners and operatives of Lancashire. "My Lord", concluded Mr. Bliss, "I venture to think that this is a matter on which there should be a very clear understanding, the use of the words "as a minimum" foreshadows an attempt to force upon the manufacturing industries of India restrictions which are absolutely unnecessary for the protection of the operatives and the effect of which must be the serious injury, if not extinction, of the work to which they are applied. The present situation of India in this respect appears to me to be ominously like that of Ireland at the end of the seventeenth century. In both cases we have a subject agricultural country seeking to establish manufactures which will compete with the manufactures of the country which has subjected it. Let us hope that the parallel may not be carried further, and that England may not bring disgrace upon herself by suppressing the cotton and jute industries of India as she suppressed the woollen industries of Ireland".¹²⁶

In support of the bill, the Governor General said that the proposals had been framed with an earnest desire to hold the balance fairly between the interests of Indian industry and the demands which had been made for even stricter regulation of the conditions of Indian factory labor. It was absolutely necessary for the government to effect a settlement of the matter in a way that might be acceptable both in India and in England. "We believe," added His Excellency, "that the effect of our measure will be to place factory labor in India on a proper footing, and that our bill will be accepted here and at home, not, as the Hon. Mr. Nugent would have us believe, as a mere "prelude" to still further restrictions, but as a settlement as final as any settlement of such a question can be."¹²⁷

¹²⁶ India, Legislative Council Proceedings, Calcutta, 1891. 30 : 177.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 30 : 192.

With some minor amendments, the bill was passed on the same day, and the act was called Indian Factories Act, 1891, being Act No XI of 1891, and came into force on January 1, 1892.

Chief Provisions of the Act.

1. The Act included under its jurisdiction all factories employing 50 persons and might be extended to those employing 20 persons at the option of the local governments.
 2. The minimum and maximum age limits for the employment of children were raised to 9 and 12 respectively. The certification of their age was made compulsory. Their hours of work were limited to 7 in any one day and to the period between 5 A. M. and 8 P. M. only with half an hour's interval of rest for every 6 hours' continuous work.
 3. The hours of work for women were limited to 11 in any one day and to the period between 5 A. M. and 8 P. M. with an interval of rest of an hour and a half, or proportionately less for less number of hours.
 4. All factories had to stop work a full half-hour about midday. There was also a weekly holiday on Sunday or any other substituted day in the week.
 5. The local governments were given power to make rules regarding the measures of sanitation and comforts, such as cleanliness, ventilation and water supply.
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CHAPTER IV.
FACTORY ACT OF 1911.

Agitation in England for Amendment.

The principal feature of the Factory Act of 1891 was the regulation of the hours of labor for women. The restriction of their work to 11 hours a day and the compulsory interval of rest for an hour and a half had a far-reaching effect. But the immediate effect of this measure was that 259 women were thrown out of the factories of Ahmedabad and other places, where they had been employed in the same kind of work as men, and the wages of the rest were reduced 25 per cent.¹

As in the case of the first factory act, the provisions of the present act satisfied neither the Manchester interests in England nor the textile interests in India. Philanthropists in both countries were also disappointed. No sooner was the act passed than agitation was started in England to amend it. Two members representing Oldham and Northwest Manchester in the House of Commons, one of them being Mr. MacLean, the foremost agitator for the restriction of labor in Indian factories, decided to await the result of the new act before the renewal of agitation for further restriction.² But others, both in and out of Parliament, kept on the agitation for the re-enactment of the act, even before it came into force.

It should be remembered that the British delegates at the Berlin conference advocated 12 years as the minimum age for employment of children in factories and they did so with explicit permission of Lord Salisbury, who was then foreign minister. England pledged herself to conform resolutely to the benevolent principles of the conference. But when the question as to raising the age of British factory children from 10 to 12 years as the minimum requirement for employment arose, the British

¹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 57.

² Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates, 1891, 356:1277.

Government found it a hard task to maintain the position she had taken and was not, in fact, able to do so. Even some of the champions of the Manchester interests, who, in season and out of season, attempted the enforcement of the resolutions of the Berlin conference on India, stood against the application of the same to England. Mr. MacLean tried to show, on May 7, 1891, in the House of Commons, that the assent given by Her Majesty's Government to the above resolution was only conditional and subject to the right on the part of Great Britain "to make such reservations as special local circumstances, the sentiments of particular classes of the population, and the necessities of special branches of industry may from time to time require".³ Hon. W. Summers pointed out that the quotation given by Mr. MacLean had nothing to do with the question of raising the age of half-timers, but had reference to an entirely distinct and separate question. Mr. MacLean in reply said that Her Majesty's Government was under no obligation to foreign powers with respect to children employed on the half-time system.⁴ For this change in attitude, Mr. MacLean was severely accused of inconsistency. Sir George Campbell remarked that Mr. MacLean objected to applying to Great Britain the very resolution of the Berlin conference, which he had been, from the first, one of the most determined to force upon India. In his attempt to exonerate himself, Mr. MacLean replied that since the India Government did not accept these resolutions, he was perfectly free to act on the question of applying them to Great Britain.⁵

The most prominent agitator outside Parliament was Mr. Holt S. Hallett, who for the past two years, as we have seen, had been writing on the necessity of strict restrictive measures on labor in Indian factories. He was regarded as an authority on the subject and had on several occasions been quoted by other agitators in Parliament.*

* *Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates*, 1891, 353: 282—4.

* *Ibid.*

* *Ibid.*, 1891, 356: 1277.

* *E. G.*, by Sir John Gorst, the editor of the *Times*, etc.

On May 20, 1891, he had a long article in the Times, London, severely criticising the new Indian factory act, which did not extend to seasonal employments nor protect workers in factories employing fewer than 50 hands. "Even in factories working through the year and employing over 50 persons," wrote Mr. Hallett, "girls above 14 years of age are classed as women notwithstanding that Mrs. Pechey Phipson, who for the last seven years has medically attended native Indian females, declared, in her recent lecture delivered in Bombay, that a Hindoo girl of 15 is about equal to an English girl of 11 instead of the reverse, and that statements to the contrary by Englishmen who had no opportunity of being acquainted with Hindoo family life were totally misleading. It is very difficult to hunt down and exterminate a lie which has been so successfully propagated by persons eager to delude the public. Thus we find the untruth, propagated by the Indian mill owners in their interests, repeated as gospel by the Viceroy in his telegram to Lord Cross, dated February 20, 1891, four months afterward Mrs. Pechey Phipson unmasked it and conclusively proved it to be a falsehood".⁷

Mr. Hallett furthermore complained that the same protection which had been granted by the factory and workshop acts in Great Britain was not accorded to the working classes of India, though a resolution had been unanimously passed by the Associated Chamber of Commerce to that effect on March 3, 1891, and he finally asked the British electors to take up the question in Parliament. "Children under the new Act," continued Mr. Hallett, "are allowed to work 42 hours a week in the large factories and 168 hours a week in small factories and workshops. Lads from 14 to 18 years of age are permitted to work 141 hours a week in the large factories and 168 hours in small factories and workshops. Girls from 14 years of age upwards are classed as women and are permitted to work 66 hours a week in the large factories and 168 hours a week in minor factories and

⁷ The Times, London, May 20, 1891, p. 18, c. 1.

workshops. Such legislation is a slur upon the English name and a disgrace to this nation".⁹

On June 26, 1891, Mrs. Phipson wrote a letter from Bombay, which was published in the *London Times* on July 17 following,⁹ criticising Mr. Hallett's use of her speech on the condition of Indian women as a protest against their work in Indian factories. "I have read from time to time," continued Mrs. Phipson, "the letters of your correspondent, Mr. Holt S. Hallett, upon the Indian Factory Act, and have been struck more than once with the small acquaintance with the conditions of Indian factory life displayed in them. But my astonishment reaches a climax on seeing words of mine quoted as an argument against the employment of Indian women in factories. If, as it seems to me, they are slow in reaching physical development, there is all the more reason why they should adopt the comparatively light and easy work of a mill-hand instead of the hard labor of a coolie or of an agricultural laborer".¹⁰ Contrasting the conditions of work under which she had personally seen Indian women undergo extreme hardships either from carrying heavy weights in the scorching rays of the tropical sun or from planting paddy in a field with "their heads in the fire and their feet in the water" with "the quiet, easy, well-paid work of an airy, shady mill," Mrs. Phipson remarked that the recent factory act by making a difference between the hours of work for men and women would compel the manufacturers to oust women from the mills wherever they were employed on moving machinery with men. "Thus," added Mrs. Phipson, "is a cruel wrong about to be inflicted under the guise of English philanthropy."¹¹

Finally, on Aug. 4, 1891, Hon. A. D. Provand, Glasgow, Blackfriars, drew the attention of the House of Commons to the insufficient character of the recent Indian Factory Act for removing the abuses in connection with labor in Indian factories. He referred to the rapid growth and

⁹ The *Times*, London, May 20, 1891, p. 8, c. 2.

⁹ *Ibid.*, July 17, 1891, p. 14, c. 2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

prosperous condition of Indian factories, which had put employers in a better position to introduce reforms, and mentioned the existence of long hours of factory work and the inadequacy of inspection even under the recent act. On the ground that Indian laboring classes could not protect themselves by combination and that the Indian women, owing to physical weakness, were unable to stand long hours of factory work, Mr. Provand urged the House "to do partial justice to the laboring classes of India"¹² by re-amending the act according to the provisions of the British factory act and the resolutions of the Berlin conference.

The proposal of Mr. Provand was strongly opposed in the House of Commons by Hon. T. R. Buchanan, Edinburgh, W., and Sir George Campbell. Mr. Buchanan protested against any intention on the part of the Secretary of State for India to carry out Mr. Provand's proposal and pointed out that the imposition of the provisions of the British factory acts on India would result in the usurpation of the function which had been delegated to the legislative authority of the Governor General and Council and would, therefore, be extremely unfair both to the people and to the Government of India. He referred to the recent Indian factory act, the details of which were settled by instructions from the India office and under protest, on several points from the Governor General of India. Regarding the second proposal, Mr. Buchanan said that the decision of the Berlin conference relating to factory legislation had not been carried out by the ministry of which the Secretary of State for India was himself a member. "It would, therefore," concluded Mr. Buchanan, "be altogether inconsistent if Her Majesty's Government were to endeavor to enforce legislation in reference to factory labor in India, while, at the same time, they are not willing to insist on the recommendations of the Berlin conference being adopted in their own country".¹³

Sir George Campbell said that he did not think that any case had been made out regarding atrocities connected

¹² *Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates*, 1891, 856: 1260-66.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 356: 1267.

with the work and labor of Indian men, women and children, to which allusion had been made, and that Her Majesty's Government, which very much depended upon Lancashire votes, had already urged the Government of India to do a great deal more than it was willing to do. The Indian Government had done all that was necessary and it was questionable whether they had not gone a little too far in regard to the women of India. Referring to the possible elimination of women from factories under the new act, he said that it would be an enormous evil to India. "Of all things," continued Sir George, "we should try to bring forward the women of India; to give them an opportunity of getting work at fair wages, and thereby of raising themselves to a higher position in the social scale. Such an opportunity they have been getting in the Indian factories, and it is one which we should endeavor still more to develop. What I say is that at the instigation of jealous Lancashire manufacturers to put any clogs or hindrances on such employment would be to do a very great injury to the people of India."¹⁴

After this discussion, the agitation of the Manchester party in the House of Commons subsided. Mr. S. Smith, Flintshire, one of the principal agitators, admitted that one of the principal motives of legislative restriction on Indian factory labor was the indignation of the Lancashire operatives at the competition to which they were subjected.¹⁵ "But I could not help considering," declared Mr. MacLean, the leader of the Parliamentary agitation after that act was passed, "that there was a political aspect to this question. We know that the concessions which have been made — and they are very substantial concessions — have been wrung from the Government of India against their will."¹⁶ Commenting on this discussion in the House of Commons, the *Times*, in its editorial of August 10, 1891, remarked that the narrow escape, which India had again had from wide-spread

¹⁴ *Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates*, 1891, 356:1274—75.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 356:1269.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 356:1277.

starvation might well make the fair-minded Englishman consider whether it would be true philanthropy or political immorality for England to interfere with industries, which fed millions of men, women and children.¹⁷

But Mr. Hallett carried the matter still further. The seventh International Congress of Hygiene and Demography had its meetings in London from August 10 to 17, 1891. Mr. Hallett brought the question of Indian factory legislation before the section on Indian Hygiene and Demography. He complained that the Indian Government refused protective legislation to the great bulk of the working classes, that children of any age were thus excluded from the operation of the Act and that merciless employers took advantage of their helplessness. "It is surely abominable cruelty," continued Mr. Hallett, "to allow lads, girls, women, and children to be employed in them (cotton presses and gins) day after day for 23½ hours at a stretch."¹⁸ Mr. Hallett asserted that even under the recent Act of the Indian Government lads and men might be employed day and night for six days in the week, or for 144 hours a week without rest, and for 141 hours a week in mills using electric or other artificial light, but not working on the shift system.¹⁹ In support of his view that the age limits of children were too low and the working hours too long, he quoted the opinion of several physicians acquainted with Indian factory conditions and again urged the application of the British factory and workshop act to the Indian Empire so that the "miserably degraded and joyless toilers in dark, dirty, dusky, overcrowded and unwholesome dens", the "puny overtasked natives of India", who were treated "worse than beasts of burden," "slaving as no slave would work," might be raised from their existing "state of moral and physical degradation and rescued "from the

¹⁷ Loc. cit., p. 12, c. 1.

¹⁸ International Congress of Hygiene and Demography. London, 1891. Transactions, Vol. 10, Div. 2 (Demography), p. 221.

¹⁹ Ibid.

inhuman exaction of their merciless task masters" who were "wringing the very life out of them."²⁰

Mr. K. N. Bahadurji, M. D., London, professor at the Bombay Grant Medical College and Indian representative at the Congress, read a paper on the conditions of labor in Indian factories, in which he contended:

First, that the hours of work in factories were not too long nor too arduous. The operatives did not work more than 9½ or 10 hours out of the 12 hours and 6 minutes of the average time spent in factories. Owing to habit and constitution, Indian operatives were accustomed to stop work after short spells and over 10 per cent of them were always found outside of the mill. It was thus necessary for them to work longer than English operatives.

Second, that as regards conditions under which work was performed, much could be said in favor of Indian factories. "In point of light, ventilation and breathing space," continued Dr. Bahadurji, "the mill he (the operative) works in, is much superior to the chamber he lives in."²¹ In the open field he said that the Indian laborer worked from sunrise to sunset in all sorts of weather with a temperature ranging from 110 to 160 degrees of heat, while in the mill the temperature was about 95 degrees, and he was protected from the direct rays of the sun. The mill atmosphere in India was free from the degree of moisture which was imparted to the mill-air in England from the use of steam all day long. The Indian mills were more lofty and capacious, giving more breathing space per person than did the generality of English mills. There was also the immense advantage of the Indian sun, which did away with the harmful effect of artificial light.

Third, that the operatives did not show any sign of breakdown in health or physique. The women were particularly healthy and strong as compared with the woman laborers outside the mill. This Dr. Bahadurji proved from

²⁰ International Congress of Hygiene and Demography, London, 1891, Transaction, Vol. 10, Div. 2 (Demography), p. 225.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

his own experience as well as from that of Dr. Gray, chief surgeon, J. J. Hospital, Bombay.

Fourth, that the factory workers earned better wages than people of the same class elsewhere. This could be proved by the Government resolution that the condition of the districts from which they came had been ameliorated by the mill industry of Bombay and that the periodical famine was not experienced as of old.

Fifth, that identical laws could be applied only to identical conditions. The application of the English factory law to Indian mills would mean ignoring the natural conditions of the country and its people. Mr. Hallett's remark related principally to the conditions of work in cotton gins and presses, where the work was sometimes hard, and where, owing to the shortness of the season and the desire of the operatives to earn enough in three or four months to keep them for the rest of the year, the hours were long. There was no parallel case of such employment in England, and it was doubtful if the English factory law would have been applied to such establishments without modification to suit the peculiar conditions of work.

Dr. Albert Leffingwell, who visited Bombay in 1881, in supporting Mr. Hallett remarked that during his observation of poverty-stricken operatives in various parts of the world, he never saw a more downhearted and apparently overworked class of working men, women, and children than that in India.²²

Surgeon General H. Cook, M. D., F. R. C. P., who had spent 30 years in India, 15 years of which were in the City of Bombay as Principal of the Medical College and Chief of the staff of the Bombay Government Hospital, corroborated the statement of Dr. Bahadurji in all its essential points and remarked that Mr. Hallett's paper was "greatly disfigured by exaggeration."²³ He con-

²² International Congress of Hygiene and Demography, London, 1891. Transactions, Vol. 10, Div. 2 (Demography), p. 244.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

tradicted the statements of Mr. Hallett and Dr. Leffingwell in their harrowing picture of Indian factory workers. "I have often passed," he said, "while driving through Bombay, crowds of operatives thronging out of the mills at dusk, and they certainly have not the exhausted and worn-out appearance depicted in Mr. Hallett's paper. They by no means look like the "driven, bullied, beaten slaves" he describes, but a throng of able-bodied operatives. — laughing, singing, chatting with rapid, if not boisterous action, hastening to their homes in the enjoyment of release from labor, and the picture by no means represents a mass of wretched beings, struggling for work at any price and knowing nothing of the real pleasure of existence."²⁴

Dissatisfaction in India with the New Act.

After a few months, the agitation in England for amendment of the second factory act subsided. A similar desire for the amendment also prevailed in India and was revealed by the inquiry undertaken by the India Government on behalf of the Royal Commission on Labor in Great Britain.

On January 16, 1891, the Royal Commission on Labor, appointed "to inquire into the questions affecting the relations between employers and employed, the combinations of employers and employed, and the conditions of labor,"²⁵ asked the Under Secretary of State for India for information on labor condition in the textile factories of India. Such information became necessary owing to "the competition of India with Lancashire in the textile trades." Following an order of the Secretary of State for India, the Government of India requested on March 14, 1892, the local governments to prepare memoranda summarising the information which the questions of the royal commission were designed to elicit. The local governments having prepared their

²⁴ International Congress of Hygiene and Demography. London. 1891, Transactions, Vol. 10, Div. 2 (Demography), p. 242.

²⁵ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1892, Vol. 34, C. 6708, p. 3.

reports, the Government of India submitted them to the Secretary of State for India on Sept. 28, 1892. "In so far as evidence was obtained with regard to the competition between India and Lancashire in the textile industries," observed the Government of India in summarising the reports, "it is stated unanimously that the condition of labor in the mills and factories is not comparable in the two countries. It is denied that India does compete with England in the spinning of finer yarns and cloth; but, even if the contrary is admitted for argument's sake, the loss in one branch of trade is a gain in another, in as much as the cotton spinning machinery in Indian mills is almost all imported from home."²⁶

The outstanding feature of the reports in so far as factory legislation was concerned, was a strong desire on the part of employers, employees, and philanthropists in India, to amend the recent factory act. The millowners and those who were interested in the textile trade were strongly opposed to the restrictions put by the new act on the labor of women and children. They, therefore, urged that the provisions limiting the hours of labor for women and children be repealed and that the age for the employment of boys to full time work be reduced from 14 to 12 as before. On the other hand, the employees and philanthropists did not fail to reiterate their demand for a uniform legal eleven hours' day in all factories and for provisions for compensation in case of accidents and for medical aid in case of sickness.²⁷

The second factory act was, however, too new to receive any serious consideration for amendment. Like the agitation in England, these propositions did not have any practical effect on factory legislation. But the different interests voiced their opinion on the question and sooner or later they were going to force the issue into prominence.

²⁶ Gl. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1892, Vol. 96, C. 6795, p. 107-08.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 107.

Agitation in Scotland for regulating labor in Bengal.

Up to this time, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce in Great Britain took the most active part in the factory legislation in India. But about this time a new force appeared in the field. Like the cotton industry in Bombay, the jute industry was growing rapidly in Bengal. Jute fabrics have long formed the rough clothing of the poorer classes of people. With the invasion of cheap British cotton goods into the Indian market, jute fabrics fell into disuse and it was only with the increased exportation of grains and the consequent demand for sacks that the manufacture of gunny bags was started. The first jute factory was built at Serampore in 1854.²⁸ For the first few years the industry did not make any headway; then all of a sudden several factories sprang into existence and the industry began to make steady progress, as shown below:

The Growth of the Jute Industry in India.²⁹

(Quinquennial averages from 1879—80 to 1893—4).

Years	number of mills	authorised capital (in lakhs of rupees)	Number in thousands of		
			Looms	spindles	persons employed
1879-80 to 1883-84	21 (100)	270.7 (100)	5.5 (100)	88 (100)	88.8 (100)
1884-5 to 1888-89	24 (114)	341.6 (126)	7 (127)	138.4 (157)	52.7 (156)
1889-90 to 1893-4	26 (124)	402.8 (149)	8.3 (151)	172.6 (196)	64.3 (166)

The above table shows that in 15 years from 1879—80 to 1893—94, the jute industry in Bengal increased 24 per cent in the number of mills, 49 per cent in the amount of capital, 51 per cent in the number of looms, 96 per cent in the number of spindles, and 66 per cent in the number of persons employed.

In the meantime a certain jute mill at Serampore, Bengal, erected electric installations and began work night and day with the help of three shifts. The progress

²⁸ Imperial Gazetteer of India, London, 1907, 3: 205.

²⁹ Statis. of British India, Calcutta, 1921, Vol. 1, p. v.

of the jute industry and the installation of electricity for night work in Bengal aroused the spirit of rivalry of the Dundee millowners who looked upon Bengal as a source of raw jute which they would manufacture for the world market. On June 1, 1894, Sir John Leng, senior Member of Parliament for Dundee, asked the Secretary of State for India in the House of Commons whether the employment of women and young men at night in the factories in Bengal was lawful and requested him to make inquiries with a view to requiring all factories in India to conform to the rules established in the United Kingdom. In reply, the Secretary of State for India stated that it was not unlawful for factories in India to work day and night with three shifts, but women could not be employed before 5 A. M. and after 8 P. M. except with the permission of the special inspector.²⁰

On the instruction of the Secretary of State for India, special inquiry was, however, started by the Government of Bengal. On September 16, 1894, after due inquiry, the Government of Bengal reported that the employment of women at night in the factory at Serampore was approved by the special inspector and was within the province of the factory law.²¹

The jute interests in Scotland were not, however, satisfied with the reply of the Bengal Government. On December 26, 1894, the Dundee Chamber of Commerce unanimously resolved to draw the attention of the Secretary of State for India to the following matters:²²

(1) The injustice of India's competition with British textile industries, since according to the Indian factory law, women and young persons could be employed for 22 hours and children for 15 hours against 10 hours in Great Britain;

²⁰ Rept. of Committee of Bengal Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, 1896, 1:1164.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1164-69.

²² *Ibid.*, 1896, 2:1163.

(2) The lack of provisions for adequate and systematic inspection by officials trained for the work as required in the United Kingdom;

(3) The evils of overwork arising from the employment of women and young persons under the provisions of the shift system.

The Chamber urged that on these grounds factories conducted by subjects of the Crown and equally under the control of Parliament, whether in India or at home, should be subjected to similar conditions.

In submitting these resolutions to the Secretary of State for India, the Chamber hoped that they would be favorably considered by the Government of India and that steps would be taken to remove the injustice complained of, and to assimilate the provisions of the Act regulating factories in India to those of the Factory Act of the United Kingdom.²³

At the annual meeting of the Association of the Chamber of Commerce of the United Kingdom, held on March 12, 13 and 14, 1895, the resolutions passed by the Dundee Chamber of Commerce were brought forward for adoption, but were rejected. The speakers who opposed the motion pointed out the danger of intermeddling with the interests of the largest population subject to the British Crown, and contended that on grounds of imperial policy it was not wise to endeavor to force upon the possessions and colonies of the United Kingdom the same ideas of manufacture and production which were adopted in the United Kingdom. It was also pointed out that the policy which inspired the Dundee resolutions was the same policy that lost England the North American colonies. Practically on the same grounds, the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and the Oldham Chamber of Commerce refused to support the motion of the Dundee Chamber.²⁴

In the meantime, through the Government of India, the Secretary of State for India forwarded the resolutions

²³ Report of the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. Calcutta, 1896, 1:1162.

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 1171.

passed by the Dundee Chamber of Commerce to the Government of Bengal. On May 9, 1895, the Government of Bengal sent the resolutions to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and to the Indian Jute Manufacturers' Association, both of which represented the cotton interests of Bengal, and asked for an expression of opinion on the matters dealt with in the resolutions and also on the necessity of amending the law regarding the employment of women and children and the adequacy of inspection.³⁵

Unlike the cotton industry, the jute industry in India was controlled by the British capitalists. The resolutions passed by the Dundee Chamber of Commerce created great resentment among the cotton interests. Even before the receipt of the resolutions from the Government of Bengal, the chairman of the Indian Jute Manufacturers' Association, in a speech at the annual general meeting held on March 4, 1895, strongly condemned the resolutions passed by the Dundee Chamber of Commerce. On June 28, 1895, the Association in reply to the request of the Government of Bengal sent a copy of the speech by the chairman with some additional comments. On September 24, 1895, the Bengal Chamber of Commerce also sent in their reply to the Government of Bengal. Both the Association and the Chamber strongly criticised the resolutions passed by the Dundee Chamber of Commerce and pointed out the following discrepancies:³⁶

(1) All the evidence that could be gathered went to show that instead of working for 22 or even 15 hours as stated in the resolutions, women and young persons worked actually less than 8 hours a day.

(2) The inspection of factories was complete and thorough, and amply sufficient for all requirements of the Indian factory act.³⁷

³⁵ Report of the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, 1895, 2:1161.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1895, 2:1170-73 & 1175-78.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 2:1177.

1892 because of the partial failure of the crops, the price of raw cotton rose to a high point and the profits of the manufacturers were, as a consequence, materially reduced.³⁹ In 1893 the demonetisation of silver and the closing of the mints necessitated a readjustment of the exchange between India and the Far East, and resulted in a disturbing influence on trade. This distress was aggravated by the outbreak of the Chino-Japanese War. The foreign exchange of India fell considerably below normal, and in 1894 the Government found itself with a deficit of about £ 2,500,000. It then became necessary to increase the revenue and in March, 1894, a tariff act was passed imposing import duties on a number of articles, but leaving cotton goods out of the schedule for fear of opposition from Manchester interests. This omission gave occasion for the rise of a strong protest even before the act was passed⁴⁰ and in the same year, it was amended, imposing a five per cent duty on cotton fabrics and yarns.

But such a procedure could scarcely be tolerated by Lancashire manufacturers without some kind of compensating measure whereby their goods could be placed on the same footing as the indigeneous products. Nor could it be sanctioned by the Secretary of State for India, especially when there were two resolutions in Parliament against such a policy. An excise duty of 5 per cent was, therefore, levied upon all cotton yarns produced in Indian factories. This amendment was followed by another amendment in 1896 by which cotton yarns were freed from taxation but a uniform duty of 3.5 per cent was imposed on all woven cotton goods, whether imported from abroad or manufactured in Indian factories.⁴¹

Beside these restrictions imposed by the Government upon their industry, the cotton manufacturers were confronted by other calamities. The shadow of wide-spread

³⁹ Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Papers, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 57.

⁴⁰ Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates, 1894, 22: 564.

⁴¹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1903, Vol. 46, H. of C. 249, p. 19.

famine was cast over the country in 1896. At the same time the plague broke out in the city of Bombay and an exodus of the inhabitants, including factory laborers, practically stopped the operation of the factories. The depression of the previous years soon reached a crisis culminating in 1900—01, when the price of coal went up. The succession of these distressing events led to the closing of 16 factories during the year. A large number of others worked only half time. The output of certain yarns dropped from 514,000,000 lbs. in 1899—1900 to 353,000,000 lbs. in 1900—1901.⁴³

But, in spite of these adverse conditions, the cotton industry did not cease making progress. During the decade from 1891—92 to 1900—01, the number of factories rose from 127 to 190, the number of looms from 24,670 to 40,542 and of spindles from 3,268,524 to 4,932,602. At the same time, the amount of capital invested in cotton industries rose from £ 7,844,000 to £ 11,170,000 as shown in the table below.

Growth of the Cotton Industry from 1891—92
to 1900—01.

	1891—92 ⁴³	1900—01
Factories	127	190
Looms	24,670	40,542
Spindles	3,268,524	4,932,602
Capital,	£ 7,844,000	£ 11,170,000

In brief, since the last year of the previous decennial period, the number of factories increased by 49 per cent, of looms and of spindles by 64.3 and 50.9 per cent respectively, and the amount of capital by 42.4 per cent.⁴⁴

⁴³ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1903, Vol. 46, H. of C. 249, pp. 228—29.

⁴⁴ The slight discrepancies in the figures for 1890—91 in this and the other table on page 39 are due to different sources of information which include or exclude some of the native states.

⁴⁵ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1903, Vol. 46, H. of C. 249, p. 229.

In 1901—02 the cotton crop was comparatively large and the consequent cheaper price of raw cotton led to the partial resumption of activity by the factories. This temporary activity was soon followed by another depression, and in 1903—04 several mills ceased from operating or worked for part time. But the year 1904—05 saw a complete revolution in the cotton industry of India. A large crop again cheapened the price of raw cotton and at the same time a profitable market was opened both at home and abroad. The factories resumed their work with full force and a state of unusual activity followed. From 1900—01 to 1904—05, the outturn of yarn rose from 342,777,500 to 555,948,400 lbs. and of woven goods from 95,844,600 to 152,741,800 lbs.⁴⁸

This sudden boom, especially after so many years of depression led to such activity as could scarcely be confined to the normal working conditions. Although all the spindles were brought into operation, the factories could not meet the demand of the market. Overwork soon resulted. The factories, fitted with electric light, prolonged the hours of work much beyond the usual time.

The Times of India, an Anglo-Indian journal at Bombay, started a strong agitation against this overwork. Column after column of the paper was filled with the description of abuses in the Bombay factories. The Pioneer, another Anglo-Indian journal at Allahabad, also published several articles strongly protesting against this overtime work. Though much of what the Anglo-Indian press said was exaggerated, the existence of long hours of work could not be denied even by employers themselves. The Bombay Millowner's Association went so far as to pass a resolution limiting the hours of work in their factories. But it could not be enforced in a time of such unusual industrial activity without state authority.⁴⁹

The agitation of the Times of India and other papers drew the attention of the Government to the matter of long hours, and an inquiry was started by the

⁴⁸ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1907, Vol. 59, H. of C. 149, pp. 176—177.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 7.

collector of Bombay. The collector informed the Government of Bombay on June 24, 1905, that out of 74 mills, the exact working hours of which had been ascertained, 16 mills worked 14 hours or more a day and 33 worked 13 hours or more.⁴⁷

About this time a momentous event took place in the Indian national life. The Government of India conceived the idea of the partition of Bengal. This province, the people of which spoke the same language, was to be divided and joined to other provinces inhabited by peoples speaking different languages. The proposed partition created a feeling of deep indignation among the Bengalees. They appealed to the Government, but without success. In their desperation, they boycotted all British goods by a resolution on August 7, 1905. And this boycott was soon turned into Swadeshi, or movement for the use of country-made goods.

Bengal was partitioned on October 16, 1905. The Bengalees observed the date as the day of mourning. The boycott movement spread rapidly. Meeting after meeting was held all over the province, renewing the vow. Small indigenous industries began to spring up in different parts of the country. The handloom industry was revived and the leaders of the movement even started a new cotton factory in Bengal. Some of the cotton factories in other provinces turned their attention to catering to the needs of the Bengalees, who had so long been supplied with goods by Lancashire manufacturers.

The actual loss of the British trade due to the boycott was rather small and temporary. But considerable apprehension was nevertheless felt by Manchester interests at the resolution of the Bengalees, who bought more than half of the goods they exported into India. On the other hand, unusual activity in Indian cotton factories again created the spirit of rivalry among them. They had repealed the import duty, or at least compelled the Indian Government to levy an excise duty in order to counterbalance it. Restriction had already been put on

⁴⁷ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 7.

child and woman labor in Indian factories. But adult male labor was still unrestricted and it was this phase of Indian factory labor to which they now devoted their energy.

On March 14, 1906, a deputation from the United Textile Factory Workers' Association of Lancashire waited upon Mr. John Morley, then Secretary of State for India, regarding the conditions of work in Indian factories. By means of quotations from the Bombay Times of India, the deputation called attention of the Secretary of State to the long hours of work in Bombay factories, and asked for a more effective system of factory inspection, and urged the necessity of reducing the working hours of all factory laborers by legislative measures. It was not a question of competition, but simply one of humanity, observed the deputation. In reply, Mr. Morley pointed out that the present delegation did not represent the Lancashire point of view, that it would be a misfortune were it to get abroad that any action which the Government might take in the matter was in the least due to the pressure from Lancashire, and that the thing which ought to be kept in mind was not competition or convenience of employers, but the welfare of the employees. Regarding the long hours of work, Mr. Morley said that the Government of India had the question fully brought to its notice. The reports of the newspapers were not fully reliable, but the cases of excessive hours of work were known to have existed in Bombay factories. The latest report of the chief inspector of factories showed, however, that these hours had been voluntarily reduced from 15 to 13. As to the inspection of factories, Mr. Morley replied that the Government of India realized the necessity of increasing the number of inspectors; perhaps a more efficient and elaborate system of factory inspection was desirable.

As far as the reduction of the working hours of adult males by legislation was concerned, the Government of India did not think that the necessity of having recourse to such a method had been established. Legislative restriction on the working hours of adult males would mean

the introduction of a new principle in factory legislation, which Mr. Morley said, was a burning question in Great Britain itself and would perhaps be more difficult in India. He admitted, however, that Indian employees had no representative and self-chosen authority to speak for them and, therefore, depended entirely upon the vigilant, effective and constant supervision by the supreme authority of all relations of employers to the Factory Act of 1891. After assuring the deputation that it would not be difficult to impress the Government of India with the necessity of using its best offices in this matter, he promised to send out an English factory inspector to investigate the actual conditions in Indian factories.⁴³

Sir H. P. Frier-Smith, a former superintending inspector for dangerous trades in England, was soon appointed for this duty.

Textile Factory Labor Committee of 1906.

On the advice of the Secretary of State for India, the Government of India appointed, on December 17, 1906, a small committee to inquire into the conditions of labor in textile factories. The committee consisted of three members, of whom Sir H. P. Frier-Smith, R. N., was president.

The specific points upon which the committee was instructed to report, were the following:⁴⁴

(1) Whether the working hours of adult males should be limited and whether the physique of operatives was affected by long hours.

(2) Whether certificates of age and physical fitness of children should be required before they were allowed to work in factories.

(3) Whether the minimum age of children should be raised beyond 9.

(4) Whether, as the result of employment as adults of persons between the ages of 12 and 14, there had been

⁴³ The Times, London, March 15, 1906, p. 15, c. 5.

⁴⁴ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1907, Vol. 59, Cd. 3617, p. 5.

physical deterioration requiring the creation by law of a special class of workers to be known as young persons.

(5) Whether a separate staff of medical factory inspectors should be provided for.

(6) Whether dangerous machinery should be more adequately fenced.⁵⁰

The committee met at Bombay on December 21, 1906, and visited Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Madras, Delhi, Agra, Cawnpore and Nagpore. They inspected 121 factories and several workmen's chawls or dwellings, and examined a large number of witnesses comprising employers and employees, special and medical inspectors of factories and others. The results of their investigation were submitted on April 5, 1907. The recommendations were based mostly on the British factory act of 1901, and embodied the following:

(1) That the hours of work for adult males should be regulated. The Indian laborer could, of course, stand higher temperature than the British workman, and the temperature in the best mills was not of a kind to cause ill-health or serious discomfort. But the committee found that the introduction of electric light had led to longer hours of work and in busy seasons there was a tendency to overwork. Employers had themselves realized the necessity of regulating the hours, but had not been successful in coming to a common understanding among themselves. Employees were desirous of shorter hours and had also made petition to the government to that effect. The committee was of the opinion that trade would not suffer from such restrictions.⁵¹

The period of employment in factories, except for those working on the shift system, should be fixed between the hours of either 5.30 A. M. or 6 A. M. and 6.30-P. M. The engine should stop for half an hour between the hours of 12 noon and 2 P. M. In mills working on the shift system, the period of employment should, as at present,

⁵⁰ This question was added later on. *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1907, Vol. 59, Cd. 3617, p. 6.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15-17.

be between 5 A. M. and 8 P. M., provided by legislation, period of employment for adult males should not exceed 12 hours in any one day.⁵²

Regarding the physique of operatives, the committee could not get any definite information other than that given by the Medical Committee of 1884.

(2) That the night work of women should be altogether prohibited. The night employment of women in textile factories was exceptional. But in seasonal employments, such as cotton gins, it was rather common. There were two possible evil effects of such a system:— First, the women had to take their children with them to the place of work, where the atmosphere, especially at night under artificial light, was unpleasant and not conducive to health, or they had to leave them at home, generally speaking, uncared for. Second, they frequently worked at household duties in the day time after working a whole night in a gin. It had often been argued that seasonal employments did not last more than three to five months and that delay in manipulation of cotton might lead to serious loss. In reply the committee said that boys over fourteen could be employed as adults, and if arrangements were gradually made, the inconvenience might be greatly lessened, if not entirely removed.⁵³

(3) That there should not be any young person class, but the names of all persons under the age of 16 should be entered in a prescribed register. Classification of employees on the basis of age was very hard and the creation of such a class would cause serious difficulty in administration. Even under the existing law, a large number of workers were employed as adults long before they had attained the age of 14. But such abuses could be avoided, the committee argued, by a physical examination prior to employment on full time.⁵⁴

(4) That certificate of age and physical fitness should be required of all children prior to both half-time and full-

⁵² Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1907, Vol. 59, Cd. 3617, p. 17.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 19—20.

time employment. The certificate should be personal property of the child to whom it applied, and be carried by him while at work.⁵⁵ The committee also recommended that the minimum age of 9 for the employment of children was sufficient and should not be raised. There were no facilities for school attendance throughout the country and many of these children would, therefore, be employed in places not under the factory act, where the conditions of work might be worse or more exhausting, or, if unemployed, they would possibly be idling in the bazaars instead of honestly earning a small sum towards family expenses. Clear and definite laws should be made requiring the employment of half time children only in sets, either in the morning or in the afternoon, or in the double set system so common in Indian factories. Efficient measures should be taken to see that children should work only in proper sets and that the prescribed hours of labor were not exceeded.⁵⁶

(5) That dry bulb thermometers should be placed in all humid cotton factories, readings should be taken at fixed times and the returns forwarded monthly. These returns should be eventually considered with a view to regulating the amount of moisture necessary for manufacturing processes to the health of employees.⁵⁷

The other recommendations regarding sanitation dealt with the fixation of a purity standard for the water used in introducing moisture into mills, the registration of the date of lime washing, and the provision of adequate latrine accommodation. As regards safety, the committee recommended the opening of factory doors from the inside and a more elaborate system of fencing dangerous machinery.⁵⁸

(6) Furthermore the committee recommended that arrangement should be made to secure uniformity of administration of the factory act throughout the country,

⁵⁵ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1907, Vol. 59, Cd. 3617, p. 11.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 22—23.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 23—28.

that the system of inspection and the strength and composition of the staff of inspectors should be considered with a view to securing efficiency, and that full-time medical inspectors should be appointed. Inefficiently administered, the law might do more harm than good. Employers were apt to think that when there was state inspection, they were relieved of their responsibility. A number of medical officers, the committee believed, should be assigned to each separate area and, subject to the department of commerce and industry, they should be the supreme authority on all medical matters relating to labor. Special inspectors should not be relieved of the duties relative to sanitary matters, but they should take instructions from medical inspectors on all such points and refer to them all doubtful cases."

Factory Labor Commission of 1907.

The textile factory labor committee was appointed to make only a preliminary investigation and it was promised that should the report of the committee establish the existence of alleged abuses, which required remedying, a comprehensive investigation would be undertaken by a representative commission before any radical change in the existing factory law. The committee reporting on the necessity of several alterations in the existing law, the Government of India, with the approval of the Secretary of State, appointed, on October 10, 1907,

* Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1907, Vol. 59, Cd. 3617, pp. 8-10.

** Ibid., 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, pp. 1-2.

The following gentlemen were the members of the commission: — Mr. W. A. B. Beaumont, superintending inspector of factories, England; Mr. S. M. Chitnavis, B. A., I. C. S., deputy commissioner, Central Provinces; Lieut. Col. C. MacTaggart, M. A., inspector-general of prisons, United Provinces; The Hon. Mr. Alexander McRobert, representative of the Upper India Chamber of Commerce; Dr. T. M. Nair, municipal commissioner, Madras; Mr. John Nicoll, representative of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce; and the Hon. Mr. Vithaktas Damodher Thackersey, representative of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce and the Bombay Mill-Owners' Association. Mr. J. Campbell, I. C. S., undersecretary to the Government of India, department of commerce and industry, served as secretary.

a commission⁶⁶ with the Hon. Mr. W. T. Morrison, I. C. S., officiating member of the Council of Bombay, as president.

The members of the commission assembled at Bombay on November 1, 1907, and visited 209 factories of all descriptions located at Bombay and 23 other industrial centers. They also sent out questionnaires to various groups of people, such as (a) employers, agents, and managers of factories, gins, and presses; (b) representatives of various local governments; (c) medical practitioners and other persons who might in any way be interested in factory legislation. The written evidence of about 275 witnesses was supplemented by oral examination. The interests of employers were well represented by 8 chambers of commerce and 4 millowners' associations. As employees did not have any organization and as they were afraid of incurring the displeasure of their employers by openly giving evidence, the president of the commission and one of the members visited the dwellings of several employees at Bombay, Ahmedabad, Delhi, Cawnpore and Calcutta. The report of the commission was submitted in May, 1908. Mr. Vithaldas Damodher Thackersey, one of the members of the commission, signed his name with the reservation of a minute of dissent. But Dr. Nair, another member, could not agree with the majority of the commission on several important points, and made, therefore, a separate report.

Like the Textile Factory Labor Committee, the commission also based its recommendations on the British factory and workshop act of 1901. (1) The most important recommendation of the commission was that the working hours of adult males should be limited to 12 hours a day, but no direct restrictive measure should be adopted for the attainment of such an object. Regarding the necessity of such a limitation, the commission fully agreed with the committee. With the exception of cotton and jute mills and the weaving departments of silk mills, excessive hours, i. e., hours over 12 a day were not worked in Indian factories. In factories working daylight hours, the average working day for the whole year was approximately 12 hours and 5 minutes. But the longest work day in sum-

mer was $13\frac{1}{2}$ hours and the shortest in winter, 11 hours. In the Bombay mills fitted with electric light, the hours varied from 13 to $13\frac{1}{2}$ a day. In the latter part of 1905 the Bombay mills worked even $14\frac{1}{2}$ hours a day, though only for a short time. Long hours of work were prevalent in some parts of Northern India. Under these circumstances, the limitation of working hours had become necessary. The Bombay employers realised the importance of this limitation in 1905, but were unable to enforce it.

On the other hand, there was a considerable number of employees who would like to work longer hours, if they could earn correspondingly higher wages thereby. Though no direct proof had hitherto been found to show that long hours of work affected the physique of employees injuriously, yet the continuance of this practice could not but lead to such a consequence. Moreover, long hours of work would tend to make factory labor unpopular in India and, therefore, the development of the industry would suffer. The majority of employees wished to have their hours regulated, because they were not yet able to combine over any large area with the object of securing a common end by concerted action. It was, therefore, the duty of the Government to prevent the recurrence, or continuation, of such practices on both economic and humanitarian grounds. But the commission could not support the recommendation of the committee for direct restrictions on adult male labor for the following reasons:⁶¹

First, that no case had been made out in favor of applying a principle which was admittedly of doubtful validity, which commanded acceptance in a very few countries, and which supplied a remedy very much more drastic than the circumstances of the case demanded.

Second, the direct limitation of the working hours of adult males would impose on all classes of factories a restriction which was found to require only in the case of textile factories.

⁶¹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1908, Vol. 84, Cd. 4292, pp. 31—33.

Third, the enforcement of any law rigidly restricting the working hours of adult males was strongly objected to in India. In all industries overtime was frequently necessary. It was not possible to devise any workable system of exceptions which would give employers the freedom they could legitimately claim, and at the same time secure the general enforcement of the restrictions. The direct restrictions of the hours of work for adult males existed in France, where the law provided numerous exceptions. There were 91 factory inspectors in France and the notice of availing oneself of these exceptions could be given to any of them. But such a system would be utterly unworkable in India, because the area over which the factories were scattered was vast, the number of inspectors small, and the employers in smaller factories were very imperfectly educated. Moreover, no exceptions could be made in advance for new industries which were springing up and which it was necessary to foster and encourage in every possible way. Official procedure always involved considerable delay.

Fourth, a direct restriction on the hours of adult labor would be repugnant to the great majority of capitalists, both Indian and European, who had already invested or were thinking of investing money. This was clear from the evidence given by a large number of witnesses. Such a measure would, therefore, check further investment and consequently hamper the growth of industry.

Fifth, there was reason to fear that, if legislation was undertaken to limit the working hours of adults to 12 or 13 hours, it would not stop there and attempts would be made in the future — not always suggested merely by the idea of doing justice to the operatives — to restrict still further their working hours.

“We are strongly opposed”, concluded the commission, “to any direct limitation of adults’ working hours, because we consider that there is no necessity for the adoption of this drastic course, because we are convinced that it would cause the greatest inconvenience to existing industries, most of which have never worked long hours,

and because we think that such a measure would seriously hamper the growth of industrial enterprise".⁶⁷

The commission, therefore, recommended the following measures for an indirect limitation of working hours:⁶⁸

(a) Formation of a young person class comprising all young persons between the ages of 14 and 17, with working hours limited to 12 in any one day.

(b) Reduction of the working hours of children from 7 to 6.

(c) Prohibition of the employment of "young persons", women and children before 5.30 A. M. or after 7 P. M.

(d) Substitution of a compulsory interval of rest after six hours' continuous work in place of a present midday interval.

(e) Assimilation of the restrictions placed upon the employment of women into those proposed for the "young person" class.

The commission was fully convinced that the hours of rest fixed for children and "young persons" would absolutely determine the working hours of all persons employed in cotton spinning. The work of doffing could not be quickly and expertly done by men. Neither were male adults good piecers, for in this work nimbleness of fingers and smallness of stature were essential. It was safe to assume that about one-third of the staff in the spinning department would be composed of young persons between 14 and 17 years of age. The number of the protected class (women and children) in the weaving department was not so large that their hours would determine the working hours of the whole department. But the machinery in the spinning and the weaving departments was in almost all cases driven by the same engine. It would not be economical to run one department while the other remained idle. Moreover, the weavers in cotton mills, because of the higher wages they earned, were much more independent than the spinners. They had, in many cases,

⁶⁷ Cf. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 185.
⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 33.

refused to work the same number of hours as the spinners, and could not possibly be induced to work longer hours.

There was scarcely any possibility of working male adults for 12½ hours, i. e., from 5.30 A. M. to 7 P. M. with the shift system arranged for the protected class. The shift system in such a case would not be possible. Nor would it be profitable to resume work for half an hour after stopping work at the end of every sixth hour, which would be required by the measure proposed.

The fact that they were relieved of the necessity of having "young persons" registered or certified of age before their employment in the new capacity, would be a strong inducement to employers to adopt a 12 hour day. A 12 hour day would also give an opportunity to women and children to go to the factory in the morning with their male relatives, and all the members of a family except the children on the morning shift could return home together in the evening. The enforcement of a 12 hour day for children and "young persons" would further create a feeling for a 12 hour day all over the country. A large number of employers in Bombay had already been anxious to follow a 12 hour day.

Dr. Nair dissented from the majority of his colleagues and recommended a direct legislative restriction of adult male labor. The chief points upon which he took issue were: First, that almost all the workers in the weaving department were adult males. The regulation of the working hours of women, "young persons" and children would not, therefore, protect the weavers. The weaving department might be worked with separate machinery, e. g., in the Empress Mill at Nagpur, or it might be worked longer than the spinning department, e. g., in Bengal cotton mills, or the work of the proposed young person class might be altogether dispensed with. Second, employees were practically unanimous in asking for a legislative restriction of their hours of labor. Employers themselves were also desirous of achieving the same end. Dr. Nair's minute of dissent did not arrive in time to be commented upon by the commission.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, pp. 81—104.

Mr. Vithaldas D. Thackersey contended in his minute of dissent that factories having no arrangement for electric light might be allowed to work daylight hours.⁶⁵ But the commission rejected the suggestion on several grounds:— First, it would raise the working hours in Northern India to 13½ hours of actual work during the hottest period of the year. Second, it would deprive employees of the enjoyment of a single hour of daylight at their home. Third, it would necessitate the working of children and “young persons” for more than 6 and 12 hours respectively. Fourth, it would prevent all improvement in the habit and efficiency of employees. The hot weather days were so long and the climatic and other conditions were so trying that employees naturally dawdled over their work as much as possible. Fifth, it would make possible for many of the employees to work long hours during the hot weather by daylight and then accept employment in cold weather in mills working a fixed 12 hours by electric light, as a considerable number of employees were willing to earn higher wages by working excessive hours. Sixth, it would be impossible to work two systems side by side in the same place.⁶⁶

(2) The commission recommended allowing women to work the same number of hours as the young person class, i. e., 12 hours a day. The general physical condition of woman workers in various parts of the country visited by the commission was uniformly excellent. The women at Pondichery, where the French Government allowed them to work 12 hours a day throughout the year, were found by two members of the commission “a robust and healthy lot”. This finding was also substantiated by the evidence of the medical witnesses examined by the commission as well as by the result of inspection conducted by Lieutenant Colonel MacTaggart throughout the Bombay Presidency. For these reasons the commission was satisfied that women could work 12 hours a day without danger to their health. The interval of rest for an hour and a half, as prescribed by the ex-

⁶⁵ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, pp. 75—76.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 56—57.

isting law in case of a full day's work, was found in practice to be too long. It was essential to the success of the proposal of the commission that the hours of work and the interval of rest for both women and young persons should be identical in all respects. There would be several advantages from such a measure: — First, a new avenue of employment would be opened to women and they would thus be able to recover the position which they had held prior to the introduction of the existing restrictions on their hours of work. The benefit of it had been perceived even by the Factory Commission of 1890. Second, it would help to relieve the scarcity of labor in textile factories. Third, it would also bind down employers of labor more closely to the acceptance of a general 12 hour day in factories.⁶⁷

Here again, Dr. Nair objected to the proposal of the commission that the working time of women should be increased.⁶⁸

(3) The commission proposed that all workers between the ages of 14 and 17 should be included within the young person class and that their actual working hours should be limited to 12 in any one day.⁶⁹

Hon. Vithaldas Damodher Thackersey differed from the rest of his colleagues and proposed 12½ hours' work for the proposed young persons and 6¾ hours' work for children. The decision of the commission was based on the observation of thousands of persons of the ages between 14 and 17 and on the minute inspection of 2000 of them. As such young persons were likely to suffer permanently from overwork and as they, owing to immaturity of judgment, were prone to overwork, their work should be regulated by law.

The Factory Commission of 1890 was opposed to the creation of a young person class between half-timers and full-timers on the ground that the members of such a class would be squeezed out of employment in factories, since their working hours could be fitted to that of neither

⁶⁷ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, pp. 45—46.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 104—105.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 40—42.

half-timers nor full-timers. That commission had also considered it unnecessary to impose any restrictions on the labor of persons over 14, as at that age many of them assumed the responsibility of a family. But the proposal of a 12 hour day by law eliminated the danger of this class being squeezed out, or forced to work as half-timers, for young persons under the proposed regulation would work the same hours as adult males and double the hours of children. Moreover, it was not borne out by facts that Indian children married or were about to be married at the age of 14.⁷⁰

The Textile Factory Labor Committee of 1906 objected to the creation of a young person class on the ground that it would create serious administrative inconvenience in actual working. But this objection would be met by the proposal that all factories, which undertook to work a 12 hour day, would be exempted from the necessity of having their young persons registered, or certified of age. The half-timers would be permitted to enter the young person class without further medical examination, when the medical certificate, obtained by them prior to admission as half-timers, showed that they had reached the age of 14. Physical examination in such cases would also be eliminated. The physique of this class was, on the whole, very satisfactory. Out of a thousand young persons, specially selected for recommendation, less than 2.5 per cent were considered physically unfit, apart from the age requirement. A large number of witnesses was opposed to the creation of such a class on the ground of administrative difficulty. But when the above method of administration was explained to them, the opposition was at once withdrawn.⁷¹

(4) The commission recommended that children over 9 and under 14 years of age should not be allowed to work more than six hours in any one day. The strain of the present working hours had affected children more severely than any other class of workers. To increase the minimum

⁷⁰ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1906, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, pp. 41—42.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 41—43.

age would not solve the problem, for parents might send them to some other work of a more exhaustive nature, as the committee had already suggested. Children should be employed either continuously for 6 hours, or in broken periods not exceeding 6 hours in all, provided always that the total period of employment was comprised within 8½ consecutive hours. The commission found the employment of children under 9 to be one of the most serious abuses in factories and endorsed the recommendation of the committee regarding the certifying of age and physical fitness prior to employment.⁷²

(5) As to the time for beginning and closing work, the commission proposed that women, young persons, and children should not be allowed to work except between the hours of 5.30 A. M. and 7 P. M., local mean time.⁷³ Under the existing law women and children were allowed to work between the hours of 5 A. M. and 8 P. M. In many factories, e. g., those in Bengal, the work began at 5 A. M. and, as the children had to walk from two to three miles before arriving at the factory, they were obliged to get up long before the daybreak, a condition regarded as one of the causes of the shortage of child labor. Women often worked late; they could not go home in the darkness and had to wait until some other worker, a relative or husband, accompanied them. And a period of absence from home of one or two hours longer than the actual hours spent in the factory work resulted in a condition that was not only detrimental to health, but also interfered with household duties. This time limitation could naturally not be applied to seasonal employments, where the conditions were different.

(6) The commission recommended that seasonal occupations should be brought under the provision of the act, whether they worked for more than four months or not. Women and young persons should be permitted to work in gins at night. But their work should not exceed more than 12 hours a day. It might be considered a

⁷² *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, pp. 43—45.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

sufficient compliance with the law, if additional workers were employed to the extent necessary to reduce the hours of work of each woman and young person to not more than 12 hours, assuming that the work, during the total period for which the gin ran, was uniformly distributed among all workers.⁷⁶

(7) The question of safety and sanitation was also considered and the commission made various recommendations on the line laid down by the committee. The commission did not, however, think that any standard of humidity could be fixed for a vast country like India, which had a variety of climate.⁷⁶ But provisions should be made for protecting workers from inhaling dust or other impurities. Machinery was, in most cases, well fenced, but fire escapes should be provided for those who worked in the upper stories of a factory building.

(8) The commission did not favor compelling factory owners to provide elementary education for children in their employment, as there was no analogous provision in India which could be cited in support of the proposal. Special schools for factory children could, however, be opened at suitable centres close to factories. These schools should be financed by local authorities assisted by factory owners. Children should be allowed to attend school only two hours a day. To encourage education, the age limit for inclusion in the class of young persons might be reduced by one year, if a child was physically fit and passed an educational test.

(9) The commission concluded that the present system of inspection had failed on account of the inadequacy of the staff and of the custom of appointing *ex-officio* inspectors. It recommended the appointment of whole time inspectors, but did not approve of the proposal of the committee for the appointment of separate medical inspectors.⁷⁷ Previous experience in factory work in England was not considered necessary for eligibility, although

⁷⁶ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 53.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 61-63.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

inspectors without such experience might, on appointment, be placed for three months with a factory inspector in the United Kingdom. Experience in India, on the other hand, and a knowledge of the vernacular of the province in which an inspector was employed, were considered highly desirable.⁷⁸

The reports of the committee and the commission gave rise to comments and discussion both in India and in England. The proposal of the committee recommending the direct restriction of adult laborers was strongly protested against in India. The Indian newspapers and also a section of the Anglo-Indian press raised their voice against such a novel measure in Indian legislation, and one which had been avoided by British legislation. The recommendations of the commission even for the indirect limitation of adult male labor to 12 hours per day and of child labor to 6 hours, were also strongly criticised. The Indian Jute Mills' Association of Calcutta addressed the Government, on September 16, 1908, stating that 90 per cent of the jute mill industry in Bengal was opposed to any alteration or amendment of the existing factory law. "It is more effective administration," asserted the Association, "of the existing law that is required rather than fresh legislation".⁷⁹

The soundness of the principle of a 12 hour day for the improvement of the general health and conditions of life of the laboring classes was seriously doubted by the Upper India Chamber of Commerce. The chamber contended that strenuous work was foreign to the habit and inclination of Asiatic laborers and to the conditions of the climate of the country and the temperament of the people. Under the 12 hour system, both the employer and the worker would experience a new compulsion for strenuous work; the former from the necessity which he would be under of obtaining the output essential to profitable working; the latter from the additional effort which he must put forth to earn the wages which he had earned under exist-

⁷⁸ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1908, Vol. 74, Cd. 4292, p. 69.

⁷⁹ Bengal Chamber of Commerce Report, 1908, Calcutta, Vol. 2, pp. 588-89.

ing conditions. The chamber regarded with serious misgivings the consequences likely to result from arousing discontent among all those engaged in industrial enterprise, whether employers or employees.⁸⁰

Introduction of the Bill into the Legislature.

On July 30, 1909, Mr. W. L. Harvey made the motion in the Legislative Council of India to withdraw the bill introduced on September 29, 1905, to amend the factory act and also to introduce a new bill to amend and consolidate the Indian factory law. The main proposal made in the new bill was "to regulate by law the hours of work of all factory operatives in the largest and most important class of factories".⁸¹ Referring to the statement of Lord Lansdowne that the Factory Act of 1891 would be accepted, both in India and in England, "as a settlement as final as any settlement of such a question" could be, Mr. Harvey pointed out that the conditions under which such a statement was made had altogether changed through the installment of electric light in factories, especially those of Bombay. The new conditions had placed before both employers and employees the temptation to exceed inordinately the regular hours of work, which were formerly 12 on the average for the year, whenever an opportunity occurred. The possibility of such abuses was clearly shown by the prosperity of the year 1904-05, when the daily hours of work rose to 15 in some cases.

The Government was, therefore, bound to reopen the question of factory legislation. The Textile Factory Labor Committee of 1906 and the Factory Labor Commission of 1907, both appointed by the Government for investigation and recommendation on the matter, had advised further regulation of factories, the former recommending direct intervention to limit the hours of adult male labor. Moreover, all local governments, except the Government of Burma, were in favor of further legislative interferences.

⁸⁰ India, Legislative Council Proceedings, Calcutta, 1910-11, 49: 584.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 1909-10, 48: 1.

Several commercial bodies held the same views, though one or two chambers of commerce and certain trade associations, representing factory owners, were opposed to any such proposal. The necessity of further legislation being established, the question arose whether the restriction on the working hours of adult male labor should be direct or indirect. The Government had decided in favor of direct restriction. The commission was opposed to such a direct measure on the grounds that it would cause great inconvenience to the existing industries and seriously hamper the growth of industrial enterprise and that the same result could be achieved by the creation of a young person class with their hours of work limited to 12 a day. The Government raised three issues to the objections of the commission: —

First, are the objections to direct restriction as serious as the commission supposed them to be? The commission questioned the validity of direct regulation on the ground of principle and pointed out the necessity for restriction at the same time. But the necessity of Government intervention being conceded, the question did not involve any new principle except expediency and administrative convenience. The contention that such a procedure had found acceptance in only a few countries overlooked the fact that labor in India was not organized. To meet the objection that only one class of factories worked excessive hours and that the law, if enacted, would apply to all cases, the Government proposed to legislate for that class only and reserved the power at the same time to extend the provision of the law to other classes, should the necessity to do so arise. Another objection raised by the commission was that overtime was frequently required in all industries and that in India it would be impossible to devise a workable system of exceptions, which would give employers the freedom they could legitimately claim and would at the same time secure the general enforcement of the restrictions. But it would not be hard to devise a workable system of exceptions. Moreover, the members of the commission themselves did not escape the difficulty by resort to indirect method.

They proposed that all factories which undertook to work for not more than 12 hours a day, should be exempted from the necessity of having their "young persons" registered and certified of age. But it was obvious, Mr. Harvey said, that if a large number of factories accepted this alternative, the position would at once be the same, as if the 12 hour day had been imposed by law, and the task of working out a system of exceptions would still have to be undertaken by the Government.

Second, would the 12 hour day for the proposed young person class between 14 and 17 automatically limit the hours of work for adult males also? The commission recommended, in this connection, raising the working hours of women to 12 and reducing at the same time the working hours of children to 6. The creation of a young person class would increase administrative difficulties; for it would be hard, as the committee had pointed out, to determine the age. The increase in the working hours of women would be a retrograde step. It had not been shown that women could work regularly 12 hours a day without detriment to their health, nor that it was desirable that they should compete with men for the same kind of work to a larger extent than they did.

Third, would the indirect method prove successful? There were three possible methods of frustrating the object in view. In the first place, factories might do away with the services of women and young persons altogether. In the second place, if, owing to scarcity of labor, all the factories did not dispense with the employment of women and of young persons, some of them at least might take that course. In such cases, the existence side by side of factories working both restricted and unrestricted hours would create an unfortunate situation. In the third place, women and "young persons" in a factory might be segregated in certain departments where a 12 hour rule might be observed; while in the rest of the factory the unrestricted long hours of work might still be continued. Factories might even be established for weaving only, where the services of women and young persons would scarcely be utilised.

With these difficulties in mind, the Government could not follow the recommendations of the commission and had to propose direct regulation of the hours of adult male labor. The provisions of the proposed bill were divided into two classes: — First, those which applied to non-textile factories. The only changes in connection with them were a compulsory midday stoppage for rest, and a weekly holiday. Second, those which applied to textile factories. The changes in connection with them were that the work of all male operatives should be limited to 12 hours in any one day, thus avoiding the necessity of creating a young person class and of increasing the hours of women, and that women and children should not be employed in any factory before 5.30 A. M. and after 7 P. M., unless there was an approved shift system in force. Special exceptions were to be proposed by the Government for the employment of women and children in seasonal employments.

The bill also contained a provision for the certification of the age and physical condition of children before they could actually be employed in a factory. It was also provided that when a child over six years of age was found in a factory, it should be presumed that he was actually employed until the contrary was proved. The other provisions of the bill related to sanitation, responsibility for infringement of the law, etc. The bill was introduced on the same day; a draft was, as usual, sent to the local governments, but it was not until 1911 that it was again taken up in the legislative council.

Reference of the Bill to the Select Committee.

On January 3, 1911, Hon. B. Robertson made the motion that the bill for the consolidation and amendment of the law regulating labor in factories should be referred to a select committee and stated that since the introduction of the bill, nothing had happened to change the decision of the Government on the important provision for regulating adult male labor in cotton factories.

Before the motion was carried, the bill was strongly protested by several members of the council, who were

opposed to further restrictions on factory labor, especially to that on adult male labor. First, the bill was shown to be of "ignoble origin". It was argued that the unfortunate anxiety of the Government for the protection of Lancashire manufacturers determined and colored the policy of the bill. Rao Bahadur R. N. Mudholkar, representing the interests of seasonal establishments, pointed out that the boom in Indian textile industries in 1904—06 aroused the fear of those who were interested in importation into India of an ever-increasing quantity of textiles. It was they who raised the cry of overwork in Indian factories and it was their agitation that resulted in the appointment of a commission for the framing of the bill. "The bill", continued the Rao Bahadur, "is not one which was brought forward by the Government of India of its own accord, or suggested by any local government. It was not demanded by the laborers; it was not demanded by any of the interests concerned in the country. It came from persons who, not to mince words, are our rivals in manufacture and in trade, and it is those rivals who have been working for this legislation".⁸²

But the bone of contention in the Council was the provision for regulating the labor of adult males. The representatives of several chambers of commerce and associations of millowners as well as other non-partisan members emphatically protested against such an innovation in Indian factory legislation, basing protests on the following arguments: —

First, legal restrictions on adult male labor would seriously injure the industrial development of the country. Sir Vithaldas Damodher Thackersey reiterated his arguments before the commission. He pointed out that, if legislation once undertook to limit the working hours to 12 or 13, further restrictions would be asked by Manchester interests along the same line. He also contended that employers would be deprived of any occasional overtime work, which was necessary in all industries. Hon.

⁸² India, Legislative Council Proceedings, Calcutta, 1910—11, 49 : 93.

M. B. Dadabhoy expressed a similar opinion. Referring to the depressing conditions of the nineties, under which certain factories had suffered financial loss, several of them changing hands and many others being sold at auction at one-fifth or one-sixth of the original cost, Mr. Dadabhoy asked if there was no justification under the circumstances for work at high pressure? The employers and employees of Bombay and Agra had to replenish their exhausted resources during the brief period of prosperity. Any other country would have adopted similar methods under similar conditions. Overwork was not unknown in England — a fact which could be verified by the trade reports of Great Britain during the Russo-Japanese War.

Second, the proposed regulation of adult male labor would interfere with the freedom of contract. Mr. Dadabhoy stated that the principle of non-interference with private contract was a recognised canon of enlightened administration. The freedom of capitalists and laborers to enter into an agreement which they thought desirable and mutually advantageous, should be respected, unless it outraged the moral sense of the community. The curtailment of the freedom of action of citizens must always be regarded as a serious encroachment on civic rights. Though Indian labor was unorganized, common action among factory laborers was not unknown. "It is the birthright of everyman", went on Mr. Dadabhoy, "to pursue his own interests in his own way. If there is one principle which is universally acknowledged and respected in all civilised countries, it is the right of the individual to fix of his own free will the hours of work. Every man is the master of his time and energy; their application must be left to be determined by individual volition".⁸³

Discussing the proposal, Sir V. D. Thackersey said that further limitation of labor in factories was unnecessary and uncalled for. In the first place, no case had been made out to prove the existence of the sweating system in Indian factories. Extra work meant extra pay

⁸³ India, Legislative Council Proceedings, Calcutta, 1910-11, 49:87.

to employees. In the second place, the health of workers had not been found to suffer from overwork. On the contrary, the vital statistics kept by Dr. Turner for seven years showed that the death rate among factory laborers in Bombay was 18.45 as against 31.58 among general laborers. The death rate in the district of Ratnagiri, whence the Bombay factory laborers came and whither they returned after a few years' work, was the lowest in the whole Presidency of Bombay. In the third place, the overwork was greatly limited in its scope. There were 224 cotton factories in India, but only 100 of them were fitted with electric lights and only 25 or 30 of the latter class had worked excessive hours. For this small number, it was proposed to penalise all of them. If the Government really meant to regulate labor in Indian factories, Sir Vithaldas proposed to accept in toto the recommendations of the commission. If the object in view was not thus attained, it would be quite easy for the government to put direct restrictions on adult male labor.

In reply to the objection that the creation of a young person class would increase administrative inconvenience, Sir David Sassoon said that the industrial interests of the country should not be subordinated to administrative convenience. Such inconvenience could be avoided and had been avoided in Great Britain. Mr. Monteath, representing the Bombay Chamber of Commerce, also protested against direct restriction and suggested that the object desired could be secured by adding the following clause to the proposed act: — Provided that in the case of textile factories, in which a system of employment in shifts approved by the local inspector is not in force, there shall be, after the factory has run 12 hours excluding the stoppages under this section, an entire stoppage of all work for not less than one hour in cases where the previous stoppages aggregate not less than one hour, and not less than one hour and a half in cases in which there has been a stoppage of half an hour only.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ India, Legislative Council Proceedings, Calcutta, 1910—11, 49:97.

In reply, Mr. Robertson said for the Government that the success of the proposals of the commission had been doubted by several local governments and others. On the other hand, the importance of limiting hours of work to 12 had been realized even by employers themselves. Shorter hours had been found to have a tendency to increase the output. Many of the shiftless habits of laborers had been ascribed to long hours. The recurrence of the long working hours found by the commission must once and for all be rendered impossible. "Surely it is not to the disadvantage of the mill industry", continued Mr. Robertson, "that Government should step in to do what far-seeing factory owners themselves admit to be imperative for the ultimate success of the industry, and that the foundation should be laid for the building up of a highly trained operative class, by work of whose hands the manufacturing wealth of the country will increase."⁹⁸

Passage of the Bill

On January 31, 1911, Mr. Robertson presented the report of the select committee to the legislative council. Out of sixteen members on the committee, six were non-officials, including the representatives of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, the Bombay Chamber of Commerce, the Jute Millowners' Association, and the Bombay Millowners' Association as well as the representatives of other industries: and all of them unanimously opposed the provision for direct restriction of adult male labor and added a minute of dissent to the report to that effect.

The other provisions of the bill were based mainly on the recommendations of the commission. The select committee concurred with the commission in its recommendation for doing away with the inspection of factories by ex-officio members, but on the representation of certain local governments that it would be impossible for the expert inspectors to visit out-of-the-way places regularly, provision was made in the bill for the appointment of

⁹⁸ India, Legislative Council Proceedings, Calcutta 1910-11, 49:101.

additional inspectors, where such was considered necessary. In such cases, it was not considered advisable to give the additional inspectors full powers under the act, and a clause was, therefore, inserted enabling local governments to define the powers which they were to exercise. Another change in the bill gave employers power to appeal to local governments against the orders of inspectors. The local governments, in such cases, were to appoint an official, who, assisted by expert assessors, should hear the case. The bill made provision for the appointment of such assessors.⁶⁶

On March 21, 1911, a motion was made in the Indian Legislative Council by Hon. W. H. Clark, member from the Department of Commerce and Industry, for final consideration of the bill to consolidate and amend the law regulating labor in factories. He announced that the bill was non-contentious except in the part which related to the labor in textile factories and that there were three amendments to that part.

As in the former case, the main issue was raised about legislative regulation of adult male labor. Sir Vithaldas, as the spokesman of his non-official colleagues on the select committee, again protested against the introduction of such a novel measure into Indian factory legislation. He said that there was no difference of opinion regarding the necessity of limiting the working hours of factory workers. But the main question was how to attain the desired object. If the government doubted the success of the commission's proposals, he would suggest an amendment, which, if adopted, would accomplish the same thing as the Government had in view without imposing any direct restrictions on the hours of adult male laborers. Provision had already been made to limit the working hours of a factory from 5.30 A. M. to 7 P. M. with an interval of rest for half an hour after 6 hours of work. If it were made compulsory that a factory must stop work for one hour after 12 hours' work, no factory could

⁶⁶ India, Legislative Council Proceedings, Calcutta, 1910-1911, 49:218-19.

work more than 12 hours. Sir Vithaldas affirmed that the new proposal by the Government had caused great alarm in the industrial community. The history of the excise duty on Indian cotton factories impressed upon the people of the country the fact that, if the direct restrictions on adult male labor were once resorted to, sooner or later, outside pressure would be brought upon the Government for further concession along the same lines, and the Government, with all the good will in the world, would be powerless to resist. The Government, therefore, by adopting the new method, should not throw away a valuable safeguard to the interest of Indian industries.

Sir Vithaldas was followed by Mr. Dadabhoy, who again unhesitatingly condemned the revision of the bill. He questioned the accuracy of the statement by Mr. Robertson that shorter hours had the tendency to increase the output — a thing doubted by the commission itself. He was not sanguine about the improvement of general health and conditions of life of the laboring classes by restricting the hours of labor to 12, and, in support of his view, he quoted the opinion of the Upper India Chamber of Commerce. On the other hand, this restriction would strangle Indian industry by seriously handicapping Indian manufacturers in their competition with China and Japan. Finally, he reiterated the argument of Sir Vithaldas that this regulation would serve only as a prelude to further regulation of a similar kind.

Rao Bahadur Mudholkar also revoiced his protest against the provision and, in the course of his speech, pointed out the difficulties which the Indian textile industry had to suffer; machinery had to be obtained from abroad, capital in India was comparatively limited, and laborers were ignorant, untrained and inefficient. Even the overseers and managers were not as highly qualified as those in Europe and America. The result was that the cost of production was greater in India. These difficulties were increased by scarcity of labor during times of plague and epidemics. Under these circumstances, it was em-

ployers, and not employees, who were at a disadvantage. "It is on a consideration of practical difficulties like these," concluded Mr. Mudholkar, "not on mere abstract grounds of the doctrine of *laissez faire*, that legislative interference with adult male labor is deprecated."¹⁷

There were two other points on which Sir Vitthalidas differed from the majority of the select committee and opposed the provisions of the bill thereon. First, he objected, as before in the commission, to the extension of the provisions of the bill to factories working daylight hours. The contention that daylight hours would extend to 14 or 14½ in the hottest period of the year would be met by his amendment, under which the working day should not exceed 12½ hours. The Bombay Government was in favor of this proposition. Second, he objected to the Government's omission from the bill of the recommendation of the commission for the appointment of a chief inspector of factories, the primary object of which was to insure uniformity in the administration of the factory law. In case the decision of the Government remained unchanged, he suggested that the Government should draw up a set of model rules for the guidance of the local governments, which would make the necessary changes in them according to local requirements. He further suggested the holding of an annual conference of factory inspectors to compare notes with a view to keeping factory administration on the same level of efficiency in all parts of the country.

Following the discussion, several amendments were proposed by the members. The first amendment moved by Sir Vitthalidas provided that every textile factory after working 12 hours should stop work for one hour, as stated in his discussion. The proposal was opposed by the Government on the ground of administrative difficulties in factories working on the shift system and negatived by the Council.

Hon. Archey Birkmyre followed Sir Vitthalidas with two amendments. His proposals were first, to begin work

¹⁷ India, Legislative Council, Proceedings, Calcutta, 1910—11. 49: 586.

at 6 A. M. instead of 5.30 A. M. and stop at 7 P. M., and second, to increase the working hours of children from 6 to 6½, so that cotton factories could work 13 hours with two shifts of children, but the work of adult males would not exceed 12 hours. With a proper arrangement of shifts, each employee might be worked 10 hours. In support of his proposals, he said that the object of limiting hours of work to 12, could be achieved by this method without having resort to any drastic measure proposed by the Government, that the shorter work period of 13 hours would render inspection easier and that at the same time the commencement of work at 6 A. M. instead of 5.30 A. M. would be beneficial to employees. In support of the second proposal, he argued that evil effects of work on children were not due to 7 hours' work as prescribed by the existing law, but to the abuses of longer hours in violation of the legal limit, the employment of underaged children, etc., which had been made possible through inadequacy of inspection and absence of compulsory certification. Finally, he said that the Government of Bengal approved of the proposed longer hours. The proposals were refused consideration on three grounds:— first, administrative difficulties; second, disapproval of them by all the local governments other than the Bengal; third, recommendation of the commission not to increase the working hours of children more than 6 in any one day. The amendments were, therefore, withdrawn.

The next amendment was moved by Mr. Gokhale, who proposed that in all factories employing more than 20 children, the children between the ages of 9 and 12 should be given 3 hours of free and compulsory education. He supported his proposal on the ground of both justice and humanity. The employment of children in factories prevented them from availing themselves of the existing facilities for receiving instruction at school. The parents, because of employment in factories, could not exercise necessary supervision over their children. Children also deserved humane consideration, as they were least able to take care of themselves. The proposal was objected to by Mr. Dadabhoj on the ground that educa-

tion was the duty of the State and not of factory owners, and also by Mr. Madge on the ground that the addition of 3 hours' study to 6 hours' work would be fatal to the health of the children. The Government raised 3 objections to the proposal: — First, schools set up within the borders of a factory would not secure efficient education. Second, it would not be fair to place such a burden on factories. Third, it might lead to abuses of the law regarding the limitations of the hours of child labor. The proposal was withdrawn.

The third amendment, or set of amendments, was brought in by Mr. Mudholkar, who proposed to exclude the factories working daylight hours from the operation of the contended provision on condition that the maximum amount of work should not exceed $12\frac{1}{2}$ hours in any one day and the average period of work should not be more than 12 hours a day in a year. Sir Vithaldas supported the proposal, saying that under this system many factories would be absolved from the installation of electric light. Mr. Gokhale also supported the proposal on the ground that, in the interest of operatives themselves, such an arrangement would be better than the one proposed by the Government of a rigid 12 hours a day. They understood it better and it was also less liable to abuse. The Government opposed the proposal, advancing several reasons: — First, the longest time of work would have to be done in the hottest period of the season. Second, it would increase the work of children from 6 hours to $6\frac{1}{4}$, and that during the hottest period of the year. Third, it would not be of any substantial benefit to millowners. Fourth, it would increase administrative difficulty. And fifth, the argument that employees liked daylight hours in preference to any definite and fixed period of 12 hours had been misrepresented. What they objected to was the work by electric light, which they understood to be the same as long hours. The proposal was negatived by the Council and the bill, as reported by the select committee, was passed on the same day. The act was called the "Indian Factories Act, 1911", being Act No. XII of 1911, and came into force on July 1, 1912.

Chief Provisions of the Act:

1. The age limits of children for employment were put between 9 and 14 years as before. They were, however, required to produce the certificate of age and physical fitness.

2. The working hours of children and women were limited to 7 and 11 respectively. In textile factories, children were permitted to work only 6 hours and adult males to work 12 hours in any one day.

3. The working time for children, women and adult men in textile factories were limited to the period between 5.30 A. M. and 7 P. M.

4. Textile factories were prohibited from using any mechanical and electrical power for more than 12 hours in a day.

5. Factories had to make arrangement for ventilation, lighting, fire-escapes, water-supply, etc. Children and women were prohibited from being employed in certain dangerous work.

6. All factories were required to stop work for at least half an hour after every 6 hours' work.

CHAPTER V. FACTORY ACT OF 1922.

The Political Movement.

Not long after the enactment of the third factory act, the world was plunged into the great European conflict, in which India had to take a prominent part on the side of the Allies. Like many other nations, India underwent complete political and economic changes during the war. The chief forces which brought about and molded the first three factory acts lost their momentum, and a new political and economic consciousness among the people formed an altogether different background for factory legislation.

The most important change in the national life of India was the rise of a new political ideal. The national movement which first asserted itself in the protest against the partition of Bengal in 1905, after a decade of many vicissitudes, emerged as a great national force during the early part of the war. India's participation in the war was followed by a demand from her for full citizenship in the British commonwealth. In 1915, Hindus and Mohammedans who had been kept apart for a long time, adjusted their differences, and when, in 1916, nineteen members of the Imperial Legislative Council drew up a scheme by which the executive was to be subordinated to the legislature, both the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League took it as the minimum demand upon the British Government. The Home Rule movement was in full swing in 1917. There soon followed a series of important events, such as the prosecution of Mr. Gandhi for his championship of the laborers' cause in their grievances against British indigo planters in Bihar, the internment of Home Rule "agitators" in Madras and the Punjab, the Rowlatt Acts, the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre, and the dismemberment of Turkey in which one fifth of the people of India professing the Mohammedan faith was vitally interested. These occurrences

stirred the people throughout the length and breadth of the country and led to the rise of the non-cooperation movement. Thus, what was only the "agitation" of the "intellectuals" a few years ago became a mighty movement of the millions of the masses under the leadership of Mr. Gandhi. The movement for *Swadeshi* or the consumption of goods made in the country, was transformed into the movement for *Swaraj*, or national government.

With the transformation in the political consciousness, there also took place a change in the constitution of the Government of India. At the beginning of the war practically all parties supported the Government in the prosecution of it. In recognition of India's contribution to the defence of the British Empire, it was declared from the throne on August 20, 1917, that India would be granted an opportunity for "the progressive realization of a responsible government" as "an integral part of the British Empire". Acting upon this declaration, the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy made a report in July, 1918, on a scheme for a new constitution. The new constitution was adopted, with some modifications, in the British Parliament in December, 1919, and became operative at the beginning of 1921. This constitution granted the people certain powers in some minor or "reserved" subjects of the Provincial Governments, and also provided for somewhat better representation in the Central Government. Many important subjects, however, including the budget, both in the provincial and central governments are still entirely outside the control of the people.

The nationalists, who form by far the majority of the people in India, have altogether repudiated the new constitution. The moderates, while not altogether satisfied with its provisions, have accepted it as a temporary measure. The new constitution, with a legislature of two chambers, Council of State and Legislative Assembly, is nevertheless an improvement in so far as it gives the people a better channel for voicing their opinions on national questions.

The rise of the new political consciousness, reinforced by the reforms in the constitution has, as stated before, brought about a new situation in the country. There has appeared an intelligent public which is both critical and constructive on the one hand, and alert and aggressive for the defence of its rights and interests on the other. Irrespective of their political creeds, the Moderates and Nationalists are agreed upon one point — that there shall be no interference from outside in questions concerning purely internal affairs. They are determined that henceforth outside influence shall play a role less and less important in the legislation of the country, and that the labor law shall be enacted by the Indian people themselves.

The Industrial Movement.

Along with the political movement, there has also appeared a vigorous movement for industrial development. Soon after the introduction of the factory system, some two generations ago, Indian capitalists began to take initiative in modern methods of production. But it was not until 1905 that the attention of the nation as a whole was drawn to the importance of industrial development. In that year, as mentioned before, the Bengalees boycotted British goods. The Boycott was soon turned into *Swadeshi*. The boycott failed and even *Swadeshi* lost its momentum for a period until revived in 1918 by Mr. Gandhi. But the national consciousness has now been fully awakened to the necessity of making supreme efforts to advance the industrial interests of India by the Indians themselves.

This industrial awakening of the people, moreover, has been accompanied by a change in the industrial policy of the Government. In spite of the desultory attempts of some local governments, such as those in Madras in the nineties, and in the United Provinces in 1907, the Government of India was indifferent to the necessity of developing the manufacturing industries of the country. The efforts of Lord Morley in 1910

and of Lord Crewe in 1912, did not bear any fruit.¹ But the Great War brought home to the British Government the important truth that even for the defence of the British Empire, the development of India's resources was absolutely necessary. The realization of this fact led the British Government to change its policy and appoint a commission on May 19, 1916, to "examine and report upon the possibility of further industrial development in India."² After two years of investigation, the commission made its final report on the methods of developing the industries of India in 1918. The Government at once gave effect to some of these recommendations.

Whether the Government will accept principles that the Indian people believe to be required by the national economy of India and adopt a policy by which the resources of India will be developed by Indians and for the Indian people, remains to be seen. But India has already entered into a new industrial career.

Soon after the outbreak of the war, imports into India from European countries, especially from Great Britain and Germany, were perceptibly reduced or completely cut off. India had to supply the Allies with arms, ammunition and other war materials. Being compelled to depend upon herself for many commodities she had hitherto imported from abroad, and having also to produce for export, India devoted herself to the development of manufacturing industries. The enormous profits made by several industries led their promoters to expand their industrial enterprises. Also many new manufacturing industries, such as tanning and oil-pressing, were started. The Indian public has come to the assistance of the capitalists by investing in new industrial ventures. While in 9 months' period from April to December, 1918, the number of industrial companies registered was only 158 with a capital of £ 4,500,000, during 12 months of 1919—20, no less

¹ The Report of the Indian Industrial Commission, 1916—18, London, 1919, Cmd. 51, pp. 68—72.

² *Ibid.*, p. 1.

than 906 such companies were floated and their aggregate capital amounted to ₹ 183,000,000.²

The industries which made the largest profits were those related to cotton, jute, and iron. In the jute industry, the ratio of profits to the total paid up capital for the first half year of 1918 rose to 73 per cent. The aggregate total profit — after the deduction of interest on investment, for 36 concerns, was Rs. 71,885,000.³ A similar advance in profit is shown in the case of the cotton industry. From an average annual income of 17,400,000 rupees for the decade from 1905 to 1914, it rose to 130,600,000 rupees in 1919.⁴ Even in the year 1920 when there was a general slump in the cotton industry all over the world, and a large number of strikes occurred in this industry in India itself, the cotton industry in India showed an “unprecedented” and “unparalleled” prosperity. The profits of the Bombay mills alone were estimated to be Rs. 160,000,000. About 40 per cent of the internal demand for cotton goods in India is now supplied by the factories of India. Moreover, her production in the cotton goods of finer counts has also increased and these became a “constant encroachment upon Lancashire Trade.”⁵

The result of this industrial development has been that there has already grown up in India a well-organized capitalist class among the Indians themselves, which is not only quite capable of undertaking some of the greatest industrial enterprises of modern times, but is also powerful enough to influence the industrial policy of the government and to counteract the foreign influence so detrimental to India's interest.

² India in 1919, Calcutta, 1920, p. 78.

³ The Times Trade Supplement, London, March 8, 1919, p. 285.

⁴ Ibid., Nov. 6, 1920, p. 178. Computed.

⁵ Ibid., May 14, 1921, p. 169.

Gr. Brit. Parliamentary Debates, 1917, 91 : 1165.

Agitation for Import Duties.

In the meantime, under the stress of the war expenditure, Great Britain found it necessary to call upon her colonies and dependencies for financial help. India, whose contribution and sacrifice were very great, proposed in the Legislative Council as early as September, 1914, that she would share in the heavy financial burden then imposed by the war on the United Kingdom.⁸ Later on, India made an offer of £ 100,000,000 towards the expenses of the war. In order to maintain the interest and sinking fund on the gift, it became necessary for her to levy new and additional taxes and to increase her customs duties.

It should be remembered that early in the nineties, when fiscal difficulties drove the Government of India to the re-imposition of import duties on cotton goods, the Lancashire interests raised a strong protest and compelled the Government to levy an equivalent excise duty on cotton goods manufactured in India. As a result of this duty, not only Indian goods competing with those of Lancashire were put under disadvantage, but the manufacture of any kind of cotton was restricted. While the extremists called this "a glaring example of British exploitation of India", the moderates regarded it "unfair" and "unjust". Ever since, this excise duty has been one of the greatest sources of irritation and agitation among all classes of people.

At the first realization of the fact that she would have to meet the expenses of the campaign she herself undertook in the Eastern theatre of the war and also to contribute to the imperial war funds, India thought of reforming her tariff and of raising her import duties on all goods including cotton manufactures. Even as early as May 13, 1916, the *Statesman*, an Anglo-Indian newspaper, gave the warning that the ultimate object of all tariff reform was to "impose increasing burdens upon British exports and especially on Lancashire goods."¹⁰ But when the import

⁸ *Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates*, 1917, H. of C. 91:1138.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1917, H. of C. 24:556.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1917, H. of C. 91:1214. Quoted by Mr. Denniss.

duty on Lancashire goods was raised from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent without increasing the countervailing excise duty, on Indian cotton manufactures, Lancashire raised a storm of protest.¹¹

On March 5, 1917, Mr. Wl. Barton asked the Secretary of State for India whether the increase of 4 per cent duty on cotton goods imported into India was to be accompanied by a corresponding increase in the excise duty then levied on cotton goods manufactured in India. On March 12, 1917, an influential deputation representing employers and employees in the cotton trade of Lancashire waited upon the Secretary of State for India and strongly objected to the action which had been taken. The Secretary did not see any serious competition on the part of India and pointed out the attitude of the Indian people on the question of excise duty.¹² On March 13, 1917, the same deputation again waited upon the Prime Minister who observed that under ordinary circumstances the case of the deputation would have been irrefutable but that nothing could be done in view of the prevailing situation.¹³ On March 14, 1917, the Lancashire interests bitterly attacked the British Government for allowing the India Government to raise the import duties on their cotton goods without a countervailing excise duty on the Indian cotton manufactures. Although it was promised that the whole question of tariff reform in the Empire would be reopened at the close of the war, all the Chambers of Commerce in Lancashire passed resolutions asking his Majesty's Government "to take immediate steps to postpone such a controversial measure until after the war."¹⁴ But His Majesty's Government failed to take any action and the Government of India did not revoke its decision. Thus after dictating the terms of Indian tariff for about two generations in order to control the Indian markets, the Manchester interests for the first time met with defeat.

¹¹ Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates, 1917, H. of C. 91:1156.

¹² *Ibid.*, 24:520.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 91:1163-64.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 91:1198.

This defeat of the Lancashire interests in the control of Indian import duties was followed by a similar defeat in their interference with factory legislation in India. On March 14, 1917, the Secretary of State for India refused to mix two entirely distinct subjects, namely, import duties on Lancashire manufactures imported into India and the factory laws which ought to prevail there.¹⁵ On April 4, 1917, Mr. L. Haslam asked in the House of Commons whether the Secretary of State for India would make representation to the Government of India stating the desirability of shortening the hours of work in Indian factories so that children of 9 years of age should not be permitted by law to work 6 hours a day, and that the hours of work for women should not be longer than those permitted in the United Kingdom. The Secretary of State did not see any reason for acting according to these suggestions.¹⁶ On March 11, 1919, Mr. Haslam repeated the question and was told that that was not an opportune time for inviting the Government of India to undertake fresh factory legislation.¹⁷

The Industrial Commission of 1916—18.

Mention has already been made of the appointment of the Industrial Commission by the Government of India, which, after two years' inquiry made several recommendations for further industrial development. One of the important subjects into which the commission investigated was the conditions of labor, especially those related to health, housing and education.

The commission came to the conclusion that the laborers in the organized industries of India were less efficient than the corresponding classes of laborers in the Western countries. One of the reasons for such inefficiency was that the conditions under which the workers lived and worked in India were much worse than those prevailing in the Western countries. "No industrial edifice can be permanent," observed the commission, "which is built

¹⁵ Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates, H. of C., 1917, 91:1148.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 92:1411—12.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, H. of C., 1919, 113:1112.

on such unsound foundations as those afforded by Indian labor under its present conditions".¹⁸

The commission recommended the establishment of sanitary organisations for improving public health and for combating many preventable diseases to which Indian laborers and the people usually fell victims. Public health was also dependent upon housing conditions, for the betterment of which the commission recommended that the dwellings built by employers in industrial centres must be of a type approved by the local sanitary authorities, and the land required for accommodating laborers should be acquired, if necessary, by the Government or local authorities, and sold or leased to employers. A permanent body of workers was necessary for the development of efficiency. The commission recommended the introduction of compulsory education for all children in factory areas, and the amendment of the factory act, requiring the attendance of school by all factory children. "If the workers' children", observed the commission, "are provided with education under tolerable conditions of life, a new generation of workers will grow up, who will learn to regard factory work as their fixed occupation."¹⁹

In the case of Bombay, however, the existing congestion and the difficulties in the way of betterment were so unique that the commission made two special recommendations: First, that the future congestion of the city should be avoided by prohibiting the establishment of new industrial concerns without special permission of the municipality. Second, that the existing state of affairs must be improved by adopting a definite standard of industrial dwellings to be taken up and worked out at the expense of the local authorities, which, if necessary, might seek the assistance of the local government and even impose tax on employers.

The commission could not, however, recommend any reduction in the hours of factory work. The workers

¹⁸ Report of the Indian Industrial Commission, 1916-18, London, 1919, Cmd. 51: p. 151.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

loitered away much of the time during which they were nominally at work and did not learn how to use a longer period of leisure more advantageously, such a "concession" might not be an "unmixed" benefit. The commission realised the importance of welfare work, but did not make any definite suggestion. "The direct participation of official agency in social welfare work", concluded the commission, "must wait until the civic sense has become more fully developed."²⁰

The First International Labor Conference.

In the meantime, the Great War came to a close and the Peace Conference at Paris appointed a representative commission early in 1919 to inquire into the conditions of employment in different countries, to suggest international measures for securing common action on matters affecting the conditions of employment, and to recommend a form of permanent agency for continuing such inquiry and action. The commission after due consideration presented its report at a plenary session of the Peace Conference in April, 1919, and recommended the establishment of a permanent international labor organization. After an amendment had been made that the conference should have due regard to the climatic and industrial conditions of each country, provided for by Article 405 of the Versailles Treaty of Peace, the proposals of the commission were accepted on behalf of India by Lord Sinha, then the Under Secretary of State for India.

The proposals regarding the betterment of the conditions of labor in different countries were finally embodied in the Peace Treaty and the League of Nations. The first clause of Article 23 of the Covenant of the League of Nations says that the member nations will endeavor "to secure and maintain fair humane conditions of labor", and to this end, "establish and maintain necessary international organizations." The International Labor Organization thus constituted consists of two branches: First, an International Labor Office to be con-

²⁰ Report of the Indian Industrial Commission, 1916-18, London, 1919, Cmd. 51, p. 161.

trolled by a governing body. Second, a General Conference of representatives of the members of the League.

The actions which are obligatory on all members of the League are embodied in Article 405 of the Peace Treaty. Each State on receipt of the proposals of the Labor Organization or of the Labor Conference, is bound to place them before the proper authorities for legislation or other action. The conference meets every year and has two functions: (1) Recommendations and (2) Draft Conventions. In the case of recommendations, each member State has only to report to the secretary general of the League of Nations as to the action taken. In the case of draft conventions, the member State will, if it obtains the consent of the authority or authorities within whose competence the matter lies, communicate the formal ratification of the conventions to the secretary general and will take such action as may be necessary to make effective the provisions of such conventons.²¹

On April 11th, 1919, the Peace Conference approved, with some changes, the standing orders of the International Labor Organization proposed by its commission on international labor legislation. The first meeting of the conference was held at Washington, D. C., from October 29 to November 29, 1919. The following provisions were under consideration: — (1) Application of the principle of the 8 hour day or the 48 hour week. (2) Question of preventing or providing against unemployment. (3) Women's employment: (a) before and after childbirth (including the question of maternity benefit; (b) during the night, (including the Berne convention of 1906 on night work for women), and in unhealthy processes. (4) Employment of children: (a) minimum age of admission; (b) during the night; (c) in unhealthy processes. (5) Extension and application of the international convention adopted at Berne in 1906 on the prohibition of the use of white phosphorous in the manufacture of matches.²²

²¹ Treaty with Germany, June 28, 1919, Washington, 1919, Art. 405, p. 160.

²² First International Labor Conference, Washington, D. C., 1920, p. 14.

At the meeting India was represented by Mr. L. J. Kershaw and Mr. A. C. Chatterjee for the Government, by Sir A. R. Murray for employers, and by Mr. N. M. Joshi for labor. Mr. B. P. Wadia, President, Madras Labor Union, was the adviser for labor.

The conference divided its work among different commissions and committees for the formulation of recommendations and draft conventions. There were altogether 6 conventions and 6 recommendations on the subjects on which the Conference was called upon to give its opinion. The questions which were of special importance to India centered around the hours of work and the minimum age for children.

The question of the working hours was discussed in great detail by a commission appointed by the conference. Under Article 405 of the Treaty of Peace, the case of the countries claiming special consideration was taken up. It was decided that the hours of work in India might be reduced from 72 to 60 a week.

Mr. Joshi proposed that the following amendment be made to the proposed convention: First, the word "factory" to be applied to India should mean "any industry worked with steam, water, or any other mechanical or electrical power and employing not less than 10 persons." Second, the hours of work for women employed in factories should not exceed 54 a week. Third, that children under 14 years of age should not be employed for more than 30 hours a week.²² The amendment was rejected.

The Commission, however, recommended asking the Government of India to adopt the principle of a 60 hour week and to consider the possibility of introducing a 54 hour week or even a shorter one in the mines, and of modifying the definition of "factory" so as to apply it to the premises where fewer than 50 persons were employed.²³

²² First, International Labor Conference, Washington, D. C. 1920, pp. 167-169-267.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

On the question of the minimum age of children, the Government of India instructed its delegates to the conference to vote against any increase. The conference appointed a sub-committee to report on modifications necessary because of the climatic and industrial conditions of oriental countries. Mr. Joshi recommended the desirability of raising the minimum age, but both the committee and the commission rejected the proposition on the ground that the Government of India still had the question under consideration. When the question came up for deliberation in the conference, Miss Margaret Bonfield, one of the advisers of the labor delegates from Great Britain, proposed for India and other oriental countries that the minimum age of children for employment should be fixed at 12 in factories working with power and employing more than 10 persons, in mines and quarries, and on railroads and docks. The chief aim of this resolution was to give India some idea of the world's opinion. The resolution was supported by Mr. Joshi and carried.²⁵

The Labor Movement.²⁶

Meantime a new force has made its appearance in the industrial life of India. The labor movement which was started in 1875, has become today a strong social, political and industrial force. Following the formation of a trade union in Madras by Mr. B. P. Wadia in 1918, industrial unions began to spring up all over the country. In 1919 the workers of Bombay held a labor conference which was attended by representatives from 75 factories. This conference drew up a memorandum of demands upon employers. By 1920 practically all the trades in India were organized and an All-India Trade Union Congress was formed under competent leadership.

The immediate objects of the labor movement are an increase in wages, shorter hours of work, and better work-

²⁵ First, International Labor Conference, Washington, 1919, Washington, 1920, pp. 93-97.

²⁶ Cf. Das, R. K., *Factory Labor in India*, chap. 10.

ing and housing conditions. But it has also been actuated by some broader aims and higher ideals, such as education and training, social betterment, political enfranchisement, and even universal brotherhood.

For the realization of their aims and ideals, the workers have adopted various means, such as social centers and evening schools. The strike is, however, their most effective weapon, and this they have used especially for achieving their more immediate objects. In 1919—20 they organized strike after strike and paralyzed industrial organization in many parts of the country. For the purpose of securing a 60 hour week in the place of the existing 72 hour week and of increasing the minimum age of children for admission into factories, they called about 200,000 persons out of the factories and workshops of Bombay and kept them out for several weeks. The demand for shorter hours was granted by employers in Bombay as well as in many of the other industrial centers.

The effect of the organization of labor is that instead of being the incoherent and unorganized mass of individuals of a few years ago, Indian laborers are today a well-organized and consolidated body, fully alive to their own interests. It is true that they still depend upon outsiders for leadership as was the case in the beginning of the labor movement in other countries. The outstanding features of the movement in India today are: — First, the laborers have a practical program for the furtherance of their own welfare. Second, they are more capable of taking a common stand against any encroachment on their interests. Third, they have won the sympathy of the public to their cause. Fourth, they have also influenced the Government to support some of their demands. In the present legislature where vital labor laws are being framed, they have their own representative to plead their cause. On March 1, 1921, a resolution was also passed in the Legislative Assembly recommending to the Governor General in Council to introduce in the legislature such measure as might be necessary for the registration of trade unions.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ India, Legislative Assembly Debates, 1921, I.: 486—506.

Growth of Public Opinion.

Meanwhile an intelligent public opinion on industrial and labor questions has also been created. The strikes stirred up the public interest in the labor question. Newspapers and periodicals devoted considerable space to descriptions of labor conditions including the hours of work, standards of living, and housing conditions.²⁸ Research and investigations into labor conditions were undertaken by scientists and philanthropists, and the results of these studies were published in the organs of such social and economic associations as the Indian Economic Association and the Servants of India Society. These associations also devoted a good deal of time in their meetings and conventions to the discussion of labor problems.

The public gradually took a more sympathetic attitude toward labor. Shorter hours, higher wages, improvement of housing conditions, increase in the minimum age of children for admission into factories, minimum wage, and compulsory education were advocated publicly. On February 19, 1920, the Hon. Khan Bahadur E. H. Jaffer made a motion in the Legislative Council to appoint a commission to inquire into the conditions of factory labor and to consider the desirability of establishing courts of arbitration for the settlement of industrial disputes. Referring to the over-crowding, insanitary dwelling, insufficient wages, and recent industrial unrest, he advocated the remedy for some of these problems by legislation. It was only when the Government of India declared that the recommendations of the Industrial Commission and also the conventions and recommendations of the first International Labor Conference had been under consideration

²⁸ The Bombay Chronicle took the lead in bringing the problems of labor before the public. The labor cause was also taken up by such newspapers as the Hindu, the New India at Madras, the Tribune at Lahore, and the Amritabazar Patrika at Calcutta. Periodicals such as the Modern Review and the Indian Review began to publish articles on the labor question and labor legislation.

for some time and that the Government would soon give effect to them that the resolution was withdrawn.²⁹

This new social consciousness did not fail in exerting some influence on the capitalistic class. Even before the Washington Conference made its recommendations, the matter of shortening working hours had engaged the attention of Bombay millowners. They felt that the hours of work were too long and later on, when the demand for shorter hours came from laborers also, they at once granted it. In order to make the shorter work day general in India, the Bombay Millowners' Association, in March, 1920, presented a memorial to His Excellency the Viceroy in which they pointed out that one of the demands made by mill operatives in Bombay, when they went on strike in January of 1920, was a reduction of mill hours from 12 to 10 a day, and they requested the Governor General in Council to amend the factory act.³⁰

While the representation was being made to the Government for legislation to shorten the working day, most of the factories adopted a 60 hour week. A 10 hour day was adopted in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills of Madras, and 10 hours also became the nominal working day at Dhariwal, at Nagpur and elsewhere, and many factories observed still shorter hours.³¹ Thus, a 10 hour day became a fact long before it became a law.

The Ratification of the Washington Conventions.

The recommendations of the Industrial Commission of 1916—18 were given serious consideration by the Government of India which issued, in June, 1919, a circular letter to local governments and called their attention to the recommendations regarding education, housing, and social welfare upon which depended the prospects of improving the efficiency of labor.³²

²⁹ India, Legislative Council Proceedings, Calcutta, 1920, 48: 808—19.

³⁰ India, Legislative Assembly Debates, 1921, 1: 252.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

³² India, Legislative Council Proceedings, Calcutta, 1920, 48: 814—15.

In the meantime, the first International Labor Conference at Washington D. C., coming to a close, the Government of India also proceeded to obtain the views of the local governments and of public bodies as to the advisability of ratifying them.

In February, 1920, the nature of the conventions was discussed in the Legislative Council and it was announced that the matter would soon come up for disposal.²⁵ On the 10th of March following, it was stated in the British Parliament in reply to a question by Mr. A. Short, that the ratification of the conventions and recommendations would soon be brought up in the Indian Legislature. Up to that time the Government of India had not, however, come to a final decision on all of the points.²⁶ In May, 1920, the Indian Government, while realising the importance of giving effect to the conventions on the age limit of children, pointed out the danger of depriving children of 9 to 12 years of age of the training which they received in factories when there were no corresponding facilities for education.²⁷

Meanwhile, the International Labor Conference held its second annual meeting at Genoa from June 15 to July 10, 1920,²⁸ in which a draft convention was passed providing that children under the age of 14 years should not be employed on vessels other than those upon which other members of the same family were employed.²⁹

It was proposed in a discussion on June 29, that no seaman under 18 might be employed as a trimmer or stoker. Mr. L. Kershaw, the Indian Government's representative, proposed an amendment to the effect that in British India the convention should be applied in the sense that no person under the age of 12 be employed on deck or saloon crews. Most of the Indian children working at sea accompanied their parents. Mr. Kershaw's amending proposition was rejected and at the same time

²⁵ India, Legislative Assembly Debates, 1921, 1:259.

²⁶ Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates, 1920, H. of C. 126:1253.

²⁷ India, Council of State Debates, 1921, 1:181.

²⁸ The Times, London, 1920, July 1, p. 15, c. 6.

²⁹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1920, Cmd. 1174, p. 8.

the resolution itself was postponed and referred to the agenda of the next International Labor Conference.³³

While the opinion of the outside world expressed in the labor conferences and Parliamentary discussions as regards shortening the working hours, increasing the minimum age of children in industry, and other improvements of labor conditions were exerting an influence, the internal forces, such as the labor movement, public opinion, and even some of the employers' organizations, were pressing the Government of India to amend the factory act, as has already been said. The Government of India gradually changed its views and, on November 25, 1920, sent a dispatch to the Secretary of State expressing its intention to recommend the raising of the minimum age of children from 9 to 12 years. Although most of the local governments had recognized that it would be advantageous to raise the minimum age, there were some which were opposed to such action. The Government of India had nevertheless come to the decision because international obligations made it impossible to advocate any lower age.³⁴ Approval was soon given the measure by the Secretary of State for India and the Government of India reached its final conclusion by the middle of December, 1920.³⁵

The question of the ratification of the draft conventions of the first International Labor Conference was finally taken up in the newly constituted Legislative Assembly on February 19, 1921, and in the Council of State on February 21, 1921.

The draft convention secured in the first place a 60 hour maximum week for all workers in factories, in mines and in mechanical transportation services. In the second place, it provided for a maximum of overtime hours, established by public authority after consultation with

³³ The Labor Gazette, Ottawa, Oct. 1920, p. 1320.

³⁴ India, Council of State Debates, 1921, 1:162.

³⁵ The Times, London, Dec. 23, 1920, p. 9. It must be mentioned that the Bengal Chamber of Commerce was unanimous that there should be no change in the age limit fixed by law. India, Council of State Debates, 1921, 1:193.

employers' and workers' organizations, if they existed, and this limitation of overtime might be applied to exceptional industries in which overtime rates of pay of not less than one quarter of the regular rate were provided. The acceptance of the conventions by the Government of India, therefore, meant three things, as pointed out by Mr. A. C. Chatterjee, who moved the resolution in the Council of State: (1) A 60 hour week as maximum; (2) The fixation of the maximum for overtime work according to the interest of each trade and (3) a minimum rate of pay for overtime.

In the discussion of the subject in the legislature, several important points were brought out. Sir Maneckji Dadabhojy gave warning in the Council of State that the 60 hour week would be regarded as the final reduction.⁴¹ On the other hand, Mr. Bhugri in the same chamber would have liked to reduce the hours to 48 a week.⁴² Mr. Jamnadas Dwarkadas in the assembly stated that the 10 hour day was "only the first step toward the desideratum of an 8 hour day."⁴³ Mr. N. M. Joshi criticised the principle of the Labor Conference meeting at Washington for treating men and women alike and for fixing 60 hours a week for both, as noted above. He was in favor of a 54 hour week for women.⁴⁴ After much discussion a resolution recommending the Government of India to ratify the convention was passed.

The convention of the Washington Conference regarding unemployment and employment agencies required: (1) the supply by the Government of India to the International Labor Office of all information as to the existence of unemployment, (2) the establishment of free public employment agencies under the control of a central authority with an advisory board which would include representatives of employers and employees.

In addition to the compulsory provisions of the conventions, the Conference recommended also: — (1) that

⁴¹ India, Council of State Debates, 1921, 1: 161.

⁴² Ibid., p. 160.

⁴³ India, Legislative Assembly Debates, 1921, 1: 260.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 1: 253.

the employment agencies which charged fees and carried on their business for profit should be prohibited; (2) that the recruiting of workers in one country with a view to employment in another should be permitted only by mutual agreement between the countries concerned and only after consultation with employers and workers in each country; (3) that an effective system of unemployment insurance should be established; (4) that the State should coordinate the execution of all work undertaken under public authority, with a view to reserving such work, as far as practicable, for periods of unemployment and for districts most affected by it.²⁵

It was pointed out that the conditions in India differed from those in other countries in several ways: — First, in India, the employer sought the worker, not the worker the employment. Second, the workers in India were not in a position to become advisors because of their lack of training and experience.

As far as unemployment was concerned, the Government of India claimed that it had a system of famine administration which had been improved after every famine or scarcity in the last two generations, and which was capable of dealing economically with unemployment on a scale for which few Western countries could offer a parallel.²⁶ But as long as labor was more congested in certain areas of India than in others, the Government consented to create regular public service agencies to meet this difficulty.

As for the recommendation on unemployment insurance the Government of India could not accept it in its entirety. No system of unemployment insurance was practicable in India. Because of the great size of the country and the comparative immobility of unskilled labor, the Government could not undertake any effective means for distributing public work to the unemployed in times of need as required by the fourth section of the recommendation.

²⁵ India, Council of State Debates, 1921, 1:165.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

In the Council of State. Lala Sukhbir Sinha, representing agricultural interests raised an objection to the establishment of employment agencies by the Government, on the ground that such a procedure would take laborers away from the rural districts to the manufacturing districts, and would thus be detrimental to agriculture.⁴⁷ It was, however, pointed out that employment agencies for Assam planters, Bengal jute millowners, and other interests, were already at work in rural districts. There was no reason, therefore, why the public agencies should not perform the same function with greater benefit to employers and employees alike.

In the consideration of the resolution regarding the disinfection of wool, it was pointed out that India needed such a provision for three reasons: First, for the protection of her own workers from anthrax diseases, especially as the tanning industry was growing rapidly and the source of danger was thus increasing. Second, India must consider her duty to other nations. Indian wool was responsible for some cases of anthrax in England. Third, India must protect her own industries. India herself prohibited the importation of various kinds of Japanese goods, such as brushes, as a precaution. Indian exporters of wool and wool products were liable to similar discriminations. Both chambers recommended, therefore, that the Governor General in Council should make an inquiry as to the possibility of arranging for the disinfection of wool and of providing disinfecting stations.

Industries giving rise to lead-poisoning among its workers were rather limited in India. Still, a resolution was passed prohibiting women and children from being employed in such industries.

The recommendation by the Washington Conference on health services, involved the establishment by each State, in addition to a system of efficient factory inspection, of a government service especially charged with the duties of safe-guarding the health of the workers. A resolution was moved by Sir Thomas Holland that the

⁴⁷ India, Council of States Debates, 1921, 1:169.

Government should examine the possibility of establishing the Government health service. An amendment was moved by Mr. Joshi recommending that the Government should establish such service instead of examining the possibility of giving effect to it. Most of the Assembly members supported the amendment. Munshi Iswar Saran favored a service "whose responsibility should be to look after the comforts and convenience of the workers and the sanitary conditions of the factories."⁴⁸ Mr. J. Chaudhuri suggested the appointment of woman physicians because women and children formed a large part of the labor population.⁴⁹

Sir Thomas Holland stated that the Government had already been at work laying the foundation for carrying out the spirit of the recommendation. He pointed out, however, that the factory acts were administered by local governments and that the Legislative Assembly could not issue any orders to them. Promising that the Indian Government would recommend to the local governments the appointments of full-time medical men, also medical women for factory inspection, he asked for the withdrawal of the amendment, which being done, the original motion was carried.⁵⁰

The hottest discussion took place, however, on the question of child labor. Resolutions were moved that the minimum age of children for admission into factories be raised from 9 years to 12. This was not to apply to factories employing more than 10 but less than 20 persons, unless the local governments so directed. Transitional regulations should be made regarding children between the ages of 9 and 12 already lawfully employed in factories.

The debate brought out the fact that the abolition of child labor was one of the important general principles enunciated in the last article of the labor section of the Peace Treaty. To this principle India had already sub-

⁴⁸ Indian, Legislative Assembly Debates, 1921, 1:172.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 273.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

scribed that the prevailing minimum age of 9 years was not only too low but led to considerable error. Owing to the lack of birth registration, the age certificate was determined by dentition and general physical development. It was found that even 7 or 8 year old children were passed as nine.²² If the minimum age were raised to 12, this error might to a large extent be avoided. In favor of the 12 year minimum it was also pointed out that according to the Indian Penal Code, criminal liability did not exist before the age of 12 in any case, as before that age a child was considered unable to discriminate between right and wrong.

In the moving of the resolution, which was done by Mr. Chatterjee in the Council and Sir Thomas Holland in the Assembly, several arguments generally advanced against increasing the minimum age were criticized. In the first place, it was pointed out that the parents of children and the children themselves were opposed to such an increase. Mr. Chatterjee argued that this was only a personal opinion and could not very well be proven. On the other hand, even labor organizations demanded such an increase and they were supported in the demand by the press and the platform. In the second place, there was no advantage in raising the minimum age until educational facilities were provided for the children. Educational acts had been passed in some provinces, but they could not be carried out without funds. In refutation of this argument, it was maintained that as long as employers could employ under-aged children, they would never contribute to such funds. In the third place, raising the minimum age would result in considerable distress to many families which depended upon the earnings of children between 9 and 12. In reply to this argument, Mr. Chatterjee observed that there was something radically wrong with the wage system of a country where adult workers had to depend for the maintenance of their families upon the earnings of

²² It is a practice among higher classes of the people to keep horoscopes which are a kind of unofficial birth registration.

children below the age of 12. Mr. Chatterjee reminded the members of the Council that in voting for the above resolution they should remember not only the children whose future would be affected by the decision and who had no special representatives in the Council, but also the well-being of many future generations in India.⁵³ In the fourth place, it was argued that such an increase in the minimum age of children would throw out a considerable amount of machinery adopted up to that time to children's use, especially in textile factories. In reply to this statement, Sir Thomas Holland remarked that there was a transitional period provided for in the resolution and in that time the factories ought to be able to adjust themselves to this gradual change.⁵⁴

Sir Alexander Murray, President of the Jute Mills' Association, Calcutta, proposed an amendment in the council that the minimum age should be raised to 11 instead of 12. A similar amendment was brought forward by Sir L. P. Watson in the Legislative Assembly. There were several arguments advanced in favor of this amendment. Sir Alexander contended that the decision of the Government to raise the minimum age to 12 was influenced more by an anxiety to meet international obligations than by any material benefit likely to accrue to the children or to the country. He also maintained that the International Labor Conference imposed upon India the minimum of 12 years without due consideration of India's case. India ought to refuse adopting its resolution to show that the Conference had no right to do this. Moreover, Sir Alexander pointed out that the educational acts made provisions for only 4 years of schooling for children, and even if they attended school they would finish their education at about the age of 10 or 11. A minimum of 11 years would give an opportunity of going from school to the factory. Sir L. P. Watson observed that the boys in India between the ages of 9 and 14 exhibited an extraordinary intelligence and an adaptability to pick up their

⁵³ India, Council of State Debates, 1921, 1:177-78.

⁵⁴ India, Legislative Assembly Debates, 1921, 1:280-81.

work and to learn it quickly, which slowed down considerably after 14. An 11 year minimum would give a longer period of apprenticeship.⁵⁵

Neither in the Assembly nor in the Council did the members favor the amendment. On the contrary, one member in the Council favored a minimum of 14 years and another in the Assembly proposed a minimum of even 15 years. The amendment was defeated.

Mr. Joshi proposed a second amendment making the new provision applicable to factories employing 10 persons. But Sir Thomas Holland objected to this amendment on the ground that it would be impossible for the Government to enforce such a provision without adequate provision for inspection. The amendment was withdrawn and the original motion was carried.⁵⁶

Introduction of the Bill into the Legislature.

On March 1, 1921, a bill was at last introduced into the Legislative Assembly to amend the Factory Act of 1911.⁵⁷ The bill was based on the draft conventions and recommendations of the first International Labor Conference as ratified by the Indian Legislative Assembly and Council of State. Minor changes were made in the light of a great mass of evidence collected through various commissions, committees, conferences, local governments, and various other official channels. The most important provisions of the bill were as follows:

First, the definition of the term factory was altered to include all establishments employing 20 or more persons and using mechanical power, and to empower local governments to extend the definition to establishments employing 10 persons or more, whether worked with mechanical power or not.

Second, a limitation of the weekly and daily maximum hours of work that could be worked in all factories, and an extension of the principles of limitation from the textile to all other factories.

⁵⁵ India, Council of State Debates, 1921, 1:182.

⁵⁶ India, Legislative Assembly Debates, 1921, 1:182.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 481-84.

Third, instead of half an hour all full time workers should, in the future, be granted an hour's rest after each six hours' work, and factory workers should ordinarily be entitled to a weekly day of rest which would preferably be Sunday.

Fourth, the minimum age of the employment of children was raised from 9 to 12, following the ratification by the Indian Government of the conventions and resolutions of the first International Labor Conference. There was also a further alteration, raising the upper age limit of children from 14 to 15.

Fifth, when a factory was specially and temporarily exempted by the local government from the operation of the 60 hour rule, the workers should be paid overtime at least $1\frac{1}{4}$ times the normal rate as required by the treaties with Germany and Austria.

On March 17 following, a motion was made by Sir Thomas Holland in the Legislative Assembly to refer the bill to a joint select committee of the Legislative Assembly and Council of State.²⁹ Since the introduction of the bill into the Assembly, some new features were added, the most important of which was the question of protecting the health and safety of the workers by introducing, in addition to the regulations already in force, a further provision for controlling the artificial humidification of factories and for protecting the workers by placing on the employers the responsibility for ensuring the safety of factory buildings.

In seconding the motion, Mr. N. M. Joshi pointed out the anomaly in the definition of the factory, by which the Government of India gave local governments power to apply factory laws to establishments employing 10 persons and working with or without machinery, while not retaining the same power to itself. Mr. Joshi further pointed out that the safety and sanitary measures were not explicit enough for the guidance of factory inspectors, that there was no limit to which overtime work might extend, and that the penalties fixed for breach of law were very inadequate in certain cases.

²⁹ India, Legislative Assembly Debates, 1921, 1:1228-88.

Mr. A. B. Latthe proposed that there should be a provision in the bill to the effect that all children should have to produce certificate of attending school as a condition for admission to factory work.

With a few more suggestions, the resolution recommending the Council of State that the bill be referred to a joint select committee of both chambers was passed. On March 21, the Council of State passed a resolution to that effect,⁵⁰ and the Legislative Assembly referred the bill to a select committee on the same day.⁵¹

Passage of the Bill.

On January 10, 1922, a motion was made in the Legislative Assembly "that the report of the joint committee on the bill further to amend the Indian Factories Act, 1911, be taken into consideration."⁵² It was pointed out at the outset that among the reasons for amending the existing law were the necessity of remedying the defects disclosed through ten years' experience and of adapting the provisions to the recent industrial advancement and to the growth of public opinion, and the fulfilment of international obligations.

Some of the provisions of the bill as introduced into the legislature were highly contentious. Three of the twelve members of the joint select committee each appended a minute of dissent, while three others also added a joint minute of dissent. Although there was unanimity of opinion on the main provisions, the amending bill underwent some important changes in the joint committee. The maximum number of hours in any one day was reduced from 12 to 11. It was also provided that every workman would secure 52 legal holidays in the year and that no worker would go without a holiday for more than ten days at a time.

Sir Vitaldas D. Thackersey, former member of the Factory Labor Commission of 1907, and representative of

⁵⁰ India, Council of State Debates, 1921, 1: 520-23.

⁵¹ India, Legislative Assembly Debates, 1921, 1: 1460.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 1922, 2: 1463-87.

Millowners' Association, raised several objections to the bill. He strongly criticised raising the maximum age of children from 14 to 15 on the following grounds: First, it went beyond the Washington convention or the law now in force in England, Japan and other countries, where, after the age of ten, boys and girls were allowed to work up to the maximum of 10 hours. Second, it was at the age of 15 that a boy was taken as an apprentice. The restriction on the half time work at that age would interfere with his employment and training. Third, a boy at 15 would not be satisfied with the half wages in factories while he could earn full wages outside. It would be especially harmful to a girl of 15, who, instead of working in the presence of her relatives in a factory, would work as a day laborer or a coolie away from them. Fourth, the innovation was introduced without consulting the laboring classes.

In reply to these objections, the following arguments were put forward by Mr. A. C. Chatterjee, Mr. Jannadas Dwarkadas, and others. First, although young persons at 14 could work for 10 hours in England, yet no one before that age could be employed in factories. Second, life in India was so short and workers in Indian factories became incapable to continue work in factories so early that children should be given enough opportunity to grow into strong men and women and should not be made victims either of the ignorance of their parents or of the interests of the capitalists. Third, if the employers were so solicitous about depriving children of the means of livelihood, they could surely increase the wages in spite of the facts that they remained half-timers. Fourth, it was not true that the laboring classes would object to the provision. They have not done so in any of their numerous meetings. Moreover, the protection of women and children should not depend upon the consent of laborers or capitalists.

There were several other minor amendments brought forward in the Assembly, which were rejected after a short discussion. But the controversy centered around the amendment which provided that "if a child over the

age of six years is found in any factory or within the precincts thereof, he shall, until the contrary is proved, be deemed to be employed in the factory."⁵³ In support of this provision, it was pointed out by the Government that there was a good deal of illegal employment of children in factories and without such strict regulation, the enforcement of the provisions regarding child labor would be impracticable. The opponents of this provision brought forward several arguments: First, it would put the burden of proof upon the employer, and under no system of jurisprudence did the burden of proof rest upon the accused person except in very exceptional cases. Second, there would be great hardship, if children were not allowed to attend mill schools, to play in the grounds, or to bring in food for their parents. After some controversy a provision was added to the effect that the premises used solely for purposes other than manufacturing processes, should not form part of the factory within the meaning of the law.

On the same day the resolution for the adoption of the bill as finally amended was passed.

On January 23 following, a motion was made in the Council of State for the adoption of the bill as passed by the Assembly, and, after some controversy, the bill was passed.⁵⁴ It comes into force on July 1 of the current year.

Chief Provisions of the Act.⁵⁵

(1) A factory is any establishment employing not less than 20 persons and using mechanical power. A local government may define as factory any establishment employing not less than 10 persons and working with or without mechanical power.

The distinction between textile and non-textile factories was abolished as far as the law was concerned. The

⁵³ India, Legislative Assembly Debates, 1922, 2:1476.

⁵⁴ India, Council of State Debates, 1922, 2:649-59.

⁵⁵ The Commerce, Calcutta, Jan. 21, 1922, p. 110; the Times Trade Supplement, London, April 8, 1922, p. 65, and Labor Gazette, Bombay, March, 1922, pp. 27-30.

scope of the provisions by which a large number of factories was exempted from the operation of the act was limited.

(2) The minimum age for the employment of children was raised from 9 to 12 and the maximum age from 14 to 15. The hours of work of children were limited to 6 in any one day. No child can be employed without medical certificate, and a child may be re-examined for the continuance of his work, if necessary.

(3) No adult should work more than 11 hours in any one day, nor more than 60 hours in any one week.

(4) All workers should have a period of one hour's rest for work exceeding 6 hours. At the option of workers, this period might be divided into two.

(5) All workers should have a day of rest in a week and no worker should go without a holiday for more than 10 days at a time.

(6) In case of over-time work, workers should receive at least $1\frac{1}{4}$ times the normal rate.

(7) The fine for the breach of the act is raised from Rs. 200 to Rs. 500, and the court is given power to pay compensation to injured persons and their families out of the fine.

(8) Prohibition of the employment of women and young persons under 18 in certain lead processes.

(9) The Governor General in Council was empowered to make rules for the disinfection of wool infected with anthrax.

CHAPTER VI.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAW.

An equitable law always implies an adequate provision for its administration. Even a good law is worse than no law unless it is enforced. In order to have a proper understanding of the factory law it is, therefore, essential to see what means have been provided for its administration.

Administrative Organisation.

The administration of the factory law is intimately connected with the general administration of a country, which in India falls into three principal divisions:¹

First, the Home Government with the Secretary of State for India, who is a member of the British Cabinet, and of the India Council in England. This council is divided into committees. The committee concerned with Indian factories is that of revenue and statistics, especially the division of statistics.

Second, the Government of India, with a Governor General, and an executive council and legislature, the latter consisting of the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly. The executive council is divided into departments which, in turn, are subdivided into divisions. The departments which have immediate relations with the administration of factories are: In the first place, the home department, especially the divisions of health, the police, the judiciary, the municipality, and the local board. In the second place, the department of commerce and industries, which was created in 1907 with a division of factory administration. Recently the Government of India has also established, in connection with the Board of Industries and Munitions, a Central Labor Bureau, for the collection and distribution of information and for advice to the local governments as well as to employers and employees.

¹ Since this writing, there have been some notable changes in the constitution of the Home as well as the India Government.

Third, the provincial or local governments, with generally a governor and executive and legislative councils. The administration of local governments is divided into several departments on practically the same basis as that of the India Government. Every local government is divided into a number of districts with an officer, called variously in different parts of the country, magistrate, collector, collector-magistrate and deputy commissioner. Two or more districts may be joined together into a division under the administration of an officer called commissioner.

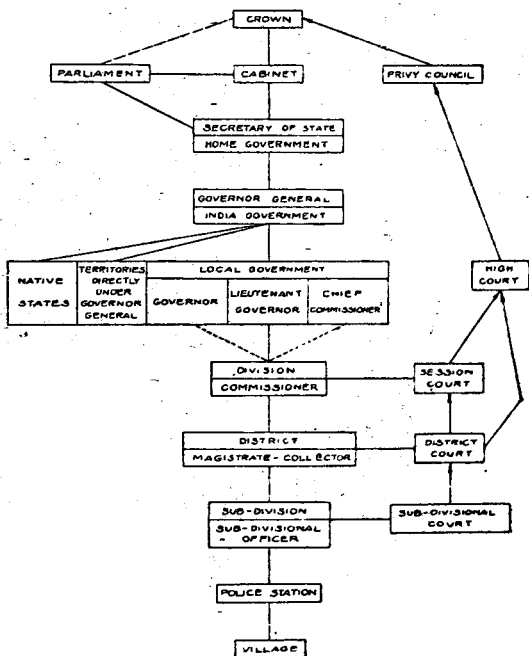
A district is the unit of political organization in India. The magistrate-collector is the chief executive officer, and virtually the supreme authority in the district. A district is generally subdivided into smaller divisions with respective officers, who are directly under the supervision of the district collector. Beside the executive function, the magistrate-collector also administers justice in all criminal cases. The administration of justice in civil suits is left to especially appointed judges of whom there is at least one in each district. The district judiciary whether of the criminal or civil court, is responsible to the High or Chief Court, located at the metropolis of each local government. Appeal from the latter court may be made in certain cases to the Privy Council in England.

Several territories are directly under the jurisdiction of the India Government. Besides, there are native states which have certain freedom in local affairs.

A scheme of the constitution of the Government of India is shown in the diagram on p. 166.

In the case of Bombay and other local governments, it is the general department, corresponding to the home department of the India Government, which is in charge of factory affairs. Until the year 1912 the magistrate was the *ex-officio* inspector of factories in all districts, except in metropolitan cities like Calcutta, where other officials were in direct charge. Even the work of special technical inspectors was carried on under his supervision. By the Factory Act of 1911 this power was largely given over to special inspectors, e. g., chief inspector of fac-

The Government of India.



tories in Bombay. But in certain provinces, e. g., the Central Provinces and Berar, the power to prosecute cases has been reserved to the magistrate.

In February, 1920, a Commissioner of Labor was appointed by the Government of Madras, whose duties included the supervision of factory inspection and of the immigration of labor. His field of activity embraces practically all economic aspects of labor, including the organization of labor, cooperative housing, and the health and welfare of labor in general. Bombay has established a similar office.

Enactment and Modification.

The supreme authority regarding factory legislation, as in fact regarding all legislation in India, rests with the Indian Legislature. The acts passed are general, compulsory for the whole of India, and uniform in their essential features. Local governments cannot undertake the enactment of factory laws, which may, by the regulation of working hours and other conditions, result in the restriction of trade; but before the enforcement of the laws enacted by the Central Government, they can, through certain powers granted by the provisions of the acts themselves, undertake modifications in minor details to suit their own special needs. Such procedure on the part of the local governments has been necessitated by the great diversity in the nature of the industries and in the geographical and meteorological conditions in the different sections of the country.

This power of modification was granted to the local governments under Sections 9, 13, and 18, of the Factory Act of 1891. Under Section 9, for instance, a local government might direct the occupier² or manager of a factory to register all children in such form and in such particulars as the local government might from time to time designate. Under Section 13, the manager must give

² Occupier means the manager and includes any person for the time being actually in charge of a factory. Notification by the Government of Bengal. *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1893-94, Vol. 65, H. of C. 151, p. 4.*

notice of an accident to the designated authorities. And under Section 18, the local government was empowered to make rules consistent with the act and subject to the control of the Governor General in Council. These rules might provide for fencing of machinery and mill-gearing, maintenance of water supply, ventilation, cleanliness and prohibition of overcrowding. But even in these matters a certain degree of uniformity was attained through a system by which all local governments were required to make report on certain definite points, such as:—

(1) A summary of results and a general resumé of inspections.

(2) Sanitary conditions and arrangements in factories.

(3) General health of operatives, especially of women and children.

(4) Wages and general conditions of operatives; a general information only.

(5) Employment of women and children and an account of the work of certifying surgeons.

(6) Fencing of machinery and mill-gearing.

(7) Convictions should be entered in the prescribed statement and detailed accounts given in the body of the report.

The Government of Bombay, for example, made several rules and orders on June 22, 1892, i. e., a few days before the second factory act came into force, which were called the Bombay Factory Rules of 1892. The words and expressions in these rules and orders were interpreted to have the same force as if they were embodied in the act. Under these rules, each factory was to supply two gallons of water for each employee per day; to provide an area of 36 superficial feet and a breathing area of 500 cubic feet with 10 square feet of ventilating openings for each employee in the room to prevent inhalation of injurious dust, if any; to lime-wash the walls and ceiling every fourteen months, to provide one latrine for every 50 employees, and so on.³ It also provided:—

³ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1893—94, Vol. 65, H. of C. 151, pp. 22—24.

(1) That an inspector⁴ should visit each factory at least once in every three months.

(2) That every order given by the inspector to the occupier of a factory should be in writing with his signature.

(3) That the occupier might make appeal against any order of the inspector, if necessary.

(4) That the inspector should make a report of all his work within a certain period.

(5) That the occupier of every factory, in which children were employed, should keep, in a form prescribed by the Government, a register of the children employed and of their respective employments.

(6) That the occupier should send notice of accidents, if any, to the inspector, or the magistrate, or any other officer designated, within one hour in case of death, within 12 hours in case of fatal injury and within 48 hours in case of minor injury.

The Government of Bengal made similar rules under the Act of 1891. Unlike the Government of Bombay, the Bengal Government did not make any specific rules regarding the supply of water, air space, etc. Each factory was to be inspected only once in every 6 months, the inspector to keep a register of the factories inspected and of the accidents reported in his jurisdiction.

The occupier must keep a muster roll of the children employed and a register of the hours worked.⁵

The rules made by other local governments were practically the same in nature, though they differed in details.⁶

After necessary modification, the law is left to inspectors or other especially appointed officers for execution.

⁴ Inspector means the magistrate of the district or a special inspector. — Notification by the Government of Bengal. *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1893-94, Vol. 65, H. of C. 151, p. 4.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-6.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-12.

Inspection and Supervision.

The most important branch of factory administration is inspection. It is both interesting and significant to note how the system of factory inspection has developed in India in a comparatively short period of time.

Under the factory act of 1881, the local governments were empowered either to appoint special factory inspectors or to entrust the work of inspection to magistrates or some other officers. In 1883 the Government of Bombay appointed a special inspector, but the position was abolished in 1887.⁷ The other local governments made over the work to district magistrates, who were *ex-officio* inspectors, the magistrates in turn often delegated their work to their subordinates or other officials.

In 1889, in reply to an inquiry by the Secretary of State regarding the efficiency of inspection by *ex-officio* inspectors, the Governor General stated that the opinion of all the local governments and administrations was favorable to the maintenance of the system of inspection by district magistrates.⁸ The subject was also discussed by the Factory Commission of 1890. The arguments put forward by the adherents of the system of inspection by *ex-officio* inspectors, were: — First, the factories were small in number and scattered over a vast area. The inspection by special agents would be, therefore, costly. Second, such inspection would also be inefficient, as the approach of the special inspector to the locality would always be known beforehand. On the other hand, the magistrate was always on the spot and could make a surprise visit at any time. Third, the lack of technical knowledge on the part of such inspectors might be met by appointing a few boiler inspectors, such as locomotive superintendents of railroads or their subordinates, who might be paid from fees.⁹ For the rest of the work, the education and intelligence of a magistrate or of any other high official were sufficient.

⁷ Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1907, 3:257.

⁸ Gr-Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 162, p. 3.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 133.

Whatever might have been the merits or demerits of these arguments, no attempt was made by any local government to appoint any special inspector until 1892, when two such inspectors were appointed, one for the Bombay Presidency and the Central Provinces and another for the Bengal Presidency and the United Provinces.¹⁰ Even the system of inspection by *ex-officio* inspectors was not uniform. The chief inspector of factories in the city of Bombay in 1905, for example, was the Assistant Collector of Bombay. The duty of medical inspection was entrusted to the personal assistant of the surgeon general and that of certification of age to three Presidency surgeons. In the Presidency, outside the city of Bombay, factory inspection was carried on by collectors, assistant and deputy collectors, and the special inspector. In Calcutta, the chief inspector was the commissioner of police to whom the special inspectors had to report. In the city of Madras, both special and medical inspectors had to report to the sanitary engineer of the Government; and in the Presidency of Madras, the work of inspection was given over to civil servants. In the Punjab, inspection was made by the deputy commissioner¹¹ or by some other officers deputed by him; in the United Provinces, by civil surgeons, district officers, and the special inspector from Calcutta; and in the Central Provinces by the deputy commissioners, civil surgeons, and the special inspector from Bombay.¹² Under these circumstances, the Textile Factory Labor Committee of 1906 strongly recommended the appointment of special inspectors of factories, having in mind both the efficiency of the work and the preservation of the uniformity of the law. The Factory Labor Commission of 1907 also took up the matter and recommended discontinuing the system of appointing *ex-officio* inspectors and placing the special inspectors under the direct control of some district officials, as in Bombay.

¹⁰ Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1907, 3:247.

¹¹ Same as magistrate and collector in Bengal and some other provinces.

¹² Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1907, Vol. 59, Cd. 3617, p. 9.

Meanwhile the importance of appointing special inspectors in order to secure efficiency in work was realized by several local governments and the number of such inspectors throughout the country was raised to 6 in 1908. They were distributed as follows: — Bombay 3, Madras 1, the Central Provinces 1, and Bengal and the United Provinces 1. The Factory Act of 1911, which came into force on July 1, 1912, made special provision for the appointment of special factory inspectors and on March 31, 1913, there were 14 such inspectors in the country, five of them being in the Presidency of Bombay alone. Besides these special inspectors, there were also boiler inspectors and certifying surgeons in each district.¹³ In the city of Bombay including the district of Thana, a whole-time officer was appointed on July 7, 1912, for the certification of children. In the other districts throughout the Presidency of Bombay, the work was carried on by medical officers, appointed by the Bombay Government.¹⁴ District magistrates are still retained as *ex-officio* inspectors, but their duty is generally confined to ascertaining that the orders issued by inspectors are observed.¹⁵

One of the points of discussion before the Factory Commission of 1907 related to the recruiting of factory inspectors. It will be remembered that experience in India and the ability to converse with the employees in their own language were, according to the commission, the essential qualifications for the posts of inspectors. The commission supported the view of the Bombay Government that recruitment of factory inspectors from the United Kingdom was not necessary. Such recruits would be entirely ignorant of local conditions and requirements and might cause embarrassment by attempting to introduce measures not suited to Indian conditions. There was nothing, argued the commission, in the work

¹³ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1914, Vol. 63, H. of C. 288, p. 65.*

¹⁴ *Bombay Presidency Factory Department. Annual Report 1912. Bombay, 1913, p. 4.*

¹⁵ *Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates, H. of C, 39 : 1191.*

of inspectors to justify their being sent to Europe for training.¹⁶

In reply to an inquiry as to whether all the factory inspectors in India should be Europeans, the Under Secretary of State for India in the House of Commons said, on June 13, 1912, that as the great majority of the managers and their assistants in Indian factories were Europeans, it was inevitable that the inspecting staff should be mainly, if not wholly, made up of Europeans.¹⁷ On November 26, 1912, Mr. Jowett asked the Under Secretary of State for India in the House of Commons whether, since out of 2,430 factory managers, some 2000 or 82 per cent were Indians and almost all factory employees were Indians, the Under Secretary should not take steps to appoint an adequate number of Indian factory inspectors. Indian factory inspectors were acquainted with the conditions prevailing in factories and spoke the same language as employees did, and would, therefore, perform better service. The Under Secretary replied that European managers were employed in the larger factories and the first hand knowledge of the working of the factory act in England was an important qualification.¹⁸ When the appointments were made, all of the 14 inspectors were found to be Europeans, or British strictly speaking, but only 4 of them were appointed in England, 2 of these having had experience in factories and the other 2 having qualified themselves for the factory inspection staff in England. The other 10 were appointed in India and had had no experience in factories or in business.¹⁹

Some idea of the coordination and interrelation of the different departments of the Government, as far as factory administration is concerned, may be formed from the following review and diagram on p. 174.

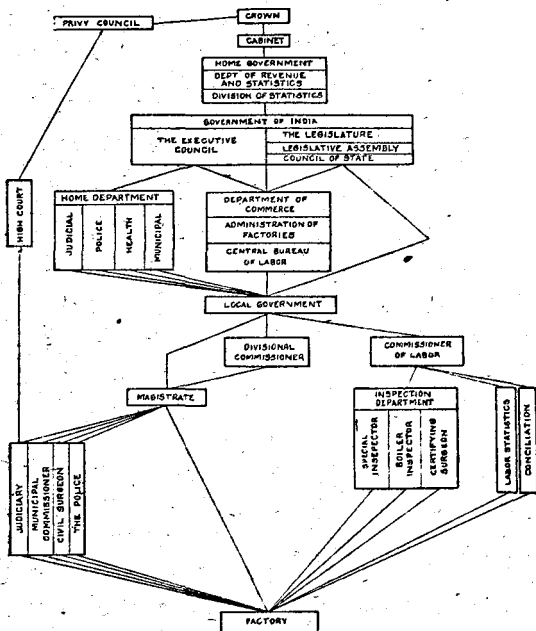
¹⁶ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 38.

¹⁷ Gt. Brit. Parliamentary Debates, H. of C., 1912, 39:1191.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 44:987.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1914, 60:1163.

Factory Administration in India.



Suppose a capitalist desires to start a factory in the City of Bombay. He applies first to the commissioner of municipality²⁰ for plans and directions, by following which he can fulfil the requirements of safety and sanitation in his intended plant. After the establishment of his plant, he notifies the chief inspector of factories,²¹ who is the head of the inspecting staff in the City of Bombay; and in response the boiler inspector inspects the boilers and the certifying surgeon examines the children and issues certificates of age and physical fitness for employment. The special inspector examines the whole plant, including safety, sanitation, employment of women, children and men, and number of hours to be worked, and gives orders, if necessary, to remedy any shortcoming before the commencement of work. So the business starts.

Suppose now an accident happens. If it is serious, the manager of the factory at once sends the injured person to a hospital and at the same time informs the police and the special inspector of the accident. The inspector investigates the nature and cause of the injury, and is assisted in his inquiry by the police and the civil surgeon under whose supervision the injured person is treated. If the inspector finds that the accident has occurred because of neglect of duty on the part of the manager, he brings a suit against him in the court of the magistrate, he himself being the prosecutor. If convicted, the manager has the option of appeal to higher courts.

Special inspectors report on their work to the chief inspector of factories, who at the end of the year sends a formal report with some observations, if necessary, to the General Department of the Bombay Government. The Bombay Government sends all such reports with additional observations to the Division of Factory Administration of the Department of Commerce and Industry, and the latter department issues a general annual report which is embodied in the other reports of the Government of

²⁰ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1888, H. of C. 821, 77: 20.

²¹ *Bombay Presidency Factory Dept. Annual Report, 1912, Bombay 1912, p. 3.*

India. Finally, a summarized report, with some observations of the Government of India, is published every year by the India Office in England and included in Parliamentary papers.

Penalties and Prosecutions.

The enforcement of law implies that there are penalties in case it is not complied with. The enactment of a legislative measure is thus always accompanied by provision for specific penalties in case of violation. The Factory Act of 1891, for example, provided penalties for any one, who employed children in dangerous work, e. g., cleaning mill-gearing, while the machinery was in motion, or neglected any of the following rules:— (1) Keeping of a prescribed register for children. (2) Setting up of notices of danger in proper places. (3) Fencing of machinery or mill-gear. (4) Supply of a required amount of water per employee. (5) Provision for proper ventilation as prescribed by the inspector. (6) Provision for necessary and prescribed space per worker. (7) Sending of notices of, or furnishing of reports on accidents, etc. The penalty for any of these offences was a fine of 200 rupees, provided the prosecution was instituted by the permission of the inspector in charge of the factory concerned. There was also a fine of 20 rupees for the offense of using, or helping others use, a false certificate of the age of children.

Conflicting opinions exist regarding the observation of the law by factories. The reports on the working of the Factory Act of 1881 seemed to indicate that the principle provisions of the law were well observed all over the country.²² The reports on the working of the Factory Act of 1891 led practically to the same conclusion.²³ The violation of the law generally occurred in the case of the employment of children. The Factory Commission of 1890 found several half-timers employed as full-timers.²⁴ On the other hand, the Madras Government did not believe

²² Cf. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1889, Vol. 58, H. of C. 124, pp. 3, 34, 48.

²³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 48.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 110.

that the evasion of the law regarding the employment of children below the age of 9 years was frequent.²⁵ "In connection with certain restrictions", wrote the collector of land revenue, in charge of Bombay factory inspection, "such as the long midday rest for women and the reduced hours for children, as the workers would gladly be free of these restrictions, irregularities are difficult of detection and may occur. At the same time, if such irregularities occur, they are not common."²⁶ The opinion of the Government of the Central Provinces on July 31, 1893, was of the same tenor. "The inspection reports of the special inspector and of the civil surgeon show," observed the government, "that the provision of the factories act and of the rules framed thereunder were, in the main, faithfully observed by occupiers of factories."²⁷

During the recent years, the reports regarding the observation of child labor law have been conflicting. "My experience of one year as medical inspector in Bombay," wrote the medical officer in charge of the Bombay factories in 1906, "leads me to believe that the existing law as to the employment of children is not evaded, nor do I think that mill managers have any desire to evade the law, nor anything to gain by doing so."²⁸ This might have been only a casual remark, as the officer's experience in factory inspection was limited to one year. But the report of the government, issued just a year previous to the above statement, made substantially the same observation. "As in the previous years," continued the report, "there are but few instances reported of the infringement of these provisions of the act, which relate to the working hours and employment of women and children."²⁹ Yet according to the report of 1912, it was found that no law was so much violated as the child labor law. Many children under false name took double certificates. While the average number of children employed

²⁵ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers*, 1894, Vol. 58, H. of C. 108, p. 49.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1909, Vol. 63, Cd. 4519, p. 57.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1908, Vol. 75, H. of C. 145, p. 176.

in Bombay was 4,300, some 13,000 passes were issued to children of that city every year.³⁰ Practically the same observation has been made by inspectors of factories in the recent years.

A fair estimate of the observance of the factory law may be had from the number of persons convicted for the breach of the act. It is not to be assumed that the convictions actually represent the number of cases in which the law is violated. In many cases, the prosecution does not take place for lack of proper inspection and, if it does, the technical difficulties often absolve the violator. A rough idea nevertheless may be formed from the statistics of conviction for the violation of the factory act.

The statistics prior to the year 1892 are not available. In that year 6 persons were convicted for breach of the factory law. The number of convictions fell to 3 in 1898, but rose to 37 in 1903. In 1914 there were 162 convictions in all parts of the country, but in 1917 only 154 were recorded.³¹ The convictions were made for such offenses as irregular employment of women and children and the failure to send in prescribed returns.³²

The provisions of the Factory Act of 1911 were extended to include all factories employing 50 persons or upward, and might by order of any local government be further extended to factories employing 20 persons. Although only two provinces exercised this power, many seasonal establishments were thus brought under the operation of the law, and the additional inspections provided by it have made possible a better and more elaborate system of inspection. The factory act of 1922 has gone still farther and empowered the local governments to include establishments employing 10 persons and working with or without power.

³⁰ Bombay Factory Report, 1913, p. 1. See also Punjab, Hyderabad, and C. P. & Berar Factory Reports.

³¹ Statistical abstract relating to British India, London, 1920, p. 235.

³² Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1917, H. of C. 136, p. 27.

CHAPTER VII.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

The Act of 1881.

The rapid progress made in the cotton industry in India soon after the establishment of the steam power factory in the City of Bombay in 1863, gave rise to a spirit of rivalry among Lancashire manufacturers, who, becoming apprehensive of losing their trade with India, which consisted of about one-fourth of their annual export, started strong agitation with a twofold object in view: First, to free the Indian market from the import duty on cotton goods. Second, to bring the factories in India under the same regulations as those in England. In 1874, a deputation of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce waited upon Lord Salisbury, then the Secretary of State for India, to urge upon him the regulation of factory labor in India. Shortly after, Lord Salisbury advised the Government of India to repeal the import duty on cotton goods and recommended the subject of factory legislation to the consideration of the Government of Bombay.

The demand of the Secretary of State upon the Government of India to repeal a revenue duty in order to please Manchester interests, was strongly criticized both in England and India. Fiscal difficulties, however, did not permit the Government of India to repeal the import duty on cotton goods, but the Manchester agitation in Parliament, nevertheless succeeded in passing, in 1877, a resolution to the effect that the import duty on cotton goods should be repealed by the Government of India at the earliest opportunity.

In the meantime, the Government of Bombay appointed, in 1875, a commission to inquire into the conditions of factories and to report on the advisability of enacting laws for the regulation of child and woman labor. The majority of the commission, however, failed to see the necessity for

such regulation and the Government of Bombay refused to take any further action.

The refusal of the Government of Bombay to regulate factory labor in India revived the Manchester agitation. While the public in India resented the attempt of the Manchester interests to interfere with India's internal affairs, the manufacturing interests being apprehensive lest the cotton industry, in which they had invested large sums of money, be strangled in its infancy, started a counter-agitation to thwart the designs of the Manchester interests. Meanwhile, philanthropists also instituted a movement in India for the betterment of factory conditions by legislative regulation, and appealed both to Manchester interests and to British philanthropists for help. As a result, a resolution was moved in Parliament in 1879 praying Her Majesty for the immediate regulation of child and woman labor in Indian factories.

In the same year the Government of India introduced a bill for factory regulation. The first factory act was enacted in 1881 and the law became operative on July 1 of that year. The most important provisions of the act were the fixing of the minimum and maximum age limits for the employment of children at 7 and 12 years respectively, and the limitation of their working hours to 9 in any one day.

The Act of 1891.

The very year the first factory act was passed, Lancashire manufacturers sustained a still further loss of their trade with India and sent a deputation to the Secretary of State for India to urge the repeal of the duty on their goods imported into India. In 1882 this duty was completely abolished. The first object of their agitation was thus won by the Manchester interests.

The provisions of the factory act, however, failed to satisfy the demands of both the philanthropists and the Manchester interests, and no sooner was the act enacted than agitation was started again to amend it. In 1882 a Manchester factory inspector investigated conditions prevailing in Bombay factories and made some suggestions

for improvement. In 1884, the Government of Bombay appointed a commission to consider these suggestions in all their bearings. Meanwhile, the factory workers of Bombay held their first conference and sent a memorandum to the commission for the redress of their grievances. The commission made several recommendations which were sent to the Government of India, but the latter declined to take any action. In 1887, another inspector of British factories made a similar investigation in Bombay and on his return to England, made several allegations against the factories in India. In 1888, the Secretary of State for India directed that these charges be considered by the Government of India.

In the meantime, the cotton industry in India was making still more rapid progress, and the spirit of rivalry among the Lancashire manufacturers was again aroused. In 1888, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce passed a resolution recommending the extension of the British child and woman labor laws to India, and soon after sent a deputation to the Secretary of State for India to present this resolution. Such attempts on the part of the Manchester interests created resentment and apprehension among the Indian public, especially among cotton manufacturers.

In reply to the inquiry of the Secretary of State, the Government of India denied the charges made by the British factory inspector, but consented to amend the factory act according to the recommendation of the Bombay Factory Commission of 1884, and accordingly introduced a bill into the Legislative Council. Under the pressure of the Manchester interests, the Secretary of State insisted on stricter measures and the Government of India postponed the passage of the bill.

The delay in the amendment of the factory act by the Government of India led to fresh agitation in England. An attempt was forthwith made to apply to India some of the resolutions of the International Labor Conference of Berlin held in 1890. A demand was also made that the Government of India should submit a draft of the bill to the British Parliament before its passage by the Indian Legis-

lative Council, although such a procedure was against the constitutional right of the Government of India.

During this agitation in Great Britain, India was not free from similar demonstrations, the most important of which was agitation among the workers themselves, who founded an organisation of their own called the Millhands' Association of Bombay and held a great mass meeting at which they drew up a memorandum of their demands.

On the advice of the Secretary of State, the Government of India appointed a commission to inquire into the conditions of factory workers. The commission received an address from the Millhands' Association and, after due investigation, recommended increasing the age limits of children in industry and regulating the working hours of women. But the Manchester interests did not find the recommendations restrictive enough and influenced the Secretary of State to demand for stricter regulation. The Government of India made several concessions, though under protest, and submitted the bill into the legislature for final decision. It was passed in 1891, and came into force on January 1, 1892. The chief provision of the act was the regulation of woman labor to 11 hours as resolved by the Berlin labor conference, with an interval of rest for an hour and a half.

The Act of 1911.

No sooner was the Factory Act of 1891 passed than agitation was started in England to amend it. An inquiry into factory conditions undertaken by the Government of India in 1892 at the request of the British Royal Commission on Labor revealed the fact that the interests of both labor and capital were not adequately served by the provisions of the new act.

About this time, the rapid progress of the jute industry in Bengal aroused the rival spirit of the Dundee Chamber of Commerce which passed resolutions in 1894 advocating stricter factory legislation for India. The agitation of the jute interests in Great Britain was highly resented by British capitalists who invested money in the jute industry of India.

In the meantime, great changes were taking place in the cotton industry. Following the enactment of the factory act of 1891, the industry met one misfortune after another. On the other hand, the fiscal difficulties early in the nineties led the Government of India to levy a revenue duty on all imported goods including cotton manufactures. But in order to satisfy the Manchester interests, the Government of India was obliged to levy a countervailing excise duty of 3.5 per cent on all Indian cotton manufactures which in any way competed with Lancashire cotton goods. In 1904—05 the cotton industry in India underwent, however, a complete change. The low price of cotton and the profitable market both at home and abroad led to unusual activities in factories which were soon followed by excessive hours of work. The investigation of factory conditions by the Government in 1905, revealed the fact that out of 74 mills inspected, 16 mills worked 14 hours or more a day and 33 mills about 13 hours or more. The Bombay factory workers also sent a memorandum to the Government of India praying for the regulation of their working hours by legislation. The question of factory legislation was, therefore, reopened by the Government of India and a bill was introduced into the Legislative Council in 1905.

In the meantime, the Bengalees boycotted all British goods as a protest against the partition of Bengal by the Government of India. The boycott was soon followed by *Swadeshi*, or the use of domestic goods, and many handicraft industries were revived; and even a new cotton factory was started by the leaders of the movement. Considerable apprehension was, therefore, felt by the Lancashire manufacturers, who sold to Bengal more than one-half of their export to India. A deputation of the Factory Workers' Association of Lancashire waited upon the Secretary of State for India in 1906 to demand restrictions on the labor of adult males in Indian factories.

In the same year, the Government of India appointed a committee to inquire into the conditions of textile factories. This committee was followed in 1907 by a com-

mission which investigated into the conditions of factories of all kinds in India. Both the committee and the commission advocated the regulation of adult male labor in textile factories, but the latter was strongly opposed to direct legislation for the purpose.

A new bill was introduced in 1909 and passed in 1911. The act became effective on January 1, 1912. The chief provision of the act was the limitation of working hours of male laborers to 12 hours a day and of children to 6 hours in textile factories.

The Act of 1922.

Not long after the enactment of the third factory act, the world was plunged into the Great War in which India had to take an active part on the side of the Allies. As in other countries, the war brought about great political and industrial changes in India. The national party, started in 1905 as a protest against the partition of Bengal, became a powerful body which aimed at the establishment of Swaraj, or national government. There was recently established a new constitution, which, while not giving the [REDACTED] any practical control of the government of the country, nevertheless created a much better means for the expression of public opinion on national questions. There appeared an intelligent public which was quite alive to its rights and interests. A new background for the enactment of factory legislation in India was thus created.

The textile industries which were making only a fair profit before the war, entered into a period of unprecedented expansion during its progress. Some new industries, such as those related to ^{hides and skins and oil-} seeds, made their start. This industrial development was accompanied by a change in the industrial policy of the Government, which, on May 19, 1916, appointed a commission to report on the possibility of further industrial progress. On the other hand, a well-organized capitalistic class appeared among the Indians themselves.

The war put a heavy financial burden upon India. She had not only to finance the campaigns she undertook

herself, but she made a gift of £ 100,000,000 to Great Britain towards the cost of the war. As a consequence, it became necessary for India to reform her tariff and raise her import duties. The duties on cotton goods imported from Lancashire were raised from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, while the countervailing excise duty of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on cotton manufactured in India was left untouched. The Lancashire manufacturers raised a strong protest and sent a deputation urging His Majesty's Government to revoke the decision of the Government of India. - In this they were unsuccessful. This defeat of the Manchester interests in controlling the import duties of India was followed by another defeat in their attempt at interfering with Indian factory legislation.

The Great War at last came to a close and an international labor organization consisting of an international labor office and a general conference of representatives of the members was created under the auspices of the League of Nations of the Peace Treaty. The conference held its first meeting at Washington, D. C., in 1919 and drew up draft conventions and recommendations for the amelioration of labor conditions in countries subscribing to the League. India was asked, among other things, to reduce the working hours in factories from 72 to 60 a week and to raise the minimum age of children from 9 to 12 years.

In the meantime, a new force appeared in India. The labor movement which had started in 1875 appeared as one of the strongest organisations in 1919—20. Through successive strikes, it paralysed the industrial organisation of the whole country, realised some of its immediate aims and even won the sympathy of the public and the recognition of the Government.

At first the Government of India was not in favor of the ratification of the conventions and recommendations of the First International Labor Conference. But the ratification was strongly urged by the British Parliament, the Indian public, and the subsequent International Labor Conference. With some modifications, the Government of India at last ratified them.

Soon after, a bill based mostly on the recommendations of the Industrial Commission and on the conventions and recommendations of the International Labor Conference as ratified by the Government, was introduced into the legislature and referred to a joint select committee of the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State. On January 10, 1922, the report of the joint committee was taken up by the Legislative Assembly for final consideration, and the bill, after a few minor amendments, was passed. On January 23, the bill, as amended and passed by the Legislative Assembly, was also passed by the Council of State.

The essential features of the act were the extension of the scope of the factory law to smaller establishments, the increase in the minimum and maximum age limits of factory children to 12 and 15 respectively and the limitation of the daily and weekly working hours of adults to 11 and 60 respectively.

• Concluding Remarks.

One of the fundamental conceptions of the eighteenth century philosophy was the theory of the divine ordinance of nature. Emanating from this ordinance, man was a rational being, who knew what was the best for himself and who, by following his own interest, promoted the welfare of the whole society. Every individual had certain natural and inalienable rights, such as private property, free competition and freedom of contract, upon the maintenance of which depended the harmony of social interests. The main function of government, according to this theory, was the preservation of these individual rights.

When the factory system made its appearance and brought about the industrial revolution, the doctrines of laissez faire and individualism thus pervaded the social mind. Private initiative and enterprise, which were repressed by the State in the mercantilistic period, received new impetus. Profit-making became the prime incentive in business organisation. Capitalism took its rise and inaugurated modern industrialism. The factory

system made a very rapid progress leading to the phenomenal growth of social capital, which increased national dividend and more or less benefited all classes of people. But it was not long before self-interest asserted itself among the capitalists and led them to the exploitation of the laboring classes, especially women and children. Children of tender age were worked day and night and often the same number of hours as adults. It was the "bitter cry" of children, many of whom were the wards of the State, which led the British Government to enact the child labor law and to lay the foundation of factory legislation.

Since the enactment of the first factory act over a century ago, there has been great modification in social thoughts. The classical doctrines upon which were based the political and economic theories of the last century have undergone radical changes. Individual rights have often been found detrimental to social welfare. There has gradually grown up a social consciousness which places social interests above those of individuals and classes. Government has become a means for the promotion of public welfare such as health, education and morals. The protective power of the State has been extended to men and women working in modern industries, such as mines and factories. Factory legislation has thus become an important political institution.

The factory system has evolved through the gradual conquest of nature by man and is the most efficient method of production known up to the present time. While the remedy of the defects which are still inherent in its process and the control of the abuses which may prevail in its operation are the chief objects of factory legislation, it also aims so to direct the normal growth of the factory system that the latter may become the most economic means for the utilisation of natural resources and for the augmentation of national wealth. The inequality in the present system of distribution, such as low wages and unemployment, largely arise from the capitalistic control of industry rather than from the factory system. They are more or less common to

all classes of laborers working under the wage system. The solution of these problems depends upon the democratisation of the present industrial organisation rather than upon factory legislation.

The problems of factory legislation proper relate chiefly to such questions as excessive hours, sickness and accidents, compensation and insurance, and child and woman labor. The remedial measures are, however, beset with several difficulties: First, lack of knowledge regarding prevention and remedy in many cases. Second, inertia of human nature not to be prompt to take advantage of the protective devices even when they are known. Third, doctrines of natural rights under the notion of which some people still oppose social legislation. Fourth, reluctance and resistance on the part of capitalistic interests to introduce any method or to accept any measure which encroaches upon their vested rights or reduces their profit. The solution of the problems lies in overcoming these difficulties by education in modern science and philosophy and in introducing progressive legislation as determined by the enlightened public and the organised workers.

Factory legislation in India, while following the same process of growth and meeting the same kind of difficulties as in other countries, presents some additional problems. The extreme poverty of the people and the primitive nature of the industries make the rapid expansion of the factory system absolutely necessary. But the British manufacturing interests are opposed to the development of modern industries in India, which is one of their principal markets. They have used, among other things, legislation to retard the growth of manufacturing industries in India, as seen in the foregoing pages. Legislation cannot serve the best interest of the workers by interfering with the growth of the factory system which opens to them new industrial opportunities.

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THE LABOR MOVEMENT IN INDIA

TO THE MEMORY OF
ZIPA ROSSIE SKLAR

PREFACE.

"The Labor Movement in India" is a preliminary study in the working class movement with special reference to its origin, growth, nature and significance. It was begun as a part of "Factory Labor in India" in 1913 and elaborated in connection with "Factory Legislation in India" in 1916. In 1918, the movement entered into a new epoch and achieved a new significance. The treatise has since then been revised and enlarged. Like the springs of a river, the forces of a movement are manifold and concurrent. The division of the labor movement in India into three periods is, therefore, more or less arbitrary.

The application of mechanical power to the productive system and the private ownership of the means of production are the two essential features of modern industrialism, the former giving rise to the factory system and the latter to capitalism. The factory system has evolved through the gradual conquest of nature by man and is, therefore, the most efficient method of production known up to the present time. But it appeared in its final form in England at the time when there was a strong reaction against state control which went into excess under mercantilism and when the doctrine of *laissez faire* and individualism was the dominant social philosophy. It was naturally taken up by private enterprise which eventually developed into capitalism. Although capitalism has been a great incentive to the growth of the factory system, the relation between the two is historical and accidental rather than necessary and fundamental.

The extreme poverty of the people and the international character of modern industries make the adoption of the factory system by India ab-

solutely necessary. Under the economic and political conditions, the growth of capitalism is also inevitable in India. The reasons for such inevitability are obvious: First, capitalism is still the quickest method of industrialisation of a country. Second, social ownership and even social control of industries imply a certain degree of concentration and integration which can perhaps be better developed under capitalism. Third, under the political domination of capitalistic England, it is the only course open to her. Fourth, the experiences of Russia within the last few years show that the overthrow of capitalism is the problem of the world rather than that of any one weak nation. Capitalism will run its full gamut in India as in other countries. But Indian capitalism being largely imperialistic, the chances are that it will play itself out more quickly.

Like feudalism, capitalism is a passing phase in social evolution. It has already outlived its utility in industrially advanced countries and has even become a hindrance to social progress. It is bound to change or give way to some other system. In order to succeed it, a new system must, however, be equally efficient in production and capable of doing away with the present injustice in distribution. Moreover, as industrial control encroaches upon political rights and social privileges, the new system must also secure social and political equality to the majority of people.

Such a system cannot be achieved by merely dethroning capital and enthroning labor. Even the establishment of the rule by the workers including peasants and artisans does not necessarily solve the social problem. As long as control, whether social, political or industrial, remains with a few, ex-

plottation and dictatorship are bound to continue and thus to retard social progress. A democratic society is possible only when a considerable number of social population can replace industrial experts rather than merely "wheel them out", can participate in local and national governments rather than vote for political candidates and can create a new social attitude rather than accept old social custom. Moreover, social democracy is not so much a goal in itself as a condition for the highest and richest expression of an individual and the moral and intellectual progress of society, which can be achieved by the development of new ideals and aspirations, especially among the masses. The solution of the problem lies not in the mere substitution of one system by another, but in the inauguration of an elaborate system of education in modern science and philosophy and of training in the efficiency for social, political and industrial service.

The economic interests occupying the greatest part of the youthful vigor and of the wakeful days are one of the primary forces of social evolution. They are, therefore, the foundation upon which social democracy can be built. The labor movement aims primarily at the reorganisation of the industrial system and secondarily at the readjustment of the social and political institutions, and is, therefore, one of the most important means to the achievement of social democracy. It is from this viewpoint that the author has tried to understand the labor movement.

Berlin, February 1, 1923.

Rajani Kanta Das.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION.

Old Industrial Organisation.

From the earliest times, India has been a country of small communities. A comparatively large village, or a group of smaller ones, forms the village, the chief industrial unit in the country.

Agriculture is the principal industry of the village. Of other industries, weaving, smithing, oil-pressing, and pottery-making are the chief. These industries together with some other minor ones make up the self-sufficing system of the village economy, which is still the dominant feature of the industrial organisation of India.

The whole industrial population of the village may be divided into two classes, the cultivators and the artisans, the former providing food and raw materials, and the latter supplying the other simple needs of rural life. In addition to these principal original classes, there have grown up, in the course of time, other classes of people, such as bankers, tradesmen, physicians, scribes, and landlords. Every village has also its menials or "servants", such as washermen, barbers, and scavengers.

Towns began to grow among these village communities even in the early times. Royal residences, places of pilgrimage, and seaports rose into prominence as industrial centres. Generally each town developed one highly specialised industry, such as the manufacture of muslin at Dacca, and of calico at Calicut, although other minor industries also developed to a certain extent.

The handicraft system, which was more or less in the rudimentary stage in the village, became

highly developed in towns. With the growth of the trading classes, the domestic system appeared and established commercial relations with such distant markets as Babylon and Rome. The domestic system was followed by the workshop system, which is still dominant in towns.

Rise of Modern Industrialism.

Until the end of the 18th century, India not only supplied the limited demand of her population for manufactured goods, but also enjoyed a large export trade. With the beginning of the 19th century, Indian industry underwent a complete change. Instead of exporting manufactures, India began to import them and to send out grain and other raw materials in exchange. This rapid change was the direct result of the British domination in India, which began in 1757.

The prime object of British rule in India is the economic exploitation of the country. Under the spirit of mercantilism, Great Britain adopted a policy by which India was made a producer of raw materials for British factories and a purchaser of finished goods from British merchants. As a result of this policy, there followed a complete collapse in the industrial organisation of the country. The artisan class suffered most, for its members had to fall back on land and to depend wholly upon farming. With the decline of the craft system, engineering, architecture, and other industrial skill also disappeared, and the industrial disorganisation was soon followed by intellectual stagnation and moral deterioration of the people.

From this condition India has, within the last two generations, been slowly but surely drifting toward modern industrialism. The self-sufficing

village economy has, in many cases, been replaced by national and international economy. Mechanical power has begun to be applied to productive processes. Indian manufactures are again finding their place in the domestic and even in the foreign markets.

The most important factor which has brought about this change is the increased facility for transportation, especially the railroads. Agriculture soon adapted itself to modern industrialism. Production with special reference to the market has already secured a firm footing in agriculture. The cultivation of indigo, tea, and coffee has been started by British planters. Modern science and invention are being applied to mining and manufacturing, resulting in the growth of collieries and factories. The growth of these modern industries have been offering opportunities of work to an increasingly large number of the population.

Rise of the Wage-earning Classes.

By far the majority of the people in India lives in villages and is occupied in agriculture. Land is owned either individually or collectively. Even where landlordship prevails, the status of the ryot or the cultivator does not materially change. He has to pay only a fixed share of his produce as rent. In either case, the ryot is economically independent. The artisan and other industrial classes invariably enjoy economic freedom. As all industries are conducted on a small scale, there is scarcely need for more labor than that which the individual ryot or artisan, with the help of his family, can render. Co-operation is common among the industrial classes. The occasional need for extra labor is met by temporarily hiring a neighbor. The economic position

of the menial or village servant is not much worse than that of the other classes. He has certain claim upon his remuneration, which has been fixed by custom and is generally paid in kind. Over and above this, he owns his homestead and often a piece of farmland as well. He is always recognised as a necessary and usefull member of the community and a part of the organic life of the village, which is not only an industrial unit but also a social and political whole. The worker has thus been free in the village.

Industries in towns are in the hands of craftsmen or trades-people. They manage their affairs themselves or with the help of hired labor. The help is a sort of apprentice and eventually becomes a master craftsman or independent tradesman. Even if he remains a journeyman, there is no occasion for the formation of a wage-earning class for two reasons: First, the workman invariably belongs to the same caste as his master, and in most cases is his relative. Second, the workman generally lives in a large family group, some member of which are master craftsmen or tradespeople. As in the village, the working men in towns are independent.

Except for the caste system which was itself socio-economic in origin and divided the people into different industrial classes, there did not exist in India any wage-earning class. With the growth of modern industrialism, there is, however, growing such a class.

The decline of craft industries, which supplemented the agricultural income, and the decrease in the size of farms due to the growth of population without a corresponding growth in agricultural land, have made it necessary for a large number of cultivators to hire themselves out for a part of the time. Such

a class of peasant laborers is growing rapidly in the recent years.

The demand for agricultural laborers came almost simultaneously with the British settlement in India. Indigo was first cultivated. Later on tea and coffee plantations were also established. They are now scattered throughout the country and employ a large number of laborers. The abolition of slavery in the British colonies in 1834 was immediately followed by a demand for Indian labor. A large number of Indians were sent out under the indentured system to such colonies as Natal, British Guiana and Fiji. Since then a large number of them has returned to India. These laborers work under contract for a number of years and depend solely upon labor for their livelihood. Being detached from their home communities for a number of years, many of them lose their homesteads and farmlands.

The most important group of workers is to be found in such modern industries as railroads, collieries and factories. Since the Great War, modern industries have been springing up all over the country employing a large number of people.

Some idea of the number and classes of laborers in India may be had from the following table, based mostly on the census of 1911, which is still the latest source of information on the subject:

The number and classes of workers in India:

Classes	Year	Number
Field Work	1911	25,879,293
Domestic service	"	2,718,415
Plantations	"	810,407
Mines	"	224,087
Factories	1919	1,367,136
Railways	"	711,690
Total		31,718,415

From the above table it is seen that there are about 31,718,415 laborers in different industries of India. Of these, 28,597,654 were in field work and domestic service and 3,120,761 were in modern industries, such as plantations, mines, railways and factories.

The number of workers who emigrated from India varied from 17,315 in 1835 to 15,439 in 1910—11 and to 1,602 in 1916—17, after which the immigration stopped. The number of those who have been returning increased from 5,788 in 1910—11 to 7,856 in 1916—17. In 1919—20, 3,783 emigrants returned to India.

Thus a large class of laborers is growing in different industries of the country. However, there has not yet appeared a sharp distinction between the laboring classes and the people from whom they are emerging. Unlike the wage-earning classes in Europe and America, the majority of the laborers in India still retain their homesteads, and some of them even own a piece of farmland, small though it may be, and they do not yet depend completely upon wages for their livelihood.

The first signs of a modern wage-earning class have already appeared in some industrial centers, such as Ahmedabad and Cawnpore. The number of workers who have been separated from homesteads and farms and depend solely upon wages for their livelihood is increasing every day.

PART. I. ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT.

CHAPTER II.

The REGULATION PERIOD.

1875—91:

Immediate Causes.

The first cotton mill was established in Bombay in 1863 and only a few mills were built in the first decade. But early in the seventies, a large number of mills began to spring up in different parts of the Presidency and to employ an increasingly large number of women and children. They generally worked the same number of hours as men. Some of the children were also quite young. The presence of women and children in factories called for regulation and was the fundamental cause of the labor movement.

The initial cause of the movement was, however, the rivalry of Lancashire manufacturers, who looked with apprehension at the rapid growth of the cotton industry in India, where they exported a large part of their commodities. They immediately started agitation for the regulation of working hours in Indian factories, and sent, in 1874, a deputation to the Secretary of State for India to urge upon the necessity of factory legislation.

On the advice of the Secretary of State, the Government of Bombay appointed, on March 25, 1875, a commission for the investigation of factory conditions. The majority of the commission failing to see any necessity of such regulation, the Government of Bombay refused to take further action.

This refusal of the Government of Bombay revived the activities of the Manchester interests,

which were shortly followed by counter-actions by cotton manufacturers in India, minimising the grievances of the laborers. In order to draw the attention of the Government to the conditions of labor in factories, the philanthropists under the leadership of Mr. Sorabjee Shapoorjee Bengalee, C. I. E., soon started agitation, which formed the nucleus of the labor movement in India.

Child Labor Law.

With a view to bring the labor question before the Bombay Legislative Council, Mr. Bengalee drafted a bill. But since the majority report of the commission could not make a case for legislation, the Government of Bombay refused to permit him to introduce it into the Council. Mr. Bengalee appealed to Manchester for support and sent copies of the draft bill to England, which was published in the London Times on September 13, 1878. The publication of Mr. Bengalee's appeal gave rise to fresh agitation in England and led to a motion in the House of Commons on April 4, 1879, for factory legislation in India.

The result of these agitations was that the Government of India drafted a bill and, with the approval of the Provincial Governments, introduced it into the Legislative Council in the same year. The bill was passed on April 15, 1881. The chief provisions of the act were that the minimum and maximum ages of children were fixed at 7 and 12 respectively and their hours of work were limited to 9 a day.

Agitation for Amendment.

The failure of the act to regulate woman labor and to put a stricter restriction on child labor at

once raised the question for amendment, and agitation was started even before the act came into force.

One of the effects of the agitation was that Mr. Meade King, an inspector of cotton factories in the district of Manchester was appointed, in 1882, by the Government of Bombay to supervise and report on the working of the factory act. Mr. King found several inadequacies in the law and made some suggestions for improvement. In order to ascertain the advisability of extending these suggestions into factory legislation, the Government of Bombay appointed another commission in 1884.

Labor Conference.

A counter-agitation was immediately started by the manufacturers in India to minimise the importance of any amendment. In this attempt, the case of labor was either neglected or misrepresented. Laborers together with the philanthropists found it necessary to present their grievances to the Government. Out of this necessity emerged the first labor leader in India, Mr. Narayan Meghjee Lokhanday, who began life as factory laborer and worked for the cause of labor until his death.

The first work of Mr. Lokhanday was to organise a conference of the Bombay factory workers. The main object of it was to present the grievances of factory workers to the commission. The conference held its meetings on September 23 and 26, and drew up a memorial to the commission, which was signed by 5,500 workers and contained the following resolutions:

- (1) That all mill-hands be allowed one complete day of rest every Sunday.

(2) That half an hour's recess be allowed them at noon.

(3) That work in mills should commence at 6.30 A. M. and cease at sunset.

(4) That the payment of wages should be made not later than the 15th of the month following that for which they have been earned.

(5) That a workman sustaining serious injury in the course of his work at the mill, which might disable him for the time being, should receive full wages until recovery, and that in case of his being maimed for life, suitable provision should be made for his livelihood.

The commission duly considered the memorial in arriving at its conclusions. The report was made on January 10, 1885. The Government of Bombay submitted the report to the Government of India, but the latter declined to take any action.

Manchester Resolution.

The failure of the Government of India to amend the factory act led to a second investigation by Mr. Jones, another factory inspector in Lancashire, into the conditions in Bombay factories in 1887. On his return to England, Mr. Jones made several allegations against the factories in India. In 1888, the Secretary of State for India directed that these charges be considered by the Government of India.

In the same year, the cotton industry in India made still rapid progress, and the Manchester Chamber of Commerce passed a resolution recommending the extension of the British child and woman labor laws to India and sending, at the same time, a deputation to the Secretary of State for India to present this resolution. Such attempts on the part of the Manchester interests created resentment and apprehension among

the public of India, especially among the manufacturers, who again started counter-agitation.

Petition to the Government.

In the agitation, which was going on in India, the exact wants of the employees were often misrepresented by employers. It was also said that employees themselves were indifferent to "any direct measure of protection against their employers" or did not feel the necessity of it. In order to show the real nature of their grievances, the workers employed in the spinning and weaving mills of Bombay, submitted a petition to the Governor General of India on October 24, 1889. The petition was based on the resolution of the labor conference in 1884 and contained the following observations:

Regarding the Sunday holiday, the petition made several statements: First, that it would contribute to the health and energy of employees, which would result in better work, both as to quality and quantity, and should thus benefit employers as well. Second, that it would afford the operatives the much needed opportunity of attending to their household duties, especially shopping, which for lack of time, they were obliged to do with hawkers at exorbitant prices. Third, that it would also afford them opportunity to meet their relatives and friends, who were otherwise employed on week days. Fourth, that the total number of holidays on account of festivals did not amount to more than 11 days in the year. The petition also pointed out that owing to the lack of sufficient number of holidays, workers had to be absent in order to attend household duties and were fined two days' wages for one day's absence.

With regard to the commencement of work in the morning, the petition said that the uncertainty then prevailing with regard to the hour for starting work was very embarrassing and was the source of great inconvenience and discomfort to workers and that a fixed and uniform hour of attendance was, therefore, greatly needed.

As to the payment of wages, the petition pointed out that the great delay in payment caused a good deal of inconvenience to the employees, and added that if the millowners desired a sort of hold on their employees to prevent desertion, the necessity of the case would be fully met by retaining in their hands a fortnight's wages of the men in arrears. In this connection, the petition also stated that cases in which employers illegally withheld the hard-earned wages of workers were so frequent that a reference to the court of small causes would convince the Government that wages were in many cases recovered only by recourse to the court. Hundreds of operatives had to forego their wages on account of the trouble involved in appealing to the judges.

"It has been said", continued the petition "that an Indian mill operative is not as hard working as an English workman and that a mill operative in England does the work of three men employed in the same work in an Indian mill. The real cause of this is the bad machinery and bad material used in mills. It is true that three men are required to manage the machine in Indian factories, but these three men, it should be borne in mind, do their work for longer hours without intermission in a more enervating climate and on poorer wages. The operatives in Indian factories have to perform their tasks without many facilities afforded in England

and calculated to lessen the burden of workmen and to preserve their constitution against breakdown. The breakage in the thread, for instance, is so continuous here on account of the bad quality of cotton, that millowners are compelled to employ more men. If the cotton were of good quality, and the concessions, which are given in England were granted here, one man could manage a machine as well as an English operative."¹

The claim for compensation for accidents, the petition further stated, was made in the interest of humanity. The distress brought about by persons being maimed for life, or even for few months, was appalling, and some relief to mitigate the sufferings and hardships was needed. The petition asked whether the amount of fines and forfeited wages could not advantageously and with propriety be appropriated for this humane purpose. The necessity for a provision of this character had already been recognised in some mills, where sufferers were adequately provided for. Among people not yet alive to the advantages of provident funds and mutual benefit societies, some arrangement affording relief to the injured was much needed.

The petition finally prayed that the interest of operatives should be carefully watched in the amendment of the factory act.

Revival of Agitation.

In reply to the inquiry of the Secretary of State, the Government of India denied the charges made by the British factory inspector, but consented to amend the factory act according to the recommendation of the Bombay Factory Commission of

¹ *Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890—91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, pp. 106—107.*

1884. A bill was accordingly introduced into the Legislative Council, but the Secretary of State for India, under the pressure of the Manchester interests, insisted on stricter measures, and the consideration of the bill was postponed. The delay in the amendment of the factory act by the Government of India led to fresh agitation in England. An attempt was also made to apply to India some of the resolutions of the International Labor Conference held at Berlin from March 15 to 29, 1890. These agitations in Great Britain were followed as usual by counteractions in India.

Millhands' Association.

One of the most important events of the time was a mass meeting of factory workers numbering upwards of 10,000 persons, held at Bombay on April 24, 1890. Two women addressed the meeting and complained of being forced to work on Sundays. A memorial asking for a weekly holiday was at once drawn and sent to the Bombay Millowners' Association, which granted the request in the general meeting held on June 10, 1890. It was, of course, a great victory for laborers, but without legal compulsion, it could not be enforced.

In the meantime, the labor movement has also made some headway. Mr. Lokhanday, who was the moving spirit of the movement, organised an association of the Bombay mill workers in 1890. The association was called the "Bombay Millhands' Association", with Mr. Lokhanday its president and Mr. D. C. Athaide its secretary. It was the first labor organisation in India.

Labor Journal.

In the agitations and counter-agitations which were going on in India on the issue of the factory

act amendment, there was a good deal of confusion as to the real nature of the grievances of laborers. While the case of employers was well represented in the Indian and Anglo-Indian press, the case of employees was almost neglected. It became, therefore, necessary for the workers to present their case to the Government and the public through a recognised organ. About the same time the Bombay Millhands' Association was founded, Mr. Lokhanday also started a paper, called the *Dinabandhu*, or the friend of the poor, which was the first labor journal in India.

As the very name shows, the attitude of the paper was more or less paternalistic. It presented the labor side in the form of appeal rather than of right. But the whole labor movement of this period was permeated with the same spirit and the organ served its purpose. It became the clearing house of the grievances of Bombay laborers and helped draw public attention to the cause of labor.

Labor Representation.

In the meantime, the Secretary of State for India sent the resolutions of the Berlin Labor Conference to the Government of India for consideration, and suggested to appoint a commission to inquire into the conditions of factory labor. The Government of India accordingly appointed, on September 25, 1890, a commission of which Mr. Sorabjee Bengalee, the leader of the Indian philanthropic movement for labor legislation, was one of the three members. The commission was assisted by three local members without the power to prepare or sign the report. Bengal and the North Western Provinces and Oudh were locally represented respectively by Babu Rasik Lal Ghose, a public spirited man of Calcutta, and

Mr. Framji Manekji, a foreman in a Cawnpore woolen mill. The Presidency of Bombay was locally represented by Mr. Lokhanday, president of the Bombay Millhands' Association.

The duty of the local members were to procure suitable evidence from the factory workers for the commission. They selected 96 operatives in 34 factories of Bombay, Amhedabad, Cawnpore and Calcutta, which were visited by the commission. The witnesses comprised of men, women, and children, and in their evidence before the commission, brought forward the grievances of factory labor.

Demands of Workers.

Before the completion of the report, the commission received an address, dated November 8, 1890, from the Bombay Millhands' Association. The association discussed the importance of the factory act amendment and asked for inclusion among the provisions of the proposed amendment several resolutions, which it called its "demands". These demands may be summarised as follows:

(1) Millhands should get one complete day of rest on Sundays.

(2) The working day should be included within the period from 6 A. M. to 5 : 30 P. M.

(3) If practicable, one hour's rest should be given during the day; if not, full half an hour's complete rest at noon every day.

(4) Payment should be made on the 15th of each month.

(5) Children from 9 to 14 should work half time.

(6) Women should work from 7 A. M. to 5 P. M.

(7) Provisions should be made for the help of sick and injured persons. Every factory should have a dispensary.

(8) A school should be maintained by every mill for the education of the half-timers.

"If the above points are fairly attended to," concluded Mr. Lokhanday, "in the factory act now to be amended, I think the mill hands will have no cause to complain."¹

The commission took into consideration the demands of the Millhands' Association and made its report on November 12, 1890.

Woman Labor Law.

The recommendations of the commission were not satisfactory to the Manchester interests, which influenced the Secretary of State for India to demand stricter measures. The Government of India made several concessions though under protest and immediately submitted the bill to the Legislative Council for final consideration. The bill was passed on March 19, 1891. The chief provisions of the act were the regulation of woman labor to 11 hours a day with an interval of rest for 1½ hours, and the increase in the minimum and maximum ages of children from 7 and 12 to 9 and 14 respectively.

The immediate effect of the regulation of woman labor was the discharge of 259 women from Ahmedabad factories, where they were employed in the same kind of work as men, and the reduction in the wages of the rest by 25 per cent. The compulsory rest period of an hour and a half made the work of women unadaptable to that of men, who had only a half hour's rest. The woman workers at Ahmedabad, therefore, sent a petition to the Government of India for exempting Ahmedabad factories from the application of the law. Since a large number of

¹ Gt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890-91, Vol. 59, H. of C. 86, p. 110.

discharged women were taken back in the reeling and winding departments, where the work was done without machinery, and where no man was employed, the Government refused to take any action upon the petition.

With the enactment of the Factory Act of 1891, the first period of the labor movement, the chief object of which was the regulation of child and woman labor, subsided.

Subsequent Events.

Following the factory act of 1891, the cotton industry in India met with one misfortune after another for over a decade. Meanwhile, the jute industry, which was started in Bengal in 1854, made a very rapid progress and aroused the spirit of rivalry of the Dundee Chamber of Commerce, which passed resolutions in 1894, advocating stricter factory legislation for India. In 1904—05, there came a sudden boom in the cotton industry. A profitable market both at home and abroad led to unusual activities in cotton factories, which were soon followed by excessive hours. The Anglo-Indian press, representing Manchester interests, at once raised its voice against overwork. The Bombay factory workers also sent a memorandum to the Government of India praying for the regulation of their working hours by legislation. The question of factory legislation was, therefore, reopened by the Government of India, and a bill was introduced into the Legislative Council in 1905.

In the meantime, a new movement appeared in the national life of India. Bengal was partitioned by the Government of India in 1905. As a protest, the Bengalees boycotted the British goods and started Swadeshi or a movement for the use of the

country-made goods. An open antagonism began between the Government and the Bengalees. Some of the Bengali leaders took the cause of labor and helped the workers win their strikes in such industries as printing and transportation.

In 1906, a deputation of the Factory Workers' Association of Lancashire waited upon the Secretary of State for India to urge upon the restriction on the labor of the adult males in Indian factories. In the same year, the Government of India, on the advice of the Secretary of State, appointed a committee to inquire into the condition of textile factories. This committee was followed, in 1907, by a commission, which investigated the conditions of factories of all kinds in India. Both the committee and the commission advocated the legislative regulation of adult male labor in textile factories. A new bill was introduced into the Legislative Council on July 30, 1909.

The labor movement started by Mr. Bengalee and Mr. Lokhanday did not die out entirely. The laboring classes took it up. They lacked leadership and also courage to come out openly for their cause, but kept up the activities to some extent. In 1909, a meeting of the Bombay factory workers was held condemning some of the practices of the employers and supporting the proposition of the Government to restrict the work of adult males by law.

In 1910, the second organisation of Bombay factory workers was formed under the name of K a m a g a r - H i t - V a r t h a k S a b h a or Workers' Welfare Association. The association sent a memorial to the Government of India supporting the proposed limitation of the working hours for adult males to 12 hours in any one day and pointing out the necessity of provisions for compensation, education

of factory children, betterment of housing conditions, and the removal of taverns from the neighbourhood of mills. One of the functions of the association was the settlement of disputes between employers and employees. The association also started a weekly paper, called the *Kamagar-Samachar* or the Labor News, in which the grievances of laborers were fully discussed.

In 1911, the third factory act was passed regulating the labor of adult males in textile factories to 12 hours a day. The working hours of children in textile factories were also further limited to 6 a day. This act has recently been amended, as shown later on.

CHAPTER III. THE ABOLITION PERIOD.

1891—1917.

The Indentured System.

The fundamental cause of the labor movement of this period was the indentured system, by which Indian laborers were sent out to British colonies to take the place of the negro slaves emancipated in 1834. The system was introduced into Mauritius and Trinidad in 1834, into Jamaica in 1845, and into Natal in 1860. British Guiana, Dutch Guiana, Fiji, Straits Settlements, and the Federated Malaya States had also a large number of indentured laborers from India.

The Indians in these colonies were of three different kinds: First, the indentured or re-indentured laborers. Second, ex-indentured laborers and children born of the ex-indentured or indentured laborers. Third, the Indians who followed indentured laborers in professional or business capacity, or who went there for trade, travel or other purposes.

By the indentured system, simple and illiterate people of India were recruited and legally bound to go to a strange country where manners, customs, and even language were unknown to them. Once in the colonies, they were bound to the estate where they were employed and could not move without a permit. Under this condition, they had to stay 5 years. Often they had no other recourse but to re-indenture themselves.

The conditions of the indentured laborers can better be imagined than described. They were often crowded together in miserable dwellings. The hours of work were unusually long. It has been said that even the slave master had some consideration for his

slaves, as they were his chattels, but the employer of the indentured laborers was destitute of any human sympathy. Death resulting from continuous grinding did not mean any money loss to him. The wages were extremely low. Even after 5 years of hard labor, an indentured laborer could not save more than Rs. 150, which means a saving of Rs. $2\frac{1}{2}$ a month.

The social condition was as bad as the economic. Marriage was often a mockery. By the regulation of the system, every 100 men were accompanied by 40 women, who were often of disreputable character. The whole population was subject to gross immorality. There was scarcely any provision for the education of the children or the recreation of the adults.

The life of the average indentured laborers was extremely miserable. They were often fined, assaulted, whipped, and imprisoned without sufficient cause. Anguish and disillusion often led them to utter hopelessness, out of which many of them found relief only in suicide.

Indians in South Africa.

While these conditions were more or less applicable to all the colonies, where Indians worked as indentured laborers, there arose some specific problems in South Africa which brought to the attention of the Indian public the ignominy and inhumanity of the system.

As the European colonies in South Africa began to grow in prosperity, to which Indian laborers, farmers and traders contributed a considerable share, the colonists realised that South Africa might be made a permanent home for European population and adapted a policy of Asian exclusion.

In the Transvaal, the law against the Asians was passed as early as 1883. In the course of time, there developed a body of laws by which the Indians were deprived of their rights and privileges as a free people. Natal began her repressive measures in 1891. She inaugurated in that year a series of laws, which made the condition of the indentured system much more severe, and brought it to the public attention. The second series began as early as 1895 with the object of stopping the growth of free Indian laborers. By an act of 1896, an annual head tax of £ 3 per head was levied for every adult male above the age of 16 and for every adult female above the age of 13. Besides there was a poll tax of £ 1. The third series of laws began in 1896 with the purpose of depriving the Indians of their political and economic rights.

The direct effects of these measures were race hatred, color prejudice and trade jealousies which marked the attitude of the colonists toward the Indians. The grievances of the Indians in South Africa might be summarised as follows: First, they could not acquire any political and municipal enfranchisement. Second, they could not hold immovable property. Third, they were liable to be confined to certain localities. These discriminations and disabilities, especially those inaugurated by the Natal Government, served as the initial cause of the labor movement in the second period.

Passive Resistance.

Early in the nineties, Mr. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Bar-at-Law, was sent by an Indian legal firm to Natal to look after the interests of some Indians and to act as their legal advisor. About this time the Natal Government introduced the bills into

colonial Parliament to disfranchise the Indians. Mr. Gandhi decided to stay in South Africa and fight for the cause of the Indians.

The first act of Mr. Gandhi was to organise the Indians into an active body for the preservation of their own interests. After a short visit to India in 1896, he returned with his family to the field of his activities. In 1899, when the Boer War broke out, Mr. Gandhi, with his followers, came to the help of the British Government and organised medical help. After the war, the Transvaal became a part of the British Empire. Although one of the reasons of the war, as given out by the British Government, was to right the wrong suffered by the Indians at the hands of the Boers, the peace did not bring any relief to the suffering Indians. On the contrary, a new Asian department was constituted to deal with the Asians as a special class.

The work of Mr. Gandhi went on as before. In 1903, he started a news paper, called the *Indian Opinion*, to educate the Indians on the South African situation and to express the Indian view to the colonists. Soon after, he founded a community, called the Phoenix Settlement, where a model was set for practising the ideal of simple life. In 1906, the new government of the Transvaal brought about a new bill against Asian immigration. The most obnoxious feature of it was that all Indians were made to register themselves and stamp their fingerprint for identification — a process resorted to only in the case of criminals. The Indian community protested strongly against such a measure. The very moment the bill was under discussion in the legislature, the Indian community under the leadership of Mr. Gandhi took a solemn vow never to submit to such a measure whatever might be the con-

sequences. It was the vow of passive resistance.

The bill was passed in 1907. But the Indians refused to obey the law. Wholesale arrests followed immediately. Mr. Gandhi himself was imprisoned for two months. Husbands and wives, mothers and children were separated from one another and put in prisons, but the Indians never broke their faith. Ninety-five per cent of the Indians proved themselves true in this new battle field.

In consequence of the general agitation in England and India, the act was suspended on the understanding that voluntary registration would be accepted and the act be repealed. In accordance with this assurance, the Indians voluntarily registered. But the promise made by the Transvaal Government was broken and compulsory registration revived. Mr. Gandhi and his followers also revived the oath of passive resistance. Arrests and imprisonments again followed. Between January, 1908, and June, 1909, no less than 2,500 sentences of imprisonment were passed, the age of the prisoners varying from 16 to 60.

Agitation against the System.

The news of the conditions of the Indians in the British colonies had long reached India. The laborers, who returned to India after the expiry of indenture, brought home many tales of their woes and sufferings. Mr. Gandhi himself on his return trips to India, addressed many meetings on the situation of the Indians in South Africa. Several methods for dealing with the problem were also suggested. The British colonial secretary, for example, suggested, on September 4, 1895, that there must be something to touch the commercial conscience of the

colonists in South Africa to bring them to reason. The matter also received some attention in 1901 in connection with the amendment of Assam Labor and Immigration Act. In 1903, the East India Association suggested to stop the Indian emigrants to South Africa until the obnoxious laws were repealed.

It was, however, in 1907 that India became really conscious of the actual condition of her people in the British colonies. The passive resistance by the Indians incurred the full vengeance of the colonists in South Africa and had several effects in India: First, the sufferings of the Indians in South Africa sent a "thrill of horror through the heart of every Indian." Second, the heroic fight of their countrymen against unjust treatment filled them with pride and admiration. Third, the discrimination of the colonists roused the spirit of retaliation. Fourth, the general public, especially the intellectuals, realised more than ever before their duty and responsibility to the Indian emigrants abroad and to the laboring classes at home.

In 1909, Mr. H. S. L. Polak, the editor of the *Indian Opinion*, was deputed to India. He addressed meetings all over the country on the Indian situation in South Africa. The result of his visit was that the public attention was concentrated on the enormities of the system. In 1910, a resolution moved by Mr. G. K. Gokhale was passed in the Indian legislature authorising the Governor-General in Council to prohibit the emigration of Indians as indentured laborers to Natal. The same year, the Indian government requested the newly-formed Union Government of South Africa for the settlement of the question. The Union Government consequently brought forward a bill, but did not omit the discriminating features of the law.

In 1911, Mr. Polak returned to India. The agitation was again in full swing. Early in 1912, Mr. Gokhale moved a resolution for abolishing the system altogether, but the Government of India opposed the motion. The Government, however, appointed a commission of two members to report on the conditions of Indian laborers in the British colonies. About the same time, Mr. Gokhale went to South Africa to make a first-hand study of the situation. Soon after Rev. C. F. Andrews was sent by the Indian Citizenship Association of Bombay to study the condition in Fiji, where a high rate of suicides existed among the indentured laborers.

In the meantime, a new complication had arisen. A decision of the Union court declared that all Indian marriages were null and void under the law of the Union Government. It was immediately protested against by the Indian community in South Africa. In 1913, a new bill was introduced by the Union Government for dealing with the situation, but it failed to provide for any settlement. Passive resistance was again revived by the Indians.

One of the plans of the Indians in South Africa was to organise strikes among indentured laborers. A small body of women from Natal and the Transvaal started the work. While the women in Natal were arrested and imprisoned, those in the Transvaal succeeded, before imprisonment, in holding meetings and in calling upon Indian workers to refuse to work. At their instigation, thousands of Indian laborers in coal mines laid down their tools and went on strike. From coal mines, the strike spread to the sugar plantations in Natal. An attempt by the authorities to suppress the strike resulted in several casualties, including the dead and the wounded.

Meanwhile the Transvaal Government prohibited the entry of the Indians into its territories. As a protest against this order, 3,000 Indians under the leadership of Mr. Gandhi began an "invasion" into the Transvaal. After several days' march without food and shelter, the party arrived in the Transvaal only to be arrested and imprisoned. Mr. Gandhi himself was sentenced to gaol for 15 months. It was one of the most remarkable incident in the history of passive resistance.

The sufferings of the Indians and the treatment by the Government in South Africa created strong resentment throughout the length and breadth of India. Even the Government of India was alarmed at the situation, and asked the Union Government for the appointment of a commission to investigate into the whole affairs. The latter Government consented and appointed a commission, which, after due investigation, reported in favor of the Indian community. The recommendations of the commission was accepted by the Union Government and put into effect in the Indian Relief Act of 1914. The three pound head tax was repealed and the freedom of residence was granted to ex-indentured laborers. Peace was restored for the time being.

Indians on the Pacific Coast.

In the meantime, a new source of trouble arose on the Pacific Coast, which stirred the people of India. Some of the Punjabees, who had been recruited by the British Government for service in the army and in the police in the Far East, after retiring crossed the Pacific and came to America. Several Sikh soldiers, after celebrating the Diamond Jubilee in Great Britain, passed through Canada, and, seeing the prospects of earning higher wages,

also settled down there. They wrote about the industrial opportunities in Canada and the United States to their relatives and friends in India. These reports caused a large scale immigration of the Hindustanees to America.

In the four years from 1905 to 1908, over five thousand Indians arrived in Canada. Agitation was at once started by the Canadians against the Indian immigration, and led to the adoption of restrictive measures. In the meantime a large number of the Hindustanees also began to immigrate into the United States. A number of them came from Canada. Like Canada, the United States also adopted restrictive measures, first in 1909 and then from 1911 on, until a law was passed in 1917 prohibiting Indian immigration.

Most of the restrictive measures were based on discrimination. Some of the methods adopted brought a good deal of sufferings to the immigrants. A large number of them was detained at the ports of Hong Kong, Victoria, Vancouver, and San Francisco, and excluded or deported on physical unfitness or some such pretext.

Unlike the Indians in the British colonies, the Indians on the Pacific Coast were free laborers or immigrants. They resented such treatment. Those of Canada sent even deputation to the Dominion Government at Ottawa and also to the British Government in London. The discrimination and ignominy which the Indians suffered in America, especially in Canada, aroused a feeling of indignation in India.

The climax of the situation was however reached in 1914. As the Hindustanees were not allowed to come to Canada unless they came directly from

India, Bhai Gurdit Singh and other Hindustanees chartered a steamer, the Komagata Maru, and brought 375 Indians to Vancouver, B. C., on May 22. The immigration authorities refused admission and ordered the ship out of the port at the point of guns and artillery. The appeal of the Indians in British Columbia to the Dominion and British Government for the relief of their countrymen proved fruitless. On July 23, the ship returned to India.

While the sufferings of the passengers due to the lack of water and provisions and to the crossing of the ocean back and forth were really great, a still worse fate was awaiting them at Calcutta, where they landed. The Government of India fearing a political demonstration intended to send the passengers directly back to the Panjab. A conflict soon started between the passengers and the police and the military, in which 16 passengers and on-lookers and 3 officers were killed and many more wounded.

The treatment of the Indian immigrants both by the Canadian and the Indian Governments made a deep impression on the Indian people. The question of Indian emigration and labor was again brought before the public and the labor movement received a new impetus.

Prohibition of Indenture.

Although the Indians in South Africa won a partial victory, which was only temporary, as will be seen, the system of indenture was still in existence. In 1916, Lord Hardinge, then the Governor General of India, stated, however, that the Government of India intended to control labor recruiting in India. In 1917, it was circulated that the Secretary of State for India consented to the

continuation of the system for another 5 years. This news aroused a strong feeling of resentment among the Indians and protest meetings were held all over the country. The Government of India was consequently obliged to prohibit all the emigration from India as a war measure. But the assurance was soon given that the system would never be revived.

Subsequent Events.

Since the passage of the emergency act in 1917 prohibiting the emigration of Indian labor, the relation of India with the colonies has undergone great changes. The status of India in the Empire has been raised by such incidents as the participation of India in the Imperial War Council at London and in the Peace Conference at Paris. India has also a new constitution by which the people have some voice in certain affairs of the provincial governments.

The restriction of emigration from India created labor shortage in some of the colonies. In 1918, a committee was formed in London to devise means for assisted emigration in the place of indenture.

In 1919, a new complication arose between the colonists and the Indians in South Africa. It resulted in the appointment of a select committee, which was followed by the passage of the Asiatic Amendment Act. The provisions of the act being unsatisfactory, the Union Government appointed a commission to which India sent two representatives. Both the colonists and the Indians prepared themselves to present their respective case to the commission. A South African League was formed in the Transvaal to combat the "Asiatic menace". On the other hand, an Indian National Congress was also held at Johannesburg, at which delegates from all parts of the Union were

present. The congress passed several resolutions, demanding among other things the abolition of all disabilities and the granting of full civic rights.

In the meantime, fresh grievances appeared in Kenya or British East Africa. The discovery in 1902 that the uplands could be settled by European colonists led to the adoption by the Kenya Government of a policy of segregating and disfranchising the Indians. As the policy became manifested through the increasing disabilities on the part of the Indians, a British East Africa Indian Association was at once formed for the preservation of their interests. The association made strong representation to the Secretary of State for India and sent a deputation to the people and the Government of India in 1919. While the Indians in Kenya started a strong agitation, protest meetings were held all over India by the public, Merchants' Association and other organised bodies. The British Foreign Secretary sent a dispatch to the Governor of Kenya on behalf of the Indians in 1920. But the dispatch proving to be highly unsatisfactory, the Indians in Kenya held meeting after meeting protesting against segregation and disfranchisement and threatening boycott and non-cooperation unless grievances were redressed.

The commission appointed by the Union Government was at last convened in 1920. One of the recommendations was the voluntary repatriation. The Union Government at once acted on the recommendation, and about 18,000 Indians were voluntarily repatriated. Meanwhile the indenture system came to an end in British Guiana in 1919 and in Fiji 1920. The Government of India passed a law early in 1922 by which the indentured system was completely abolished.

CHAPTER IV.
THE ORGANISATION PERIOD.
1918—

Fundamental Causes.

The first labor union was formed in 1890 and the second in 1910, as we have seen. The latter is still in existence as an influential organisation. In the meantime a few Indians resident in England and their English friends became interested in the Indian labor question. They founded, in 1911, an organisation called the Workers' Welfare League of India with the object of bringing about "a unity of the working and living conditions of Indian and British labor". While in England, several Indians who eventually took active part in the labor movement, were connected with this league. But none of these unions made much impression upon the working classes. The reason is obvious. Laborers were still unconscious of its real interest and of its latent power.

The fundamental causes of the labor movement in this period were the unfavorable conditions of work and living. The growth of industrialism and the increasing solidarity among employers made their conditions worse. They were quite helpless to remedy their grievances by concerted action. During the war the situation, however, underwent a radical change. Several elements brought about a revolution in the social, political, and industrial life of India. First, the Great War, which stirred the whole world, affected also the masses of India, who had to bear the burden of recruitment, loans and taxes. Second, the national movement became very strong in power and adopted defying methods for

the achievement of Swaraj. Third, some of the repressive measures of the British Government, such as the martial law, Jallianwalabagh massacre, Rowlatt acts and imprisonment of national leaders, aroused a spirit of defiance among the people. Fourth, the agitation against the discrimination by colonies and dominions mentioned before, created a feeling of national self-respect on the one hand, and of sympathy and responsibility toward the laboring classes on the other. The last, but not the least, was the revolution in Russia, especially the establishment of the soviet republic, which awakened hope for a new social order.

The new consciousness among the masses, of which the laboring classes, especially in the cities, were the most important, gave rise to new ideals and aspirations. With a body of intellectuals being bent on upbuilding a new national life and sympathetic toward laborers, a ground was prepared for a new direction of the movement, which soon entered into a new epoch.

Industrial Unionism.

The first and foremost effect of this new consciousness was a strong desire for organisation. During the war, India was cut off from Great Britain and other Western countries upon which she depended for her manufactures. On the other hand, she had to supply material for the campaign in Western Asia and Africa. This gave a new impetus to the growth of both industrialism and capitalism. The laboring classes found themselves helpless more than ever. The only recourse left to them was to solidify their rank by trade unionism.

The first industrial union was formed, on April 27, 1918, by Mr. B. P. Wadia among the textile workers

of the mills at Coolai, Madras. By 1919, there were 4 unions in the Presidency of Madras with a membership of 20,000. Among the chief unions might be mentioned those of tramwaymen, printers, rikshamen, aluminium workers, motor drivers, scavengers or street cleaners, and metal and iron workers.

From Madras, the movement for unionism spread to other parts of the country. Similar unions were formed in Bombay, Calcutta, Ahmedabad and other important industrial centres. In a short time there was scarcely any industry in India, which was not organised in some form or other.

Labor Revolt.

The second effect of the new consciousness was the growth of the spirit of defiance and restlessness. The wages of the workers in modern industries were higher than those of the same classes of people in other industries. But their standard of living also became higher, especially under the influence of the urban life. During the war prices began to increase much faster than the wages. Although the employers made enormous profits, they failed to grant an increase in proportion to the rise in prices. On the other hand, the increasing industrial activities brought into the industrial centres many new workers who were housed together with the old workers, thus making already crowded dwellings still more congested.

With the social mind surcharged with war spirit, political agitation and revolutionary ideal, the laboring classes could no longer remain patient and tolerant under the old social wrongs and the new economic disabilities. Victimised for centuries, they

were at last determined to assert their manhood, and revolted against the modern industrial system which was the immediate cause of their grievances.

Unionism gave them a new weapon. But it was only one of the means. What they unconsciously realised was to demand the rights and privileges as workers of an industrial organisation, citizens of a State and members of a society. Many unions were nothing but strike committees. Often they failed to formulate their grievances and give even formal notice of their strikes. When asked for, they could not give reasons for strikes. At the time of settlement, they would shift ground and make extravagant claims. It was only natural for a group of men who were impelled by an inner spiritual force not to be able to analyse their grievances in any known economic terms.

This spirit of revolt has been latent for sometime, but it became manifest only in the latter part of the year 1919. Under this spirit, the workers started strike after strike, until like an epidemic, it spread all over the country, paralysing the whole industrial organisation. Some conception of the intensity and extensity of the strikes of this period may be had from the following data: November 24 to December 2, 1919, woolen mills, Cawnpore, 17,000 men out; December 7, 1919, to January 9, 1920, railway workers, Jamalpur, 16,000 men out; January 9 to 18, 1920, jute mills, Calcutta, 35,000 men out; January 2 to February 3, general strike, Bombay, 200,000 men out; January 20 to 31, mill workers, Rangoon, 20,000 men out; January 31, British India Navigation Company, Bombay, 10,000 men out; January 26 to February 16, mill workers, Sholapur, 16,000 men out; February 2 to 16, Indian Marine Dock workers, 20,000 men out; February 24 to

March 29, Tata Iron and Steel workers, 40,000 men out; March 9, mill workers, Bombay, 60,000 men out; March 20 to 26, mill workers, Madras, 17,000 men out; May, 1920, mill workers, Ahmedabad, 25,000 men out.

Trade Unionism.

While the labor revolt was manifesting itself almost all over the country and destroying the old industrial relationship, some constructive work was also being done in some industrial centres. In December, 1919, a conference of the Bombay workers was held at which 75 factories were represented. They drew up a memorandum demanding reduction in the working hours, an increase in the rest period, and compulsory education of factory children.

A more important work was, however, begun at Ahmedabad by Mr. M. K. Gandhi, who organised laborers into trade unionism. Trade unions, in the technical sense of the word, have appeared more at Ahmedabad than at any other part of India. On February 25 and 26, 1920, a spinners' union and a weavers' union were respectively formed by Mr. Gandhi. The same month saw the rise of folders' union. In March, June and August of the same year were formed the unions of sizers, winders, carders, blowers and framers. At the end of 1920, the membership of the trade unions rose to 16,450 and the funds to Rs. 54,797. About 43 per cent of the factory workers at Ahmedabad were organised by the end of 1920. By the middle of 1921, the membership rose to 20,000 and the funds to Rs. 75,000. More than half of the Ahmedabad factory workers joined trade unions of some kind or other.

Federation of Unions.

At the very outset, when industrial unions were being formed at Madras, the tendency of federation became evident. This was partly due to the fact that the same leaders were interested in several unions. They found it more convenient to have a central organisation of all the unions for the economy of time and for the purpose of control. But the effectiveness of class solidarity as means of attaining aims of labor was the driving force which united the unions into federation.

Cities began to federate local unions almost simultaneously with the growth of trade unions. Most of the large cities have one or more federations of trade or labor unions. Madras, for instance, has its Central Labor Board and Bombay has the Bombay Central Labor Board and the Bombay Central Labor Federation. From cities the scope of federation was extended to the country and also to the provinces, as we shall see.

Court Injunction.

The spirit of defiance on the part of the workers as expressed in constant disputes and the willingness on the part of the intellectuals to lead and organise the workers could not long remain unopposed by employers. They looked for an opportunity and it was soon found.

A dispute between employers and employees in the Buckingham mills at Madras was followed by both lockout and strike, in which trade unions took active part. The company brought a suit against Mr. B. P. Wadia and other leaders of trade unions. The High Court of Madras decided against them and brought in a judgment of a fine of £ 7,000 and the cost and put the union leaders under injunction.

The company consented not to prosecute the judgment further on the condition that Mr. Wadia would sever all his connection with the labor movement. Mr. Wadia agreed to the proposition and the employers acquired a very successful weapon in the form of injunction for coping with unionism.

Injunction against trade unionism in India was disapproved of by the labor party in Great Britain. A deputation of the Trades Union Congress Parliamentary Committee waited upon the Secretary of State for India on March 22, 1921, and, pointing out the injustice of injunction against the young trade unionism movement, asked for a legislation for the recognition of trade unions with a principal provision that they would have power to sue and to be sued. The Secretary of State promised early consideration of the matter by the Government of India.

All-India Trade Union Congress.

Meanwhile the labor movement went on its course with a more constructive policy. It assumed its national importance in 1920, when the first All-India Trade Union Congress was held at Bombay from October 31 to November 2, with Lala Lajpat Rai as its president and Mr. Joseph Baptista its vice president. A standing committee was appointed to manage the affairs of the congress during the following year and to further the cause of labor until a permanent constitution was adopted. The most important subjects of discussion were shorter hours, higher wages, better housing, medical help in sickness and accident, and old age and maternal benefits.

The second All-India Trade Union Congress was held at Jharria, a small coal town in Bengal, from November 30 to December 2, 1921. There were

10,000 delegates from about 100 unions representing about 1,000,000 members and all the provinces. There was a local strike in the coal fields and over 10,000 striking miners attended the sessions in a body. Mr. Joseph Baptista was elected president. A constitution of the Congress was accepted. Most of the discussions centred on such topics as hours, housing, wages, disputes and conciliation. Resolutions were passed expressing sympathy for the Russian famine. A call was also made to the workers of the world to devise means for abolishing the war.

Mr. Baptista in the course of his presidential address suggested that Government should establish a ministry of labor and hoped that the Congress would develop a national organ of labor, in which the cooperative, trade unionism and socialistic movements would be represented. He considered the presence of outsiders in the union desirable as they constituted an impartial element and as in a trade dispute they would represent the consumers' interests. He also suggested that labor should insist upon giving effect to some of the conventions and recommendations of the international labor conferences.

Mr. Chaman Lal, Secretary of the Trade Union Congress, showed the importance of organized labor to the national movement which could not achieve the Swaraj or self-government without its help. He also warned that unless the economic conditions were improved, the Indian workers would use direct methods and establish Bolshevism or workers' rule.

Provincial Conference.

With the formation of the All-India Trade Union Congress, which is the national organisation of labor, the spirit of federation received a new impetus. Between the city and national federations, there

remained a gap, which was soon filled up by the formation of provincial federations. The importance of provincial organisation becomes evident, when the question of language is taken into consideration. There is no common language throughout the country. Although a province may have more than one language, they are more or less understandable to all classes of the people within the province.

Provincial federation has been started in Bengal, and the first Bengal Trade Union Conference was held in Calcutta, April 4, 1922. A large number of delegates representing 15 unions, including mercantile clerks, tramway men, iron workers and seamen was present. The Conference was presided over by Raja Monindra Chandra Sinha. Several resolutions were passed demanding legal recognitions of trade unions, the repeal of workmen's breach of contract act and the enactment of workman's compensation act.

Labor Legislation.

Another important activity of the labor movement is the improvement of labor conditions by progressive legislation. Labor legislation has its beginning in the indentured system which was created early in the thirties of the last century. The supply of labor to the tea gardens and to the mines also called for new legislation. All these laws were enacted without any influence by laborers themselves. In the later legislations, the wishes of the laborers had to be taken into consideration. In the recent years, the laborers are taking an active part in influencing legislation on their own behalf.

The first factory act of 1881 was amended in 1891 and 1911. But after the amendment of 1911, the conditions of the country altogether changed. The growth of trade unionism and of the public

opinion within the country and the international labor conferences without brought in new forces in the movement for factory legislation. These forces led to the fourth factory act, which was passed early in 1922. The chief provision of the act are the reduction in the working hours of adults from 72 to 60 a week and the increase in the minimum and maximum ages of children from 9 and 14 to 12 and 15 respectively.

Another important legislation, in the enactment of which labor leaders are at present interested, is that for the registration and protection of trade unions. On March 1, 1921, a resolution for such legislation was accepted by the Government of India. On September 12, 1921, the Government of India asked the Provincial Governments to gather opinions and suggestions of the organized bodies and influential persons, interested in the question. The matter is still under consideration.

Labor leaders are also agitating for such legislations as workmen's compensation act and minimum wage act. Recently a resolution was brought forward in the Bengal Legislative Assembly for fixing a minimum wage in all industries including plantations. Although the resolution was lost, it marks the beginning of a new tendency in the Indian labor movement.

Labor Representation.

Another indication of the influence of the labor movement is shown by the recognition Indian labor has recently received at all national and international labor conferences. In all the important industrial conferences of the recent years such as those of the International Labor at Washington, D. C., Genoa, and Geneva, Indian Labor was equally represented with

capital. In all these representations the labor organisations had at least the nominal right of selecting their representatives.

Labor has also been recognised by the national and provincial governments. Labor has its own representatives at the legislative assemblies. Most of the resolutions for labor legislation in the recent years have been brought forward by the representatives of the working classes.

Women's Union.

One of the most far reaching steps taken by the labor movement in India is that of unionising female workers. A considerable number of women find work in agriculture, but their number is very much limited in organised industries, such as factories and mines. Recently, women are entering into such occupations, as teaching and stenography.

Attempt has already been made in unionising these woman workers. On April 22, 1922, the female workers of Bombay met with the object of organising clerical workers of the city. The meeting was presided over by Mr. Joseph Baptista, President of the All-Indian Trade Union Congress. This is only the beginning. There is no doubt that a strong organisation of women will sooner or later grow and play a very important role in the Indian labor movement.

Nationalisation of Unions.

The trade unions had already been federated into local, provincial, and national federations, as we have seen. There was still a defect in the labor organisations of India. Some of the industries, such as transportation, are national in character. They can be dealt with only by the national organisation. All-India Trade Union Congress is more or less weak

in dealing with a particular industry. The latest tendency in the labor movement is to remedy this defect.

During the last week of December, 1922, there was held at Lahore a conference for the amalgamation of the northern and southern federations of railwaymen's unions into the All-India Railwaymen's Federation under the chairmanship of Mr. C. F. Andrews. The intention of the national federation is to represent the workers of all railways in India and Burma and to have a Central Standing Committee at Delhi, which will directly and constitutionally deal with the Railway Board and transact other business. Steps have been taken for organisation of this national federation.

The Present Status.

The number of trade unions all over India is not definitely known. The trade union members all over the country amounted to about 500,000. By the end of 1921, there were about 77 unions with a membership of over 1,000,000 persons, of which 108,073 were in the Presidency of Bombay. According to the latest report of the secretary of All-India Trade Union Congress, the number of trade unions in the whole country has risen to 113.

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The fundamental cause of the movement in the second period was the indentured system and the main object was to abolish it. It started in 1891, when the Natal Government first began to pass discriminating laws against the Indians. Such laws were passed by the Transvaal Government as early as 1883. But the Transvaal being outside of the British Empire at that time, and the number of the Indians there being very small, they failed to raise any effective opposition on the part of the Indians. The period ended in 1917, when the emigration of labor from India was prohibited as a war measure. The act abolishing the system was finally passed early in 1922. The problem of the Indians in British colonies is still an acute one. But it has become more or less a racial question and divested itself of the economic aspects.

The second period of the movement was politico-economic. Discrimination against the Indians abroad was a national question and the main spring of the movement was the wounded national pride. But connected with it was the ignominy of the indentured system. It was this mixed feeling which led to the nation-wide agitation for the abolition of the system. Like the first period, the movement in this period failed to understand the interest of labor as such. But the agitation opened the eyes of the people toward the labor condition at home and abroad. It created a sympathetic atmosphere and prepared the ground for the new period.

The underlying cause of the movement in the third period is the growth of modern industrialism and of class solidarity among the employers on the

one hand and the rise of a new class-consciousness among the working classes on the other. The main purpose is to organise laboring classes in order to establish collective bargaining in modern industries. It began in 1918 and is still in the process of development. The motive force of the movement is the new socio-economic ideal which has been gradually dawning upon the country for a past generation or two. The political conditions have offered a new background. Although the leaders have come from outside, it is the movement of the rank and file of the working classes, and it is their active cooperation which made it so formidable in the course of a few years. Unlike the movement of the previous periods, the movement of this period is fully class-conscious. It realises the causes of the workers' grievances and apprehends their goal.

Labor Organisations.

A movement generally implies organisation through which its function may be carried out and its aims may be achieved. Although the labor movement started in 1875, it was not until a decade and a half later that organisations began to appear. As it was at first under the direction of the philanthropists, who were outsiders, the necessity of organisation was not realised.

There were still other reasons for the lack of organisation. A labor organisation makes its appearance under several conditions, such as the existence of a more or less permanent class, consciousness of class interests and the ability to maintain such interests. Until recently, none of these conditions existed in India. Moreover, the wages of the workers in modern industries were higher than those of the same class of people in old industries.

There were not, therefore, sufficient grievances to make them class conscious and to lead them to class organisation. In recent years, there have been considerable changes in the conditions of workers and in their relationship with employers, such as the expansion of industrialism, development of a definite labor policy among the employers, rise in the standard of living among the workers and higher cost of living. There has, therefore, been a decided change in the character of the labor movement.

In the first period, the labor union, like that of the Bombay Millhands' Association of 1890, was only a loosely organised body. There was lack of a definite aim and constitution. The officers worked mostly in the advisory capacity. But their function in the labor movement cannot be minimised. They brought the labor question to the attention of the Government and attempted to formulate the grievances and sentiments of the laboring classes in definite shape. The second period being mostly a movement of the intellectuals did not lead to the rise of any labor organisation in the strict sense of the word. But many social and political organisations took active part in the movement and even the press for the first time became interested in the labor question. In the third period, the movement divested itself of the social and political domination of the first two periods and assumed its economic nature. In order to establish collective bargaining into modern industries and to realise its other aims, it made unionisation of labor its immediate object and organised laboring classes all over the country.

The present labor organisations in India may be divided into the following groups: First, craft or trade unions, such as spinners' unions and weavers' unions. Second, crafts or trades unions, such as the

Bombay Central Labor Board and All-India Trade Union Congress. Third, industrial unions, such as railway workers' unions and printers' unions. Fourth, labor unions, such as the Bombay Millhands' Association and Workers' Welfare Association.¹

Almost all the labor unions are well organized. Most of them have such officers as presidents, vice-presidents, treasurers and secretaries, some of whom come from outside. There are also advisory bodies or committees, the members of which are mostly the workers themselves. The members generally pay fees. In large cities like Bombay and Ahmedabad, all the unions are federated into one or more organisations. Such federations may be either independent, as the Central Labor Board at Bombay, or may be affiliated with the All-India Trade Union Congress, as the Central Labor Federation also of Bombay.

Some idea of the nature of the labor federation may be had from the constitution of the Bombay Labor Board. Any labor union in the Presidency of Bombay may be affiliated with it on the payment of an admission fee of ten rupees and on furnishing satisfactory information on the following: First, the aims and objects of the union. Second, the actual number of the members at the time of affiliation, monthly subscription received from the members, and the names of the office-bearers. Third, the willingness of the union to abide by the rules of the Board.

¹ A craft or trade union is an organisation of the workers of a single occupation. A crafts or trades union is the federation of unions in different occupations. An industrial union is an organisation of the workers in the same industry. A labor union is an organisation of workers irrespective of occupations.

The outstanding feature of the labor organisations in India is that the majority of them are industrial unions. There are several reasons for the preponderance of this form of unions. First, there already exists some kind of trade unionism in the form of the caste guild. Second, the laborers in each trade or craft have not attained the stage of development and specialisation which creates rivalry and calls for the protection of the craft interests by organisation. Third, the leaders of labor organisations are mostly outsiders, and as such, they are interested in the laboring class as a whole, rather than in any branch of it. Fourth, the tendency of the modern labor movements abroad toward industrial unionism has also influenced the aims and methods of the labor leaders in India.

Recently there has been, however, a tendency toward trade or craft unions. The essential cause of their growth is the influence of the British Labor Movement, which has been taken as a model by some of the Indian labor leaders. The encouragement given by British employers, managers, and officials in India toward the growth of trade unionism is also responsible for the growth of such a tendency. As the skill of the workers develops, and as they become more and more class-conscious, there is every likelihood that such unions will also become larger in number.

Along with the growth of craft unions, there is also growing a tendency for federation and nationalisation. Craft unions with their conflicting interests might split up the labor camp and weaken the movement. The local unions are also unable to deal with centralised and nationalised industries. But when federated and nationalised, they become all the more powerful. The federation of labor unions into pro-

vincial and national organisations is the most significant feature of the Indian labor movement at present.

Welfare Work.

Welfare work for the benefit of laborers has been almost co-existent with the growth of some of the modern industries, such as cotton and jute manufactures. Some of the large factories have departments for such welfare work as housing, medical help and night school. There have also been formed in the last two or three decades private organisations in several provinces. Among the most prominent organisations might be mentioned the Bombay Social Service League and the Bengal Social Welfare League.

The significance of the welfare work movement is seen in the formation of the All-Indian Welfare Association, which had its first conference at Bombay on April 6, 1922. There were representatives from six local governments. The subjects discussed in the conference comprised of such subjects as sanitation and hygiene, housing, consumers' cooperation, and works committees.

The welfare work in India has taken a much more comprehensive view than the similar movement in Western countries. It consists of two kinds of activities, those inside the factory and those outside, as the president of the All-India Industrial Welfare Conference at Bombay put it. There is no doubt that some of the activities, such as regulation of hours, insurance against old age and sickness, and housing, will ameliorate the conditions of workers.

The importance of welfare work as a means of redressing some of the grievances of workers cannot be minimised, especially under the present social and

economic conditions of India. Charity is a part of both Hindu and Mohammedan religions. The inhabitants of the community have always taken care of their dependents and been interested in other charitable work. It is, therefore, only natural that social and economic conditions of a large number of urban population would give rise to organised charity, at which the welfare workers in different parts of the country are aiming.

Welfare work or philanthropy as a method of solving the labor problem is, however, quite inadequate. At best, it is only a palliative measure. It deals with the symptoms rather than with the diseases. The wage-earning classes are the products of the modern industrial organisation, and any permanent change in their conditions can be brought about only by a change in the economic institutions.

The main spring of welfare work is fellow-feeling, while that of the labor movement is social justice. The former takes the present status of workers for granted, while the latter attempts to create a new status for the workers. Moreover, the object of welfare work by the Government and employers is to check the progress of the labor movement rather to confer real benefit to the working classes. As such, the labor movement is quite distinct from the welfare work, although their activities may sometimes overlap.

Cooperative Societies.

Another movement which is keeping pace with the labor movement is that of cooperation. Cooperation in the sense of mutual help is the very essence of the social and industrial organisation of India. It is as true of the village as of the town. With such a background, it is only natural that the modern

cooperative societies will grow in India with a tremendous rapidity.

The first cooperative act was passed in 1904, and the work of organisation began shortly after. This act restricted the cooperative activities only to credit organisations. This defect was remedied by the act of 1912, when the provisions of the law were extended to the formation of other kinds of cooperative societies. In 1910—11, there were 5,321 societies with a membership of 395,058 persons. In 1919—20, the number of the societies grew into 37,254, and the membership into 1,520,376. During the same period the amount of the loans issued to members and other societies increased from £ 1,131,522 to £ 8,076,247.

The most important class of co-operative societies in India is that related to credit. Indian ryot was perpetually in debt, and it was to relieve him from such a condition that the first cooperative societies were started. At present there are also other cooperative societies such as those for purchasing, selling, and insuring. The importance of such societies in the industrial reconstruction of India cannot be overestimated. In fact, cooperation is one of the most important movements in India to-day.

The present cooperative movement of India is, however, quite different from the labor movement. The pivotal point of the modern industrial society is the wage system. It is to this that the modern working classes owe their origin. None of the creditors', distributors', or producers' societies touches upon the wage question, and as such, they have very little, if any, direct influence upon the labor movement. The most important cooperative movement, which partakes of the nature of the labor movement, is the consumers' cooperation. Such a co-

operative movement has already appeared in India, as described below.

Labor and Radicalism.

One of the outstanding features of the labor movement in India is the absence of radicalism. Practically all the unions have collective bargaining as their goal. They accept the modern capitalistic and the wage systems as more or less permanent institutions and attempt to improve the lot of workers under them.

The absence of radicalism from the labor movement may be accounted for on several grounds. First, the national movement for self-government has absorbed the time and energy of the majority of the people, leaving other movements in a comparative weak condition for full and rapid development. Second, the evils of modern industrialism have not appeared to the same extent in India as in the Western countries. Third, the actual wage-earning class in India is still very small in number and weak in power. They have not, therefore, attempted to achieve their aims by subverting the existing social order. Fourth, in spite of considerable progress in many branches of science and philosophy, revolutionary doctrine did not make much headway in India. Without a proper philosophical background, there was not much chance for the development of revolutionary ideals which could be realised in practice.

The first signs of the revolutionary movement in India may, however, be noticed in a few consumers' co-operative societies. So long as they produce whatever they consume and eliminate profit from the productive system, they undermine the capitalistic system and, as such, are revolutionary

in character, although peaceful. Such cooperative societies are small in size and few in number. But India with her village system and her spirit of collectivism offers a fertile soil for the growth of such societies. The mushroomlike growth of creditors' and producers' co-operative societies within the last two decades warrants such statement. The growth of consumers' co-operative societies in India is only a question of time.

As to the other forms of the revolutionary labor movement, such as socialism, syndicalism, and guild socialism, nothing has as yet taken any definite shape. But the philosophy of these movements has already imbued the thoughts of several labor leaders. The most important factor of the rise of radical doctrine in India is the Soviet Government of Russia which is only a neighboring State. Quite a few young Indians are also taking active part in the revolutionary movements in foreign countries. Sooner or later such movements will find their place in India.

CHAPTER VI.

AIMS AND METHODS.

Three distinct forces directed the course of the labor movement and gave rise to three immediate objects, such as the regulation of child and woman labor, the abolition of the indentured system, and the unionisation of the laboring classes, as we have seen. While these were the principal objects, there were also many other objects in which the workers were vitally interested. These objects might be grouped into three classes, primary, secondary and ultimate.

Primary Objects.

The primary objects are concerned with the solution of the problems arising from the economic status of the workers under the modern system of production and distribution. Being the outcome of modern industrialism, they are more or less similar in nature in all industrially developed countries. The most important of these objects are those related to such questions as hours of work, health and safety, employment and discipline, wages and income, trade unionism, and collective bargaining. Some idea of the primary objects of the Indian labor movement may be had from the demands the workers made, or the aims they formulated, from time to time.

The workers of Bombay in the first period included among their aims such primary objects as a weekly holiday, a rest period of a half hour at midday, regular payment of wages, and a fixed hour for the commencement of work.

The objects of the movement in the second period were both political and economic. The primary objects of the Indians in South Africa comprised of such demands as the abolition of the poll tax, the

eradication of the racial element as a principle of legislation, the recognition of the validity of Indian marriage and the equitable administration of all laws affecting Indian immigrants.

The scope of the labor movement in the third period widened much further and the objects also became much more diversified. Among the primary objects might be mentioned the following: abolition of corporal punishment in the case of children, eight hour day and overtime for more than 8 hours and for Sundays, payment of wages by the week, a minimum wage for every branch of industry, compensation for sickness and accidents, equitable rates for granting bonus, a month's vacation with full pay, improvement of housing conditions, recognition of unions, participation in the management of those branches of industry in which the workers are vitally interested, organisation of the workers irrespective of caste and creed into one common group, maintenance of sickness and benefit funds, removal by lawful and constitutional means of the workers' disabilities in regard to work and wages, and training of workers for leadership.

Secondary Objects.

The secondary objects are concerned with the solution of those problems which arise from the social and political conditions of the workers. They are dependent upon the stage of social development and are, therefore, different in different countries. Among them are to be included the educational and cultural aspects of life. They form a part of the aim of the labor movement, for they are the indirect results of the economic conditions.

In the first period, the secondary objects were mostly concerned with the education of children. In the second period, the assertion of the social and

political rights of the Indian immigrants in the British colonies became necessary owing to the racio-political nature of the question. In the third period, the secondary objects have become much broader and have become concerned with such aims as the improvement of the social and political conditions of the workers.

A rough idea of the secondary objects of the movement may be had from the aims formulated by various labor unions. Of these the most important are the following: general education, political enfranchisement, education and training in civic virtues and social duties, establishment of social centres for the cultural and recreative purposes, creation of new ideals and aspirations, and socialisation of science and philosophy for the benefit of the workers.

Some of the labor unions were formed with these primary and secondary objects in view. The Bombay Central Labor Board, for instance, defined the following aims: the study of the labor question, collection of statistics in order to form a correct idea of the conditions of workers, propaganda work for the welfare of labor, organisation of new unions and the strengthening of the old ones, coordination of different unions and the protection of their rights, promotion of the moral status of the working classes by organising temperance and other similar movements, and the establishment of schools, libraries, and other similar institutions for the benefit of laborers.¹

Ultimate Objects.

The ultimate objects are those ideals which spring from the spiritual hankerings of man and which are more or less intangible. They may not be realised in

¹ Bombay Labor Gazette, March, 1922, pp. 14-15.

any material sense of the term, but they add a spiritual meaning to a movement and raise it to the highest pitch of human passion. The ultimate objects of all labor movements are the achievement of that stage of society in which all men and women have equal opportunity for the highest and richest expression of life. These objects have been expressed in the aspirations for the political, industrial and social democracy. The labor movement in India has also been more or less imbued with these ideals.

The conditions of India have not been favorable for the growth of the ideal for political democracy. But the Indian labor has already realised the significance of political equality. Industrial democracy is still more important to the workers. Like political democracy, it has also been only vaguely conceived of by the workers of India. The injustice of the modern distributive system has, however, not been clearly manifested to some of the leaders. Social democracy is possibly the highest ideal of the labor movement. The caste system and the untouchability of the majority of the people have naturally led to such an ideal. Under the influence of Mr. Gandhi, universal brotherhood has, therefore, been one of the ideals of the labor movement in India.

Means of Attainment.

The labor movement is primarily guided by the doctrine of opportunism. It adapts itself to a particular occasion to achieve its aims. It assumes dictatorship whenever possible, compromises whenever necessary, and even takes dictation when no other alternative presents itself. The labor movement in India is no exception to this general rule.

The Indian movement has been generally peaceful and constitutional. Violent and revolutionary

methods have been practically avoided. The lack of full consciousness of their latent power may partly account for the absence of revolutionary and violent methods, but the religious teachings of the country and the influence of Mr. Gandhi are also partly responsible.

Appeal to Authorities.

One of the most important means of the labor movement has been to appeal to the Government. It consists of memorials, petitions and deputations. In the early stage of the movement, it was extensively resorted to. The lack of any class organisation and the comparatively weakness of the laboring classes led to the adoption of such a method. It was also the general custom with the people to appeal to the British Government for the redress of their grievances. The working classes only followed the general custom of the country.

The Indians in South Africa had naturally to depend a good deal upon this method. Some of the problems they wanted to solve required the intervention of the Imperial Government. The indentured system itself was created by law and no redress of the grievances could be achieved without Government intervention. Thus Mr. Gandhi himself made several appeals to the British, South African and Indian Governments. On the other hand, deputations were also sent to the Indian people which was the final authority to decide the question and it was through their agitation that the indentured system was finally abolished.

Appeals to employers for minor concessions or for the settlement of disputes are also occasionally adopted by the laborers of all classes.

Press and Platform.

The most important methods at the hands of the labor movement, in fact of any movement or organisation, are the press and the platform, both of which are lately being well utilised by labor leaders in India. In the world of labor, agitation and education are practically synonymous. Agitation has fourfold function: First, to formulate grievances for effective demand. Second, to create new ideals and aspirations. Third, to present the case of labor to the authorities including the Government and the employer. Fourth, to educate the public to the needs and grievances of the working classes and to win their sympathy, which is the deciding factor in all labor disputes. All these functions have been dominant in the agitations by the Indian workers.

The importance of the labor press was realised even in the early period of the movement. The *Dina Bandhu* of Mr. Lokhanday, in 1890, and the *Labor News* of the Workers' Welfare Association in 1910 are the examples of the fact. In the recent years the general press of the country has taken up the cause of labor. The labor press itself has also grown in power.

The platform has been the much more effective method of labor agitation. The labor movement began in mass-meetings and they are its chief support even to-day. It is the only means to the majority of the workers in India who are mostly illiterate.

Civil Disobedience.

The most important method used by the Indians in South Africa was civil disobedience which is a form of passive resistance. It was first inaugurated by Mr. Gandhi in 1907 and marked an epoch in the history of the labor movement. By

defying the arbitrary laws which were revolting to all legal and ethical codes, Mr. Gandhi gave the Indian workers one of the greatest weapons in industrial warfare. In passive resistance, the weak and helpless found a means of preserving self-respect and succeeded in having some of their grievances mitigated. It was a triumph of moral force against the brute force.

In the recent agitation against the British Government, Mr. Gandhi utilised his experience in South Africa and introduced non-cooperation movement. In many disputes, the spirit of passive resistance was quite evident. Some of the disputes were won by this method.

Strikes and Boycotts.

The significance of strikes and boycotts as a method of winning their cause has been fully understood by the working classes, as will be seen in a subsequent chapter. When strikes and boycotts bring an industry to a standstill, the employer is bound to listen to the grievances of labor, of which he is otherwise neglectful. They have been in use for over a generation and have been taken advantage of by all classes of workers including indentured laborers in South Africa, plantation laborers in Assam, and miners in Bengal.

Legislative Methods.

Legislation as a method of solving some of the problems of labor has become well-known to the leaders. In fact, it was the only method known to the movement in the beginning. Some of the grievances of labor cannot be remedied without State intervention and the best way the Government can intervene under the present conception of the State is to pass regulative measures.

The labor leaders in India have already felt the necessity of taking active part in labor legislation. They have representatives in both national and provincial legislatures.

Political Control.

One of the best means of enhancing the cause of labor is political control. The formation of a political party for the cause of labor is a well known phenomenon in Europe and America. That India would have her own labor party is only a question of time. This is especially so because some of the labor leaders had their training in England, where the labor party has become so strong and influential in the recent years. There is already a strong desire on the part of some labor leaders in India to take active part in politics. They are waiting for an opportune time, which Swaraj or national government will undoubtedly bring.

CHAPTER VII. CONFLICT AND CONCILIATION.

Class Struggle.

In the first period, petitioning and memorialising were the chief methods of realising the aims of the labor movement. There was scarcely any chance for the development of industrial warfare. There were of course minor grievances, which sometimes led to strikes and lockouts, but they were small and local. The class struggle between labor and capital was, therefore, insignificant.

In the second period, the labor movement covered a wide range, and was carried on in three or four different continents, — partly in the British Colonies of Africa and Australia, partly on the Pacific Coast of North America and partly in India itself. Industrial warfare took place on a large scale in such colonies as Natal, the Transvaal, and Fiji. A large number of Indians was imprisoned and the casualties were also great in several cases. It was, however, an uneven fight. On the one side were the colonists, who though in the minority formed the employer and the government at the same time, and on the other side were the Indians without any political and economic status. National consciousness rather than class consciousness formed the background. The struggle was both political and economic.

The third period is, however, quite distinct from the other two. It is the movement in which the laborers themselves have taken more or less active part for the introduction of collective bargaining into modern industries. The employers were averse to recognise the status of labor and to accept the principle of collective bargaining. Wherever they

yielded, they did so under the threat of strikes. It is a period of pure and simple class struggle.

Industrial Disputes.

Strikes and lockouts on a small scale took place in factories and plantations even in the early days of modern industrialism. But there is scarcely any record of them. They received little attention in India — a country where industrial and labor consciousness was still insignificant. The status of the industrial classes in the Indian society has not been very important, and that of the laboring classes has been still less so. The facilities for the circulation of news were also very much limited. Industrial disputes arose and spread without attracting public attention and getting formal record.

The earliest strikes, for which authentic data are available, took place at the Golam Baba Spinning and Weaving Company Ltd. in 1882. The strike lasted for two days from the 13th to 15th of November. It was soon followed by another strike lasting from the 19th to 24th of December. Between the years 1882 and 1890, there were 25 important strikes recorded in different factories of Bombay and Madras. But minor strikes were more frequent. Most of the strikes lasted only for a day or two and involved only a fraction of the working people of a factory or an industry.

In recent years, strikes have increased tremendously both in number and intensity. In 1905, for instance, there were strikes in several mills of Bombay due to the introduction of electricity making excessive hours possible. In 1907, some of the strikes in Bombay lasted for over a week or so on the question of wages. The factory labor commission found in 1907 that the workers fully understood the

machinery of strikes and had repeatedly forced the employers to comply with their demands. But they were as yet unable to combine over a large area with the object of securing a common end by concerted action.

The first important and widespread strike took place in the summer of 1908, when the mill workers of Bombay went on strike out of sympathy for Mr. Tilak, a foremost political leader, who was sentenced to prison for sedition. About fourfifths of the workers were on strike, but they returned after a day or two.

Strikes increased greatly during the war. In 1917, several strikes took place in important industrial centres, such as Ahmedabad, Madras and Bombay, and the workers obtained some concessions. During 1918, strikes for the advance of wages were frequent, but most of them were amicably settled with the workers receiving an increase of wages. One of the largest strikes took place in Bombay in December, 1918. The trouble began in one of the mills, and gradually the strikers received the support of other mills. By January 9, 1919, about 125,000 workers were out on strike.

It was, however, in the latter part of 1919 and in the first part of 1920 that the disputes between employers and employees became most acute. Labor unions had grown stronger and they stood solidly for fighting out the issue. Strikes and lockouts increased in number until, like epidemics, they spread all over the country.

In the first two months of the year 1920, from January 2 to March 3, there were 124 strikes of which 96 were reported to have occurred in the city of Bombay alone and involved about 300,000 people. During the first six months of 1920, there

were about 200 strikes involving about 1,500,000 employees. From July to December, 1920, there were 119 strikes involving 211,478 employees in the Province of Bengal alone. By the end of the year, there was practically no industry in the Hooghly Basin in which strikes did not occur.

Detailed statistics are available since 1921, when the Labor Office was established by the Government. In 18 months from January, 1921, to June, 1922, there were 559 disputes involving 714,172 persons. Of these disputes, 184 took place in Bengal and 247 in Bombay involving respectively 360,134 and 211,602 persons. 232 disputes occurred in the cotton industry, 55 in the jute industry and the remainder were distributed among such industries as collieries, engineering works, shipping and docks, tramways, railways, tea gardens and printing presses.¹

General Character.

The industrial dispute committee, appointed by the Government of Bombay on July 30, 1921, to report on the methods of settlement of industrial disputes, made the following characterisation of the strikes in the Bombay Presidency:

- (1) The frequency of the strikes without notice.
- (2) The absence of clearly defined grievances before striking.
- (3) The multiplicity and sometimes extravagance of the claims put forward after the strike has begun.
- (4) The absence of any effective organisation, except perhaps at Ahmedabad, to formulate the claims of the operators and to secure respect for any settlement which might be made.

¹ Computed from the quarterly reports in the Journal of Indian Industries and Labor. Some of the disputes have been counted twice.

(5) The increasing solidarity of employers and employees and the capacity of the operatives to remain on strike for considerable periods despite lack of any visible organisation.

The observations of the committee no doubt contain some truth. A large number of strikes took place before the present trade union movement, and there was scarcely any organised body of persons in the executive capacity through which the grievances of the workers could be properly defined and formulated. But the grievances were indeed there and many of them, such as low wages, long hours and bad housings, were known to employers, who ignored them.

Strikes often started for one reason, such as higher wages, and that gave them the opportunity to demand the redress of other grievances. No doubt, the claims of the workers were often extravagant. This was due to the fact that the underlying cause of the labor movement and industrial unrest was not merely for the improvement of working conditions and the increase of wages. It was the inner impulse of the human nature which was just expressing itself among the masses of India. Being spiritual in nature, their demands were naturally vague and extravagant. This has been the characteristic of the labor movement all over the world. The labor organisations in India have not yet come down to the business methods which have already been achieved in Europe and America. One of the reasons is that in all the countries other organisations, such as the socialistic, communistic and anarchistic, give the outlet for such expression.

The most remarkable observation of the committee is that Indian workers can "remain on strike for considerable periods despite any visible or-

ganisation." This shows the intensity of their ideals and aspirations, which are the motive forces of the labor movement.

Principal Causes.

The underlying cause of the labor unrest in India is the class-consciousness which has been slowly growing up among the laboring classes for the last generation, but which was only brought to focus within the last 4 or 5 years by several external and internal forces, as we have seen.

The immediate cause of the strike was, however, economic. The wages of all classes of laborers in India were shamefully low. With the rise in the cost of living, the conditions of the workers became worse and the sufferings increased. It was the dire necessity to make a living that led workers to revolt. All of the 48 strikes, for example, occurring in Bengal in October and November in 1920, arose from demand for higher wages. Of the 559 strikes and lockouts in 1921 and the first half of 1922 all over the country, 245 arose on the question of wages and 83 on the question of bonus.

Besides this essentially economic cause, applicable to all the industries of the country, there were also some specific causes, economic in origin, but peculiar to each industry and locality. Most important of these were long hours and bad housing. Although a large number of industries worked only 9 or 10 hours a day, some of the factories especially those related to cotton manufacturing worked 12 hours a day. As to the condition of housing, nothing could be worse than the Bombay Chawls, which were the veritable slums. It depended upon laborers to remedy these evils.

The rise of the trade or labor unionism itself was a cause of strikes and lockouts. Whenever the workers formed a union, they wanted to present their case to the employers through their leaders. Many employers refused to recognise trade unions and to deal with labor representatives. The only recourse left to the workers was strikes and the employers also resorted to lockouts to break up trade unions. In several cases the employers did not want to take back the ringleaders of previous strikes. The workers had to strike again to reinstate their leaders.

Some of the strikes have been attributed to political causes. It has been said that agitators in order to win "cheap notoriety" took up the labor cause and incited the laborers to the point of striking. When the whole atmosphere of India was surcharged with political agitation, no doubt some of the political leaders might have utilised labor disputes for their own purposes. But even in such cases, the fundamental causes were economic, and the politicians only accentuated the seriousness of the situation.

The new ideals and aspirations with which the working classes have been imbued through the labor movement in the recent years also offered cause for some of the strikes. This can be seen in the demands they made upon employers as conditions for the settlement of some of the strikes. These demands concerned such questions as the participation of labor in the management of those branches of the industry in which workers' welfare was involved, and an annual vacation of one month with pay.

Among the contributory causes of the disputes might be mentioned the following: First, lack of provision for compensation in case of any serious or fatal accident. Second, the summary dismissals of

workers at the option of some employers. Third, occasional withholdings of wages. Fourth, the indifference of some employers to the grievances of their employees. Fifth, ill-treatment of workers by some foremen and managers. Sixth, the failure on the part of some employers to fulfil the agreements entered into as condition for previous strike settlement. Seventh, the sympathy of one group of workers for their fellow-workers.

Chief Results.

It is impossible to measure in any known terms the actual loss which the modern warfare between labor and capital imposes upon society. While the losses in working days, profits, wages, and property, and even life, can be computed in figures, the loss to society through the disturbance of peace and the paralysis of social, political and economic activities, cannot be measured or visualised. Only a great strike like the Bombay general strike shows clearly the inefficiency of the modern industrial organisation by which labor and capital are allowed to match their strength at the expense of society.

The most obvious effect of a strike is the loss of working days. Complete figures for the working days lost in the disputes in India prior to the year 1921 are not available. The Bombay general strike of 1920 alone, which lasted from January 2 to February 3, i. e., 27 actual days of work, and involved about 200,000 laborers, caused a loss of 5,400,000 working days. Since some of the strikes lasted 3 months or over, and the total number of persons involved in the strikes amounted to 1,500,000, the aggregate loss of working days for the first half of the year 1920 must have been enormous. During the second half of the year 1920, the number of

working-days lost through strikes in Bengal alone amounted to 1,052,261. These data are incomplete, several important strikes being still in progress when this estimate was made. The total loss of working days in 1921 was 6,837,862 and in the first half of 1922, 1,305,188.

Very little is known as to the amount of the loss in profits, wages, and property. Nor is it very easy to evaluate such losses. A faint idea may, however, be had from a few fragmentary data. The Buckingham Mills at Madras, for instance, lost a profit of Rs. 10,000 per day. In one of the strikes at Ahmedabad, 32 mills lost Rs. 300,000 in profits and the workers, Rs. 100,000 in wages. The strikes at Bombay was reckoned to have caused a loss of £ 8,000,000 in production alone. The loss in property was not great, although the bulk of the strikes were accomplished by picketing and intimidation was also utilised, actual violence was scarcely resorted to, especially with reference to property.

The most regrettable loss resulting from strikes was through the death of several workers. In such strikes as those in the Tata Iron and Steel Works, the Sholapur strike and the Bombay general strike, several laborers were killed and a large number was wounded. While the loss of life itself is irreparable, the misery and sufferings brought upon the workers' families through the loss of their earning members are also considerable.

The most tangible results of the industrial disputes are to be noted in settlement. In the years 1919 and 1920, the majority of the strikes were settled in favor of the workers. Some of the strikes of the government employees were lost. Of the 164 strikes and lockouts in the Presidency of Bombay from April, 1921, to March, 1922, 54 per cent were

settled in favor of the employers, 15 per cent in favor of the employees, 13 per cent were compromised, and 18 per cent were still in progress without any definite results. The strikes in other parts of the country were, however, settled more in favor of the workers. Of the 559 disputes, most of which were strikes, in 1921 and the first half of 1922 in all India, 105 were successful, 96 partially successful, and 271 unsuccessful, the rest being classed as indefinite, unknown or still in progress.

Immeasurable and irreparable as some of the losses from strikes and lockouts are, they are the inevitable results of the modern system of production and distribution and should be considered in relation to the corresponding gain to the laboring classes. If strikes are the only methods for establishing the industrial status, enhancing the labor cause and improving the labor conditions, they must be regarded as a means to social amelioration.

Industrial Peace.

One of the great problems requiring solution by modern society is to secure industrial peace. This is as true of India as of any other country. As a result of some of the strikes, especially those at Bombay, the importance of devising means for the solution of the problem has been brought to the people of India.

One of the first requirements for the adjustment of labor disputes is the gathering of accurate and impartial data. This can perhaps be better done by the government than by any other agency. The Government of India and the Provincial Governments of Bombay and Madras have already established labor bureaus for this purpose.

In April 1918, long before the first Bombay mill

strike of 1921, Sir Dinsha Wacha, then chairman of the Bombay Millowners' Association, advocated the establishment of a council of experienced arbitrators in whom employers and employees might have the fullest confidence. No immediate step was taken toward the solution of the problem.

Early in the year 1921, a committee was appointed on the recommendation of the Bengal Legislative Council to consider the problem of industrial unrest in Bengal. The committee concluded that the unrest was due to both economic grievances and to the general spirit of unrest then dominant all over the country. The committee rejected all schemes involving any element of compulsion by legal process. In the public utility services, the committee recommended the establishment of a panel from which a small conciliation board could be formed on the application of one or both parties or by Government of its own motion. Such a board would have no legal status to enforce its findings, but it was expected that public opinion would be sufficiently strong to induce the parties to come to terms on the basis of the findings by the board. In the case of private dispute, the committee recommended that employers and employees should settle their differences by direct negotiations which could be carried on by a joint works committee. "The idea of the panchayat," remarked the committee, "as an agency for settling social and economical affairs is familiar in India, and a joint works committee organised on proper lines would supply a panchayat for regulating industrial affairs so far as they concern the workers." Where both parties expressed a desire for impartial outside intervention, Government should endeavour to meet their wishes and might appoint a board similar to that in the public utilities.

Shortly after, the Bombay Government also appointed a committee of 9 members "to consider and report on the practicability or otherwise of creating machinery for the prevention and early settlement of industrial disputes." The recommendations of the committee fall into two groups, the prevention and the settlement of disputes. As to the prevention, the committee recommended standardisation of wages, recognition of unions by employers and registration by the Government, formation of works committees, introduction of welfare work and improvement of housing. Regarding settlement, the committee deprecated any outside interference, specially by the State until all other means have been employed and have failed, or unless it was invited by one or both parties to the dispute, or unless the situation was such that peace, order, and good government were prejudiced. If such condition would arise, then there should be formed an industrial court of inquiry to be followed, if necessary, by an industrial court of conciliation. Three persons representing employers and three persons representing employees in the industry concerned should form the membership of the court. The report of the committee is still under consideration.

The recommendations of the committee are subject to several criticisms, the most important of which is the proposed selection of labor representatives by the Labore Office. The Labor Office being a government body could not be trusted by laborers to take any part in the selection of their representatives. Laborers often suspect that Government sides with employers. This is especially so in India where the Government is foreign to the country and where most of the officers and a large number of employers are foreigners.

Preventive Measures.

Two fundamental forces of the industrial disputes are acquisitiveness and self-assertion. Under the influence of the former, the employer wants to make profits often even at the cost of the employee and the employee wants to increase his wages irrespective of business conditions. Under the influence of the latter, the employer desires to manage his business in his own way without interference even by the employee, and the employee desires to be respected as an individual although he works for others and to say something in the affairs of the industry in which his life and welfare are vitally concerned. Any measures which can bring about a conciliation between labor and capital on these two points can solve the problems of industrial disputes. But none of the measures recommended for the prevention of disputes can reconcile these forces and solve the problems.

In the first place, the welfare work no doubt intends to improve labor conditions. Since it takes away some of the grievances of the workers and reduces the causes of friction between labor and capital, it serves as a preventative measure. But its field of activity is very much limited, as indicated before.

In the second place, standardisation of wages may eliminate some of the local frictions and thus reduce small strikes. But as long as there is a body of persons bent on making as much profit as they can on their investment and, therefore, anxious to pay laborers as little as possible, and there is another body of persons goaded either by dire necessity or love for comfort is determined to get higher wages, the friction is bound to come, be it on a smaller or

larger scale. Standardisation of wages makes the dispute wider whenever it comes.

In the third place, trade unions make laborers better articulate and serve as a channel of communication between labor and capital. Disputes through misunderstanding can thus be easily avoided. But most of the disputes arise due to difference in the viewpoints rather than to misunderstandings. The registration of unions will undoubtedly raise their status and, therefore, be more readily recognised by employers. The failure on the part of employers to recognise unions has been one of the important causes of the recent strikes. The growth of trade unions is not, however, a means of preventing industrial disputes. It acts just the other way. It makes laborers more conscious of class interests and class power, and leads to right their wrongs by collective activity and strikes, if necessary.

In the fourth place, the most important measure adopted for the prevention of strikes is the formation of the works committee. The object of the works committee is "to enable the employer to realise the difficulties and hardships of his men, and to give the employed an opportunity of making known their needs and of influencing directly the policy of those who control the factory or workshop in which they work."

The works committees were introduced into the B. B. and C. I. Railways in 1920. The committees consist of 6 members each in each of the railway districts, representing in all, about 25,000 employees. It is restricted only to the literary persons. Social and general questions on wages, housing, schools, medical provision, and the like are being discussed. Matters of general interest are referred to one of the two central committees located at Bombay and

Ajmere and formed of 14 representatives from various district committees, one being from each committee.

Works committees were introduced in the cotton mills of Messrs. Currimbhoy Ebrahim and Company and of Messrs. Tata and Sons in 1921. In the mills of the former, a general committee of about 81 members, viz., representatives of the workmen and all the officers of the mill, with the manager as president, elects a working committee of about 20 persons, which decides questions of conditions and discipline and forwards them to the supervising board for disposal. The board consists of 3 members from the agents, 3 from the Social Service League and welfare work organisations of Bombay, 3 from the Servants of India Society and 20 presidents of the cooperative societies in the mills. The works committees in the mills of the latter are based on practically the same conditions. The questions of hours and wages are excluded from the consideration by the committees.

The most important cause of labor disputes is economic and, if the works committees are not allowed to express their opinions on the wage question, the success of these committees as a means of preventing strikes is extremely doubtful. No doubt strikes have taken place in the mills of Messrs. Tata and Sons without notice and without formulating their grievances through works committees.

Conciliatory Methods.

The recommendations of various committees appointed by different provincial governments have not yet been given effect. There is no question that some of them will be tried in the near future. In the meantime, several methods have been adopted to solve the immediate problems which the industrial

disputes have given rise to in different sections of the country.

The most important of these methods is arbitration. This has been tried in some of the big strikes in Bombay. The position of the arbitrator undoubtedly influenced the disputants. Men like Mr. Gandhi exerted great influence upon all classes of people. But such a popular and impartial arbitrator is not always handy, especially in these days when the disputes have become a thing of everyday occurrence. If arbitration is handed over to a board or court instead of an individual, the inherent defects of arbitration cannot be eliminated. Arbitration tends to impose its will or decision upon the disputants from outside without taking into consideration real causes of the dispute. It is at best temporary and palliative. Besides, arbitration is rather difficult in India on account of political conditions. The great majority of employers, except those in the cotton industry, are Englishmen. Most of the disputes are likely to arise between English employers and Indian employees. In case of arbitration, the arbitrator would naturally be an Englishman or an English board. Unfortunately, Indian laborers, whether or not there is any justification for such suspicions, would question the impartiality of a decision made by Englishmen when the issue is between them and the Englishmen.

Mediation boards or committees for the settlement of disputes have also been in operation in several parts of the country. In strikes in the Buckingham and Carnatic mills of Madras in 1921, for instance, which lasted from May 20 to October 21, 1921, and involved several thousand workers, the Madras corporation on its own initiative appointed a committee to mediate and bring about a settlement of the

strikes. A similar committee of mediation was appointed by the employers themselves and a temporary peace was restored.

Direct negotiation is a much more effective means of bringing about industrial peace in India. It has a very great effect on the mind of the working people. One of their keenest desires is to have access to the employer and tell him their grievances. It has become traditional with Indian people to have direct and informal access to Indian princes or his representatives when engaged in the dispensation of justice. Direct negotiations between employers and employees will lead the latter to take active part in their affairs and to preserve their interest by making them self-conscious and self-reliant, and will, therefore, afford a training ground for democracy.

CHAPTER VIII.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROBLEMS.

A movement starts with some objects in view. Some of them may be vague and indefinite, while others are immediate and definite. The success of the movement may be judged from the full or partial realisation of its objects.

.Material Gain.

The labor movement started primarily from economic causes. The consideration of its economic or material success becomes, therefore, of prime importance. Its principal achievements may be stated as follows:

First, the most conspicuous achievement is the abolition of the indentured system which had existed for over three quarters of a century and against which agitation continued for over a generation. No doubt the present system of labor supply to the plantations in India, which is a form of indenture, will also be soon abolished.

Second, the next important achievement is the regulation of woman and child labor. In the beginning there was no restriction on the working hours of women and children. Sometimes they worked the same hours as men. The first act of 1881 fixed the minimum age of children at 7. It was raised to 9 in 1891 and to 12 in 1922. The corresponding maximum ages were also raised from 12 in 1881 to 14 in 1891 and to 15 in 1922. During the period, the number of their working hours has also been reduced from 9 to 6 a day. It was in 1891 that the working hours of women were first limited to 11 a day with a rest period of $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours. The reduction of hours from

72 to 60 a week by the act of 1922 also affected woman workers. By subsequent laws, women and children were also prohibited from work at night or at dangerous operations.

Third, the reduction of the working hours for men is another important success. In the beginning of the factory system, from sunrise to sunset was the common working day. In ~~the~~ most of the factories, the hours did not amount to more than 8 to 10 a day. But in the cotton industry the hours were excessive, especially in 1905-6. By the act of 1911, these hours were limited to 72 a week and by the recent act to 60 hours a week, as mentioned above.

Fourth, another gain of the movement is that it has been able to draw the attention of the public and the government to the unsanitary and demoralising housing conditions in many cities like Bombay. The result of the recent agitation has been that definite steps have been taken by employers, municipalities and port trust companies for better housing accommodations.

Fifth, the conditions of work and living have also been improved in other industries, such as mines and plantations. After successive measures, working hours have been reduced and provisions have been made for safety and sanitation.

While these are the permanent achievements to the cause of labor, other gains of importance have also been achieved by the movement in the recent years. The most important ones are as follows: First, almost universal increase of wages varying in degrees in different industries. Second, more regular payment of wages and bonus. Third, a promise of compensation in case of serious or fatal accidents. Fourth, better treatment, by employers.

Moral Gain.

A still greater achievement of the Indian labor movement is the moral gain. Moral achievement comes only through self-consciousness and self-realisation. For centuries Indian workers have accepted their social and industrial status without questioning its validity. The labor movement for the first time in the history of the country has begun to make them class-conscious.

Another feature of moral success is a sense of class-solidarity. Not only a large number of the workers are becoming awakened to the new consciousness, but there is also a feeling among many of them that their interests are common and they must stand by one another for common welfare. In the recent strikes, this spirit has been indicated. Many of the strikes were sympathetic in origin.

Among the moral gains must also be included the various methods of education, welfare work, and recreation which have been introduced by workers in various industrial centers. This kind of work was started first by employers and then by social workers. But labor organisations have also taken up such work in their own hands.

One of the outstanding features of the movement is self-control with which most of the workers have conducted themselves, especially in all the strikes. Considering the widespread character of the strikes and acute distress of the workers involved, rioting has been negligible. It is this spirit of self-restraint which led them to victory. No doubt, the non-cooperation and non-violence movement of Mr. M. K. Gandhi, played an important role in the cultivation of the spirit of self-control on the part of the workers.

The laborers have also shown their independence of action. In July, 1920, the Government of Madras

decided to appoint a committee of employers and employees to investigate into the causes of labor disputes, but the chairmanship of the proposed committee was given over to a man, who supported the nationally condemned Rowlatt Acts. The Madras Central Labor Board, representing organisations, refused to cooperate in such a committee.

Industrial Status

Another important feature of their moral gain is the establishment of a new industrial status for the working classes. Under the old industrial organisation, cultivators and artisans were two important industrial classes, both of which were independent workers. Labor for hire and even manual labor lost its dignity. The labor movement has been attempting to restore the dignity of labor.

What really commands respect and secures recognition is not the nature of occupation, but its significance to society and its relationship to self-development. In recent years, workers have become self-confident and self-assertive and by various aggressive activities, have impressed upon the nation their importance to the modern industrial organisation. Their educational and cultural ideals have commanded national respect.

Employers' Attitude.

One of the notable features of the existing status of the workers is the recognition of the unions by the employers. In some cases, the employers have been slow to do so and the result has been strikes. In many cases such strikes have been won and the unions have been recognised.

Another instance showing the status of the workers in modern industries is their participation

in the management of some of their conditions. The works committee mentioned before has given some such status. There is no question that it is far from satisfactory. But a beginning has been made and the right of the workers to participate in such affairs has been conceded. There is no doubt that it will grow.

Government Attitude.

Some of the labor leaders feel that the attitude of the Government toward labor has not been entirely impartial. They charge that the Government has openly favored the employers in supplying them with troops and police not only to preserve peace in times of industrial dispute, but also to coerce and intimidate the laborers into submission. The Madras Government, for instance, lent 50 members of the labor corps to the Electrical Supply Corporation to carry on the work and thus to starve the strikers to submission after 53 days.

Some of the court decisions have also led the labor leaders to such belief. The decision of the Madras Court, mentioned above, is very significant to this point: First, the court tacitly approved of the contention of the employers that they would not deal with outsiders, which meant a blow to the trade union movement in India. Second, any kind of activity which seems to be against the interest of the employer might be considered "malicious" and the leaders might be prevented by injunction from taking any part in industrial disputes. Third, if the labor unions cannot achieve their aims by open and constitutional agitation, they will be driven to have recourse to underhand means thus aggravating the bitterness and estrangement between labor and capital.

Since the Government itself is the sponsor of the capitalistic system and even the employer of large body of workers, it is liable to become more or less biased against employees. The Government of India has, however, either willingly or by the force of circumstances, enacted labor laws for the regulation of the conditions in mines, plantations, factories and other industries. The Government of India has also accepted labor representation in all industrial conferences. If the recommendations of the various committees on reconciliation are enacted into law, the legal status of labor will be established as one of the two principal industrial classes in India.

Public Attitude.

The public has taken a very sympathetic attitude toward the labor movement. The workers have been financially helped in their strikes, and the Home Rule League and the Moslem League openly sided with some of the strikers to bring about reconciliation.

The importance of the service rendered by the public for the furtherance of the labor movement cannot be overestimated. The leadership has always come from outside. The grievances of labor have existed for years. It was the "intellectuals" who made them conscious of their grievances, inspired them with the new ideals and aspirations, organized them into unions and helped them win the strikes. Without such leadership, the movement could not proceed very far.

The national organisations have also expressed their sympathy for the cause of labor. The Indian National Congress, for example, in its session at Nagpur in 1920, passed a resolution to the effect

that laborers should be organised with a view to the promotion of their well being, and with the object of securing their just rights. The same Congress instructed its committee to appoint a sub-committee in order to give effect to the resolution. The National Liberal Federation, a similar organisation of the moderate party, also passed resolutions advising the Government to legalise trade unions and made some suggestions for the amendment of the existing factory act.

There are reasons for such active sympathy of the public for the cause of labor. First, the cleavage between labor and capital is not yet very distinct in India. A large part of the capital invested in India comes from abroad, and although the remainder has been raised in the country, the number of stockholders in capitalistic production is very small. Second, the spirit of nationalism has stirred the whole people. Now they realise more than ever before that both progress and prosperity of India depend upon elevation of the masses. It is through this realisation that several eminent men have been drawn to the cause of labor.

Nature of the Problem.

The labor problem is essentially economic in its nature. It deals principally with the difficulties of the laboring classes in the preservation and furtherance of their economic interest.

The prime object of the modern industrial organisation is to make profit. As profit depends upon the difference between the cost of production and the market price, and as the price is more or less beyond the control of an individual employer, his chief interest lies in lowering the cost of which wages are

often the principal item. The prospects of profits also determine the expansion or contraction of business, disregarding the necessity of work as a means of livelihood to a large population. The private ownership of the means of production brings about a still more important distinction between the employing and the working classes. In addition to the remuneration for personal services, the former derives a large income in the form of rent and interest, while the only asset of the latter is the personal services which are more or less perishable and which are sold at a more competitive price. The income of the wage-earners thus becomes both low and insecure.

The condition of the workers becomes still worse by some of the features of the modern productive system, such as application of mechanical power to the productive system, large scale production, employment of a large number of workers at a certain time and place and production much ahead of consumption due to the distance of the market. Some of the problems of labor, such as long hours, sickness and accidents, and unemployment are the direct results of these conditions.

The distinction between the wage-earning class and the capitalistic class lies in this fundamental difference in the economic interests and the problems arising out of the conflicts in these interests are essentially economic. But the effects of these problems are not limited to the economic field alone. They stand against the enjoyment of many social privileges and the exercise of many political rights on the part of the working classes. The object of the labor movement is to solve primarily the economic problems and secondarily to look after the social and political interests.

Consciousness and Solidarity.

The first and most important problem of the labor movement is that of class-consciousness among the rank and file of the working classes. If the workers would further their interests, they must first of all know what these interests are and how do they differ from those of the capitalists. The majority of the workers are ignorant of their status and even of their conditions. The result is their support and co-operation have not been fully available to the labor movement. The difficulty in making the workers alive to their conditions becomes all the more greater in India for the reason that they are mostly illiterate and cannot be approached through the press, which is the most important means of communication in the modern time.

While class-consciousness is the corner stone, class solidarity supplies the foundation on which the labor temple can be built. Unless all the interests are centralised into one united whole, the concerted action for the achievement of common aims becomes impossible.

The problem of class solidarity among the workers is as great, if not greater, as that of class-consciousness. The wide area over which they are scattered makes contact difficult. The greatest enemy of labor is, however, laborers themselves. It becomes evident in the case not only of strike-breaking but also of concerted actions. Petty jealousies, temporary self-interests and narrow outlooks have often caused dissensions in the labor camp and stopped the progress of the labor movement. The most recent danger to the cause of labor has appeared in the form of spying. While there are professional detectives employed by the capitalists, the most of the spying work is done by the workers themselves.

The organisation of the laboring classes into unionism is, however, the first step toward solidarity. The progress made in India in this direction is both praise-worthy and encouraging.

Masses and Leaders.

The next important problem is that of leadership. Owing to the comparative newness, the labor movement in India, has to depend upon outside advice and direction.

Outside leadership is not a new thing in the history of labor. It was in fact the outsiders who first awakened class-consciousness and formulated class ideals among the workers. It is more or less true even to-day. Outside help becomes all the more important in India where workers lack education and have lost a good deal of initiative through centuries of social and political repression.

The leaders in India come mostly from the 'intellectuals'; comprising such classes as teachers, preachers, editors, reformers, lawyers and politicians. Some of the leaders belong even to the landlord, official and capitalistic classes. The domination of the workers by the intellectual class is not without its danger. The workers are liable to forget the real issue of the problem. Under the paternalistic influence, they may lose their power of initiative and fail to develop into an intelligent body of men and women alert to the preservation of their own interest and of those of society. But the greatest danger to the cause of labor lies in the leadership by the aristocracy and bureaucracy which are consciously or unconsciously liable to mislead the workers in the the real solution of the problem.

However defective the outside leadership may be, it is the only means to the growth of the labor

movement in India to day. This inherent weakness is not, however, without some mitigating features. Different classes of intellectuals may add their respective viewpoints to the cause of labor and thus enrich and broaden the outlook of the laboring classes. Moreover, under the guidance of these intellectuals, the workers can receive a sound training for the conduct of their own affairs and for the leadership of their own people.

The main question in connection with a leader is not whether he comes from outside or grows from inside, but what his attitude is toward the rank and file of the workers. At the outset, he must clearly understand the real issue of the labor question and have genuine sympathy for the ideals and aspirations of the laboring classes. He must also have a clear vision of the immediate goal and full confidence in the methods used. Above all, he must be willing to serve the cause of labor and not his own interests. His success lies not in winning strikes or increasing wages, but in elevating the workers to the level of his own aims and methods.

Education and Training.

The most important problem of the laboring classes is that of education and training. Upon the proper solution of this problem depends not only the economic betterment of the workers, but also their moral and intellectual development.

Education is a means for the expression of life in relation to the environment. It implies first of all an adequate body of traditions including ideals and technique. The function of education is first to initiate or adapt a person to these traditions and secondly to inspire him to develop his own indivi-

duality. Upon the proper coordination of these two functions depends the success of education.

There was a time when India's traditions were among the highest and richest in the world. But within the past centuries, they have remained more or less stationary, while those of other countries, especially in Europe and America, have made rapid progress. Discovery and invention have led to the enlargement of society. Life has become much more diversified and complicated. The incomplete and obsolete traditions of India cannot form the basis of education for modern life.

From the viewpoint of industrial technique, there is still another phase to the question. Intensity of work, regularity of hours, and use of machinery make work in factories and other modern industries quite different from that in fields and shops from which the laborers generally come. On the other hand, the modern system of production and distribution has made the world one international market, where the workers sell their labor at a more or less competitive price. Equipped with antiquated technique, Indian workers have thus to compete with the modern industrial workers in Europe and America, and get, therefore, the worst of the bargain. For the adaptation of Indian workers to the modern system of production, India needs new traditions in technique.

Class interest raises still another aspect to the question. The history of the world is the history of class domination. There has never been a time when one class of society did not dominate other classes and develop such traditions for its own interest as laws, customs and doctrines. The present traditions of India have largely been influenced by the ruling social, political and industrial

classes. A critical valuation of these traditions is also a problem of workers' education.

The first problem of the workers' education is, therefore, a new orientation of the old traditions and the creation of the new ones. New ideals of life should be created and new technique for the realisation of these ideals should be found. The second problem is the socialisation of these traditions among the workers. The best method of socialising or imparting knowledge is schooling. But schools in India are few and far between. Practically all of the workers are illiterate. The universal and compulsory education is the first step toward the solution of the problem.

CHAPTER IX.

EFFECTS AND CONCLUSIONS.

Labor and Population.

The significance of the labor movement is by no means confined to the laboring classes, but it has a profound influence upon the whole society. In order to comprehend this significance, it is essential to take into consideration the proportion of the workers to the whole population.

The number of workers is only 3 millions in modern industries and 28 millions in agriculture and domestic service, as we have seen. According to the census of 1911, which is still the latest source of the data on the subject, there were 45.9 million people in the latter group including both actual workers and their dependents, while the number of dependents of the former class was unknown. It is, however, not too much to assume that there are about 50 million people or about one-sixth of the total population of the country, who belong partly or wholly to the wage-earning classes. But the potential supply of the laborers in India is still much greater.

The population of India may be roughly divided into four classes: First, the upper class or the aristocracy of land and wealth. Second, the middle class or the nobility of birth and education. Third, peasants and artisans or the independent industrial workers. Fourth, workers who depend upon wages either fully or partly for their livelihood. The last two classes comprise over 90 per cent of the people. The number of the peasants and artisans amounts to about 200 million people, a large portion of which is bound sooner or later to become wage-earners for the following reasons:

First, under the pressure of foreign competition, India is rapidly adopting industrialism and absorbing the artisans into the wage-earning classes.

Second, agriculture supports at present about 72 per cent of the population, a proportion too large for the economic cultivation of the land. The introduction of scientific agriculture will throw a large number of small peasants out of the overcrowded area.

Third, India is one of the largest producers of the world's raw material, which is mostly exported at the present time. With the growth of national economy, a considerable portion of it will be manufactured within the country employing a large number of the people.

Fourth, there is a large class of people who live by rendering personal services to the village or the town, such as the priests and menials. The decadence of the old industrial organisation has made their occupation more or less precarious. The increasing cost of living can scarcely be met by the customary rate of remuneration. The economic forces have already driven many of them to seek employment in the city. The majority of them are still waiting for industrial opportunities.

India may not become one of the so-called manufacturing countries like England and Germany, but it is only a question of time that she will have highly developed modern industries for the supply of her essential manufactures. If the present system of production and distribution continues to exist, there will develop a small class of employers and a vast body of employees in India as in any other industrially advanced country.

What will be the proportion of the wage-earners to the whole population is hard to say. It is, however,

not the actual proportion but the closeness of the social and economic status between the workers and the rest of the masses which is more significant. At present, the status of the workers is practically the same as that of the peasants and artisans from whom they are emerging. Although there may develop some difference in the relative position of these classes, the influence of the workers on the latter classes will remain great for a long time to come.

Industrial Reorganisation.

The most obvious effect of the labor movement is to be found upon industrial life. The old economy of the village and the town is being fastly replaced by national and international economy. Agriculture, manufacture, mining, transportation and other branches of production have come under the influence of modern industrialism.

While the wage-earning classes are the effect of modern industrialism, they are also the cause of its further development. In the beginning, there was scarcity of labor for factory work in India. This is more or less true even today. The new technique and long hours partly account for the labor shortage. By reducing hours and increasing wages, the labor movement is making modern industries more attractive and the labor supply more adequate. On the other hand, by raising the standard of living and imparting education and training, the labor movement also promises to solve the problem of comparative inefficiency of Indian labor, which has been one of the detriments to the growth of modern industries. So far as the movement furthers the growth of modern industrialism, it is a factor in the industrial reorganisation of India.

The modern system of production is a great improvement upon the older ones. Within a century and a half, it has revolutionised the whole industrial system. No other institution has made a better use of the human knowledge, such as discoveries and inventions, for the furtherance of its cause. It has immensely increased the capital and dividend of society of which even the workers have become beneficiary. The prime interest of the labor movement lies, however, in a more equitable distribution of national dividend rather than in the mere augmentation of it. It is the reorganisation of the distributive system at which the labor movement principally aims.

The wastage and injustice of the modern industrial system cannot be exaggerated. Useless competition, restriction upon production, and even destruction of commodities for price control are only a few instances. A system, which gives only a few men control of the vast majority of the people, compels men, machinery and material to remain idle in the face of great need around and throws periodically a multitude of able-bodied and willing workers out of the means of their livelihood, is inefficient economically, unjust politically and immoral socially. It is bound to change and the people, who suffer most from the system are going to bring about the transformation.

One of the aims of the labor movement is the establishment of collective bargaining, which will undoubtedly improve the condition of the workers. But as long as one class of the people depends only upon personal services for their income and another class derives rent and interest in addition to the remuneration for personal services, as noted before, there is bound to remain a great divergence in the income of the two classes leading to the difference

in social prestige and political power. The realisation of this fact has led a large number of workers to demand the nationalisation of land and capital and the organisation of industry for use and not for profit. The labor movement in India is young and its present aim is collective bargaining. But it will not be long before the Indian workers, who had enjoyed economic independence on farms and in shops, realise the limitation of their demand and be imbued with the desire for the equality of economic opportunity, which industrial democracy alone can fulfil.

Political Reconstruction.

Not less significant is the effect of the labor movement upon the political life of the country. Absolute monarchy together with consequent tyranny and despotism were not be unknown to such a large country like India with a long history of foreign invasions and alien dominations. But the essential feature of the Indian polity was democracy which was the basis of the village organisation. Every village was a republic in which all questions of common interest were decided by the p a n c h a y a t, or the council of five men. Neither the Hindu monarchs nor the Mohammedan emperors ever interfered with this fundamental right of the Indian masses. Under the British rule this democracy was replaced by bureaucracy.

The national question of India to-day is how to attain Swaraj or self-government. In the solution of the problem lies the vital interest of the working classes. For over a generation the National Congress and Provincial Conferences have been struggling for political rights and privileges. But without the support of the masses, who are the real repositories of all power, they became nothing but debating clubs of

the intellectuals. In the recent awakening of the Indian masses, of which the labor movement is the best expression, the Congress has found a real source of hope and inspiration. In the achievement of Swaraj, the labor movement will be an important factor.

The establishment of Swaraj is, however, half the game. If the British bureaucracy is replaced by Indian aristocracy, the workers will not be much better off. A much more significant point to the workers is to democratise the government so that it can be a rule of the people for the people. Democracy in the true sense of the word may be a dream. But a government in which the people take active part in making laws for the guidance of their own conduct and in devising means for the promotion of their own welfare is within the reach of all people.

Labor has also a special interest in political activities. Modern industrialism owes its origin to the existing political institutions, such as private property and free competition. A permanent change in the modern system of production and distribution implies a reconstruction of these institutions, which can be brought about by the active participation of labor in the local and national governments. The advent of the labor party in the political field implies a better distribution of power among the classes, if not among the masses. In educating the workers in the national affairs, in demanding universal franchise, and in participating in some of the legislative measures, the labor movement has taken the first step toward democracy.

Social Regeneration.

A still more important effect of the labor movement in India is the regeneration of social life. Two important elements which brought about reorganism-

ation in Western societies are modern industrialism and public education including the press. That they will have similar effects in India cannot be doubted. Public education in India may still be a question of the future, but industrialism has already begun to re-classify the people. While this process is more or less mechanical, the labor movement promises to make it conscious and functional. In fact, the social effects of the labor movement are manifold:

First, like the Greek and the Roman societies, the society in India represented the life of only a few upper classes. The masses of the people remained inert and vegetative. Neither political revolutions nor religious reforms found any means for the reclamation and acclimatisation of the intellectual and spiritual wealth of the teeming multitude. The labor movement has, for the first time in India's history, given them a means for the assertion of their rights and for the development of their individuality.

Second, since the 12th century, through immigration and conversion, a large number of Mohammedans has grown up in India. For the most part, the Hindus and the Mohammedans have lived peacefully. But there was no great and common cause in which they could unite their interests. The Swaraj movement offered such a cause, but owing to the remoteness of politics from the masses and the manipulation of the British authorities, the Hindus and Mohammedans never stood together until very recently. The labor movement has given the Hindu and Mohammedan workers a new cause in which they have united their economic interests. This unity in the industrial field will be gradually extended to other spheres of society.

Third, the caste first originated in the economic division of labor and afterwards received social

and religious sanctions. The more or less static condition of society has made it so rigid that it is to-day a great hindrance to social progress in India. Various religious movements have unsuccessfully attempted to abolish it. A system which is economic in origin can be replaced only by economic institutions. By organising trade and industrial unions, the labor movement has given a new basis of class formation, which will gradually replace the old caste system.

Fourth, one of the great defects in India is the lack of towns and cities, which generally act as the centers of new ideas. Modern industrialism has led to the growth of towns. But these industrial towns are liable to bring in slums, saloons and brothels. One of the aims of the labor movement is to eliminate these evils on the one hand and to establish educational, recreative and cultural institutions on the other. New ideals and aspirations from these centers will have great influence upon the rural population.

Fifth, women work as hard in India as in any other country and contribute a large share to the wealth of the country. But owing to the lack of social sanction, they did not have any economic independence and had mostly to live under the protection of their relatives. Unionisation and other activities of the labor movement will not only improve their industrial status, but also raise their social position. Economic independence will sooner or later lead them to participate in all social privileges and political rights.

Lastly, the labor movement is also a means for establishing cultural relationship between the workers of India and those of other countries. India has been a more or less isolated country. New ideas from

abroad had very little chance to come to the people except through invaders and missionaries. But it took ages before they could filter through different social strata to the masses. Labor organisations all over the world having practically the same aims to achieve and the same problems to solve are constantly in touch with one another and serve as a direct means of communication among the working classes. This contact with the workers of the other countries will be a source of inspiration for 'new ideals and activities among' the Indian masses.

The labor movement has thus been bringing the workers irrespective of caste and creed or age and sex into new social contact and adapting them into new social conditions. In the labor movement the masses of India have found an avenue through which they can seek the redress of their grievances, demand the rights and privileges, and command the respect and recognition. The effect of this will be the enlargement of social scope, the rise of new social ideals and the formation of a new social order.

Cultural Orientation.

Another important effect of the labor movement has been showing itself upon the culture of the people. Culture is the idealistic conception of life, which is expressed in thoughts and actions.

Life is a series of adaptations to environment both physical and social. It can be achieved either by adjusting or subduing the inner nature to the external world or by conquering or subjugating the external world to the inner nature. The two processes are interrelated, but the relative emphasis put upon the one process or the other makes a great difference

in the nature of a civilisation. In one case, civilisation tends to be material and in the other, spiritual.

Hindu civilisation is essentially spiritual in nature. The ideal of Hindu life is to realise either here or hereafter that entity of which this visible world is a mere expression. Centuries before the Christian era, Hindus conceived this entity in the terms of truth, beauty and good, and tried to realise these ideals in inner life. Art, science and philosophy were cultivated for finding means for the realisation of these ideals. Even the social institutions were built with this object in view. The control of mind for the realisation of moral and spiritual ideals is the essence of Hindu civilisation. But in the very refinement of Hindu civilisation lies its weakest point. Its lofty ideals are beyond the reach of the majority of men and women. A civilisation in order to be functional and effective must be such that in it an average person can "live, breathe and have his being". Hindu civilisation originated from the experiences of the few and it has remained for the few even to-day.

Mohammedanism, which like Hinduism is not only a religion but also a civilisation, is very democratic in its nature. Its purely monotheistic doctrines and high ethical principles have united into its fold a large portion of the world's population, irrespective of race and color. The loyalty and earnestness of the Mohammedans, who form about one-fourth of the total population of India, cannot be surpassed by any other sect. But these very virtues of the Mohammedans have been detrimental to their progress. They still scrupulously adhere to their old social, political and industrial ideals which evolved at a very early stage of social development, and which are, therefore, quite inadequate for modern life. Like the Hindus, they also fail to appreciate the

necessity of reorientating their culture in the light of modern science and philosophy and of emphasising the material aspect of life.

Materialism was not unknown to India. In fact, she made considerable progress in commerce and industry, even under the Mohammedan rule. But minimising the importance of material needs of life, she failed to utilise the experiences of the masses into the social organisation. The present civilisations of India are like inverted pyramids. 'What they need is not demolition, for that would be an irreparable loss to India as well as to the entire humanity, but reconstruction. The ethical superstructure of Indian culture needs a solid material foundation, which can be furnished by the ideals and aspirations as well as the wants and requirements of the masses.

The labor movement representing the Indian masses has brought forward such material and practical questions as health, housing, income, compensation and child and women labor. Such questions were discussed before by reformers and philanthropists, but they failed to receive public attention. The labor movement representing the grievances of actual sufferers has injected these questions into national life.

There is idealism even in the so-called materialism. If the aim of life is to realise truth, beauty and good, this realisation must not only be in thought but also in action. To possess healthy body and sound mind and to own a beautiful home or artistic things are some of the methods of realising the same ideal in material life which is aimed at by a poet or philosopher in spiritual life.

This utilitarian idealism has already made impression on Indian culture. Except perhaps Russia, there is no country on earth which possessed so many

idealists as India. But for the lack of proper field most of them devoted themselves to meditation on self-emancipation or to writing commentary on Hindu philosophy. The materialistic idealism has shown many of them a new process of self-realisation. Many idealists are now working for the betterment of Indian masses.

As a consequence of the mass movement, new ideals are growing in India. The aim of life is not to control mind, but to develop it harmoniously, not to achieve salvation hereafter, but to make the best use of it here below, and not to realise truth, beauty and good only in contemplation but also in the actual experience of daily life; social progress depends not upon the ennoblement of the few but upon the enrichment of the many; and spiritual democracy or universal brotherhood can be achieved only when there is an equality of opportunity in the social, political and industrial life. The projection of the material aspects of life into society has started a new orientation of Indian culture.

International Aspects.

The significance of the labor movement in India is not limited to the improvement of her workers or even of her masses, although social, political and economic amelioration of the millions of the people forming one fifth of the human race itself is a great achievement to the whole humanity. But it has a great influence upon the workers in other countries as well as upon the world at large.

First, modern industrialism is a world-wide institution. Its chief and direct beneficiaries may be very few in number, but this small minority is so

strong and powerful that they control both the world market and international politics. If there be any change in the nature of the system, it must be brought about by the cooperation of international workers. The rapidity with which capital flows from one country to another makes this cooperation all the more necessary. The rise of Indian workers is, therefore, a source of strength to the world labor movement.

Second, although the primary aims of the labor movement are the same all over the world, it has taken different shapes and adapted different methods according to the social and political backgrounds of various countries. This diversity in nature and methods has broadened the scope and enriched the aims of the labor movement. Like the movements in England, France, Germany, the United States and other industrially advanced countries, the movement in India is also a distinct one and has its own share of contribution.

Third, one of the contributions of Labor is that it has produced great men like Karl Marx, whose thoughts and ideals have enriched not only the laboring classes but also the entire society. Great men are not rare in India but their minds were occupied with abstract philosophy. The labor movement in India has diverted their attention to a more humane and practical field and has already helped produce a Gandhi whose idealism is a solace and inspiration to a large number of people in the world.

Fourth, as a means of communication among the workers of the world, the labor movement in India has also another function. India is one of those ancient countries which once achieved a very high stage of civilisation. While its contribution to science and art has been immense,

its achievement in religion and metaphysics still remain unsurpassed. In the first half of the 19th century, Hindu culture was one of the greatest sources of inspiration to the Western thinkers. But this was more or less restricted to the intellectual classes. The spread of Hindu culture among the industrial workers of the world will inspire a new ideal for moral and spiritual realisation.

Concluding Remarks.

Except for the movement for national government, no movement is so important in India today as that of labor. Considered from the viewpoint of its effect on society, it is in fact the most significant movement in the whole history of India. Its significance may be judged from threefold viewpoint: The working classes, the Indian society, and the world at large.

First, the labor movement is showing to the millions of the workers as well as to the rest of the masses in India the importance of their existence. It is a means to their economic improvement as well as to the achievement of their political rights and social privileges.

Second, the reclamation and acclimatisation to the social whole the moral and material experiences of the inert and vegetative masses of India forming more than nine-tenths of the population implies reorganisation in the industrial system, reconstruction in the political organisation, regeneration in the social institutions and reorientation in the cultural ideals of the country.

Third, the advent of the millions of Indian workers in the field of the labor movement is a source of strength to the workers of the world who are

fighting against the modern industrial system. Moreover, India which has contributed so much to the moral, spirtual and intellectual developement of humanity, promises an equally important share to the cause of labor in establishing social, political and industrial democracy for which the workers in other parts of the world are striving.

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